

Chapter 2

Go Where? Creative Industries After the Global Financial Crisis

Abstract Cities have signified excitement, movement, chaos, political intrigue and opportunity since—at least—the industrial revolution. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed theories for political change while watching the twisting Manchester landscape, bending and buckling under the speed of economic and social change caused by the textile industry. Yet in the century that followed, urbanity started to be marketed, gentrified and celebrated, displacing the industrial tailings and poor health of the workforce. Since the first set of creative industries policies were instigated by the Tony Blair government in 1997, economic development and city development have been tethered. Researchers such as Richard Florida, Charles Landry and Charles Leadbeater have aligned progress with urbanity. Certainly, there is positive correlation between urbanization and per capita income. Efficiencies in agriculture frees a population to move into cities. Through the history of the creative industries, the challenges and specificities of small, third-tier cities have been under-discussed. Indeed, a series of proxies—such as the presence of a gay community or ‘bohemians’—have been the building blocks for researchers of a creative city. This has meant that assumptions have dominated the creative industries literature. The most damaging and seductive is the theory of cultural modelling. Researchers suggest that the practices that operate well in San Francisco in the United States or Manchester in England will have a relevance and resonance in Wagga Wagga or Invercargill. Indeed, even the relevance of Manchester’s regeneration to Bolton, Blackburn or Morecambe is questionable.

Keywords Creative industries • Global financial crisis • Regeneration • Sustainability • Metrocentricity • New economy • Richard Florida

Cities have signified excitement, movement, chaos, political intrigue and opportunity since—at least—the industrial revolution. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed theories for political change while watching the twisting Manchester landscape, bending and buckling under the speed of economic and social change caused by the textile industry. Yet in the century that followed, urbanity started to be marketed, gentrified and celebrated, displacing the industrial tailings and poor health of the workforce. Since the first set of creative industries policies were

instigated by the Tony Blair government in 1997, economic development and city development have been tethered. Researchers such as Florida (2010), Landry and Bianchini (1995) and Leadbeater (2000) have aligned progress with urbanity. Certainly, there is positive correlation between urbanization and per capita income (Henderson 2010). Efficiencies in agriculture frees a population to move into cities (Michaels et al. 2012). Through the history of the creative industries, the challenges and specificities of small, third-tier cities have been under-discussed. Indeed, a series of proxies—such as the presence of a gay community or ‘bohemians’ (Florida 2002a)—have been the building blocks for researchers of a creative city. This has meant that assumptions have dominated the creative industries literature. The most damaging and seductive is the theory of cultural modelling. Researchers suggest that the practices that operate well in San Francisco in the United States or Manchester in England will have a relevance and resonance in Wagga Wagga or Invercargill. Indeed, even the relevance of Manchester’s regeneration to Bolton, Blackburn or Morecambe is questionable. Such assumptions create sloppy thinking. Regeneration must not become a bland word or one that defaults to an automatically positive connotation. The examples from the United Kingdom in the late 1990s and 2000s showed that urban regeneration emerged in the context of neoliberalism, when public services and funding were reduced.¹ Regeneration meant—simply—a boost in building construction. Yet the personal and public resolve and planning required to regenerate the lives of residents—through thinking about work, leisure, education and family life—were not conducted. Phil Jones and James Evans presented this process ruthlessly—but with productive bite (Fig. 2.1).

The question that emerges from such a diagram and argument is what happens next? After ‘urban regeneration,’ how is development sustained, particularly if this ‘development’ only ‘improved’ the central business district? Buildings and the ‘investments’ that follows are a mask for deindustrialization, depopulation, environmental damage and decrepit infrastructure.²

Perhaps the most important emerging concepts in understanding urbanity are sustainability and resilience.³ Global cities continue to do well, attracting the money, businesses and well educated population. But this creates deep inequalities and imbalances of wealth.⁴ Third tier cities are left with the poor, the less educated,

¹ Jones and Evans (2008, p. 9).

² An outstanding article that investigates the relationship between climate change, environmental damage and ageing infrastructure is in Satterthwaite (2013).

³ Satterthwaite particularly probes the concept of resilience and the capacity to manage the shocks of climate change, *ibid.*, p. 381. A powerful book using the concept has also emerged. Refer to Newman et al. (2009).

⁴ Jones and Evans (*op. cit.*, p. 54).

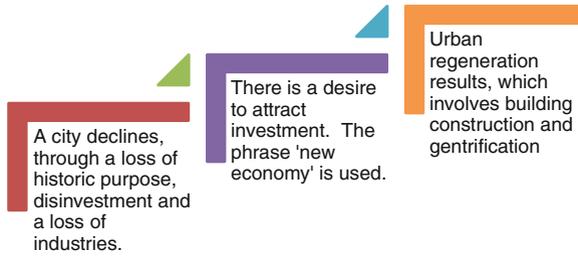


Fig. 2.1 Diagram constructed by Tara Brabazon, based on Jones and Evans (2008)

the less mobile and the less skilled.⁵ They are places of residuals, waste and deficits. Therefore, the assumption that a neo-liberal model of urban regeneration (constructing buildings) is generalizable to struggling small cities is flawed at best, and delusional at worst. This is not only a mode of metrocentricity, it is also global-metrocentricity. As Howell realized, “large populations bring their own amenities and agglomeration effects ... making consolidated cities more attractive.”⁶ While strategies like creative industries mapping and the building of creative clusters are valuable, the generalizability of these strategies should now be deeply questioned, particularly considering the imbalance of research away from third tier cities. As with many goods and services, both consolidation and fragmentation have value. Large, mature and consolidated cities have their advantages. They can also embody an “urban sprawl,”⁷ alienation and invisibility. There are benefits in and with the specialist, distinctive and different. But the key is to ensure that the hard work—intellectually and institutionally—is conducted and buzz words and phrases like regeneration and the new economy are unpacked, discussed and defined.

Albert Arthurs asked a key question: “how provable is the new economy?”⁸ With the array of proxies in place, only casual connections can be configured. No causal alignments between policies and economic change can be constructed. Policy makers, urban planners and scholars cannot treat an economy or a landscape like a one armed bandit in a casino. A lever is pulled. The view changes. Occasionally there is a win. Cities and economies are too complex to be able to isolate a few variables, make changes that will not have unforeseen consequences, and enable positive developments. Moving beyond building construction and gentrification, urban regeneration at its best uses infrastructure as leverage to attract businesses and community organizations. Therefore investment, planning, design and transportation align. At its (rare) best, there is a movement away from a carbon-based economy, by creating a walkable, sustainable city.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶ Howell (2013).

⁷ Nechyba and Walsh (2004).

⁸ Arthurs (2002).

Besides the mask of ‘regeneration’ in theories of the new economy and creative industries, there is also the trope of creativity. What is the function and meaning of ‘creativity’ in the creative industries? Like ‘cultural value,’ it is an ambiguous term. Plato viewed creativity as a divine act.⁹ Aristotle saw it as artisanal, bringing an object into being.¹⁰ Richard Florida described a “geography of creativity.”¹¹ It has a place. Yet the question remains, what is the link—and indeed is there a connection—between creativity and economic development? The critiques of Florida’s work suggests that there is not. The relationship, indeed the assumption, is that ‘creative people’ also hold high level skills. Such phrases and words are impossible to measure. Therefore, for Florida, gay men and women and bohemians were proxies for creativity.¹² This theoretical slippage revealed some benefits. Creative industries could be defined in a way that avoided debate about high and popular culture.¹³ The problem is that—since Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*¹⁴—high culture was deemed to be good and beneficial, yet did not make any money. Popular culture was trash that incubated in the gutter of gritty capitalism. Formal education, including universities, reinforced rather than critiqued these divisions.¹⁵ Perhaps the greatest long-term gift the creative industries literature gave the humanities and social sciences is to slice through this elitist division¹⁶ to find strategies that linked culture with economic growth.¹⁷ Also this shared culture can create the foundations for community, building relationships through collaborative experiences. Richard Caves early definition captures this transformation from entertainment ‘value’ to economic ‘value.’

‘Creative’ industries supply goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic or simple entertainment value. They include book and magazine publishing, the visual arts (painting and sculpture), the performing arts (theatre, opera, concerts, dance), sound recordings, cinema and TV films, even fashion and toys and games.¹⁸

⁹ Kraut (2006).

¹⁰ M. Michalko, “What I learned about creative thinking from Aristotle,” *Creative Thinking*, <http://creativethinking.net/articles/2013/02/11/what-i-learned-about-creative-thinking-from-aristotle/>.

¹¹ Florida (2002b).

¹² Florida and Mellander (2009).

¹³ *ibid.*

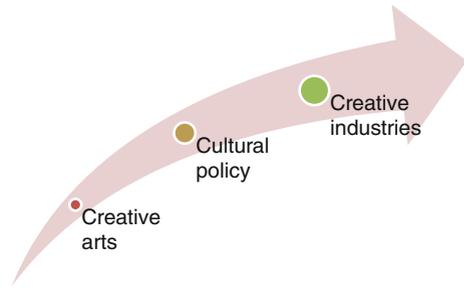
¹⁴ Arnold (1869).

¹⁵ Carey (1992).

¹⁶ While recognizing the importance of the creative industries in revising assumptions about class and culture, such a challenge was based on the foundation of poststructural and postmodern theory. The role of the interdisciplinary disciplines of Media Studies and Cultural Studies in flattening these hierarchies must not be under-represented.

¹⁷ Also—and importantly for the future of creative industries—the division between the arts and sciences was also critiqued. Both art and science are governed by IP law. Further creative industries strategies can—and should—be applied beyond media and the arts, and into agriculture and manufacturing.

¹⁸ Caves (2000).

Fig. 2.2 The policy arc

The focus was on the ‘products’—rather than the culture—that activated intellectual property law, patents, copyrights and trademarks. Such a shift offers a reminder that the biggest British export industry in 1998 was the Spice Girls and the Beatles received their MBEs not for the contribution to music, but for their contribution to export.

Much has happened to culture, media and arts policy since the late 1990s. There has been a movement from creative arts, giving individuals a grant with no imperative for economic return, through to cultural policy, where block grants were given to national organizations such as museums, community arts organizations and galleries, through to creative industries (Fig. 2.2).

Creative industries strategies focus on the development of seed funding and entrepreneurship. Cultural value was not the focus. The capacity to generate economic development and profit was the goal. While all three models are concurrently applied by layers of government and co-exist, the latter policy has the most importance for third tier cities. While ‘art for art’s sake’ may be possible in larger cities, there are greater requirements and necessities for policy makers in smaller cities. Ignoring the importance of economic dividends and outcomes for the sake of ‘art’ is not an option.

The maturity of a council can be ascertained through how they structure the relationship between economic development and culture, creativity, the arts and media. Since Tony Blair reconfigured the British Department of Heritage into the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the late 1990s, retrograde separations of culture and economics into different portfolios or policies would block more complex, innovative and entrepreneurial understandings of development and sustainability. Chris Smith, the Minister who oversaw this change in structure and policy, stated that

[t]he role of creative enterprise and the cultural contribution to the modern world is a key economic issue ... These creative areas are surely where many of the jobs and much of the wealth of the next century are going to come from.¹⁹

This policy trajectory formulated an interest in content creation and creative assets that can be developed and then marketed. This imperative was to aggregate

¹⁹ Smith (1998).

the cultural sector, including GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums), with advertising, film, radio, television, popular music, fashion and design. It was fortuitous to make such decisions in the late 1990s and early 2000s as the read-write web and user generated content started to emerge. An example of a dated administrative structure that did not recognize the changing relationship between producers and consumers is Bathurst Regional Council. Even in the 2010s, they maintain four departments that structure their activities.

Corporate Services and Finance
 Engineering Services
 Environmental, Planning and Building Services
 Cultural and Community Services.²⁰

Culture and community arts are described as a ‘service.’ City planning and ‘building’ is structurally separated from culture. Conservative and elitist conceptualizations of ‘culture’ permeate these structures.²¹ This Council remains locked in older models of economics and culture, derived from the creative arts and cultural policy. The economic potential of popular music, design and sport is unmentioned and unrepresented. On the website, the council does not offer entrepreneurial initiatives or opportunities, using popular culture, to create economic development. Without this support, few opportunities emerge and innovation can be blocked. For example, Nick Dunn, an academic and digital arts entrepreneur, recognized the value of these small cities to cultural development, but also the personal costs of such environments.

Advantage—small clusters of self regulating and isolated cultures. Disadvantage—Localised reputation of citizens and small minded mentality. Very hard to reinvent yourself in a 3rd tier city if you have lived there your whole life.²²

For cultural development, small cities can be a fine incubator. But the insularity and lack of idea migration and collaboration can be damaging. The restricted cross-sectorial cultural development in Bathurst is a testament to the structural separation of art and commerce. The question is: where does the potential for change and innovation emerge from such structures? How can musicians, designers, software developers, or men and women creating innovative processes in agriculture and manufacturing find support, connection and assistance through such departments that structurally separate economics and culture?

The alternative way of conducting council business is revealed in Bathurst’s near neighbour, Dubbo. Dubbo City Council has configured itself as a growing city with

²⁰ Bathurst Regional Council, Council Departments, <http://www.bathurst.nsw.gov.au/council/departments>.

²¹ I am a member of the Heritage Committee in the Bathurst Regional Council. The members enact productive work protecting buildings and—increasingly—attributes of the natural environment. Yet popular culture remains far beyond their brief. Galleries, libraries, museums and ‘historic buildings’ are the focus.

²² N. Dunn, Facebook post, January 18, 2014.

a large catchment area of influence.²³ ‘Recreation and culture’ is a focus, rather than ‘the arts.’ Because of this changing trajectory and nomenclature, they were able to attract a national live event: JJJ’s One Night Stand. Held in April 2013, the Council not only welcomed this opportunity and windfall, but also created value-added potential for local businesses.²⁴ Popular music developed tourism and shopping. Dubbo offers a solid model for creative industries and city imaging. Cultural policy is always economic policy. The changes in economics—through globalization, digitization, hyper consumption and increasing interests in intellectual property rights and copyright—are radical reconfigurations in cultural life.²⁵ Dubbo certainly has challenges. As one interviewee for my project stated,

Dubbo is just that bit too far west—hard to shake off the Hicksville label. Council haven’t helped by splitting the CBD in two with an out of town mall, and ignoring the potential of the riverbank for development (CF Wagga) and taking 30 years to build a theatre—which should have taken advantage of the river not just an adjunct to Council buildings. On the other hand, it’s a good place to bring up kids, people are friendly but after 22 years it might be time to move on.²⁶

So while Dubbo has been able to capture events, there are some structural limitations such as a slowness to build creative institutions like theatres. Also, as shown throughout the testimony of men and women in this book, there are limitations in selling a city to and for families. A greater diversity of interest and motivation is required to both sustain and grow a small city. Families are diverse. They transform, and parents (and people more generally) will leave if there are not opportunities for social and cultural growth. Alternative modes of social organization include single and divorced men and women, gay partnerships, and trans-generational family units of ageing parents and adult children. The focus on a particular model of ‘families’ where two parents raise children is not generalizable. It is promotable. It is simple, clean and crisp branding, requiring little innovation or imagination. A recent study—reported widely in the Australian press—listed the most ‘family friendly’ cities. Perhaps not surprisingly, third tier cities were over-represented in this list.²⁷ In conservative times, it is easy to perpetuate the narrative of small cities as insular (inward), safe (dull) and dependable (lacking imagination and dynamism). These are “place based social norms”²⁸ that can have a debilitating effect on the men and women that do not fit within the narrow definitions of love, sex, intimacy and families. These everyday geographies do matter. Innovative councils should recognize this complex palette of interpersonal relationships, rather

²³ Dubbo City Council, <http://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au>.

²⁴ Special Opportunities for Dubbo businesses, March 27, 2013, *Dubbo City Council*, <http://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/BlogRetrieve.aspx?PostID=315452&A=SearchResult&SearchID=5898359&ObjectID=315452&ObjectType=55>.

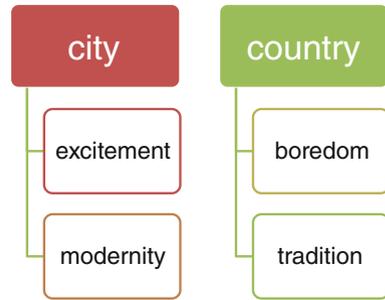
²⁵ Tepper (2002).

²⁶ Anonymous, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

²⁷ Elsworth (2014).

²⁸ Myrdahl (2013).

Fig. 2.3 Binary oppositions of urbanity and rurality



than building administrative barriers that block the formulation of linkages and alignments that dynamically transform through the life cycle.

Much of this creative industries literature defaults to urban environments. It is also a particular mode of urbanity, involving coffee shops, music, mobility and digitization. This reinforces a series of binary oppositions that demean rurality (Fig. 2.3).

Jo-Anne Reid et al. describe such binary oppositions and the resultant ideologies as “the rural problem.”²⁹ The consequences of this “problem” is that rurality and regionality become spaces of deficit, lack and absence. In the case of eastern Australia, the movement from the Pacific Ocean over the Blue Mountains is a trigger for isolation, fear, loneliness, a lack of services and disconnection. Rurality is an ideology, and adds a complexity to the understanding of rural and regional cities. As explored by Donehower, Hogg and Schell:

We define ‘rural’ as a quantitative measure, involving statistics on population and region as described by the U.S. Census; as a geographic term denoting particular regions and areas or spaces and places; and as a cultural term, one that involves the interaction of people in groups and communities.³⁰

Therefore, demography, geography and culture align to frame, define, label and configure. But such a definition provides the mechanism to understand the plurality of rural environments, but also how to reshape the meanings of this space to render it complex, intricate, enabling and productively different. City imaging strategies and policies can assist this development, by exploring the urban hubs and clusters in rural and regional landscapes.

City imaging is a phrase with resonance in urban planning, marketing, tourism and creative industries.³¹ It builds on these positive associations with the city. It connotes a combination of place and iconography, with the goal of spatializing

²⁹ Reid et al. (2010).

³⁰ Donehower et al. (2007).

³¹ The relationship between cities and the creative industries has been a constant through the literature. To explore this relationship at its most overt, refer to Florida (2005).

economic development through metaphors and policies.³² While phrases like the Creative City, cultural quarter and cultural cluster³³ have been deployed by Charles Landry and others,³⁴ such initiatives—at their most basic—probe, explore and develop advertising campaigns for cities and regions, rebranding troubled, static or declining locations and facilitating entrepreneurial initiatives to reinvigorate buildings, shopping complexes and event management.³⁵ The assumption derived from Tony Blair’s shaping of this discourse is that creative industries will—intrinsically and inevitably—regenerate declining areas through innovative reconfigurations of ‘quality’ culture, access to art, and entrepreneurialism.³⁶ The result is a heady mix of economic, social and cultural development.

City imaging is based on building and marketing the assumptions and expectations of a place, amalgamating the colours, sounds, smells, textures and history that arise when a particular urban environment is mentioned. It is a policy and process for change management. Yet the ideologies are often based on ambiguous and vague emotions, sensations and feelings. The mental image of Detroit is different from Singapore. Tokyo is distinct from Glasgow. Some senses are more strongly involved in the imagining of a city than others. The application of these senses summons or denies the visual, sonic, olfactory, tactile and taste-based representations of a place. The outcomes are dynamic, unstable and unpredictable. The task for policy makers, urban planners and the tourism industry is to use this image (if it is positive and beneficial) or transform it (if negative), to market the city as a tourist destination for music, sport,³⁷ beaches, books³⁸ or relaxation.

City imaging is really city competition, a branding of a place to attract the best workers, finance capital and businesses.³⁹ But the problem is that not every city can be ‘world leading’ or ‘the best.’ Cities create competing allegiances, identities and ways of dividing and sharing space. If one location can attract the talented and innovative people and innovative businesses, then it will have an impact on the city of origin that loses population and revenue-generating opportunities. Every nation is crafted through threads of relationships between households, streets, neighbourhoods, towns, cities, regions, states and provinces. Any understanding of a national culture has to work its way through intertextual networks, balancing not

³² O’Connor and Wynne (1996).

³³ Cornford and Charles (2001).

³⁴ Landry and Bianchini (1995).

³⁵ O’Connor and Wynne, *op. cit.*

³⁶ Kunzmann (1995).

³⁷ Misener and Mason (2006).

³⁸ Brabazon (2011).

³⁹ A fine study of this competitiveness is in Saxenian (1994). This book explores the competition between Silicon Valley, in Northern California, and Route 128 in Boston. Both were leaders in electronics in the 1970s. Yet the stories diverge. After Silicon Valley loss much of its chip market to the semiconductor memory manufacturing in Japan, Route 128 suffered from the loss of business to workstations and personal computers. But the question is how this technological decline was managed. Silicon Valley—literally rebooted. Route 128 did not.

only national culture with international culture, but also national with local, and national with regional.⁴⁰ These are not only analogue relationships. The mobility of digital information only widens and deepens this spatial dialogue. Jim Shorthose and Gerard Strange confirmed that,

at its most general level, this new economy can be identified as being increasingly global; increasingly about intangibles such as knowledge, information, images and fantasies; and increasingly decentralized, and characterized by networks and flexibility.⁴¹

Shorthose and Strange recognized that national imaginings are being challenged, bent and transformed through the engines of the ‘knowledge economy’,⁴² which is built on the mobility of people, ideas, information and capital. Their engagement with the ‘intangibles’ of a city is important. Consider New York. Woody Allen films and the television programme *Sex in the City* manipulated the cityscape like a character. Billy Joel’s “New York State of Mind” and Alicia Keys’ “Empire State of Mind” capture both a gritty reality and expansive aspirations of these global cities. It is a ‘state of mind.’ Compare these complex vistas to Ron Sexsmith’s “Lebanon, Tennessee,” which is described in the lyric as “as good a place as any.”⁴³ Spark, dynamism and opportunity drain from such words.

In a post-fordist and neo-liberal environment, it is important to recognize that development is metaphorically—and perhaps best—represented with great effectiveness by ageing, irregular and rusted sheets of corrugated iron, rather than the shiny surfaces of glass and chrome. Economic and social development is irregular, sharply unjust and often unpredictable. The creative industries literature produced in the early 2000s attempted to configure the global economy as manageable, logical and predictable, able to be shaped, augmented and corrected by a few knowing brand managers and economists manipulating a few levers. However capitalism—particularly finance capitalism⁴⁴—is chaotic and unpredictable.⁴⁵ Capitalism is really capitalisms.⁴⁶ Modernity is modernities.⁴⁷ While global and second tier cities frequently have a more complex economy that can manage dips and declines in agriculture, manufacturing or the service sector, third tier cities are often built on one industry (wine in the case of the Napa Valley, cars in Oshawa in

⁴⁰ Walby (2003).

⁴¹ Shorthose and Strange (2004).

⁴² I have intentionally used inverted commas around ‘knowledge economy’ for its first appearance in this book. It is now a compound noun with a reasonably agreed definition. However I wished to emphasise that it is a shift in both policy and thinking about how money is made in a post-fordist, globalized economy. To track one trajectory of this debate, refer to Leadbeater (1999).

⁴³ R. Sexsmith, Ron Sexsmith, (Interscope, 1995).

⁴⁴ Lapavitsas (2013).

⁴⁵ A strong theorization of globalization from the early 2000s is Urry (2003). Of particular significance in Urry’s work is the attention to disorder, paradox and surprise in trans-local flows of people, capital and ideas.

⁴⁶ De Soto (2000).

⁴⁷ An example of this plurality is in Hatherley (2008).

Fig. 2.4 A model of city time, derived from a phrase by Duranton (2007)

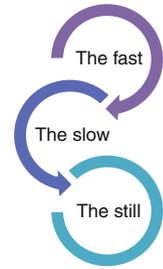
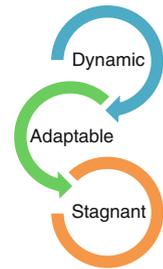


Fig. 2.5 How cities and their citizens manage change



Canada or steel production in Newcastle, Australia), and when that one industry faces difficulties, the social and economic consequences can be catastrophic.

When small cities face such challenges, the layered model of cities—global, second and third—overlay with theories of time. Urban development has also been categorized as fast, slow and still⁴⁸ (Fig. 2.4).

Global cities are associated with speed of movement and change. There is dynamism in managing a changeable context. Second tier cities are more embedded in their histories but can mobilize opportunities if and when they are presented. The Beatles emerged from Liverpool. Beatles tourism grew from the 1980s. *The Lord of the Rings* film series was managed from Miramar near Wellington in New Zealand. From this opportunity, a productive business in special effects and tourism has emerged. The slow third tier cities often rely on agricultural rather than industrial time—using seasons—rather than the vagaries of a stock market opening and closing (Fig. 2.5). Therefore, spaces and times, geographies and histories, the land and the clock, create a momentum for change, or a blockage to innovation.

While post-fordism has many definitions and application,⁴⁹ it captures and frames a suite of important words and phrases, like unemployment and underemployment, pollution, hyper-consumerism, and a knowledge-based economy. It is a movement beyond mass production.⁵⁰ Consumption becomes integral to the

⁴⁸ Duranton (2007).

⁴⁹ Bowring (2002).

⁵⁰ Kennedy and Florida (1993).

formation of identity. Instead of work and leisure, new words like ‘lifestyle’ infuse ‘free time’ with shopping.⁵¹ Some cities manage the corrugated iron development of post-fordism. Some do well. Others do not. Some have a magnetic pull to innovate and transform, while others lose attraction. The question is whether such movements are inevitable, or predictable. Edward Glaeser realized that,

many cities around the world have experienced some version of Detroit’s fate, and politicians have implemented many approaches to urban decline. U.S. cities have mainly tried to build their way out of decline. Spain has turned to transportation, spending tens of billions of dollars on high-speed rail, partly as a way to boost economic growth in poorer areas. Other places, like Italy, have used large tax subsidies to encourage enterprise in poorer regions.⁵²

Once more, building and transformative infrastructure are stressed. The question is whether such transformations can be planned, organized and managed. Glaeser locates particular characteristics of cities that work well. The city must attract and sustain “smart people” who “work collaboratively.”⁵³ It must be administered well.⁵⁴ It must have a plan for environmental sustainability and be walkable.⁵⁵ There is a strong link between (a lack of) transportation options and poverty,⁵⁶ with incredible effects on education, housing and available employment. Therefore in declining third tier cities, men and women are trapped. It is difficult to find work or attend university. It is also challenging to support good health,⁵⁷ leisure and fitness,⁵⁸ because of a lack of availability of quality food and supportive sporting infrastructure.⁵⁹ Indeed Maurice Patterson has created a strong short book, titled *Inner-City Diet*, that shows the cost of social and economic injustice on the health and fitness of residents.⁶⁰ Therefore, the poorest people who most needed assistance had little chance of receiving it because of a lack of a supportive and enabling built environment.⁶¹

Education remains important, particularly in neglected areas and regions. It is a personal and collective agent of change in cities. Gary McDonogh and Marina Peterson realized that the word downtown “evokes intensities at the core of urban life, space and capital.”⁶² The description of ‘intensities’ is fundamentally

⁵¹ An evocative article critiquing the unproblematic and clichéd use of lifestyle is in Maycroft (2004).

⁵² Glaeser (2011).

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 223.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 267–268.

⁵⁶ Sanchez (2008).

⁵⁷ The specific health concerns in urban environments were discussed by Marber (2000).

⁵⁸ A ‘how to guide’ to exercise in cities is Noiman (2009).

⁵⁹ A creative and innovative discussion of the relationship between ‘fat’ bodies and cities is from Marvin and Medd (2004).

⁶⁰ Patterson (2009).

⁶¹ Handy (2002).

⁶² Peterson and McDonogh (2012).

appropriate, capturing the hostility, fear and decline of downtown regions alongside the potential for development, in the many manifestations of that word. McDonogh and Peterson capture the abandonment of the city, policies for rejuvenation and the mixed use of urban environments during the day and night. For example, there are an increasing number of university ‘downtown campuses,’ using the land and buildings to enable expansion of higher education. From his Canadian experience, Leo Groarke, former Dean of Wilfrid Laurier University’s campus in downtown Brantford Ontario, wrote *Reinventing Brantford: A university comes downtown*.⁶³ He noted challenges in enrolment and the complex relationships formed in multi-campus institutions. Similarly, the University of Windsor, at the edge of the Canadian and US border, is relocating Social Work, Visual Arts and Music to its downtown. Brock University is constructing a cultural arts centre in St Catharines. Grant MacEwan University in Alberta is rebranding itself as “Edmonton’s downtown university”. Claudio D’Andrea confirmed the reason for this expansion.

Many see these campuses as solutions to the problems of decaying downtowns in smaller Canadian cities. Universities, in turn, are reaping community goodwill—as well as badly needed expansion space.⁶⁴

Higher education gives small cities a new industry and the opportunity for residents in these declining regions to gain a degree. Businesses source new student consumers. However history matters. It pulls and drags. As John Quelch and Katherine Jocz realized, “place determines how consumers interact with a product or brand.”⁶⁵ While students are not consumers and universities are not a product, the corporatization of higher education mobilizes wider brand management strategies.

There is a provocative and important relational maxim to consider: the smaller the city, the more important the university. While second tier cities have multiple institutions and global cities feature a matrix of further and higher education options, the small cities often feature only one university, or the outlier campus of a larger university. For example, Murdoch University in Western Australia, has a central campus in the suburb of Murdoch in Perth, but two smaller campuses in Rockingham and Mandurah in the now booming southern corridor of the state. This Peel campus in Mandurah is very small⁶⁶ and—most importantly—offers highly restricted courses.⁶⁷ Even with these restrictions and limitations, this is still a valuable contribution to a region. John Hogan, the registrar at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, verified the accuracy of this assumption about universities and small cities.

⁶³ Groarke (2009).

⁶⁴ D’Andrea (2012).

⁶⁵ Quelch and Jocz (2012).

⁶⁶ “Peel Campus,” Murdoch University, <http://www.murdoch.edu.au/About-us/Our-profile/Campuses/Peel-campus/>.

⁶⁷ A bridging course, nursing and counselling courses, and masters and doctoral supervision are available, Peel Courses, Murdoch University, <http://handbook.murdoch.edu.au/courses/?&loc=Peel>.

Imperial [College London] is a fantastic institution, but if it closed, would London notice? Probably not. But if Newcastle closed, or Northumbria, Durham, Teesside or Sunderland [universities] closed, it would be a catastrophe for the local and the bigger region, because there's not a lot else going on in the North East ... The relative importance of these universities is so much more important than some of the outstanding institutions you might find in London.⁶⁸

This role is increasingly crucial because—as Richard Muir from the Institute for Public Policy Research revealed—regional inequality increases when public spending declines. He suggests that, in the UK context, “£1 million output by a university generated a further £1.38 million for the wider economy.”⁶⁹ Therefore, in a declining economy, regional injustices heighten, and at such a time, the economic role and significance of a university is amplified.

The dearth of education in many postindustrial cities helps explain why these places have had such trouble reinventing themselves. They've also suffered because their model of having vast firms in a single industry stunts entrepreneurship and innovation.⁷⁰

This is the double bind. A single industry employed a city's workers, but there were few opportunities to retrain, because of the lack of educational opportunities. That is why universities matter so much, particularly when situated in third tier cities. One clear example is in Orange, a small inland city located 260 km from Sydney. It has a population of 38,000. The Electrolux plant is closing, with 500 jobs being lost to the city.⁷¹ Electrolux commenced manufacturing in 1957. Eastern European and Asian-based plants now produce the white goods at much cheaper rates. Therefore the Australian plant in a small city closes. Manufacturing has declined. But the university campus of Charles Sturt University has remained. This is not only of benefit to students, but to all the dependent facilities in the small town, like supermarkets, gyms, bars and transportation networks that are used by students and staff. There is also the social diversity that joins a community when a university becomes one of the employers in the city.⁷²

The underlying question remains: what happens next to those 500 Electrolux workers? They occupy an important space, as manufacturing workers who no longer manufacture. They are simply not required in the global economy and are discarded when a cheaper international labour force is available. What happens to the people who are not ‘smart’ and ‘collaborative,’ or flexible in a neoliberal economy? Guy Standing has argued that a new class—the precariat—is being

⁶⁸ J. Hogan in Cunnane (2012).

⁶⁹ R. Muir, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 255.

⁷¹ Barrett (2013).

⁷² Tiffany Muller Myrdahl conducted a study of everyday geographies for gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer men and women in small cities. In her oral history project, she found that “all but one narrator were in some way attached to the University.” In other words, because of the students and staff in a university, sexual diversity became part of the population in these small cities. Refer to Myrdahl (2013).

formed.⁷³ It is an evocative word, capturing a movement from stability and certainty with work and home. It is a life of fracture, fissures and dense instability. The precariat is not an underclass. This is not the ‘squeezed middle.’ This is the group that in effect funded neoliberalism, through the ‘flexibility’ of the labour market. In other words, this is the group of casualized workers that personally assumed the risk of capitalism. Entrepreneurs were hedging less risk because their casual or contract workforce could make no long-term requests and their hours can be adjusted to increase profit. If the business was losing money, then casual staff could be sacked and rehired if required. This is a transfer of risk from employer to employee. The outcome is “temporary career-less workers.”⁷⁴ The wider question Standing asks is, how to manage the loss of loyalty and trust in the workplace. What happens to a group that can never rely on a living wage the following week or month? What happens to personal relationships, family structures or the housing sector? The impact of this deep instability on the building of a community or city remains the troubled and troubling concern within this present book on small cities. Because third tier cities have less complex economic options for alternative employment, the problems of the precariat are particularly severe. Workers—historically—have possessed the ‘double freedom’ to sell their labour but be ‘free’ from the means of production.⁷⁵ Yet in times of labour surplus, this last freedom dissipates. Such a lived reality is also spatialized. With upward mobility rare, a large labour force is—to use Jan Breman’s evocative phrase—“drifting back and forth between the slums of the urban periphery and the impoverished rural hinterland.”⁷⁶ Therefore rural and regional cities are the hub, cluster and punctuation for this movement.

After the Global Financial Crisis and the rise of the precariat, these assumptions, theories and models of mobility, branding and urban regeneration not only appear brittle but corrosive. Doreen Massey recognized the relationality of this reality.

It does seem that mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, and that some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak.⁷⁷

Massey’s point is subtle and important. The discussion of mobility is not simply a question that one group can move and another is trapped via economics, transportation or a lack of employment opportunities. She is suggesting that the lack of mobility for some is both created and used by the powerful. In other words, men gain power and leverage through women being unable or fearful to walk freely on the streets at night. One group’s mobility renders another immobile.

⁷³ Standing (2013).

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Marx (1990).

⁷⁶ Breman (2013).

⁷⁷ Massey (1994).

That is why ‘the creative class’ has faced so many critiques and challenges. It is a form of ‘trickle down economics’ (again). It is also a masking device to block a discussion of industrial and post-industrial workers. As Joel Kotkin has argued,

Among the most pervasive, and arguably pernicious, notions of the past decade has been that the “creative class” of the skilled, educated and hip would remake and revive American cities. The idea, packaged and peddled by consultant Richard Florida, had been that unlike spending public money to court Wall Street fat cats, corporate executives or other traditional elites, paying to appeal to the creative would truly trickle down, generating a widespread urban revival ... Indeed in many ways the Floridian focus on industries like entertainment, software, and social media creates a distorted set of economic priorities. The creatives, after all, generally don’t work in factories or warehouses. So why assist these industries? Instead the trend is to declare good-paying blue collar professions a product of the past.⁷⁸

‘Cool cities,’ such as San Francisco, do not provide methods, strategies, trajectories or scenarios for assisting deindustrialized cities, particularly with an un(der)employed working class. The sleight of hand was that the underemployed, post-skilled working classes in Detroit, Stoke or Newcastle (in Australia) would move from their assembly lines and work in service industries, making coffee, preparing food or selling clothes or mobile phones. This shift did not eventuate.

The other profound problem that escalated the scale and scope of the Global Financial Crisis was the profound limits of a culture and economy based on the internal combustion engine (ICE). Living in a period of financial instability and peak oil⁷⁹ means that increasingly desperate and dangerous strategies have emerged to keep the collective car running: deep-sea oil wells with a fly in and fly out (FIFO) workforce, the burning of rocks to remove tar sands, and fracking. Peter Newman has long critiqued this oil-fuelled economy. He reads the GFC as the pivot of change.

My reading of the trends in technology, global climate-change governance peak oil, city planning, urban economics, and urban cultural change suggest that we have at this point in history a convergence towards a new kind of city building based around renewables and electric transport. It promises to create much cleaner and greener cities than could have been imagined before. These cities will be oil-free.⁸⁰

Newman shows that at historic moments of economic downturn, innovation in transportation technology emerges. Modes of movement are proxies for social and economic change. Public transport is now being reassessed, including fast rail, and an audit of the costs of car-based infrastructure.

Car-based city building has created shopping malls and dormitory suburbs rather than the interactive, walkable city center that is needed for the service-oriented knowledge economy. As traditional city centers have recovered and grown with these new service jobs, they

⁷⁸ Kotkin (2013).

⁷⁹ Peak oil remains an under-utilized phrase. But it did meet its moment in 2008 when oil prices increased rapidly, local services suffered and stopped, and the lack of local jobs in services in these ‘satellite’—or third tier—cities became obvious. Refer to Murray and King (2012).

⁸⁰ Newman (2013).

have also attracted residential development for those wanting a more urban lifestyle. Now the need for these centers has shifted to the middle and outer suburbs, and the basis of this shift seems to be good rail systems that can attract development around them—transit-oriented development (TOD).⁸¹

The digital economy does have the potential to be sustainable. But it is important to understand the sociology of technology, rather than believe the catch phrases from public relations campaigns. The paperless office and school have not happened. Digital platforms can distract as much as enhance our lives. Certainly, faith in technology has limitations. However technology can help us reconsider our mobility. Skype and video conferencing have reduced—and must reduce—the necessity for face-to-face meetings, conferences and events. Such software and hardware innovations also reduce the isolation of small cities and towns. If the infrastructure is present, then participation is possible. Moving bodies in a car on a road is becoming redundant and is certainly wasteful. Such patterns, practices and behaviours are being reshaped through the movement of voices, views, words and ideas over the web.

The Global Financial Crisis was the honest—indeed brutal—mirror that made the followers of Richard Florida—capitalism’s Dorian Gray—recognize the flaws in their theories and research. By January 2013, Richard Florida admitted this reality in public.⁸² He noted that, “the past couple of decades have seen America sort itself into two distinct nations, as the more highly skilled and affluent have migrated to a relatively small number of cities and metro areas.”⁸³ He did not hear the Benjamin Disraeli echo in his words,⁸⁴ or assess the impact of this ‘sorting’ on reinforcing inequality.⁸⁵ The cities with skilled workers have increased their skill. The others suffer and decline as the educated, the skilled, the young and the tax payers leave one location and move to another.

On close inspection, talent clustering provides little in the way of trickle-down benefits. Its benefits flow disproportionately to more highly-skilled knowledge, professional and creative workers whose higher wages and salaries are more than sufficient to cover more expensive housing in these locations. While less-skilled service and blue-collar workers also earn more money in knowledge-based metros, those gains disappear once their higher housing costs are taken into account.⁸⁶

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸² Florida (2013).

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ B. Disraeli, *Sybil, or the two nations*, Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3760/3760-h/3760-h.htm>.

⁸⁵ A potent discussion of the ‘austerity’ ideology that followed the credit crunch is in Blyth (2013). He stated that, “when those at the bottom are expected to pay *disproportionately* for a problem created by those at the top, and when those at the top actively eschew any responsibility for that problem by blaming the state for their mistakes, not only will squeezing the bottom not produce enough revenue to fix things, it will produce an even more polarized and politicized society in which the conditions for a sustainability politics of dealing with more debt and less growth than undermined,” p. 15.

⁸⁶ Florida, “More losers than winners in America’s new economic geography,” *op. cit.*

This reality was masked before the Global Financial Crisis. The surplus capital from finance and real estate could be used for branding, promotion and advertising of other, particularly media, industries. Manufacturing and agricultural industries were neglected, with the focus on universities and the service sector. After the GFC, an array of workers required jobs, stability, security and reliable funding for housing and health. Instead, the precariat emerged.

Richard Florida—the great cheerleader of the New Economy—recognized that ‘trickle down economics’ was not delivering equality or the social change where it was needed. It reinforced advantage. But he was only confirming the obvious after the GFC. The ‘I told you so’ critics scuttled from their darkened corners to re-establish their expertise. Alec MacGillis confirmed the ‘ruse’ of the creative class.⁸⁷ The anger from such critics is understandable. Like much of the creative industries ideologies, the urban planners and local governments were sold smoke, mirrors and a band aid, all of which proved weak and irrelevant when buffeted by the whiplash of finance capital. MacGillis’s critique was not only seething, but personal.

In April 2006, the Richard Florida show arrived in the Southern Tier of Upstate New York. It was only one of the scores of appearances this decade by the economic-development guru, whose speaking fee soared to \$35,000 not long after his 2002 book *The Rise of the Creative Class* made him a star on the lecture circuit. Cleveland, Toledo, Baltimore, Greensboro, Green Bay, Des Moines, Hartford, Roanoke, and Rochester were among the many cities that had already shelled out to hear from the good-looking urban-studies professor about how to get young professionals to move in ... Of course, none of these burgs has yet completed the transformation from post-manufacturing ugly duckling to gay-friendly, hipster swan. But middling results elsewhere did not keep people in the greater Elmira area from getting excited about Florida’s visit. They listened as, in his stylish suit and designer glasses, he related his blue-collar upbringing outside Newark before segueing into his secrets of urban success in the 21st century: the “three T’s” of technology, talent, and tolerance. If cities could make themselves appealing to the Web designers, architects, biomedical researchers, and other innovators who are now the drivers of economic growth, then they would also attract the businesses that want these footloose pioneers to work for them.⁸⁸

Significantly, these ‘post-manufacturing’ burgs were also small third tier cities. Their manufacturing past was the reason for their creation, foundation, infrastructure and population. But the seduction of ‘the 3 Ts’ is obvious. I have taught the creative industries to first year university students around the world. Their enthusiasm for these simple theories of change and development is understandable and must—for policy makers in these declining urban environments—have seemed like the fire starter for their future.

Then there is Detroit. Famous for motor cars and music, the city is now the most striking US example of a retracting, decaying city. There are remarkable stories of personal success, reclamation and investing—personally and financially—in the city. Drew Philip’s “Why I bought a house in Detroit for 500 dollars” is an evocative and outstanding example of this desire to not give up on and in these

⁸⁷ MacGillis (2009).

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

post-industrial cities.⁸⁹ He bought. He repaired. He survived. He lived. Yet other movements—termed ‘white-sizing’—have also commenced.

The city is talking of disinvesting in entire neighborhoods such as mine—literally letting the neighborhood go to seed and removing city services, shrinking the city in what some have termed as “white-sizing”; upstarts backed with foundation money are talking about transforming an entire neighborhood into an 2,475-acre urban farm. The state just approved a \$350 million subsidized giveaway for a hockey stadium with a suburban fan base that’s going to tear down another portion of the city and push more people out. Of course, the divide between the gentrifying Detroit downtown and the bankrupt Detroit that is the rest of the city mirrors what is happening in a lot of this country.⁹⁰

Detroit is part of what is now termed the “Rust-belt cities.”⁹¹ This phrase includes not only Detroit, but Buffalo, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. These cities are proxemic, but all reached the end of a manufacturing cycle. Hartley realized that not only have these cities lost more than 40 % of their population, but it has been an uneven decline. Some neighbourhoods have been much more deeply affected than others. Studies are showing that the areas with the lowest housing prices are facing the deepest decline in population.⁹² This is a bizarre, destructive and inverted gentrification. The issue that remains is how much of this decline could have been predicted and planned to create rebooting of diverse industries before the Global Financial Crisis. Did the Medusian attraction of creative industries block a concrete discussion of complex industrial and social policies?

There were pre-GFC researchers who recognized that there was a dysfunction—a dissonance—between creative industries policies and the working class cities that most required a cultural, economic and social reboot. In 2004, Jim Shorthose and Gerard Strange unpicked the nature of the ‘new economy,’ offering concrete characteristics: globalized, decentralized, networked, flexible and invoking intangibles such as “knowledge, information, images and fantasies.”⁹³ The strength of a decade of creative industries discussion is that the economic value of culture, community arts and the media have been recognized, moving beyond individual models of patronage. There was and is profound value in aligning creativity and capital, and exploring the contexts—including city environments—for creativity. The problem is that the policy discussion became a checklist of requirements about how to develop money making initiatives from the creative sector, rather than recognizing specificities, distinctions and differences. Mark Jayne’s analysis of Stoke-on-Trent’s failed sortie with creative industries is both rigorous and disturbing. But it did predict the wider international problems, particularly in third tier cities.

⁸⁹ Philip (2014).

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ Hartley (2013).

⁹² Guerrieri et al. (2012).

⁹³ Shorthose and Strange (2004).

Stoke was internationally known for its ceramics, described as ‘The Potteries.’ Therefore, applying creative industries strategies, it would seem that a craft-led recovery would deploy the historic branding of the city and the skills of the workforce. This hypothesis did not eventuate. The model for failure was present in Stoke. Jayne described it as a “mono-industrial economy, and social and cultural life.”⁹⁴ Therefore, imposing the ‘new economy’ and ‘heritage management’ over such structures attempted to build new policies on an unstable foundation.

‘The Potteries’ tag thus remains a continuous distraction from, the symptom of, the failure of Stoke-on-Trent to develop the economy, infrastructure, social structures, atmospheres, and spaces and places associated with more successful post-industrial cities; that is, the failure to be anything more than a city in name only.⁹⁵

Production and consumption remained in industrial models. Regeneration failed. The ‘creative class’ did not move to Stoke. Tourists did not arrive. Jayne published his results in 2004. But his Stoke research emerged in a period where global and second tier cities were doing well, pumped up by real estate sales and derivatives trading. Stoke could not participate in this boom. Third tier cities like Stoke were the canary in the mine. They function at the mono-industrial edge of capitalism, showing the cost of simple solutions—of marketing and branding—to dense, complex and structural economic and social weaknesses.

Through the tandem forces of industrialization and urbanization, the building of industries and the construction of cities was aligned. Cheap housing was created in the middle of cities so that workers could operate the equipment in factories. Through the nineteenth century, the white collar workforce moved into the suburbs, enabled first by the train and then the car.⁹⁶ However this narrative of urban sprawl changed later in the twentieth century. The affluent moved back into cities, living in lofts and condominiums. Inner cities were upgraded and updated for urban professionals.⁹⁷ This process displaced the working class people living there. Governments therefore created housing estates at the extremity of cities. This was an effective option in the 1960s and 1970s because they were serviced by regular trains and buses. But as public services started to decline, the hospitals and schools were closed in these outlying suburbs. Fewer buses and trains were available to transport people to work, education or leisure. Concurrently, Edgelands⁹⁸—the “waste places”⁹⁹ at the metaphoric moat of cities—demonstrate the neglect of public spaces and the mismanagement of industrial ruins.

Because so much of the creative industries neglected manufacturing and agriculture, focusing instead on the service sector, media industries and tourism, it did not take root and create the horizontal integration between industries. The best use

⁹⁴ Jayne (2004).

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Featherstone (2004).

⁹⁷ Butler and Lees (2006).

⁹⁸ Farley and Roberts (2011).

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

of creative industries involves the deployment of design and skill development to ‘value-add’ to agricultural products and manufactured goods. A wine industry uses branding and design strategies to provide information about the region in which the grapes are grown. Tourism is enabled and other produce in the area is both promoted and supported. There are still large groups of workers around the world who live in and on manufacturing, mining, construction and agriculture. The problem is that Charles Leadbeater’s title—*Living on thin air*¹⁰⁰—was taken literally. But copyright and intellectual property rights are the start of economic development and a new income stream. They are not the entirety of the economy.

If Florida and the first wave of creative industries researchers were wrong—which they were—then what can be gleaned from the creative industries and city imaging theories after the GFC? Beyond the 3Ts—talent, technology and tolerance—and the focus on branding and design, there remains real people with real families, housing (particularly mortgage) crises, health crises and transportation crises in third tier cities. They were living in Daniel Bell’s post-industrial society.¹⁰¹ This is not only a question of earning a predictable and stable salary. There is a provocative link between health, wealth and inequality.¹⁰² A ‘good life’ is difficult to create or measure and requires attention to health and a secure, reliable income.¹⁰³ It is imperative that there are educational opportunities to retrain for new opportunities in employment, and participation in community life. How are these to be managed? To answer this question, the next chapter explores the specificities of third tier cities.

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¹⁰⁰ Leadbeater (2000).

¹⁰¹ Bell (1976).

¹⁰² Deaton (2013).

¹⁰³ To provide one example of these problematic wages in small cities, a recent study confirmed that one third of Hull’s residents are earning below a living wage. Refer to “Third of Hull workers earn less than a living wage,” *Hull Daily Mail*, January 17, 2014, <http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/Hull-workers-earn-living-wage-figures/story-20450208-detail/story.html>.

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