Making spaces for creativity: designating 'cultural quarters'

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Introduction

The promotion of cultural activities to regenerate declining urban areas is expanding within many cities, largely as a response to deindustrialisation (Bianchini, 1993a; Ebert *et al*, 1994; Evans & Dawson, 1994; Kawashima, 1999). In addition, the UK Government has directly encouraged cultural industries (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999), and the National Cultural Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2000) highlights the contribution that culture can make to wider Scottish Executive priorities.

In terms of the rationale for 'culture-led' approaches to urban regeneration, there are three main strands. First, such approaches are seen to lead to economic diversification, employment creation, and increased innovation and creativity (Booth & Boyle, 1993; Bianchini, 1993a; Williams, 1996; Mommaas, 2004); in addition cultural industries are likely to employ high-skill, high-wage workers (Scott, 2004). Second, such approaches can contribute to 'place marketing' by image enhancement (Ashworth & Voogt, 1990; Council for Cultural Co-operation, 1995). Third, they can promote increased social cohesion and improved quality of life (Matarasso, 1997).

As a result, spatial cultural clusters have been encouraged in many cities, and 'cultural quarters' have often been designated where a 'critical mass' of culture-related activity is seen as providing the basis for anticipated sustainable development outcomes. Wansborough & Mageean (2000) suggest a 'cultural quarter' may be defined as a spatially limited and distinct area that contains a high concentration of cultural facilities compared with other areas, though such areas may include uses such as childrens' play areas, libraries, open spaces and informal recreation (Roberts, 2002). Designation of such quarters encourages further concentration of cultural uses, and they may be broadly oriented to consumption uses such as tourism and entertainment, or production uses, or a mixture of both.

In all such cases, spatial concentration of culture-related uses is assumed to lead to synergy, agglomeration economies and minimisation of amenity loss (Evans, 2001; Richards 2001a, 2001b). In the case of consumption-related uses, complementarities between uses may be developed, and the range and variety of consumption-related uses may be a large part of the attraction to many visitors (Johnson, 1996). In the case of production agglomeration, beneficial effects are seen to arise from the spatial clustering of cultural uses (Porter, 1990), whereby proximity of producers allows enhancement of competitive advantage. Indeed, creative industries in general show a strong proclivity to spatial clustering (Pratt, 1996; Richards, 2001b; Scott, 2004).

However, there are several areas of contention in respect of cultural quarters. In particular, there is contention over the necessary conditions in relation to cultural quarters. For instance, Wansborough & Mageean (2000) suggest that key characteristics of such quarters relate in part to physically-oriented factors such as their centrality within the city and their high degree of use mixing. Montgomery (2003) also emphasizes the physical characteristics

of potential cultural quarters, together with other aspects such as contribution to local identity. However, others such as Mommaas (2004) and Scott (2004) emphasise a more generalised or non-spatial economic set of assumptions in relation to cultural clustering.

There is also contention regarding what is regarded as good practice in relation to cultural quarters. For instance, some observers suggest that such quarters should ensure a 'cross-over' between production and consumption (Wansborough & Mageean, 2000; Williams 1997; Montgomery, 2003) while others point to the wide spectrum of choice in relation to consumption or production (Newman and Smith, 2000). In addition, some observers endorse the prioritisation of consumption uses in such quarters (Williams, 1996; 1997) while others prioritise production uses (Crewe, 1996); indeed, Mommaas (2004) identifies five different sets of justifications relating to cultural quarters in the Netherlands, and suggests that some of these are potentially contradictory.

In relation to outcomes, cultural quarters may lead to escalation of property and land values and consequent displacement of those without a stake in such values. In addition, there are associated arguments for dispersal of cultural facilities (Beckett, 2003; Evans, 2001). It may also be argued that synergies are only feasible within the context of large cities (Scott, 2004). There is also contention over the desirability of formal designation of cultural quarters within statutory spatial planning documents, as opposed to informal designation in other policy documents or implementation plans; this is linked to Zukin's (1995) notion of the potential self-defeating processes of cultural designation.

This paper examines the application of cultural clustering in four UK cities, which apply very different approaches. Glasgow and Manchester (large cities with a diverse pre-existing cultural capacity) both apply 'informal' cultural quarters, in that these are not designated within a formal statutory spatial plan. By contrast, Dundee and Wolverhampton (both small cities) apply 'formal' cultural quarters, with explicit designation within a statutory spatial plan, and accompanied by policies intended to encourage the development of cultural uses. The paper sets out these differences in approach, and explores the extent to which they reflect the aims and circumstances (particularly issues of scale) of each area, rather than a fundamentally different interpretation of the merits in principle of cultural clustering and of appropriate policy mechanisms to achieve this. This leads to conclusions regarding the application of cultural clustering in general.

Dundee's Cultural Quarter

Dundee, a city of 145,000 people on the east coast of Scotland, has experienced industrial and corporate restructuring which has resulted in the extreme contraction of traditional industrial sectors. Hence attempts have been made to encourage retention of the population as well as to enhance the image of the city so as to attract visitors and inward investment.

Dundee has a formally-designated Cultural Quarter set out within the adopted spatial plan for the city. The area was selected since it surrounds the flagship cultural venues of the Dundee Repertory Theatre and the Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) Centre (a cinema and arts complex with a restaurant and bar). While the concept of a cultural quarter dates back to the 1980s, the trigger for the designation of the Quarter was the development of DCA, which prompted the City Council to commission a feasibility study into a possible cultural quarter. Image enhancement was an important principle from the start, and it was felt that the creation of a critical mass of cultural activity – including both production- and consumption-related activity – would be easier to achieve and would generate a greater impact than dispersal.

EDAW and Urban Cultures were commissioned to produce recommendations for the cultural quarter. This led to their report of September 2000 (EDAW and Urban Cultures, 2000),

which defined the area of the cultural quarter. Their concept of a cultural quarter comprises a 'hub and spokes' model whereby the core is linked to other facilities immediately outside the area. The report indicates the presence in the city of a particular strength in digital media businesses, including aspects such as marketing, advertising and graphic design; broadcasting and cable services; and computer games businesses (EDAW and Urban Cultures, 2000). The report suggests that by 2010 the area could incorporate a critical mass of cultural economic production. To achieve this, the report suggests assistance of business growth by more targeted start-up assistance; more marketing for inward investment to build on the success of computer games companies; and the development of new workspace such as high specification business space for digital media companies. It also suggests the introduction of new cultural facilities, cafes, bars and restaurants, rehearsal space, and new city centre residential accommodation.

The current local plan (Dundee City Council, 2003) designates the Cultural Quarter and indicates that uses that further its role as a focus for 'cultural and related leisure and business activities' (Dundee City Council, 2003, p.15) will be encouraged. Specifically, it states that proposals to extent speciality retailing or other small independent uses will be encouraged, and proposals will be judged 'in terms of their contribution to the mix and diversity of uses and to their potential to enhance its visitor attraction' (Dundee City Council, 2003; p.15).

In terms of implementation mechanisms, the Dundee Partnership, an umbrella organisation representing all major stakeholders in the city and co-ordinated by the City Council, is in overall control of the cultural quarter's promotion and development. Partly because of the limited time that has elapsed since designation, direct outcomes of the Cultural Quarter by 2005 were small in scale, comprising environmental improvements, plans for further development, and some additional facility provision. Nevertheless, there remain major opportunities for cultural development, including the 'Burns and Harris' building, a redundant printing works acquired by the City Council and anticipated for mixed uses with a cultural element. Environmental improvements and public art have also been achieved in the cultural quarter, as in other parts of the city, and the Façade Enhancement Grants Scheme has proved extremely successful. In addition, a Digital Media Park is being developed adjacent to the Cultural Quarter, and there are indications that the choice of Dundee as a location by digital media firms is linked in part to the progress made in changing the city's image in connection with the establishment of the Cultural Quarter. While no new significant residential facilities have been established in the area since the designation of the Cultural Quarter, the 'City Quay' area of the waterfront is being developed as a major new residential location.

Wolverhampton's Cultural Quarter

Wolverhampton is a small city in the English Midlands, which has a designated cultural quarter within the 2003 Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan, the spatial plan for the city. The reason for designation was to maintain and expand the role and function of an area which had become established as a focus for leisure, cultural and artist-related activities, and to encourage more street activity. The rationale for the particular area chosen relates to its concentration of existing leisure and cultural uses, the presence of premises suitable for refurbishment, re-use or redevelopment, central location with easy access, and its historical and architectural importance.

The area was previously identified as a 'Leisure and Entertainments Area' in the 1993 Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (Wolverhampton City Council, 1993). The intention at this time was to broaden the uses in the city centre away from retail and office uses to include leisure and entertainment, thereby encouraging use mixing and diversity, and expanding the evening economy. A key factor in the development of the present Cultural

Quarter policy was the Wolverhampton Town Centre Audit (Donaldsons and URBED, 1994), which highlighted the potential for further provision of arts, culture and entertainment facilities in the town centre. It concluded that the potential benefits of greater investment in such uses was not being maximised because of several factors including: perceptions of low levels of safety; lack of a major tourist attraction; few high quality restaurant or bar uses; few opportunities for leisure shopping, and poor availability of evening public transport.

Following from the Audit's recommendations, and subsequent public consultations, the Wolverhampton Town Centre Action Plan (Wolverhampton City Council, 1996) proposed short term actions as follows: to improve accessibility in the Cultural Quarter; to improve the environment; create better public spaces; introduce more street activities; to promote the Cultural Quarter; to encourage late night shopping; and to create a new visitor attraction. The Cultural Quarter is intended as a continued focus for leisure, cultural and artistic activities, which are intended to be maintained and expanded. Specifically, Policy CC7 states that 'The Cultural Quarter … will continue to be the focus for leisure, cultural and artist activities in the City Centre. The role and function of the Quarter will be maintained and expanded. The creation of new jobs and businesses within the Artists' Quarter (see below) is seen a priority' (Wolverhampton City Council, 2003, p. 228).

In addition, an 'Artists' Quarter' was designated in 2002 in an updated Town Centre Action Plan, and it is indicated in the UDP. This Quarter falls within the established Cultural Quarter, and comprises a small area dominated by the narrow Princess Alley. The Artists' Quarter is intended to provide jobs, enable synergetic effects by encouraging speciality shopping, cultural and leisure facilities to be used as part of one visit, allow for an improved street environment, create more street activities, promote enhanced access to the arts, create new living accommodation (particularly for rent), provide an affordable living and working community for artists and craftspeople, and create a visitor attraction by physical refurbishment. Specific proposals for this area aim at conversion of vacant upper floors in Princess Alley to artists' workspace / studios, crafts workshops or arts / culture related uses; the encouragement of mixed uses; the development of activities at different times of day; upgrading of key pedestrian routes; and environmental enhancement of public spaces. The rationale for the area chosen was the proximity to existing facilities in the area such as the Art Gallery Backyard Project and the refurbished Grand Theatre. The trigger for the Artists' Quarter proposal was the presence of vacant premises above an Indian restaurant, for which grant aid was provided (via the Single Regeneration Budget) for the conversion of residential units into artists' studios with protected rents. A further building was subsequently refurbished and a wine bar attracted to the area. The key implementation mechanism for the Artists' Quarter was the provision of Single Regeneration Budget grant aid for refurbishment costs for arts-related uses, though such aid was discontinued in 2003.

Evidence and opinion in relation to outcomes achieved as a result of designation of the Cultural and Artists' Quarters is mixed. The achievements of the Artists' Quarter are small in scale, and it may be suggested that in the wider Cultural Quarter no major cultural icons or new 'flagship' facilities have been attracted, and entertainment-related uses are likely to have located here anyway. However, the overall attractiveness of the town centre, partly as a result of the culture-related uses that have been encouraged in recent years, and the shift way from purely leisure-oriented uses, would seem to have contributed to the new residential uses that have been established in areas adjacent to the town centre, as well as to new residential uses above retail premises in the Cultural Quarter itself. In addition, designation of the Cultural Quarter would seem to have enhanced bids for funding culminating for instance in a grant award for the Art Gallery extension.

Glasgow's Merchant City

The City of Glasgow City covers an area of 578,000 people within a broader city-region on the west coast of Scotland. It has a long-established cultural sector, and in 1990 it was selected as European City of Culture, followed by the Year of Visual Arts in 1996 and the designation of UK City of Art and Design in 1999. The creative industries have been identified as a key growth area for the city, and the City Council supports the visual arts sector in particular by means of direct provision as well as funding external organisations and individuals. There were 32,084 people in the city employed in the creative industries in 2001, approximately 8% of the total workforce (DTZ Pieda Consulting, 2003).

An early proposal for the creation of some form of (formal or informal) cultural quarter came in a Glasgow Development Agency Management Paper in 1996 entitled 'Regenerating the Merchant City: Glasgow's Cultural Quarter', which proposed that the Merchant City area should become the new cultural quarter for the city, in order to attract small and medium sized enterprises in the media and creative industries, and to act as a focal point for tourists and visitors (DTZ Pieda Consulting, 2003). In addition, a study by Urban Cultures (1994) recommended the development of the Merchant City area as a cultural quarter. This recommended a strategy for culturally-led urban renewal to the area, including actions to provide financial incentives, encourage mixed uses, promote high quality urban design, and initiate development projects.

Part One of the City Plan (Glasgow City Council, 2001) shows that the City Centre is anticipated as the main location for new strategic arts, culture, media and leisure infrastructure. While no one dominant 'culture quarter' is identified, Part Two of the City Plan describes six geographical clusters of arts, culture or media activities. While this clustering is seen as largely a result of chance, policy supports the retention of the facilities within them, and the encouragement of new uses that relate to them. Perhaps the most significant cultural node is the Merchant City area, where the Tron and Ramshorn Theatres are already established, and there are several small scale arts businesses.

In terms of implementation mechanisms, the Merchant City Townscape Heritage Initiative aims to regenerate the built environment, and grants are available for high quality repair, restoration and refurbishment of buildings and public realm. The THI comprises a partnership involving the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Glasgow City Council (GCC), and Scottish Enterprise Glasgow (SEG). Both GCC and SEG committed annual funding for the Initiative for 2000-2005, and the HLF committed to match this investment.

In addition, as part of the City Council's commitment to the Townscape Heritage Initiative, the City developed a five year action plan (Glasgow City Council, 2002a). This Plan acknowledges that the Merchant City area offers a range of opportunities for cultural industries, and it commits the Council, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, to implement business support mechanism and incentives to encourage new business start-ups, particularly in the design and media industries. Scottish Enterprise Glasgow have also sought specific means of enhancing the potential for additional employment in the cultural and creative industries in the Merchant City area for instance by developing managed incubator space for arts-based activity, since there is evidence of market failure in the area of property provision for creative and cultural industries.

Moreover, in 2002 Glasgow City Council adopted a Strategy for Housing the Visual Arts in Glasgow (Glasgow City Council, 2002b) by means of a joint approach between the Departments of Cultural and Leisure Services and Development and Regeneration Services. This strategy involves the development of two major council-owned buildings in the Merchant City. Together, these buildings are planned to house 11 visual arts organisations, and a range of open access production, studio, exhibition and educational facilities is proposed. The aims of the strategy are to provide high quality facilities for artists; to raise the profile of the visual arts; and to ensure greater access to the visual arts. The strategy has cross-

departmental support. In addition, the Strategy acknowledges the 'cluster effect of a successful arts quarter' (Glasgow City Counci1, 2002b; p. 1).

Manchester's 'Northern Quarter'

Manchester is a large city in northern England with an established cultural repertoire, and the Northern Quarter, an 'informal' cultural quarter, comprises an area of 56 acres immediately to the north of the city centre. Its origins are with the centre of the city's market activity, but the area began to decline partly as a result of the decline of the textiles industry generally, compounded by the relocation of the Smithfield Market. While this resulted in evident decline in the 1980s, in the late 1980s and early 1990s several new businesses moved into the area. Such businesses formed the Eastside Association in the early 1990s to lobby for improvements (Montgomery, 2003). Partly as a consequence the area is now characterised by a mix of creative businesses, older pubs and textile warehousing.

In the early 1990s the notion of the Northern Quarter emerged as a result of the success in the area of Affleck's Palace, a retail emporium, followed by the Dry Bar. In addition the Crafts Centre in the area had been established since the mid 1980s, though it had failed to flourish because of the poor location with respect to the other main attractors within the city (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000). There was also the basis for a residential community in the area since a popular public housing estate had been built in the area in 1979. In addition, the basis for the current emphasis on cultural consumption and production was originally provided by the presence of a number of live music venues in the area.

A significant factor in the area was the number of vacant or underused properties, though uch of the area was also a conservation area. A 'bottom-up' approach was seen as necessary in 1994, and the core part of the area was seen as comprising that area between Oldham Street and Stevenson Square. The character of the area was seen as deriving from the mix of uses, and a key advantage was seen as being the cheapness of the property compared with the nearby city centre. Hence an arts-related basis for regeneration was foreseen, and the City Council granted £300,000, deriving from the Urban Programme and later from European Regional Development Fund, for building cleaning, public lighting (in part to improve safety and security) and for public art. This was later supplemented by further funds (£25,000) from the City Council itself to lever investment in refurbishment. An artist in residence was also established. These initiatives levered a significant amount of private sector funding.

Partly as a result of the initial success of the funding mechanisms in changing the image of the area and attracting investment, the Northern Quarter Association (NQA) was established, a self-organised group comprising members drawn from the major stakeholders within the area (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000). Partly as a consequence the area began to be seen as a corporate priority in terms of regeneration. What was seen as critical from the start was the attraction of investment, rather than a particular and exclusive focus on the creative industries or cultural uses. It was felt that a baseline study with recommendations for further action was required. Consequently such a study was commissioned by the Eastside Association and the City Council, and the result was the Northern Quarter Regeneration Study (Urbanistics, 1994).

This study recommended the encouragement of a diversity of uses in the area, with the retention and expansion of cultural creation and consumption, together with the fashion wholesale industry. It made a series of recommendations for the successful regeneration of the area for mixed uses with a high component of cultural uses, and it identified the need for the development of indigenous industries. In terms of creative uses, the report suggested that these should be encouraged, building on the cultural base by means of cultural animation (stimulating liveliness, identity and vibrancy) and public art, as well as

development of the night time economy. In addition the report argued for improvement of the built stock (Urbanistics, 1994.)

The Northern Quarter has no formal designated status within a statutory spatial plan. However the corporate aim is to retain and enhance the diversity in the area by supporting creative uses, as well as other compatible uses such as residential (with affordable housing particularly encouraged) and entertainment-based uses. It is also intended improve the 'evening economy' of the area. Perhaps the most important objective however is to bring vacant floorspace – which is very prevalent in the area – back into productive use. By such means it is intended to foster a cluster of creativity and innovation as part of a wider mix of uses that contribute significantly to the wider city economy. The area is thus intended to combine processes of cultural consumption and production as well as incorporating a significant degree of physical gentrification, development of information networks, specialist business support and training, and sensitive residential development.

In terms of implementation mechanisms, a variety of grant aid mechanisms have been used to leverage private sector investment within the area, including Conservation Area Partnership Grant, Urban Programme funding, and the European Regional Development Fund. In addition these have been combined with direct spending on infrastructure (for instance public lighting enhancement, and signage) by the City Council.

In relation to outcomes, there is evidence of rent increases in the area arising from the gentrification process, with artists moving out of the area to cheaper properties in nearby Ancoats, but this would seem to be in part a result of the broader buoyancy of the residential market in the city. As in the case of other similar areas there is a potential conflict between many consumption-oriented uses such as live music and associated '24 hour' uses, and the need to protect the amenity of the current residential community. However, the area has now become a focus of creative industries including in particular those related to music recording, and associated back-up services. Nevertheless, it may be argued that many of the outcomes may have been achieved without the branding and funding associated with the Northern Quarter, since the bohemian culture associated with the area had been prevalent since the 1980s, and the clustering of creative uses may be seen to be at least in part a natural result of market demands and the presence of cheap rents and property within the area.

Analysis

It is premature to compare the effects of policy for cultural clustering in the cities identified, not least because of differences in time elapsed since designation / identification. However it is possible to compare the approaches to cultural clustering in these cities, and to attempt to identify reasons for such differences. For instance, Glasgow and Manchester have adopted an 'informal' approach which does not rely upon the formal designation within a statutory spatial plan of one area as a 'cultural quarter' for the benefit of the city as a whole. Instead, Glasgow indicates in its formal spatial plan several non-site-specific cultural clusters, with policy oriented merely to encourage further clustering, and Manchester does not indicate specific cultural clusters in spatial planning terms, but applies a broader cultural strategy for the city as a whole. Dundee and Wolverhampton, by contrast, both have adopted city plans that set out a designated 'cultural quarter' for the city as a whole, to act as a focus for further cultural concentration for the benefit of the wider city. Moreover, the approach of the cities in terms of orientation towards a production or consumption orientation is also very different. Essentially, in Dundee and Wolverhampton there is an emphasis on a consumption orientation, albeit with associated production-based elements, while in Glasgow and, to a limited extent, Manchester, there is more of an emphasis on cultural production.

There would seem to be several potential reasons for such differences in approach. It is helpful to separate the differences in terms of nature of designation (formal – in a statutory spatial plan, or informal – in a non-statutory policy document), and nature of orientation (consumption-oriented or production-oriented). In terms of nature of designation, the issue of scale is clearly relevant. As major UK cities, both Glasgow and Manchester have a plethora of cultural consumption attractions, and in both cases this has been strengthened by the city's successes in attracting international attention within the cultural arena. In addition, in both cities cultural attractions and uses are not concentrated in one part of the city but occur (with different emphases) in several areas. There is therefore in Glasgow and Manchester a rich and complex pattern of cultural uses, and this complexity of the pattern of cultural assets could be seen to render any attempt to prioritise any one area at best ineffectual and at worst harmful to the overall pattern. Hence designation of one such area as the city's primary 'cultural quarter' could be assumed to lead to other areas becoming devalued and losing out in terms of future visitor attention and investment.

By contrast, in Dundee and Wolverhampton – both relatively small cities – the relatively small number of cultural attractions, and their concentration in one area of the city, made the identification of a unified cultural cluster much less problematic. Moreover, in Dundee the 'hub and spokes' model that was applied allowed the encouragement of links to other cultural attractions in the city.

In terms of the consumption versus production orientation, the area chosen in Glasgow as an 'informal' cultural cluster had a clear production emphasis – particularly in terms of the visual arts. The decision to concentrate on this aspect would seem to flow directly from the context, in terms of developing an existing strength. Again, the plethora of consumption-related cultural attractions elsewhere in the city would seem to have contributed in the decision not to encourage such uses in the Merchant City area. Similarly, in Manchester, the pre-existing capacity in terms of cultural industries would seem to have provided the basis for much subsequent activity in the area, though the policy orientation was for a mixed production and consumption-based approach. In Dundee and Wolverhampton, the lack of clear productive capacity in the creative industries (other than the digital media sector in Dundee and the ceramics industry in Wolverhampton) and the need to encourage visitors to the city, meant that a broadly-based strategy seemed appropriate.

Overall therefore the approach to cultural clustering within the cities considered would seem to arise in part from the specific circumstances within each context – particularly in terms of scale and pre-existing cultural capacity. However, these cases also indicate that there remain unresolved issues in terms of assumptions in relation to cultural clustering and the application of policy to encourage the development of cultural quarters. First, the merits or otherwise of application of formal spatial planning policy in relation to cultural clustering remain unclear. This is because the decision of the cities considered in terms of policy application – essentially whether or not to designate a 'cultural quarter' within a statutory spatial plan – would seem to have been influenced not only by context, particularly the extent of pre-existing richness and diversity of cultural uses, but also by different interpretations of the merits or otherwise *in principle* of such designation. In other words, each city holds a different set of conceptual models in relation to cultural clustering, which would seem to have played at least as important a part in the decision regarding designation as the nature of the city's context and aspirations. Moreover, there is contention over such models even within the cases. Hence for instance in Glasgow, where formal designation was not applied, it was nevertheless recognised that such designation could assist in cases of conflict between competing uses. Similarly, for instance in Dundee, while the Cultural Quarter is designated formally in the Local Plan, serious concerns were expressed prior to designation by those cultural attractions outside the Quarter.

Second, the defining characteristics of cultural quarters remain contested. In particular, the issue of the necessity of 'cross-over' between consumption and production is still unclear. While the assumption within the Glasgow case for instance is that a version of a cultural quarter can function effectively within a production-based approach, others would contest that the synergies brought about by the inclusion of consumption uses are essential (Wansborough and Mageean, 2000).

Hence there remains substantial confusion over the nature and potential of cultural clustering, and the appropriate policy mechanisms to accompany such approaches, in particular the use of 'cultural quarters', within the UK. This issue is heightened in importance by the ubiquity of both formally- and informally-designated cultural quarters within virtually all towns and cities, and the developing practice of initiating such areas where there is little or no basis in terms of indigenous capacity.

Given such contestations over basic principles of cultural use clustering, it may be proposed that one way forward would be for the generation of a more sophisticated typology of cultural quarters than exists at present. This could provide a basis for decisions concerning the applicability of approaches to particular contexts. For instance, it would seem that a basic division exists between areas within town or city centres with a clear pre-existing concentration of cultural uses, and areas on city fringes where land and property values are lower. In the former case, such areas may normally be more appropriate for broadly-based cultural quarters, while in the latter case, such areas would seem more appropriate for production-based orientations. An added complication is of course that such areas may change substantially as a result of (or in spite of) policy application, with a potential likely evolution from edge-of-centre production-based areas to more broadly-based areas, with the growth of new visitor attractions, entertainment nodes and perhaps a new residential population. The use of such a typology could provide a means of escaping from the reductive notion of generic 'cultural quarters'.

Conclusions

While it is clear that a culture-led approach regeneration – and the use of cultural quarters in particular – can deliver a range of outcomes for both designated areas and wider cities, it is equally clear that the underlying concepts are imperfectly understood. This may be illustrated by the cases of Dundee, Wolverhampton, Glasgow and Manchester, within which differences in approach seem only in part to be grounded in differences of context and aspiration, with clear differences in basic conceptual assumptions of the necessary conditions for, and good practice in, the application of 'cultural quarters'. This confusion presents an obstacle to the effective delivery of outcomes, and increases the risk of either limited additionality or indeed counter-productive effects. There is thus a clear need for a more coherent body of knowledge in relation to cultural use clustering. New concepts of cultural clustering – perhaps involving more sophisticated typologies of approaches – are therefore required to escape the reductive nature of contemporary theory and practice with respect to 'cultural quarters'.

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