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# Unique Urbanity? Rethinking Third Tier Cities, Degeneration, Regeneration and Mobility



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# Unique Urbanity?

Rethinking Third Tier Cities, Degeneration,  
Regeneration and Mobility

 Springer

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# Chapter 1

## Go to Darwin and Starve, ya Bastard

**Abstract** Family stories weave in and out of sanitized, reified national histories. Colonized nations such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and Aotearoa/New Zealand are built on a pioneering myth of white ‘settlers’ and ‘explorers’ moving through a landscape and ‘discovering’ mountains and rivers. The ‘other side of the frontier’ of genocide, sickness and institutional racism against indigenous people who were not granted the right of citizenship—sits uncomfortably within the propulsive narrative of progress and economic development for a (debateably) modern nation.

**Keywords** City imaging · City modelling · Global cities · Second tier cities · Third tier cities

Family stories weave in and out of sanitised, reified national histories. Colonized nations such as Australia, the United States, Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand are built on a pioneering myth of white ‘settlers’ and ‘explorers’ moving through a landscape and ‘discovering’ mountains and rivers. The ‘other side of the frontier’ (Reynolds 2001) of genocide, sickness and institutional racism against indigenous peoples who were not granted the right of citizenship sits uncomfortably within the propulsive narrative of progress and economic development for a (debateably) modern nation.

Family stories summon unexpected, interwoven histories of progress and development, injustice and discrimination. My parents—both in their eighties—maintain distinctive stories that cut through the clouded narratives of colonialism. Kevin and Doris Brabazon married in Broome in 1950. Broome is a coastal town in the north west corner of Western Australia. After his Perth-based apprenticeship, Kevin started work as a carpenter at the Broome meat works. Doris worked in

Streeter and Male, the general store of the town.<sup>1</sup> Doris had just turned 20. Kevin was 23. Broome was a tough, but intriguing place. My mother describes it as a town of music, money, fun and laughter. White men and women lived there, but were not dominant. Yawuru men and women were the majority,<sup>2</sup> even though they did not have the rights of citizenship or the freedom of movement below the Tropic of Capricorn.<sup>3</sup> Strong minority communities were also present from Japan, many who had faced internment during the war,<sup>4</sup> China, Indonesia and the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

One man living in Broome at this time was Con Gill.<sup>6</sup> A Jamaican who was mentioned in Ion Idriess's *Forty Fathoms Deep*,<sup>7</sup> he was a pearl diver at the height of the industry. By the time Doris and Kevin arrived in Broome, he was an ageing man near the end of his life, as was the pearl shell industry itself.<sup>8</sup> Yet Con is not the star of his own life story. Instead, it is his unnamed white cockatoo that remained in my parents' memory.<sup>9</sup>

Con lived in or near—or spent much of his time in or near—the Continental Hotel.<sup>10</sup> Unmarried, his companion was a cockatoo with a rather large vocabulary, much of it gleaned from drinkers at the Continental. His most memorable phrase, pronounced to anyone who would listen, was “Go to Darwin and starve, ya bastard.” Significantly, if a cockatoo had learnt this phrase, it must have been uttered frequently and consistently. Cockatoos are like an analogue tape recorder, but with feathers.

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<sup>1</sup> Although recorded later, the ABC current affairs programme 4 Corners went to Broome at the moment it was transitioning from its primary industry: sourcing mother of pearl before the arrival of plastics, which destroyed the market. Refer to “4 Corners in Broome 1962,” ABC, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2010/12/02/3083134.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Two language groups lived in the Broome region: the Yawuru and Jungun. By 2006, the Yawuru gained Native Title for the area around Broome. This region was approximately 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> This dedication and commitment to the land remains. Refer to “Bardi Jawi,” Department of the Environment, Government of Australia, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/bardijawi.html>.

<sup>4</sup> McNamara and Coughlan (1992).

<sup>5</sup> A fascinating recent article captured the intimate nature of some of these relationships. Refer to Balint (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Con Gill—along with his ‘parrot’—is mentioned as a ‘colourful personality’ in a family history “Adams and Associated Families in Australia 1830–2013,” <http://members.iinet.net.au/~nbradley/Adams-o/p14.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Idriess (1937). This is a rare, out of print book with few records online. However there is a reference in the online review website GoodReads. Refer to “Forty Fathoms Deep,” GoodReads, <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4096689-forty-fathoms-deep>.

<sup>8</sup> It was to be replaced with a still-thriving cultured pearl industry that is very successful because of Broome's king tides. Refer to “Australia's Pearling Industry,” *Australia.gov.au*, <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/australias-pearling-industry>.

<sup>9</sup> As cockatoos (often called umbrella cockatoos) can live over 50 years, Con and his cocky may indeed have spent much of their adult lives together. It is believed Con Gill died in 1955.

<sup>10</sup> “The old Continental Hotel,” NLA, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn4361595>.



What makes the phrase both evocative and worthy of discussion is that it emerged from Broome. This town is 2,200 km (1,400 miles) from Perth. Importantly, Perth is not an international destination of note and distinction. Instead, the capital city of Perth is famously known as the most isolated in the world.<sup>11</sup> Yet Broome revealed another layer or wave of isolation. Residents managed tropical heat, huge tides, irregular transportation, uneven and scarce food supplies, and seasonal tourism and tourists. Currently, the population of Broome is growing, recorded at 12,000 at the last census, but expanding to 45,000 during the tourist season, including the Shinju Matsuri Festival.<sup>12</sup> It is a small, arid and isolated place, with patches of beauty and a diversity in population beyond the scale of many cities. Significantly, the cockatoo carried a different story: a love of Broome and a deep derision for—and competitiveness with—another small and isolated town: Darwin.

Darwin at the time of the cockatoo's derision was damaged, still recovering from Japanese bombing during the Second World War. It was a place of even fewer women than Broome and suffered from—or ecstatically enjoyed—an even wilder reputation. But from the isolation of Broome, the pejorative labelling of Darwin had bite and must have been common enough for a cockatoo to learn and use.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, this is an original and analogue phase. A search through both Google and Google Scholar shows no record or mention of this combination of words.<sup>14</sup> It is part of an oral history, carried by a cockatoo, to residents of Broome in the 1940s and 1950s.

This book uses this phrase as a hook to understand third tier cities and the relationship between them. These small urban environments do not have the profile of global cities like New York, London, Tokyo or Cairo, or second-tier cities, like San Francisco, Manchester, Osaka or Alexandria. There remains a wide gap in the city imaging literature when attempting to grasp the challenges of these small places. This book attempts to renew interest in these cities and towns that are not well known or internationally branded, but are facing structural economic issues worsened after the Global Financial Crisis, and therefore needing to invent new reasons for their existence. However the social and economic challenges within

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<sup>11</sup> The corrective is often that Perth is the most isolated continental capital city in the world. Honolulu is actually more isolated from neighbouring cities. Refer to Life on Perth, <http://www.lifeonperth.com/facts.htm>.

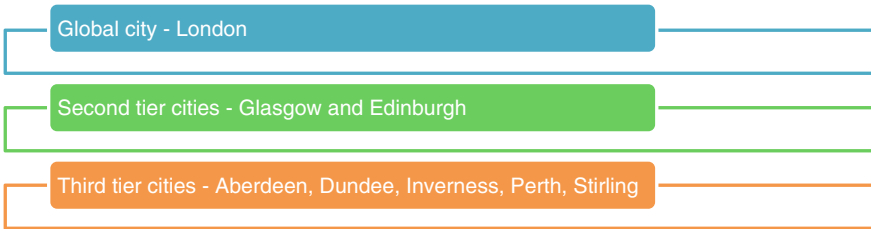
<sup>12</sup> Shinju Matsuri Festival, <http://www.shinjumatsuri.com.au/>.

<sup>13</sup> Fascinatingly, the film *Australia* was based in and around Darwin for much of the story. However the shooting of pre and post-bombing Darwin was conducted in four states and territories: Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Because of the scale of transformations to Darwin, it was necessary to discover and deploy locations that still sustained some historical features. For a discussion of the film *Australia*, refer to *Fiona Lake*, <http://www.fionalake.com.au/other-info/other-references/music-films-books/australia-film-story#set>.

<sup>14</sup> “Go to Darwin and starve ya bastard,” Google Search, [https://www.google.com/search?q=Go+to+darwin+and+starve+ya+bastard&oeq=Go+to+darwin+and+starve+ya+bastard&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64j2.7287j0j8&sourceid=chrome&espv=210&es\\_sm=93&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=Go+to+darwin+and+starve+ya+bastard&oeq=Go+to+darwin+and+starve+ya+bastard&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64j2.7287j0j8&sourceid=chrome&espv=210&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8).



**Fig. 1.1** Global, second tier and third tier cities



**Fig. 1.2** Colonial complexities in urban environments

these regions are great, particularly with regard to health and health services,<sup>15</sup> education, mobility and physical activity. This book traces the current state of the creative industries literature after the GFC, but with a specific imperative. I probe the specific—and worsening—conditions in third tier cities. The book then raises theories, concepts, strategies, models, approaches and opportunities for third tier cities to create profile and growth.

To commence such a study requires a clear presentation of how cities are defined, constituted, developed, decline and build relationships with other urban environments. To clarify and enable this research requires an early discussion of the types, modes and tiers of cities (Fig. 1.1).

While such rankings provide a solid foundation for analysis, there is complexity and debate that weaves through such tiers. There are colonial ambiguities in such rankings. In the United Kingdom, London is the global city, but there are consequences to and for the colonized nation of Scotland (Fig. 1.2).

For Scotland, political and financial power is held—literally—in another nation. These distinctions are important. Similarly, the definitions and determinations of the differences between cities and towns varies between nation states. Definitions are not definite, but are both dynamic and relational. A city is larger than a town. A town is larger than a village. But the population size, rights and responsibilities that constitute these distinctive markers of urbanity are not transferable between nation states. Number of residents is not a reliable indicator. In Australia, the determination of a ‘city’ is statistically constituted, being given to a place with a minimum of 10,000–30,000 people. This wide variance in population is necessary as there is a difference between states, with Tasmania at the lower end, and Western

<sup>15</sup> Particularly when these small cities are also rural, there are specific challenges to confront. Refer to Klugman and Dalinis (2008).

Australia at the top of the scale. Reviewing the complexity of systems—for transportation and sanitation for example—is often a better indicator. Some of the historic cities in the United Kingdom are small in terms of population, with towns attracting much larger numbers. In the United States, a ‘city’ has delegated powers from a state and county, but the population size required to be granted this authority is distinctive to each State. In the New England states—Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut—it is determined by mode of government, rather than population. A town is unincorporated and holds no governmental powers to deliver services. New Zealand maintains distinct and particular characteristics to define and determine a city. It must, “have a minimum population of 50,000, be predominantly urban in character, be a distinct entity and a major centre of activity within the region.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, while a precise and transnational definition of cities and towns would be advantageous, there are internal distinctions between states and provinces within a nation, and wide variations between nations. There are historical legacies, fortuitous discoveries and random events that have shaped the fortunes of cities and towns.

This book has been drawn to small cities that in some nations are defined as towns. But the goal of the research is clear: to enter and study these under-discussed locations and reveal the scarred layering of injustice, signified by depopulation, disinvestment, economic decline and a reduction in public services such as health, transportation and education. Small cities and large towns have more in common with each other than with global cities. Dubbo has more in common with Invercargill and Bolton than Sydney, Auckland or London. Living at the edge of urbanity requires life skills and management strategies that are distinct and more complex than those required in global cities. These skills, tactics, strategies, plans and policies are the focus of study for this book.

*Unique Urbanity* is not a book of urban planning. This is not a book where a model for regional development is assembled, celebrated and disseminated. Instead, the plurality, complexity, confusion and contradictions of these small places are part of the argument. Global cities are globalized. They possess similarities, relationships and connections. Second tier cities are more distinctive, often based on particular industries and settlement patterns, but their size ensures certain expectations and standards in commerce, connectivity, communication and transportation. Yet third tier cities are willfully diverse. There are few geographical or social constants or consistencies. Therefore creating a singular, streamlined model for development and growth is not possible. Indeed, the transferability of successes and failures in policy or social interventions from one place to another is questionable. One size does not fit most. Development is differentiated. Doreen Massey described this process as “an increasing uncertainty about what we mean by ‘places’ and how we relate to them.”<sup>17</sup> Yet by focusing on the places that too often remain in the

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<sup>16</sup> “City,” New Zealand Government, 2006, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/about-2006-census/2006-census-definitions-questionnaires/definitions/c.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> Massey (1994).

shadows, underserved by railway lines and media, new opportunities, theories, strategies and potentials may emerge. I am not creating a model for small cities that holds a universal application. That is not possible. Instead, this book presents a portfolio of opportunities from an array of international examples.

There is an intentional echo—a resonance—in the subtitle of this book. The use of the word ‘rethinking’ pays homage to John Allen, Doreen Massey and Allan Cochrane’s *Rethinking the Region*.<sup>18</sup> They described “our major aim was to conceptualize the geography of growth, its character and potential fragility, and in so doing to reveal how regions are made and remade over space and time.”<sup>19</sup> This is the project I am replicating in *Unique Urbanity*, but for small cities. This book probes and pokes these odd, distinctive and heterogenous urban environments. They are fragile and growth is not always—or even often—attendant to their ‘development.’ The history—often the industrial history—lags, chains and anchors. The lack of infrastructure, particularly to enable digital communication, is increasingly problematic. After the Global Financial Crisis, and the corrugated iron ‘development’ that followed it, it is time to fill gaps in the research literature and synthesize some theories of third tier cities. It is time to rethink this small, intricate, complex, unique urbanity.

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<sup>18</sup> Allen et al. (1998).

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. viii.

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

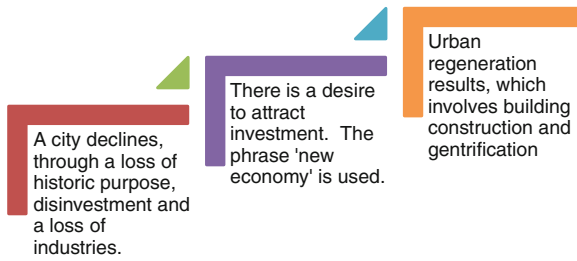
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<sup>1</sup> Jones and Evans (2008, p. 9).

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

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.”<sup>6</sup> 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,”<sup>7</sup> 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?”<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Howell (2013).

<sup>7</sup> Nechyba and Walsh (2004).

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Aristotle saw it as artisanal, bringing an object into being.<sup>10</sup> Richard Florida described a “geography of creativity.”<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> This theoretical slippage revealed some benefits. Creative industries could be defined in a way that avoided debate about high and popular culture.<sup>13</sup> The problem is that—since Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*<sup>14</sup>—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.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the greatest long-term gift the creative industries literature gave the humanities and social sciences is to slice through this elitist division<sup>16</sup> to find strategies that linked culture with economic growth.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Kraut (2006).

<sup>10</sup> 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/>.

<sup>11</sup> Florida (2002b).

<sup>12</sup> Florida and Mellander (2009).

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Arnold (1869).

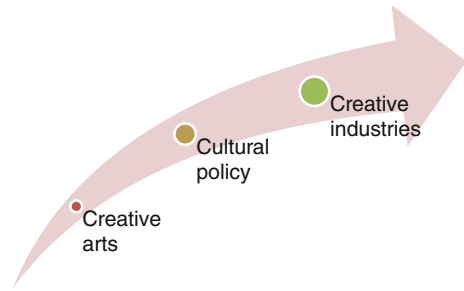
<sup>15</sup> Carey (1992).

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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

<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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

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

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> N. Dunn, Facebook post, January 18, 2014.

a large catchment area of influence.<sup>23</sup> ‘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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> 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”<sup>28</sup> 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

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

<sup>24</sup> 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>.

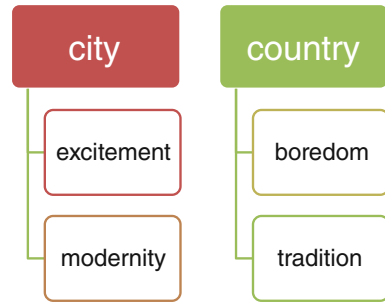
<sup>25</sup> Tepper (2002).

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Elsworth (2014).

<sup>28</sup> 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.”<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup> It builds on these positive associations with the city. It connotes a combination of place and iconography, with the goal of spatializing

<sup>29</sup> Reid et al. (2010).

<sup>30</sup> Donehower et al. (2007).

<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> While phrases like the Creative City, cultural quarter and cultural cluster<sup>33</sup> have been deployed by Charles Landry and others,<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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,<sup>37</sup> beaches, books<sup>38</sup> or relaxation.

City imaging is really city competition, a branding of a place to attract the best workers, finance capital and businesses.<sup>39</sup> 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

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<sup>32</sup> O’Connor and Wynne (1996).

<sup>33</sup> Cornford and Charles (2001).

<sup>34</sup> Landry and Bianchini (1995).

<sup>35</sup> O’Connor and Wynne, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Kunzmann (1995).

<sup>37</sup> Misener and Mason (2006).

<sup>38</sup> Brabazon (2011).

<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup>

Shorthose and Strange recognized that national imaginings are being challenged, bent and transformed through the engines of the ‘knowledge economy’,<sup>42</sup> 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.”<sup>43</sup> 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 capitalism<sup>44</sup>—is chaotic and unpredictable.<sup>45</sup> Capitalism is really capitalisms.<sup>46</sup> Modernity is modernities.<sup>47</sup> 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

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<sup>40</sup> Walby (2003).

<sup>41</sup> Shorthose and Strange (2004).

<sup>42</sup> 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).

<sup>43</sup> R. Sexsmith, Ron Sexsmith, (Interscope, 1995).

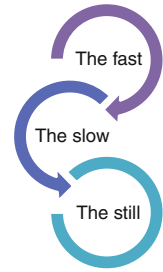
<sup>44</sup> Lapavitsas (2013).

<sup>45</sup> 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.

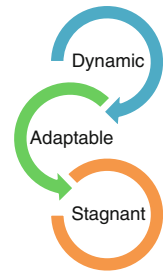
<sup>46</sup> De Soto (2000).

<sup>47</sup> 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 still<sup>48</sup> (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,<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> Consumption becomes integral to the

<sup>48</sup> Duranton (2007).

<sup>49</sup> Bowring (2002).

<sup>50</sup> Kennedy and Florida (1993).

formation of identity. Instead of work and leisure, new words like ‘lifestyle’ infuse ‘free time’ with shopping.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

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.”<sup>53</sup> It must be administered well.<sup>54</sup> It must have a plan for environmental sustainability and be walkable.<sup>55</sup> There is a strong link between (a lack of) transportation options and poverty,<sup>56</sup> 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,<sup>57</sup> leisure and fitness,<sup>58</sup> because of a lack of availability of quality food and supportive sporting infrastructure.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup>

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.”<sup>62</sup> The description of ‘intensities’ is fundamentally

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

<sup>52</sup> Glaeser (2011).

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 267–268.

<sup>56</sup> Sanchez (2008).

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

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

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

<sup>60</sup> Patterson (2009).

<sup>61</sup> Handy (2002).

<sup>62</sup> 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*.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup>

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.”<sup>65</sup> 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 small<sup>66</sup> and—most importantly—offers highly restricted courses.<sup>67</sup> 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.

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<sup>63</sup> Groarke (2009).

<sup>64</sup> D’Andrea (2012).

<sup>65</sup> Quelch and Jocz (2012).

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

<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.”<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>

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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup>

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

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<sup>68</sup> J. Hogan in Cunnane (2012).

<sup>69</sup> R. Muir, *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>71</sup> Barrett (2013).

<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> 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.”<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> 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.”<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup>

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.

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<sup>73</sup> Standing (2013).

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>75</sup> Marx (1990).

<sup>76</sup> Breman (2013).

<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

‘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 oil<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup>

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

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<sup>78</sup> Kotkin (2013).

<sup>79</sup> 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).

<sup>80</sup> 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).<sup>81</sup>

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.<sup>82</sup> 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.”<sup>83</sup> He did not hear the Benjamin Disraeli echo in his words,<sup>84</sup> or assess the impact of this ‘sorting’ on reinforcing inequality.<sup>85</sup> 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.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>82</sup> Florida (2013).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>85</sup> 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.

<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup> 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 burghs 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.<sup>88</sup>

Significantly, these ‘post-manufacturing’ burghs 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

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<sup>87</sup> MacGillis (2009).

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

post-industrial cities.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup>

Detroit is part of what is now termed the “Rust-belt cities.”<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> 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.”<sup>93</sup> 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.

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<sup>89</sup> Philip (2014).

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Hartley (2013).

<sup>92</sup> Guerrieri et al. (2012).

<sup>93</sup> 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.”<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup>

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.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> 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, Edgelands<sup>98</sup>—the “waste places”<sup>99</sup> 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

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<sup>94</sup> Jayne (2004).

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Featherstone (2004).

<sup>97</sup> Butler and Lees (2006).

<sup>98</sup> Farley and Roberts (2011).

<sup>99</sup> *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*<sup>100</sup>—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.<sup>101</sup> This is not only a question of earning a predictable and stable salary. There is a provocative link between health, wealth and inequality.<sup>102</sup> A ‘good life’ is difficult to create or measure and requires attention to health and a secure, reliable income.<sup>103</sup> 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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<sup>100</sup> Leadbeater (2000).

<sup>101</sup> Bell (1976).

<sup>102</sup> Deaton (2013).

<sup>103</sup> 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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## Chapter 3

# Entering the Third Tier: A Tour Through Decay and Disadvantage

**Abstract** All cities share many characteristics: a transportation network, pollution and commercial hubs. Differences are instigated through immigration, size of population, geographical specificities, weather and economic policies. As shown in the introduction to this book, one strategy to organize cities for both research and policy development is to position them into tiers, based on size, influence, branding and impact. Global cities are the spine of the international economy, with a huge multicultural population, housing the international headquarters of corporations and diverse modes of production and consumption. Such global cities can be listed with ease: New York, Toronto, Mumbai, Paris, London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, Moscow, Sydney, Auckland, Tokyo and Cairo. They have much in common. This similarity is matched by an intense connectivity and mobility. The point of globalization is that it renders global cities homogenized. Indeed, Saskia Sassen—the key theorist of global cities—argued that they are “de-nationalized”. Global cities are disconnected from national imaginings and form relationships with other global cities. They hold a particular function in the global economy. After September 11, global cities like New York and London became places of fear, confusion and terrorism, with a targeting of transportation networks. The premise of such an argument is that New York has more in common with Toronto and London than New Orleans or Las Vegas. Non-global cities, not surprisingly, describe all the other cities that are not global cities. The most researched cities in this category are situated on the second tier. They are sites of difference, including divergent popular culture, tourism, industries and economic development. These cities, like Vancouver, Brighton, Wellington, Perth, Osaka, Dunedin and Düsseldorf, are very different from each other. While the second-tier cities have both economic and social potential, third-tier cities are not only neglected in the research literature, but are lacking infrastructural and policy support. These cities require the most intervention.

**Keywords** Global cities · Second tier cities · Third tier cities · Mobility

All cities share many characteristics: a transportation network, pollution and commercial hubs. Differences are instigated through immigration, size of population, geographical specificities, weather and economic policies. As shown in Chap. 1, this

strategy to organize cities for both research and policy development is to position them into tiers, based on size, influence, branding and impact. Global cities are the spine of the international economy, with a huge multicultural population, housing the international headquarters of corporations and diverse modes of production and consumption. Such global cities can be listed with ease: New York, Toronto, Mumbai, Paris, London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, Moscow, Sydney, Auckland, Tokyo and Cairo. They have much in common. This similarity is matched by an intense connectivity and mobility (Florida 2005). The point of globalization is that it renders global cities homogenized. Indeed, Saskia Sassen—the key theorist of global cities—argued that they are “de-nationalized” (Sassen 1991). They hold a particular function in the global economy. After September 11, global cities like New York and London became places of fear, confusion and terrorism, with a targeting of transportation networks (Redhead 2006). The premise of such an argument is that New York has more in common with Toronto and London than New Orleans or Las Vegas.

Non-global cities, not surprisingly, describe all the other cities that are not global cities. The most researched cities in this category are situated on the second tier. They are sites of difference, including divergent popular culture, tourism, industries and economic development. These cities, like Vancouver, Brighton, Wellington, Perth, Osaka, Dunedin and Düsseldorf, are very different from each other. Very few commercial banking and corporate headquarters are located there. Disparate industries fuel the cities. They reveal diverse and frequently distinct ethnic and immigration histories. These non-globalized differences are the foundation for tourism. While non-global cities hold many remarkable similarities, Dunedin is very different from Vancouver. These distinctions sharpen the market and marketing. Without these diverse and marketable landscapes and identities, tourism does not function. Because of the unusual histories and size of second tier cities, they become known and branded for a particular moment or event. The Beatles and Liverpool is one example. Nirvana and Seattle is another. Wellington, *Lord of the Rings* and the Weta Workshop is a further case study of a cultural intervention providing wider social and economic opportunities.

The music industry is based on the categorization of differences in genre, time and space. When considering Düsseldorf, Sheffield and Manchester, music has been used with great effectiveness to shift the imaging of such cities.<sup>1</sup> Certainly global cities like New York and London absorb all the creative, critical, institutional and economic attention. Bands and DJs who are successful in these places are highly visible to policy makers and the music industry because the corporations are based in these cities. Any minor success is quickly recognized. The A&R personnel of record companies are based in these locations. However musicians and artists not resident in these centres have more time to develop a sound, skill base and experience without preliminary pressure. They can improve musically, grow up, get a fan base and support structure. By the time recognition does arrive—or at least a record contract—they are more experienced from managing a smaller city’s venues

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<sup>1</sup> Brabazon (2005).

and audience. Oasis, The Stone Roses and The Beatles<sup>2</sup> are clear examples of this argument. Second-tier bohemia—in San Francisco and Seattle—can be branded.<sup>3</sup>

The strength of second tier—or non-global cities—is clear. Differences develop and specificities thrive.<sup>4</sup> Manchester provides an archetype. Dave Haslam realized that,

Manchester is too small to be unwieldy and impersonal, but too big to be weedy and insignificant. Perhaps it is to do with the city's entrepreneurial spirit: it's not a question of making things, it's also one of marketing them, selling them. There's an attitude too: defiant, determined, cocky, canny.<sup>5</sup>

The characteristic of second-tier cities, in comparison to global cities, is a more stable and smaller population size, more compact and maintaining a greater diversity of industries, spaces and immigration patterns. In terms of sport, while global and second-tier cities house Olympics, World Cups, World Championships and Commonwealth Games, second tier cities feature the famous teams with often international branding. For example the famous soccer teams include Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool and Everton, AC Milan and Inter Milan, the US (Golf) Open circulates through second tier cities and the Australian (tennis) Open in held in Melbourne.

Some global cities like Auckland are so spread out that it is very difficult to bring a group of people together in space. For a music industry to function, there must not only be venues to play, but enough people to attend the gig, often enabled through a functional bar and public transportation networks. The strength of second tier—or non-global cities—is clear. Located outside the matrix of global cities, the smaller size of the urban environment enables audiences, communities and fans to be formed. This economic modelling of cities, particularly on the second tier, is increasingly important.<sup>6</sup> Ann Markusen, Yong-Sook Lee and Sean DiGiovanna argued that “second tier cities are the most remarkable new regional phenomenon in the late twentieth century.”<sup>7</sup> There are many reasons for the innovations that jut with seeming predictability from second tier cities. They are more malleable to urban planning and city imaging strategies. Manchester and Sheffield are the archetypes of this innovation and intervention. Activating and marketing sport, music, tourism and technological change has meant that new relationships are forged between city imaging and economic development. Markusen, Lee and DiGiovanna described them as “sticky places in an

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<sup>2</sup> The Beatles are particularly interesting as they not only played Liverpool venues in their early career but travelled to Hamburg for extended residencies. In other words, they were formed and based in one second tier city and improved their musical abilities and sharpened their capacity to perform in front of a live audience in another.

<sup>3</sup> Brabazon and Mallinder (2010).

<sup>4</sup> C.P. Lee provided an example of this attribute: “in musical terms, Manchester isn't unique, but it is certainly special,” (Lee 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Haslam, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii.

<sup>6</sup> As one example, refer to Lyons (2005).

<sup>7</sup> Markusen et al. (1999).

increasingly slippery world.”<sup>8</sup> These sticky places include Vancouver,<sup>9</sup> San Francisco, Makkah, Brighton, Wellington and Melbourne.<sup>10</sup> These places attract Florida’s archetypal “creative class.”<sup>11</sup> Because of the population and geographical size, cultural and creative industries policies can be more targeted, appropriate and specific.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the most effective and precise way to both study cities and create efficient policies is to find relationships between them. Structuring them in tiers is a way to create this specificity.

While the second tier cities have both economic and social potential, third tier cities are not only neglected in the research literature, but are lacking infrastructural and policy support.<sup>13</sup> These cities require the most intervention. The impact of global cities on the regions encircling them—often composed of discarded, marginalized and neglected post-industrial landscapes—is that they pull people, industries and money.<sup>14</sup> The economic and social scale and size of global cities ensures that the surrounding areas are often decayed and without purpose. It is difficult for these areas to gain an identity and image. These outlying regions often form third tier cities. These cities are incredibly diverse in shape, population and economic ‘development.’ Erickcek and McKinney located and categorized eight types of small cities:

1. Dominated by an older industry in decline
2. Private-sector dependent, with little public sector employment
3. Dispersed geography and function
4. Company towns attempting to survive when a company leaves
5. University and college cities where graduates leave after graduation
6. Company towns surviving after the company leaves, but with a remaining social purpose
7. Cities growing through the engine of the new economy and creative industries
8. Cities growing through university/government/business clusters.<sup>15</sup>

This is a strong rubric to map and categorize third tier cities. A key book in this under-researched field that captures this diversity is the edited collection from David Bell and Mark Jayne: *Small cities: urban experience beyond the metropolis*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>9</sup> Shanes (2006).

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Florida (2005b).

<sup>12</sup> Sweeney (2004).

<sup>13</sup> D. Bell and M. Jayne, in “Conceptualizing small cities,” stated that “the woeful neglect of the small city in the literature on urban studies means that we don’t yet have to hand wholly appropriate ways to understand what small cities are, what smallness and bigness mean, how small cities fit or don’t fit into the ‘new urban order,’ or what their fortunes and fates might be,” from Bell and Jayne (2006, p. 2).

<sup>14</sup> Scott (2001).

<sup>15</sup> Erickcek and McKinney (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Bell and Jayne (2006).



The contributors investigate the consequences of inter-city competitiveness. The overarching argument from the researchers is that the strategies that have worked in San Francisco and Manchester are not (necessarily) applicable to Bathurst, Mandurah, Invercargill, Bolton or Oshawa.

Therefore, unable to replicate the strategies of second-tier cities like Manchester, Osaka or Seattle and without an intervention from public or private investment or higher education institutions, third-tier cities stagnate or decompose. The question, raised by Beth Siegel and Andy Waxman, is whether this decline is unstoppable.

Unfortunately for these cities, many of the sources of strength that they drew upon in their heyday are now disadvantages in the New Economy. For example, their rich industrial heritage was the result of large, densely built factories that were constructed to take advantage of the transportation modes of the day—waterways and railroads. In the New Economy, employers prefer an entirely different sort of location—sprawling one-story buildings near highways and advanced telecommunications lines, or in larger, more vibrant cities ... As jobs moved out of these small cities, a host of other problems followed: declining population, loss of the middle class, abandoned mill buildings with environmental legacies, struggling downtowns, a shrinking tax base, and fewer employment opportunities.<sup>17</sup>

Jobs vacate these small cities, along with population. Downtowns struggle. The tax base reduces. The difficulty in retaining young people and attracting new residents is profound. Facilities and infrastructure follow the population. These third tier cities exist throughout the world and the strategies to enable their recovery are diverse. Superficial attention to branding and city imaging are not sufficient. Siegel and Waxman realized that, “while the data demonstrate that third-tier cities are having difficulty transitioning to the New Economy, a more thorough understanding of these cities is needed, an understanding that goes well beyond statistics.”<sup>18</sup> They are correct.

In this present book, I propose a four-layered strategy for the understanding of small urban environments. Firstly, it is important to grasp the specificity of the city’s history, noting the period of its greatest economic and social success, along with its causes, consequences and legacy. A second stage is to recognize the present environment and reality of living in this city, including the social and institutional gaps and challenges. Thirdly, it is beneficial to explore the similarities and differences with other third tier cities around the world, noting effective and inefficient strategies for change. Finally, a city modelling imperative, where applicable strategies in one city are then attempted in another, may provide either a longer-term pathway to growth or a temporary tactic to sustain a current situation while other policies are discovered and researched. Cities are not a “growth machine”<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 3.1).

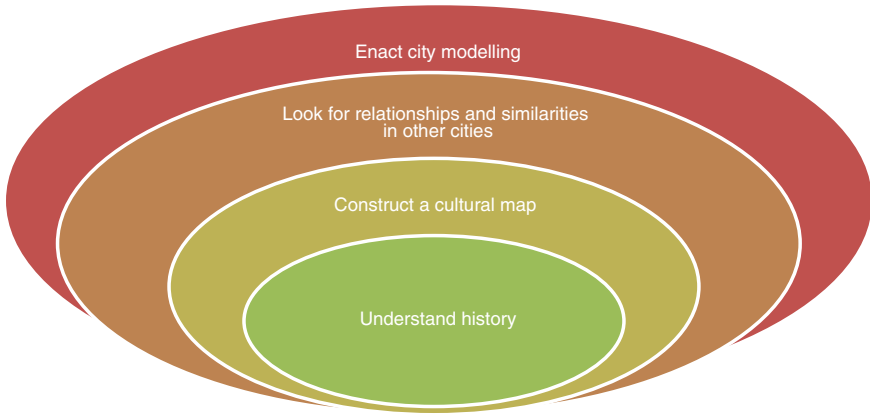
Many third tier cities gained a successful single industry in the manufacturing and industrial age. Flint, in Michigan, and Oshawa in Canada, manufactured motor

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<sup>17</sup> Siegel and Waxman (2001).

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Molotch (1976).



**Fig. 3.1** Stages to intervene in third tier city development (outward development)

**Fig. 3.2** Third tier branding — ‘Rockhampton (Qld) Cattle City’ cap (photograph by Tara Brabazon)



vehicles.<sup>20</sup> Napa (still) makes wine and has flourishing wine-tourism enterprises. Blackpool was a destination for working class tourism. Rockhampton in Australia was a service hub for the cattle industry with a huge meat works (Fig. 3.2).

These cities are rarely known beyond their nation. They were not marketed or branded. So third tier cities were successful in the manufacturing/industrial age, but have failed in the new knowledge economy. The housing and transportation in the third tier is inadequate.<sup>21</sup> The infrastructure was based on factories and the

<sup>20</sup> Macaluso (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Grieco and Raje (2004).

construction of small homes for the workers to service the industry. The telecommunication systems and mobile networks are inadequate. Therefore, the jobs reduce, and employment in ‘the new economy’—particularly in the service sector, creative industries and education—moves to global and second tier cities.<sup>22</sup> Because of the lack of employment, the population is declining, the middle class are leaving, and health and educational facilities are reducing. Abandoned and derelict buildings proliferate. Environmental problems, hazards and pollution result from the after effects of de-industrialization. Downtowns are deserted. Shops close because of the lack of population. Young people leave for global cities where work and leisure opportunities are a draw card. What remains are commuter cities that are often desolate, decomposing and decaying. As an example, Luton—a third tier city—is 44 km (or 27 miles) from London. Brighton—a second tier city—is 88 km (or 55 miles) from London. That slight increase in distance from the global city creates just enough space for separation and difference which is integral to the development of the creative industries. Brighton is a second tier city of 220,000 people. Luton has 180,000 people. Luton is an industrial wasteland. The talented, skilled and educated move to London. The affluent live in Brighton. Although it is only slightly further away, it is still within 1 hour of London by train. It means Brighton has an independent identity. Luton struggles to maintain one.

Although this chapter has focused on the distinctions between modes of cities, all cities have much in common. Their differences are imagined, created, promoted and transformed. The task for researchers and policy makers is to use an already existing image that is powerful or positive, or intervene and change a damaging brand (and history) of a place. Besides branding and differentiation, a series of other debates attend the potential of city imaging, modelling and management, including regionalism, deterritorialization, obsolescence, postindustrialization and decline. While the deterritorialization of the web enables the movement of money, music and ideas over national borders, cities remain relevant for policy makers and politicians. Cities, particularly since the industrial revolution, have been surveyed, monitored, ranked, judged, improved and discarded. Through the process of an industrial revolution, a city’s population, infrastructure and identity warped, morphed, expanded and corroded, revealing uneven development in education and health facilities, poverty and volatile overemployment, underemployment and unemployment in response to radical shifts in production and consumption. Built structures created or enhanced social exclusion.<sup>23</sup> Rivers, bridges and railway lines separate and organize people, spaces and buildings socially and economically.<sup>24</sup>

Because of this complexity, an array of academic disciplines, theories and paradigms are required to understand urbanity. From sociology to English literature, from cultural and media studies to urban planners, from history to geography and politics, cities activate inter-disciplinary studies. This diversity of approaches,

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<sup>22</sup> Barnes and Hutton (2009).

<sup>23</sup> Manley (1996).

<sup>24</sup> Abbott (1997).

theories and methods are necessary because each city has different patterns of mobility and inward and outward migration. Some cities that service agricultural industries must pay attention to the seasons. Others must fit in with event management or global shifts in particular industries. But there are also the internal diversities to be considered. As Fran Tonkiss confirmed,

For those interested in city-making as a social process, it is important to take seriously the figure of the middle-class gentrifier, the rural migrant, the electricity pirate or the street trader but also to understand their agencies in the context of larger and more impersonal processes: of post-industrial restructuring, environmental crisis, urban immigration and legal exclusions.<sup>25</sup>

Social actions and behaviours move in and through urban environments. Actions and activities around schools and universities are distinct from the movements in shopping centres or sporting stadia. Urban sustainability emerges through the capacity to understand and balance these functions. It must question the focus and centralized role of the motor vehicle.<sup>26</sup> Mixed land use is a signifier for mixed industries and economic diversity. But incisive and targeted strategies are necessary to manage the geographies of inequality. Without strategies to address injustice, the result is the ghetto or slum.

Flexibility and fluidity attend the borders of cities. Innovative scholars—deploying poststructural theory—have captured this boundary flux. Edward Soja used the description of “postsuburbia.”<sup>27</sup> Dean MacCannell deployed “new urbanism.”<sup>28</sup> Leonie Sandercock recognized that, “cities and regions of the end of the twentieth century are multi-ethnic, multiracial, *multiple*.”<sup>29</sup> These differences are productive economically, socially and in terms of sport and physical culture. Elizabeth Wilson was concerned if this multiplicity was lost, “that the world, and its cities, are becoming homogenized; difference is ironed out and everything is the same. At the same time, within every city a growing distance between rich and poor makes for another kind of unreality, a gulf in experience that cannot be bridged.”<sup>30</sup> Wilson was welcoming the diversity, complexity and undulations in urbanity, yet concerned about standardization. The key is to recognize the specificity of each nation’s pathway to urbanization<sup>31</sup> and the challenges it creates for work, health and education, while mitigating this specificity in relation to international examples, models and strategies.

The third tier city—although under-researched—offers much to researchers particularly with regard to local culture, theories of economic and social decline and

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<sup>25</sup> Tonkiss (2013).

<sup>26</sup> Newman and Kenworthy (1999).

<sup>27</sup> Soja (2004).

<sup>28</sup> D. MacCannell, *ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>29</sup> L. Sandercock, “The Death of radical planning: radical praxis for a postmodern age,” *ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson (2004).

<sup>31</sup> McCann and Smith (1991).

rejuvenation. Unable to replicate the strategies of Melbourne, Vancouver or Manchester, without infrastructural investment, they may stagnate and decompose without careful, incisive and specific policy development. Most gained a purpose and focus through the industrial revolution and Fordism.<sup>32</sup> After post-industrialization, attraction and retention of migrants becomes a concern.<sup>33</sup> But in an environment of creative industries, knowledge economy and Leadbeater's *Living on Thin Air*,<sup>34</sup> these third tier cities began to lose their purpose.

There are opportunities for these small cities to recover and bloom. Some cities adjust to change. Others do not. Landry presented some reasons for this pattern of success, failure and transformation.

Successful cities seemed to have some things in common—visionary individuals, creative organizations and a political culture sharing clarity of purpose.<sup>35</sup>

Third tier cities lack these attributes. As shown earlier in this book, they lack the policy structures to build relationships between sectors. Art is separated from economics. Certainly, that there is no checklist for recovery. There is little evidence that confirms the transferability of strategies between struggling cities.<sup>36</sup> What may work in Dubbo will not function in Hastings. What operates in Margate may not succeed in Invercargill. However outlining these strategies, policies and plans that have worked in a third tier city does offer opportunities and possibilities that are available to use in some form, but are rarely available because a lack of research. As David Bell and Mark Jayne realized,

Small cities have been ignored by urban theorists who, in seeking to conceptualize broad urban agendas and depict generalizable models (for example relating to epochal urbanism, the structure and nature of the urban hierarchy, global cities and global city-regions), have tended to obscure as much as they illuminate. Given that study of 'the city' has been vital to broader advances in the social sciences, this neglect of smaller urban centres has profound consequences for urban studies.<sup>37</sup>

This 'neglect' also has consequences for economic development, managing social inequalities and enabling access to not only the infrastructure but the opportunity to participate in sport and leisure, and develop healthy individuals and communities. Long commutes sap both life and time. Importantly, many workers live in third tier cities and work in global cities. For example, Eastbourne is an affluent—if uneven—town in the extreme south east of England. It is a 90 min train

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<sup>32</sup> Brown et al. (1996), Castro (1997/1998), Dudley (1994), Harrison (1993).

<sup>33</sup> Krahn et al. (2004).

<sup>34</sup> Leadbeater (1999).

<sup>35</sup> Landry (2004).

<sup>36</sup> Bill Baker realized that, "recommending the destination marketing practices of Las Vegas, New York City, and San Francisco to small cities is hardly appropriate. We have specifically designed this book for those ambitious communities that recognize that they must adopt the principles of a branded approach, despite having a modest budget," (Baker 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Bell and Jayne (2009).

trip to London Victoria, with the first train leaving the station at 5:08 am.<sup>38</sup> This train is filled with men working in London, alongside a few holidaymakers catching an early flight and disembarking at London Gatwick station. But the impact of 3 hours of commuting time each day must be recognized in all areas of a person's life. Relationships suffer.<sup>39</sup> Health declines.<sup>40</sup> Political engagement reduces.<sup>41</sup> One key solution to these nagging and corrosive social problems is that third tier cities be economically more robust and resilient, so that individuals, couples and families can live in these small cities and towns, but also work within them. By removing the commute, an array of new social and economic relationships can be formed.

The key advantage that makes an enormous difference to the life and time of residents in small cities is if they can live and work within these urban environments. The capacity to live and work in Luton, Bolton, Flint, Dunedin, Mackay or Mandurah is transformative. Lisa McLean, a Research Officer at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, captured the similarities and differences to her life in Sydney.

My life here is pretty much THE SAME as it was in inner Sydney... the disadvantage is I travel LONGER for the big stuff (e.g. to see big name artists/exhibitions etc.) and advantage is I travel LESS for the daily stuff like commuting to work, shopping, family activities. I hope that make sense. In inner Sydney I think your life contracts somewhat to your surrounding area but you have to fight like the devil to get anywhere!<sup>42</sup>

Global cities can be limited in terms of relationships, compressing into the local neighbourhood. But the ease of moving for 'daily stuff' is recognized as valuable by McLean. The challenge is that regional art and music in Australia is not strong. While there are some touring circuits, the south east corner of the country—Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra—is the magnet for major cultural events. To travel to these exhibitions and concerts—because of the poor transportation networks—is difficult.

The creative industries policy, strategy, ideology and agenda focused on success, entrepreneurship, ambition and positivity. These tropes dominated because most of the research emerged from management consultants, rather than experts in media and cultural policy or urban planners and architects. It was and is easier to write about Manchester and Seattle, rather than Aberdeen and Darwin. Yet as Lisa McLean's testimony recognizes, the bones of urbanity requires the flesh of a cultural life. When this is neglected, it creates a gap, absence and a desire to travel. The cities that have confronted difficulties engaging with the knowledge economy have been neglected. There is no low hanging fruit to collect and promote. Also, there seems a depressing inevitability to the decline in these small cities and towns. The drip-drip-drip of manufacturers and businesses moving to other regions or

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<sup>38</sup> Eastbourne to London Victoria, National Rail timetable, <http://ojp.nationalrail.co.uk/service/timesandfares/EBN/VIC/tomorrow/0445/dep>.

<sup>39</sup> Pamer (2013).

<sup>40</sup> Everett (2013).

<sup>41</sup> Inskeep and Vedantam (2013).

<sup>42</sup> L. McLean, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

countries, migrants choosing to arrive and reside in global cities, under-funded hospitals and struggling city councils creates an aura of hopelessness. This operates in stark contrast to the success stories of San Francisco<sup>43</sup> and Wellington<sup>44</sup> that have been acknowledged and celebrated. The challenges confronting the development of physical infrastructure and widening life choices for those living in Stoke,<sup>45</sup> Bathurst, Dubbo and Oshawa<sup>46</sup> have been underwritten. In 2009, a stark report has logged,

some of Canada's small and medium-sized cities with the heaviest concentration in manufacturing and automotive production are being punished the most by the current economic recession. Oshawa's economy, which is heavily dependent on auto production, is forecast to decline by 2.5 per cent in 2009. Kitchener–Waterloo, with a more diversified economy, is forecast to decline by 2.6 per cent. St. Catharines–Niagara is expected to suffer a decline of 2.7 per cent due to a fall in both manufacturing output and tourist activity. London is facing a decline of 2.8 per cent, unprecedented in its recent history. Given the expectation that Canada's automotive industry will be radically reshaped by the current restructuring, the pressure on these manufacturing-dependent urban centres to shift their local economy to more knowledge-intensive forms of production will be all the greater.<sup>47</sup>

This economic stagnation also has an effect on housing, education, health, fitness and sport. The alignments between education and health are starting to emerge in both national policies and the research literature. Australian studies in 2009–2010 confirmed that those citizens in work and with a higher educational attainment were the most active.<sup>48</sup> Often investigations of development and decline focus on the workforce, but the impact on leisure is less defined. The hub of New South Wales' inland cities—including Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga and Albury—confront distinct issues to small cities in Canada and the north of England. Better weather does enhance the opportunities for physical activity, particularly walking. But there are shared patterns involving depopulation, challenges with health and educational infrastructure, and stable employment that anchor third tier cities. Cathy Smith had a specific and distinctive view of these cities, having moved between them throughout her life.

I grew up in Trangie, west of Dubbo and moved to Orange when I started high school. While Orange was great for education and jobs, I don't think I ever recovered from leaving Trangie. I now live in Wellington, (NSW) and while education and jobs are challenging, the girls at Woolies know my kids, I know the name of staff at all the shops, I am friends with many of them. So for me it is firstly community. The second reason is that for me, I feel I

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<sup>43</sup> Florida (2003).

<sup>44</sup> Florida (2005a).

<sup>45</sup> Jayne (2004).

<sup>46</sup> For example, Oshawa is only mentioned as a place to source inter-regional tourism, rather than economic development, in Noble (2009).

<sup>47</sup> Wolfe (2009).

<sup>48</sup> *Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation*, Australia, 2009–2010, Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 21, 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/4177.0~2009-10~Main+Features~Characteristics+of+persons+who+participated?OpenDocument>.

can contribute and make a difference here, a feeling that I don't think I would experience in a city (and so much why I love teaching at CSU).<sup>49</sup>

This is a remarkable narrative and shows how residents can move between the small towns and small cities at different stages of their life, particularly punctuated by education, employment and family responsibilities. However Smith's evocative phrase—"I don't think I ever recovered from leaving Trangie"—confirms deep emotional ties and investments. These places may be small in population and land area, but are enormously resonant in people's lives.

These anchors make such cities and towns unpopular for urban researchers. Third tier cities rarely fit into such fashionable creative industries proxies such as the Bohemian Index<sup>50</sup> or the Creative Index.<sup>51</sup> Instead of only measuring the diversity, gay, creative or technology indices, attention to health, educational opportunities and diverse leisure activities are also required to render urban environments liveable, diverse and workable. For example, a range of national sporting policies that had emerged in the preceding decade, such as the British government's *A Sporting Future for All*,<sup>52</sup> the Australian government's *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability—A More Active Australia*,<sup>53</sup> SPARC's *Obstacles in Action: A Study of New Zealanders' Physical Activity and Nutrition*<sup>54</sup> and the United States' initiatives under the umbrella of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.<sup>55</sup> These initiatives maintain many variables in common:

1. The necessity for young people to be involved in organized sport, particularly in a school setting.
2. An awareness of the separate strategies required for elite sporting success and community participation.
3. Formulating strategies for citizens with diverse abilities and impairments to gain physical movement.
4. An awareness that sporting participation decreases with age.

Springing from these policy imperatives, scholars have logged injustices on the basis of gender, race and age.<sup>56</sup> There is some attention to the distinctions between

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<sup>49</sup> C. Smith, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Florida (2001).

<sup>51</sup> Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> *A Sporting Future For All*, (London: DCMS, 2000), <http://tblp.localknowledge.co.uk/Assets/3146/a%20sporting%20future%20for%20all.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability: A more active Australia*, (Canberra: Australian Institute of Sport, 2001), <http://fulltext.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/2001/feddep/active.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> *Obstacles to Action: A Study of New Zealanders' Physical Activity and Nutrition*, (SPARC, 2003), [http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/Publications/Obstacles%20to%20Action/Obstacles\\_to\\_Action\\_Overview\\_Report\\_2003.pdf](http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/Publications/Obstacles%20to%20Action/Obstacles_to_Action_Overview_Report_2003.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> *President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition*, <http://www.fitness.gov/>.

<sup>56</sup> Donnelly and Harvey (1999), Elling and Knoppers (2005), Flintoff (2005).



rural and urban environments.<sup>57</sup> But the specific challenges of third tier cities with declining infrastructure—particularly with regard to health and leisure—require focused attention. For example, the 2014 edition of Australia’s ‘The Biggest Loser’ was based in a Victorian town, Ararat. The takeaways, alcohol consumption and lack of exercise created a systemic problem throughout the town. Yet national documents—understandably—do not stress the specificities of town and small city cultures. The distinctive challenges of small cities, towns and rural environments remain under-discussed. This maxim is specifically exemplified by the inland cities in Australia. Therefore the next chapter takes this unique urbanity as a focus.

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<sup>57</sup> Loucaides et al. (2007).

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## Chapter 4

# Inland Possibilities

**Abstract** Australia as a nation—and like many nations—is sliced by a series of binary oppositions: east versus west, south versus north, urban versus regional, coastal versus inland. These binaries also punctuate narratives of indigeneity and immigration. But the power is held in and by the coastal cities in the southeast of Australia. While the capital of Canberra is inland, the two most influential and largest cities—Sydney and Melbourne—embrace the coast. This means that multiple disadvantages overlay inland, third-tier cities and towns. Each state has examples of them, such as Katherine in the Northern Territory and Northam and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. Even in the most populous state, New South Wales, a series of inland cities fan Sydney. Commencing at Port Macquarie in the north—which as the name suggests is hemmed by water—through to Albury in the south—these cities face structural disadvantages. They are all underserved by public transportation, face challenges in holding their population, health and education services, but also—structurally—have not developed relationships between them. Following the transportation infrastructure, the alignments are between Bathurst and Sydney, Dubbo and Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Sydney, and Albury and Sydney. Only one train operates each day connecting Bathurst and Dubbo and it commences—no surprise here—in Sydney. Every movement inland requires a return to a coastal, global city. There are no trains or buses that link Bathurst and Wagga Wagga. To catch a train to Wagga from Bathurst requires a detour via Sydney. There are no direct flights. To move between the regional hubs (such as Dubbo and Albury) requires a flight to Sydney and then back out to inland New South Wales. The disadvantages of hub and spoke travel—first flying or travelling to a global or second-tier city and then out to a third-tier city—involves added expense, inconvenience and time. Few options are made available for the young, the old and those with impairments. This is a profound structural limitation.

**Keywords** Transportation · Sustainability · Regionality · Mobility

Australia as a nation—and like many nations—is sliced by a series of binary oppositions: east versus west, south versus north, urban versus regional, coastal versus inland. These binaries also punctuate narratives of indigeneity and immigration. But the power is held in and by the coastal cities in the south east of Australia. While the capital of Canberra is inland, the two most influential and largest cities—Sydney and Melbourne—embrace the coast. This means that multiple disadvantages overlay inland, third tier cities and towns. Each state has examples of them, such as Katherine in the Northern Territory and Northam and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. Even in the most populous state, New South Wales, a series of inland cities fan Sydney. Commencing at Port Macquarie in the north—which as the name suggests is hemmed by water—through to Albury in the south—these cities face structural disadvantages. They are all underserved by public transportation, face challenges in holding their population, health and education services, but also—structurally—have not developed relationships between them (McCann and Ward 2010). Following the transportation infrastructure, the alignments are between Bathurst and Sydney, Dubbo and Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Sydney, and Albury and Sydney. Only one train operates each day connecting Bathurst and Dubbo and it commences—no surprise here—in Sydney. Every movement inland requires a return to a coastal, global city. There are no trains or buses that link Bathurst and Wagga Wagga. To catch a train to Wagga from Bathurst requires a detour via Sydney. There are no direct flights. To move between the regional hubs (such as Dubbo and Albury) requires a flight to Sydney and then back out to inland New South Wales. The disadvantages of hub and spoke travel—first flying or travelling to the global or second tier city and then out to a third tier city—involves added expense, inconvenience and time. This problem is termed, a “lack of inter modal integration” (Pooja et al. 2013). Few options are made available for the young, the old and those with impairments. This lack of infrastructure is made more serious because Charles Sturt University has campuses at each of these small cities. So staff and students do move between Wagga and Bathurst. Therefore, the only option is to drive for 4 or 5 hours between campuses, as all buses, trains and flights detour through Sydney.

This is a profound structural limitation. It is also ignoring international growth and commitment to public transport. As Peter Newman, Jeffrey Kenworthy and Garry Glazebrook realized,

There is now a major rail revival around the world, including light rail, metro rail, heavy rail, and high-speed rail. This reflects growing concerns by city, regional and national governments about the need to make their transportation systems more sustainable, their cities more liveable, and their economies more resilient to future shocks from the peaking of oil supplies and from the need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the face of global warming. Some cities such as Seoul are even looking to how urban rail, in conjunction with tearing down of major freeway infrastructure, can help to create regenerative urban environments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Newman et al. (2013).

The more that regional Australia commits to roads, the less modern, innovative and connected to international movements to sustainability and economic growth the nation appears.<sup>2</sup> Light rail is a particularly important option. Newman, Kenworthy and Glazebrook realized that there are particular characteristics of small cities that are ready to move to light rail:

- Oriented towards a knowledge economy and/or service economy
- Walkable CBD
- Traffic congestion is a concern
- Young people are moving to the city
- There is entertainment and a cultural life in the city centre.<sup>3</sup>

For the network of inland cities in New South Wales, these trigger points are not surfacing. But the challenge remains: what is to be done to revive a declining inner city? How is that spark of interest returned to provide opportunities for walking, experiencing, shopping and learning?

Transportation systems for multi-city regions requires both focus and intent. The growing cities have railways to airports, effective local rail services and walkability.<sup>4</sup> Poticha confirmed the reality of transportation and urban development:

automobiles promote dispersed development, but trains promote compact, concentrated development around stops along the system. Airports also promote concentrated development. Together the two are a potent combination. Integrating airports and rail systems does more than reduce congestion; its built up the airport as a regional urban location.<sup>5</sup>

Short-sightedness in infrastructure blocks regional development. It stops businesses creating non-Sydney based solutions to staffing, logistics and strategic planning. This is distinct from the vision and structures offered by Will Alsop and his Supercity. Reconfiguring a future for the north of England, he created overarching visions and structures from Liverpool to Hull, while understanding the transportation, leisure, housing and shopping requirements of the ‘Supercity.’<sup>6</sup>

For much of the twentieth century, especially the second half, sensible planning was regarded as the saviour of the city. Much of this activity concentrated on denial and impermissible activity, unless you happened to be driving a car. There was an assumption that suburban dwelling was a common goal for most people, accompanied by car ownership, a sizable garden, modern schools for your children with large windows and playing fields ... At the turn of the current century, prevailing economic and social factors have now driven local planning systems into such disarray that the idea of planned cities is now questionable.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of rurality and sustainability in Australia, refer to Cocklin and Dibden (2005).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> Poticha (2007).

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Alsop (2005).

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

From dispersed, suburban living, the potential of increased density, reduced travelling distances and times between home and work, and a reinvestment in ‘the public,’ particularly with regard to transportation and space, were new goals created by innovators such as Richard Rogers.<sup>8</sup> Alsop’s vision, while recognizing the reality of roads, cars and the M62 from coast to coast, is distinct from the lived reality of inland New South Wales cities and towns, but still summons a balance between the excitement of Manchester and Barnsley’s “monoculture of pub ‘n’ club”<sup>9</sup> His desire was to create an alignment between the local and the regional, while not tethering or linking the north with London, or indeed Birmingham. Instead, by building trans-localism, health, leisure and working opportunities and vistas are increased. Third tier cities are supported by connections with the second tier.

Airports also matter to this discussion of regionality. Manchester has a domestic and international airport, tethered to a train line that enables direct boarding of flights for all visitors, with strong enabling structures for men and women with disabilities. It means that Manchester, as a second tier city, is able to service Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield (three other major second tier cities) with ease. London Gatwick is similarly serviced, as is Frankfurt. Multiple carriers move in and out of these airports. However third tier cities also have smaller, underserved airports. They are connected by road, rather than rail, and have unstable, smaller carriers or are limited to a single carrier because of a small number of travellers. Orange—a regional city between Bathurst and Dubbo—lost a range of options because its primary air carrier Brindabella was placed into receivership.<sup>10</sup> The company also had neglected to pay passenger fees to these regional airports.<sup>11</sup> This is the deep challenge of a small city being served by a small airport and small airline.

This blockage to mobility would always be challenging to manage, but the airport is a key hub in an online-dominated environment. Such a statement may seem counterintuitive, when recognizing the reality of peak oil and the necessity for sustainable transportation options. However Greg Lindsay argued in *Aerotropolis* that we are reaching the point where the airport is the city and the centre of its development.<sup>12</sup> Cities are built around the dominant transportation of the time. For the modern city, those dominant platforms are the automobile and the internet. But the challenge is how to move goods bought online to consumers.<sup>13</sup> Zappos and Amazon’s fulfilment centres are necessary hubs to deliver on the online shopping impulse. Therefore the airport is a required delivery hub for online shopping.

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<sup>8</sup> Rogers (1997).

<sup>9</sup> Alsop, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> “Troubled Brindabella airlines goes into receivership,” *ABC News*, December 16, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-12-16/troubled-brindabella-airlines-goes-into-receivership/5158092>.

<sup>11</sup> Colley (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Lindsay (2011).

<sup>13</sup> A fascinating early intervention In this discussion was from Gilbert and Perl (2006).

Transportation policies not only regenerate communities and relieve traffic congestion, but create an integration of work and family life. There are social costs and wasted hours in cars, aircraft and trains because of a disconnection between home and income creation. Gerry Rafferty, while best known for the song ‘Baker Street’ that captured the desolation and isolation of London, also revealed the stresses and strains of trans-city transportation. In ‘City to City,’<sup>14</sup> Rafferty wrote about the need to move for work, and the costs to his relationship. What makes this song so special is that both the instrumentation and lyric capture the experience of commuting via train. The rhythm track reverberates as if the lyrics are travelling over tracks. There is also an autobiographical element. While living in Glasgow, London was the hub of the music industry. Many of Rafferty’s early songs engage with his desire to balance his life and work, the north and the south, Scotland and England.<sup>15</sup>

Movement is not only important to popular culture. Mobility is perhaps the most important concept in the contemporary social sciences. John Urry is particularly associated with this area of study. The Centre for Mobilities Research (CeMoRe) is at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom.<sup>16</sup> The organization holds conferences<sup>17</sup> and publishes a journal.<sup>18</sup> This innovative scholarship provides an entrée into a key truth of our time: mobility is a new marker of class and power. Those who have power have the choice to move. Those who lack power are immobile. Powerful companies, corporations and individuals are able to move through space and gain profit from exploiting an immobile labour force. Once these immobile workers with few choices are exploited, the goods and services they produce at a low cost can then be exported around the world. Corporations can move. Money moves. Poor workers cannot. Mobility is also popular. Most of the technological platforms that have become part of popular culture, whether cars, mobile phones or iPods, exist at a node or point where humans encounter technology in their daily lives.<sup>19</sup> Most often these products affirm individuality and the right of the individual to consume without consequences or limits. Throughout the twentieth century, ‘freedom’ was defined as the capacity of an individual to choose the time of their departure, arrival and transportation mode. An individual person in a car, travelling to work, became not only an aspiration, but a mode of normality. John Renne and Billy Fields reported that—at the point of the Deepwater Horizon disaster which poured oil into the Gulf of Mexico in 2010—“seventy percent of all oil consumed

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<sup>14</sup> Rafferty (1999), track 11.

<sup>15</sup> For a further discussion of Gerry Rafferty’s contribution to popular music and cities, refer to Brabazon (2012).

<sup>16</sup> Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/centres/cemore/>.

<sup>17</sup> “Events,” Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/centres/cemore/event>.

<sup>18</sup> “Publications,” Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/centres/cemore/journals.html>.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of media mobility, refer to Green and Haddon (2009).



in the United States goes to the transportation sector, mostly powering single-occupant vehicles that Americans use for 82 % of all trips.”<sup>20</sup> This is not necessarily the fault of individuals, but to create change necessitates new ways of thinking about power, agency, movement and freedom. For small cities, the decades of neglect have had an impact in the development of alternatives for transportation. Living in the United Kingdom—south and north—for much of decade, I did not drive and did not own a car. I lived and worked in the small and second-tier cities of Eastbourne, Brighton, Bolton and Manchester. The public transportation was so good that there was no inconvenience or problem in relying on the railways. My life, work and leisure were not inhibited in any way. I attended the gym each morning, bought groceries and easily moved between my house and university employment. At the point of moving back to Australia—to regional New South Wales—I made the rather startling realization that I would once more have to drive—after a decade away from the steering wheel. There was no choice to consider regular railways or buses. They were not available. So once more, it was necessary to buy a car and run it. Even those wishing to use alternative transportation modes find it impossible to do so.

Therefore, a new way to think about class-based difference and inequality with high relevance to city imaging is mobility or immobility. It is important to note that while the twentieth century activated the expansion and rights to individual mobility, the current century will be different. Deborah Gordon and David Burwell realized that “climate is a condition that will define the twenty-first century, especially global mobility.”<sup>21</sup> Transportation and climate are linked. The removal of traditional working class communities to the edges of cities was done at a time when effective public transport was available to carry employees to a workplace and consciousness about the environment and environmental damage was outside of popular culture and lived experience. These local services declined and public transportation provisions reduced. Men and women living in these areas were and are disconnected from education, health, leisure and employment services. They are trapped. Generational disadvantages result. Living in a poor area, which is difficult to travel out of, has consequences for health. Finding healthy food is difficult. There are few places to exercise. These structural challenges are exacerbated in areas of poor weather, where the availability of high quality and affordable gyms, swimming pools, aerobic centres are required to assist health and wellbeing. Instead, in poor areas, there is little access to gyms or health care, but junk food is easy to find. This region has been termed *Edgelands* by Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts.<sup>22</sup> They were particularly focused on the urban edge, called “waste

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<sup>20</sup> Renne and Fields (2013).

<sup>21</sup> Gordon and Burwell, “The role of transportation in climate disruption,” in *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Farley and Roberts (2011).

places.”<sup>23</sup> Neil Sipe and Jago Dodson described them as a “regressive city region.”<sup>24</sup> They realized that low incomes and high debt—alongside higher transportation and housing costs—meant that this group was not likely to consider alternative modes of moving, walking and living. These are vulnerable areas, lacking resources to create change. Part of this waste captures a neglect of public environments, but also how to manage the damage and ruins of industrialization. The edge is liminal: unstable, dangerous, but also intriguing.

A sense of a community with a shared history is also created. Kelly Ragoobar recognized this tapestry of relationships in Oshawa.

An advantage of living in a third tier city such as Oshawa, is that there is a seemingly greater developed sense of community and identity to self and origin via the small proximity of the city limits (small town living, everyone knows where everything is, where to go, how to find what/who they’re looking for). It’s like the TV show *Cheers* where everybody knows your name, there’s a certain comfort in third tier cities. While there’s a stigma still in existence from outsiders, those inside know, there’s really no place like home to truly be at peace.

Everyone seems to know where they come from and have a pride within themselves because they know that they can only grow from there. Globalization won’t disastrously affect their bubble or their community even though it now connects them to the world.

See, a third tier city is secure enough in itself to adapt to changes with technology and societal structures but still retain a stronghold on tradition in such a way that the basics become enviable strengths—that at a glance, can make these small communities resemble foreign empires.<sup>25</sup>

The insularity and stagnation can be read as belonging and familiarity. Another resident of Oshawa read this tradition and continuity differently. Ophelia Thomas stated that,

One thing I’ve noticed about Oshawa is that the culture is homogeneous in nature. Many of the establishments are the same but with different names. No matter where you go you are seeing and experiencing the same type of people. This can be an advantage for some as there is a certain comfort that comes from monotony. However, compared to an immensely diverse city like Toronto it becomes apparent how a lack of diversity can make life in a little city seem behind the times. It’s as if little cities are designed to be places of refuge from change and diversity. This can be seen in how the transportation is set up in little cities. It is designed to discourage travel into and outside of the area with infrequently running buses/trains.<sup>26</sup>

Ragoobar is reading globalization as a positive force, yet “the bubble” did burst. Thomas offered an evocative and fundamentally depressing reading of small cities. They are monotonous, lacking diversity, dated and contain few transportation

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sipe and J. Dodson, “Oil Vulnerability in the American City,” in Renne and Fields (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>25</sup> K. Ragoobar, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> O. Thomas, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

services. Her phrase—“refuge from change and diversity” is in equal measure powerful and disturbing. What can be read as tradition and community is also suffocating and inward.

Fascinating new models and theories of mobility and inequality are emerging after the Global Financial Crisis. The excesses of finance capitalism shredded particular economies and sectors.<sup>27</sup> Angus Deaton, in *The Great Escape: health, wealth and the origins of inequality*, argued that “inequality is often a consequence of progress.”<sup>28</sup> This interpretative knight’s move acknowledges that the world is a healthier place than fifty years ago, but social injustices between groups have increased. While economic growth is a strategy to reduce poverty, that growth is stagnating at the same time as—particularly in the United States—inequality is increasing.<sup>29</sup> Such a realization maps over the injustices of urbanity. The next chapter takes this framing of third tier cities and explores how to intervene, change and challenge structural inequalities.

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<sup>27</sup> Angus Deaton described this inequality in stark terms. He stated, “financial services have played an important role in financing innovation throughout the economy, and the efficient allocation of capital is one of the most valuable tasks in a market economy. But there is widespread suspicion that some highly profitable financial activities are of little benefit to the population as a whole, and may even threaten the stability of the financial system—what investor and businessman Warren Buffett has called financial weapons of mass destruction. If so, the very high payments that come with them are both unjust and inefficient. The heavy recruitment of the best minds into financial engineering is a loss to the rest of the economy, likely reducing innovation and growth elsewhere. What is much less controversial is that the implicitly guarantee that the government would bail out the largest and most highly interconnected institutions led to excessive risk taking that was highly rewarded, even though it led to collapse and to misery for the millions who lost their jobs, faced reductions in incomes, or were left with debts that they could not hope to repay. That people playing with their own and their clients’ money should get rich is one thing; that they should do so with public money is quite another. If these activities cause widespread social harm, the situation is intolerable,” from Deaton (2013).

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## Chapter 5

# When a Place Finds a Purpose

**Abstract** What do a car race, apple blossom festival and an Elvis weekend have in common? The answer is that each of these events hook into three strategies to create tourism, profile and economic development in third-tier cities in the Central West of New South Wales in Australia. Such strategies combine entrepreneurialism, natural advantages in the landscape and luck. Urban environments, at their best, create a matrix between landscape, economic development and social behaviour. At their best, organic and productive relationships emerge between these variables, creating imaginative, dynamic and innovative patterns in daily life. The generic policies for the creative industries and city imaging provide the basic framework to consider the changing nature of urbanity. The problem is how to decode, translate and filter these agendas for very distinctive environments and outcomes.

**Keywords** Event management • Tourism • Regional development • Intelligent cities • Evocities

What do a car race, apple blossom festival and an Elvis weekend have in common? The answer is that each of these events hook into three strategies to create tourism, profile and economic development in third tier cities in the Central West of New South Wales in Australia. Such strategies combine entrepreneurialism, natural advantages in the landscape and luck. Urban environments, at their best, create a matrix between landscape, economic development and social behaviour. Organic and productive relationships emerge between these variables, creating imaginative, dynamic and innovative patterns in daily life (Middleton, 1999). The generic policies for the creative industries and city imaging provide the basic framework to consider the changing nature of urbanity. The problem is how to decode, translate and filter these agendas for very distinctive environments and outcomes. I understand these challenges, having worked in small cities in Canada, England and Australia. Currently, I am resident in Bathurst, one of a series of inland cities in New South Wales that arc out from Sydney. This fan of inland cities are unusual, particularly considering that 80 % of the Australian population hug the coast. Bathurst is an important

site of study. Known for ‘the great race’—the Bathurst 1000<sup>1</sup>—it offers both international branding and an economic spike for the city each year. Yet there remains an ambivalence from the residents. This event is separated and distinct from the lived experience of this small city. What is happening to the health, mobility and sporting participation beyond this single annual event in the city’s calendar? Further, what can we learn about regional Australian cities, particularly inland environments, from such a place?

To augment and improve creative industries and city imaging thinking in and through these specialist third tier cities, it is important that this project moves beyond diagnosis and description. Instead, there is an imperative to align the narrative of a city with the life cycle of its participants. Bathurst both fits the profile of third tier cities, and maintains an aspiration and trajectory for change. This city was—and is—best known as the home of a day-long motor race. It is an educational hub that houses Charles Sturt University. It (almost) manages the pull towards Sydney,<sup>2</sup> but suffers from a poor transportation infrastructure, particularly with regard to cheap and publically-available facilities. A similar example is Luton in the United Kingdom, which also houses a university (Bedfordshire), but is too close to London to resist its pull, and lacks the specificity of event management. Oshawa in Canada now has a university—the University of Ontario Institute of Technology—but is tethered to the global centre of Toronto. Bolton in the north of England also maintains a university, but it is part of the Lancashire towns that is collapsing into Greater Manchester. Bathurst is internationally unusual because it features one major, internationally-known sporting event.

Most third tier cities are unknown outside of their region. Bathurst is distinct. The Napa Valley is another exception, branded through wine production. This branding does present advantages and consequences. Mick Winter stated that,

Napa Valley and its wine and food have been ‘discovered’ in the last few decades. The result: High cost of living, expensive housing, yet low tourist industry wages. Lots of expensive restaurants offering cuisine, very few moderately-priced restaurants offering food. Lots of wine-tasting bars, very few beer joints. Large cities can easily absorb many tourists; third-tier cities not so much. Can cause wrenching changes.<sup>3</sup>

Winter has captured the double-edge of branding and notoriety. Tourists bring a revenue stream. They also warp the life of residents. These challenges were also noted by Chris Egan about Mandurah, a third tier city south of Perth in Western Australia. Mandurah is now the second largest city in Western Australia, and this growth has been rapid, facilitated by a train line connecting it to Perth. Because of the speed of growth, there has been a warping of services and identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Bathurst 1000, <http://www.bathurst1000.com.au/>.

<sup>2</sup> It is rare for workers to live in Sydney and commute to Bathurst. The distance is too great, the trains too slow and the flights too unreliable. Some academics at Charles Sturt University do manage this arrangement through working at home for some part of each week. But enacting a commute as exists between Luton and London or Eastbourne and London would not be possible.

<sup>3</sup> M. Winter, Facebook Post, January 17, 2013.

I live close to Mandurah, which as a small city is a disaster. So much potential and it's just got urban sprawl, even in the inner hub. I just have to add if we compare Rockingham/Mandurah (which you would understand is one of the major topics of conversation in the Peel region) Rockingham City Centre has developed much better than Mandurah City Centre. Maybe it's because it doesn't try to be a tourist city, or its high rise has been aimed at a lower entrance point, but the city vibe is not full of For Lease signs like Mandurah is. Mandurah needs to start offering incentives for offices for companies such as iinet or FMG to start to bring new middle income jobs to the city. The big apartment building near the traffic bridge had sold 4 apartments out of a total of 30 last time I checked.<sup>4</sup>

The opening story of this book found a competitiveness between Broome and Darwin. Similarly, there is an adversarial relationship between Rockingham and Mandurah. Facebook pages are filled with commentary and memes disrespecting the other city.<sup>5</sup> That is why Egan focused on 'middle income jobs.' Rockingham is known for bogans.<sup>6</sup> With the boom in mining jobs in Western Australia, both unskilled and skilled workers have been offered a range of 'Fly in Fly out' (FIFO) jobs. This has created a new cliché and undesirable archetype for Rockingham: 'CUBS' (Cashed up Bogans). Therefore the differences between Rockingham and Mandurah are being stressed, particularly by residents in the latter city. This is not only about urbanity, but class.

Significantly though, the inland cities of New South Wales as a collective also have another advantage, created by a network of universities to service the population and deploy online learning and distance education far beyond the region. As shown in earlier chapters, universities matter to this story, but cannot be a solitary singular engine for development. Often forgotten are the diversity of employment opportunities in a university, and its tethered service industries. While academics are the most visible, a large suite of administrators—from finance to human resources to legal and governance to information technology—are required. Cleaning and hospitality staff are needed, alongside an array of shops and services to keep this large organization in food, clothing and an array of services such as banking, stationery, security, software, hardware and books. Universities—in and of themselves—are complex organizations. That is why they matter in third tier cities, which were often mono-industrial in their formation. Rendering such spaces, economies and populations complex is a challenge. But universities are a strong first step in enabling this diversity.

Nicos Komninou developed the phrase "intelligent cities."<sup>7</sup> This concept builds on the configurations of learning regions and organizational learning to develop "regional systems of innovation."<sup>8</sup> Attendant to such systems is an understanding of

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<sup>4</sup> C. Egan, Facebook Posts, January 17, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Mandurah memes, <http://www.facebook.com/MandurahMemes?fref=ts> and Rockingham memes, <http://www.facebook.com/RockinghamMemes>.

<sup>6</sup> "Rockingham makes the punch bogan top 10," Perth Now, August 4, 2009, <http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/rockingham-makes-the-punch-bogan-top-10/story-e6fgr12c-1225757775604>.

<sup>7</sup> N. Komninou, *Intelligent Cities: Building 3rd Generation systems of innovation*, <http://uwforum.org/upload/board/intel-cities-overview-city-college-2008.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

the actors in this system, how they interact, and the technology available to create competitive strengths over other regions. When extended, an “intelligent city” emerges, integrating individual, collective and artificial intelligence in a specific setting.<sup>9</sup> The goal is to create innovation through social cooperation.<sup>10</sup> While Komninou does not mention the role of schools and universities in such a scheme, online learning offers an extraordinary opportunity to collaborate, innovate and disseminate, serving to brand and market the university in the process.

Not so retrospect in valuing education, Pierre Filion, Heidi Hoernig, Trudi Bunting and Gary Sands provide a checklist for success in small cities.

These districts nearly always cumulate advantages that are exceptional among small-metro downtowns—close proximity of a university, a state capital (in the U.S.), or provincial legislature (in Canada); a strong historical character; and a powerful tourist appeal.<sup>11</sup>

While Bathurst and most third tier cities lack at least some of these attributes, the positioning of a university campus in Bathurst and an annual event that attracts tourists provides an impetus for a sustainable population, if not growth.<sup>12</sup> Rockhampton in Central Queensland in Australia found a similar impetus for improvement. As the meat industry declined, Central Queensland University gained an increasing importance for labour and economic development. Similarly, Guelph has the advantage of the University of Guelph.<sup>13</sup> The arrival of staff and students in such third tier cities not only feeds a night time economy, but also creates an urban, mobile and educated group of consumers in a downtown that confronts depopulation and crime.

The difficulty emerges when the third tier city is so close to a global or second tier city that the University simply becomes a commuter institution. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa is an example. Less than one hour’s drive from Toronto and with a lack of housing options and opportunities particularly in the downtown, students attend the campus, but leave the area after the conclusion of their classes. Rundown housing, a lack of venues to buy food, coffee or alcohol, and an inability to participate in an active social life are all deterrents to this location.

There is another variable that is important to consider when probing the relationships between universities and small cities: knowledge sharing. If academics are present in these specific social environments, then some of the scholars can and should deploy their research time to assist the local community. This sharing of expertise particularly matters in these locations. While universities are “knowledge intensive environments,”<sup>14</sup> the capacity to disseminate that research to a diversity of

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Filion et al. (2004).

<sup>12</sup> The importance of a university to second-tier cities was outlined by Walton-Roberts (2011).

<sup>13</sup> Mulholland (2006).

<sup>14</sup> Fullwood et al. (2013).



audiences is important. A separation between ‘gown’ and ‘town’ is not helpful to either. Universities are unusual workplaces, but they can be incredibly valuable to their communities for not only lifelong learning, but as a font of expertise, innovation and change management. It is also important for academics to ensure their knowledge speaks with and to its environment.<sup>15</sup>

Branding and marketing—particularly in a period of accelerated modernity and user generated content—can completely disconnect from landscape and history. Places can be configured, invented and—to use Benedict Anderson’s evocative phrase—imagined.<sup>16</sup> More precisely, third tier cities cannot maintain a uniform, sustainable high profile. The only way they can enter regional and national discourse is via an event and event management. With current economic development a focus, such schemes may be nostalgic, as is the case of the Henry Lawson Festival in Grenfell<sup>17</sup> or the Banjo Patterson Festival in Orange.<sup>18</sup> Such invented or imagined communities, traditions and histories are not necessarily fake, inauthentic or artificial.<sup>19</sup> There is an authenticity to this inauthenticity.<sup>20</sup> These festivals summon a populist, literary, colonial Australia of ballads and bushmen. The absences and gaps are significant, particularly with regard to indigenous Australia and migrant Australia. There are certainly economic benefits to the creation of this simple, clean, comforting colonial past. But as Fiona Allon realized, “the recognition and maintenance of cultural memory and difference may not simply be a negative preoccupation with the ‘local.’”<sup>21</sup> Some cities have created a profoundly productive localism.

At this point, a key argument and strategy for third tier cities is being presented and offered for evaluation. For third tier cities, event management is the key. They cannot dominate space, but they can dominate a (short) period of time in their region, and perhaps nation. The key challenge is to mobilize event management to improve the life of residents in the city. Greg Richards and Robert Palmer confirmed that events can “help ‘make’ places.”<sup>22</sup> They show how events can render cities more liveable and how they can be the carrier for wider social, economic and cultural objectives.<sup>23</sup> Their key examples are from the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) programme that has been held since 1985. Their research—published after

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<sup>15</sup> Collinson and Cook (2003).

<sup>16</sup> Anderson (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Henry Lawson Festival, <http://www.henrylawsonfestival.com.au>.

<sup>18</sup> Banjo Patterson Festival, Slow Summer Orange, <http://www.tasteorange.com.au/slowsummer.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of tourism, authenticity, inauthenticity and postmodernism, refer to John Frow’s “Tourism and the semiotics of Nostalgia,” *October*, Vol. 51, 1991.

<sup>20</sup> The phrase ‘authentic inauthenticity,’ comes from Grossberg et al. (1988).

<sup>21</sup> Allon (2000).

<sup>22</sup> Richards and Palmer (2010).

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

the Global Financial Crisis—captured the stark nature of choices available for cities. None of Florida’s 3Ts or indices could mask their stark reality.

Cities of today face two choices. Either they develop to meet the challenges created by the pace of global change, or they resist the impulse for transformation and stagnate. At a time when economic systems are no longer predictable, in order to remain competitive, cities are turning to strategies that focus on their own innate resources—their histories, spaces, creative energy and talents.<sup>24</sup>

This is particularly poignant considering the infrastructural neglect of most third tier cities. The small city is confronting challenges, but the marketing (or at least the definition) of ‘creative energy’ is necessary. While the meaning of such a phase is ambiguous, it is obvious that for certain regions, they need (desperately) Richard Florida and the creative industries/city imaging discourse to hold at least some truth: “The new centrality of culture in urban policy was linked to a series of externalities, such as the need to stimulate economic growth, the need to bolster social inclusion and the changing urban landscape.”<sup>25</sup> Within such an argument, the marketing of culture becomes the economic strategy of last resort. When the city becomes a stage, infrastructure becomes a prop.

Events such as festivals are crucial to third tier cities. Their success is reliant on transforming a concept, historical accident or imaginative idea into a practical application and outcome. It is a movement from ideas into experiences. Put another way, this is the movement from city marketing to city branding.<sup>26</sup> Global and second tier cities dominate film festivals (Toronto, Cannes, Venice, Berlin). But food offers enormous potential for third tier cities—particularly when they are the gateway or hub for agricultural regions. A fine example from Halifax is ‘Catch,’ the Nova Scotia Seafood Festival.<sup>27</sup>

These examples do matter, because scholars and policy makers require an evidential base to develop new theories for growth, change, development and assistance during difficult times. City imaging requires targeted attention to and for these smaller cities and towns. It requires commitment from university scholars in these environments. Certainly they pose challenges for academics. The lack of bookshops, expansive collegial engagement and international partnerships make such environments difficult for scholars. But the need for expertise is obvious. Bill Baker realized that,

In most cases, cities of this size can’t always afford wide-ranging consumer research or high-profile advertising campaigns. Yet, there remains the need for them to stand out from the crowd in order to attract more visitors, more talented people, more inward, investment, and more new businesses.<sup>28</sup>

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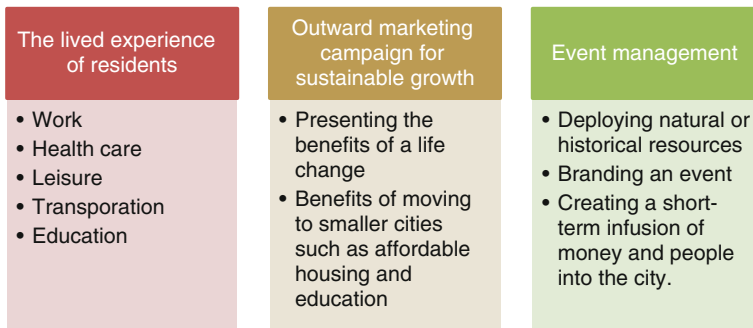
<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>27</sup> Catch, <http://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/catch-the-nova-scotia-seafood-festival/Event?oid=1697601>.

<sup>28</sup> Baker (2007).



**Fig. 5.1** Three strategies for third tier cities

Therefore without a focused research and developmental support from scholars working in these regions, there is little momentum or assistance for small businesses and local governments to create change. Specifically, the use of social media and user generated content can create a profile with minimal investment. Particularly, assistance with geosocial networking strategies would be of value, digitizing places and histories and allowing them to move.

Creative industries and city imaging policies, strategies and agendas will look different in these places. But they will claim a moment in time, rather than a generic branding or marketing strategy. Budgets will be small. Goals—which may become key performance indicators—will be conservative, long-term and difficult to measure. Part of the challenge to address is neglect. The dominance of finance capitalism in global cities—alongside the boom in ‘lifestyle’ capitalism in second tier cities—means that third tier cities and towns are decentred, marginalized, denied and forgotten. Therefore the ‘brand’ of these cities has never been addressed directly. It is difficult to start this process now because of the hyper-availability of information via the read-write web that discredits and undermines the life of those living in these places.

When developing a strategy, there are three areas to address and manage when considering and constructing the future for these small cities (Fig. 5.1). Firstly, there must be attention to the lived experience of residents. Is there sufficient work? Is health care reasonably available and of quality? Can healthy food be purchased and physical activity be conducted? Is it possible to move through the life cycle with needs and demands met? Ben Gelin, who has been a lawyer in the largest global cities and in Bathurst, located a clear disadvantage of the latter as providing “fewer and often poorer government services.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore and secondly, it is important to develop a campaign in places where the lived experience of residents is so attractive that sustainable growth is enabled. Thirdly, event

<sup>29</sup> B. Gelin, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

management is a short-term strategy to enable the infusion of money and people into a city or town for a day or weekend.

The second strategy to be stressed in this book is a ‘top down’ policy to build relationships between third tier cities. One example is currently being trialed in inland New South Wales. The specific campaign is titled Evocities.<sup>30</sup> It provides both information and financial incentives to move to one of the small inland cities of the state. The slogan of the initiative is, “Evocity is not a sea change, not a tree change but a CITY CHANGE.”<sup>31</sup> The attractions and assumptions of urbanity are captured within this phrase. There is the notion that the attractions of the city are not lost, but there are advantage to education and lifestyle through the movement. While success of this scheme is debatable, there is an attempt to create mobility, new skills and sustainability. The major goal for such campaigns is to ensure that external branding and marketing can create and attract businesses to these small cities. Without work and a diversity of employment options, these cities die.

Evocities has some international heritage. It is part of a framework termed Constructing Regional Advantage (CRA). While deployed in large and affluent regions, there is an emerging literature investigating how it can operate when aligning small cities with less developed infrastructure.<sup>32</sup> Tanja Buch, Silke Hamann, Annekatrin Niebuhr and Anja Rossen realized that labour migration is an integral determinate to the future of cities. They discovered that “amenities” had an impact on triggering movement from workers and their families. They argued for an “urban policy aimed at enhancing the attractiveness of cities ... both boosting the local economy and improving the quality of life.”<sup>33</sup>

Arne Isaksen and James Karlsen configured three layers of CRAs for small regions (Fig. 5.2). Of particular focus and necessity are “different kinds of support from the regional institutional and knowledge infrastructure.”<sup>34</sup>

This support can locate, track and map regional specificities and advantages and mobilize them in a way that is appropriate for specific industries. Innovation rarely emerges in isolation.<sup>35</sup> The goal is clustering, yet without competition between cities.<sup>36</sup>

The Evocities campaign attempts to reduce the competition between these inland cities and fosters the migration of people and businesses to one of these locations, dependent upon goals, interests and employment. All seven cities have set aside funding for the scheme, which is also supported by the New South Wales (state) government. A website is maintained ([www.evocities.com.au](http://www.evocities.com.au)), alongside a twitter

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<sup>30</sup> *Evocities*, New South Wales Government, <http://www.evocities.com.au>.

<sup>31</sup> “About evocities,” Evocities, New South Wales Government, <http://www.evocities.com.au/about-evocities/>.

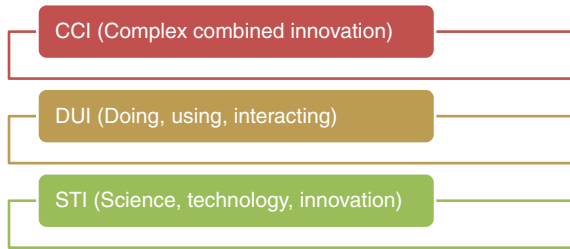
<sup>32</sup> Isaksen and Karlsen (2012).

<sup>33</sup> Buch et al. (2013).

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>35</sup> Fagerberg et al. (2005).

<sup>36</sup> Asheim et al. (2005).



**Fig. 5.2** Constructing regional advantage (CRA) in small cities. Diagram developed from Isaksen and Karlson (2012, p. 243)

feed (@evocities). While reducing the internal competition between these small urban locations, the goal is to critique and discredit the ‘capital city.’

On the maps featured on the Evocities website,<sup>37</sup> Sydney is not named or positioned on the map. Instead, it is signified by the concrete sails of the Opera House. The goal for Evocities as a project is to create a workable plan to move from Sydney, over the Blue Mountains and inland. The assumption—and the target—is that people in Sydney will be the ‘market’ of the movers. When the mouse hovers over each of the cities, the information provided is significant: population, mean property price, schools and distance from Sydney. This information captures who the target audience is for this scheme. The goal is to encourage families to move inland. The audience is parents with children looking to buy a house. That is why the focus is on ‘family life,’ ‘lifestyle,’ ‘housing,’ ‘affordability’ and ‘education.’ This is not a scheme for Richard Florida’s creative class. The goal is not to increase the Bohemian Index of WaggaWagga or to create a coffee culture in Albury. Instead, the emphasis is on work, housing and education. This is a very different way of developing a strategy for third-tier cities. It has enormous potential and should be supported. The challenge is that such a ‘lifestyle’ policy does not necessarily align with the much more Richard Florida inspired ‘EVO’ shorthand, which stand for Energy, Vision and Opportunity. The first two words are not signified or captured by the project, and the ‘opportunity’ that is presented is cheap housing and a range of schools. This is a nostalgic rendering of opportunity, but it does demonstrate that the Global Financial Crisis has triggered a rebooting and reassessment of aspiration and entrepreneurialism.<sup>38</sup>

A conservative and restricted aspiration is offered: of family, cheap housing, schools and jobs. This is a particular version of a family that may create social limitations and restrictions. Anne McLeod, a university academic in Dubbo, recognized the values and challenges in her city.

<sup>37</sup> Evocities, <http://www.evocities.com.au/>.

<sup>38</sup> A profound and reflexive example of the role of (repetitive) crises in neoliberalism is in Mirowski (2013).

Dubbo has a great sense of community and has enough modern facilities to keep you going. Unfortunately because we are in central NSW we end up being a little behind the times in our thinking. It took 2 years for my husband to be accepted as a home dad and for me to be accepted as the primary income maker! Having lived in Sydney born and bred I love Dubbo and will not go back to live in a busy metropolis!<sup>39</sup>

Anne McLeod mentioned the employment opportunities granted to her. She is a university academic. Yet Evocities do not mention Universities, which is ironic considering that two universities operate in the region. But there is a reason for this absence. The University of New England, based in Armidale, is a ‘supporter’ of Evocities and has an advertisement featured on the banners on the site. The consequences of accepting sponsorship from UNE is that their direct competitor in the region—Charles Sturt University—is unmentioned. That would not matter except that CSU has university campuses in five of the seven Evocities. UNE is present in one. So that is why the focus is on schools, rather than universities. But if an attention to retraining and reskilling a workforce is important, then recognizing that six of the seven cities have a university within them would be a powerful selling point.

My argument here is not underestimating the value of schools. As Jo-Anne Reid et al. have realized,

There is a complex interconnection among the issues and concerns that affect rural-regional sustainability, and this requires an equally complex program of research designed to support, understand and direct the work of school systems, teachers, teacher educators and local communities, who are collectively involved in a key aspect of the sustainability of inland Australia: the attraction and retention of high-quality teachers.<sup>40</sup>

This is a provocative and important argument aligning the sustainability of regions with the sustainability of school systems. This is an important point considering the emphasis on schools in ‘Evocities.’ As always, the challenge is not maintaining bricks and mortar of school buildings, but high quality teachers and student numbers to keep the institution alive. There is a teacher ‘churn’ that impacts less on Bathurst, WaggaWagga and Albury, but has a profound effect on the smaller towns further inland. Newly qualified teachers—as in other professions such as medicine—use an initial appointment in ‘country towns’ and small regional cities to move to a ‘better’ school in their career,<sup>41</sup> which is code for a second or third tier city.

This mobility of workers from third tier cities, and their surrounding towns, back to the larger cities is very difficult to address, manage and stop. Jobs do remain the challenge and is specifically addressed by the Evocities initiative. A separate—but tethered—site promotes ‘Evoinvest.’<sup>42</sup> At this point, when directly addressing

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<sup>39</sup> A. McLeod, Facebook post, January 17, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Reid et al. (2010).

<sup>41</sup> A fascinating book exploring the movement from these small towns to large urban environments is Corbett (2007).

<sup>42</sup> Evoinvest, <http://evoinvest.com.au>.

employment and economic development, some Florida language and strategies are deployed. Again, the adversarial targets for this campaign are ‘capital cities,’ which in effect is Sydney. Intriguingly, only Bathurst, Wagga Wagga and Armidale list ‘education and training’ as in their top five industries. The lists in the evocities are dominated by manufacturing, construction and retail.<sup>43</sup> This is not the glamorous selling of a city by music, architecture, design and culture. This is the selling of jobs in warehousing, retail and the building industries. This is what creative industries and city imaging looks like when targeted for a skilled, lower middle class, Australian workforce. Pretensions of and for coffee, clubs, software and hardware start-ups are removed from the vista. Such a strategy is revealing success. Promoting the availability of regional jobs, and the lower competition for these jobs, has been an effective strategy.<sup>44</sup>

Chris Smith, the architect of much of the creative industries policy making in the United Kingdom, and Alan McKinlay realized that “there is certainly a lot of excitable puff around the creative industries, whether in regard to the size and significance of the sector, the uniqueness of work and employment relations or the motivation of workers in the sector.”<sup>45</sup> This ‘puff’ is recognized in these third tier cities. The councils in inland New South Wales do not even attempt to promote the popular music, fashion or design industries. There are many reasons for this absence. A key reason is the lack of revision or questioning of the ‘value’ of high culture. So earnest museums, local art galleries and ‘worthy’ culture is recognized and promoted.<sup>46</sup> A 2014 Report—*Adding Value*—studied the value of galleries and museums.<sup>47</sup> Yet in such reports, the majority of cultural and creative experiences are ignored. For example, ‘music’ is only mentioned twice in the report: as part of the brief definition of creative industries<sup>48</sup> and a mention of the Tamworth Country Music Awards.<sup>49</sup> This absence is particularly unfortunate as Australian policy making had a strong foundational text for regional and community arts and media, written by Gay Hawkins and titled *From Nimbin to Mardi Gras*.<sup>50</sup>

Instead, the damaging binaries remain corroding the culture of the many and over-egging the art of the few (Fig. 5.3).

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<sup>43</sup> Evoinvest, “Snapshots,” <http://evoinvest.com.au/snapshots/>.

<sup>44</sup> “Evocities data reveals jobs aplenty,” *Northern Daily Leader*, April 1, 2014 <http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/2188990/evocities-data-reveals-regional-jobs-aplenty/>.

<sup>45</sup> Smith and McKinlay (2009).

<sup>46</sup> I am not underestimating the value—culturally or socially—of GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) in regional areas. Indeed, a 2014 report demonstrated that \$61 million is brought to the Evocities through 26 cultural institutions. Refer to J. Mazzochi, “Evocities bring \$61 million to regions,” <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-06/evocities-value/5651478>.

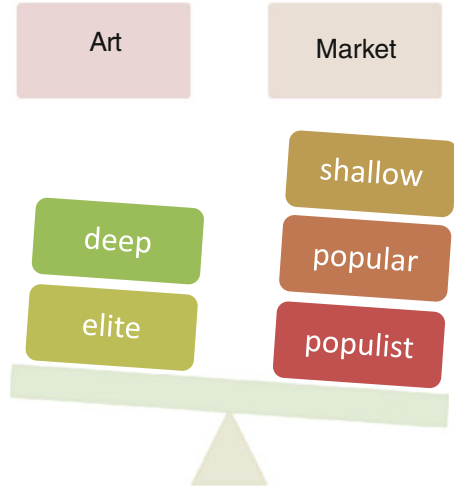
<sup>47</sup> M. Huxley, *Adding Value*, Museums and Galleries of New South Wales, June 2014, [http://mgns.w.org.au/media/uploads/files/Adding\\_Value\\_-\\_for\\_publication\\_1.pdf](http://mgns.w.org.au/media/uploads/files/Adding_Value_-_for_publication_1.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

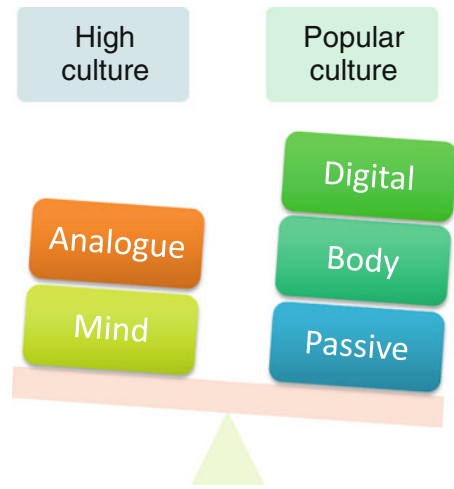
<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>50</sup> Hawkins (1993).

**Fig. 5.3** Structurally demeaning of popular culture



**Fig. 5.4** Building cultural and social relationships



But another series of binaries are also restrictive and damaging to the creation of a complex cultural and social life (Fig. 5.4). This is where Richard Florida should make a return to city imaging research. The value of sporting and movement cultures, bands, DJs, dancing and a spectrum of digital expressions can not only be determined economically, but adds validation, interest, events, light and diversity to the lived experience of the city. One of the challenges of city imaging is to use marketing and branding to ensure that a place appears attractive and viable, thereby dragging new businesses and residents to the region. Yet the lived experience of the residents is under-played. A key intervention in regional development policy needs to be cultural. While recognizing that the key businesses in many of these small cities



are warehousing, retailing and construction, the question unaddressed is the leisure life of the men and women in these jobs. Significantly, one group's leisure is another group's work.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps that is the great critique of Evocities and most city imaging strategies for these small urban environments. There is a focus on family, work and school. Yet adults and children have lives beyond the confines of the office or classroom. The events and activities—the making, doing and thinking of life—is left under-discussed and under-developed because the policy makers in these small councils have not subverted the cultural boundaries to allow a rich, complex and diverse series of events, activities and actions to emerge.

This cultural and social life matters to all industries, from warehousing to journalism. As AnnaLee Saxenian realized,

Far from being isolated from what lies outside them, firms are embedded in a social and institutional setting that shapes, and is shaped by, their strategies and structures. The concept of an industrial system illuminates the historically evolved relationship between the internal organization of firms and their connections to one another and to the social structures and institutions of their particular localities.

The organizations included in these 'industrial systems' incorporate universities, government and business associations and local government. But Saxenian also includes professional societies, hobbies and clubs and anything that "sustain[s] regular patterns of social interaction in a region."<sup>52</sup> This is an incredibly important realization and configuration of an 'industrial system.' While such a phrase and model emerged through an understanding of Silicon Valley and Route 128, it is just as crucial to small cities. With fewer infrastructural advantages and resources, the few organizations and mechanisms to sustain social interaction are crucial. It must be more than the skeleton of schools and jobs. Although vital, it is the cultural and community organizations—the music conservatorium, Saturday morning hockey games, the Sunday afternoon banjo club at a pub, swap meets and cooking classes—that build the flesh and form of a place.

Termed "cultural-creative clustering,"<sup>53</sup> it is this lack of industrial complexity, diversity and integration that must pose challenges for the Evocities. There is a negative reading of this list of booming industries like warehousing, manufacturing and building. Glaeser and Kerr have demonstrated that successful entrepreneurship and start-up businesses emerge in cities that provide economies of scale. This means—in terms of industrial innovation—the larger the city the better they function. This is a mode of both agglomeration and aggregation. This relationship between size and functionality is not linear, a simple shadowing of population increases.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the key question is how to render the economic and social life of these small cities more complex. Any city based on a few industries for employment after the Global Financial Crisis, will be vulnerable to the volatile

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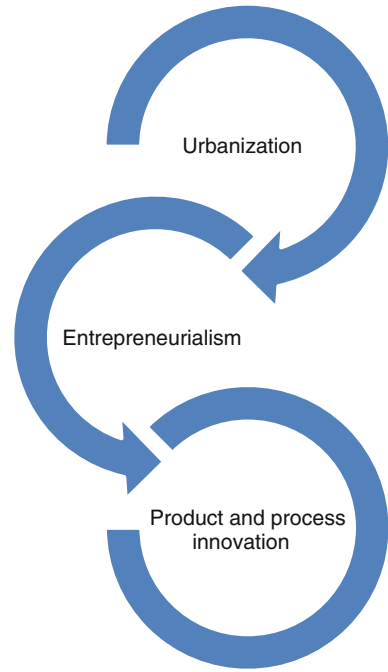
<sup>51</sup> Saxenian (1996).

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Mommaas (2009).

<sup>54</sup> Glaeser and Kerr (2009).

**Fig. 5.5** Understanding urban innovation



transformations of markets, subsidies and changing governments. The safest city economies will be the ones that can balance the primary, secondary and tertiary industries. But in terms of the creative industries, research and development, and the creation of intellectual property, the larger the city, the higher the level of innovation (Fig. 5.5).

This finding is also confirmed by Ghani, Kerr and O’Connell.<sup>55</sup> They show that a greater-than-proportional increase emerged in start-ups for large cities. Their study deployed a greater diversity of variables than Glaeser and Kerr, confirming that for the Indian districts they investigated, educational levels of achievement were an important variable entrepreneurial activity and success.

Their corrective matters because education matters. Analytical problems emerge when decentering the reality that these cities are also university cities. Evocities is a short term strategy to attract young families, let them buy a house and ensure their children go to school. Yet the capacity to continue this story through the availability of higher education and diverse employment opportunities through entrepreneurialism is not discussed. The assumption is that children will go to school in the regions, but university in ‘the capital city.’

The issue of ‘the capital city’ is important here. Evocities is a strategy to manage the pull of population from third tier to global cities. It is certainly worth the attempt

<sup>55</sup> Ghani et al. (2011).

and is creating a narrative of liveability for prospective residents. But all the focus on Sydney is blocking any suggestion that people may move from other states or from overseas. There is an ideology that rural Australia is white Australia (with a predilection for racism),<sup>56</sup> and that migrants move to capital cities.<sup>57</sup> When promoting Evocities, diversity and tolerance were not descriptions used. Therefore, the primary focus is on moving middle class families, with school aged children. The advertisement is targeted on the ‘squeezed middle’ class in Sydney. Yet the question is, why is the focus not aimed at Australians more generally, or indeed the world? Perhaps an answer to that question emerges in the city imaging literature, where all the focus is on the global city and the complexity and intricacies of diverse urbanity are lost. More implicitly, such a campaign implicitly continues the ideology that rural Australia is racist Australia, and anti-migrant.

Even with these challenges, Evocities is a strong initiative to try something new and arrest the depopulation of small regional, inland cities. Baker argued that, “It’s not easy for small cities to attract positive attention.”<sup>58</sup> Actually, it is not easy for small cities to attract attention of any kind. They are invisible. That is why an overt strategy is required. The invisible remains invisible unless the conditions are generated to create visibility. Such a strategy requires an understanding of the strengths of a landscape and community, but also how it engages with—and perhaps competes with—other similar cities. That is why three strategies are required: (1) promoting a productive environment for already existing residents, (2) creating strategies to enable sustainable population growth, and (3) short-term event management for infusing money into the city or town.

Understanding redundancy and obsolescence are also necessary. While city imaging can change the perception of a place at relative speed, the urban infrastructure—particularly transportation and road construction—cannot alter as rapidly.<sup>59</sup> This is a structural problem and blocks the development of new functions. Allan Jacobs realized that “today’s cities are leftovers from methods of production and achieving that are no longer necessary and can disappear.”<sup>60</sup> But how do they ‘disappear’? Dead modes of production—like dead media<sup>61</sup>—remain in our present, often holding back innovation and change. The industrial revolution has left

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<sup>56</sup> Forrest and Dunn (2013).

<sup>57</sup> This situation is changing around the world, with refugees and migrants settling in rural and regional areas. Yet a fine article has emerged that shows the costs—and some advantages—of this strategy in Australia. The lack of community, infrastructure and socio-economic opportunities in regional Australia are systemic challenges that need to be addressed. Refer to Schech (2013).

<sup>58</sup> Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>59</sup> There is also a hidden cost when expanding the scale of roads. This is termed ‘induced travel.’ Robert Noland and Christopher Hanson described this phrase as “the observation that congested roads quickly gain new traffic after they have been expanded.” Refer to R. Noland and C. Hanson, “How does induced travel affect sustainable transportation policy?” from Renne and Fields (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>60</sup> Jacobs (1995).

<sup>61</sup> Brabazon (2013).

**Fig. 5.6** Wasted space in Oshawa



**Fig. 5.7** Downtown Oshawa  
—closed for business?



scars and third tier cities rarely have the transformative investment to deploy. Second tier cities like Manchester were able to change the former textile mills into inner city loft living. The mills were changed into spaces for living, rather than working.<sup>62</sup> For Oshawa—home of GM in Canada—the scars remain in the Downtown (Fig. 5.6).

Vacant spaces prevail in the middle of the downtown, with the former locations for the manufacturing of car parts being voided of buildings and partly rehabilitated over decades. Public buildings on main streets are boarded up and graffiti proliferates (Fig. 5.7).

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<sup>62</sup> A fine example of the resources available to transform buildings and environments in second tier cities is the Hacienda in Manchester. A sail warehouse, it was transformed into one of the most famous nightclubs in the world and is currently the location for elite apartments. Refer to “Hacienda: the legendary nightclub,” *YouTube*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJqqmScn-Qg>.

**Fig. 5.8** Post-industrial residues



**Fig. 5.9** Oshawa branding



The state of these empty and discarded spaces remains disturbing for residents and visitors. Event management or sustainable growth campaigns cannot mask pollution and deep industrial scars (Fig. 5.8).

Whatever the Durham Regional Council<sup>63</sup> may propose, this site is on the main street of Downtown Oshawa. This is an example of where city imaging and branding strategies cannot overcome the deep injustices that scar the present landscape (Fig. 5.9).

This slogan is so disconnected from the lived experience of Oshawa that it is not useful or productive. This banner is 200 metres from the industrial debris presented in the previous photographs. Further, there are few jobs, fewer restaurants and shops are closing. Obviously the branding literature is wide and interdisciplinary, and only minimally conflates with city and regional development. However the imperative

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<sup>63</sup> Durham Regional Council, <http://www.durham.ca>.

remains ‘improvement’ and ‘progress.’ As Evans states, “Frequently, regeneration programmes are developed without reference to, or inclusion of, incumbent arts and cultural groups, or past heritage associations/communities. This arises due to the different nature and perspective of the ‘regenerators’ and community-based activity.”<sup>64</sup> He realizes that, “Indeed, in the areas which are the subject of extensive regeneration, it is presumed that quality of life and, by association, indigenous culture, is poor and needs ‘improving.’”<sup>65</sup> Therefore, a city imaging process can emerge from a disrespect and disregard of urban history and injustice, and configures a shiny if brittle shell of modernity. A better model emerges from Jonathan Gabay, founder of Brand Forensics, who stated that, “Branding a city is not just about the logo but the intricate details—as small as clean streets and as deep as getting a city’s residents to feel proud to be brand ambassadors. When citizens are proud, visitors are encouraged to find out what the fuss is all about and then tell the world.”<sup>66</sup> He recognizes the importance of ownership and investment in the image, and the depth with which the changes in city imaging and branding are recognized by those who live in these spaces. This strategy must not only encompass short-termism or superficial iconography. It must be based in a lived reality.

While Evocities is one method to create development in specific cities—that creates a unifying approach to specific inland cities to address depopulation concerns—for other smaller cities and towns, the challenges are even greater. This is where event management is the key agenda for economic development. These small cities and towns cannot control, manage or dominate time or space, but they can construct an event that—for a moment—creates profile and branding. The archetype of this strategy is ‘the Great Race’ in Bathurst. This small city is invisible 364 days each year. It is a small city, with nothing significant, evocative or interesting to report, apart from its pioneering settlement by Governor Macquarie. But once a year in Australia is ‘Bathurst Day.’<sup>67</sup> A long race—the Bathurst 1000—is held in October each year. It is not the formula one format but races are held between V8 Supercars.<sup>68</sup> Run over 1,000 km, it is held on Mount Panorama in Bathurst. While this is the most famous motorsport event in Australia, it is a key question why it has moved beyond a single sport and into wider national popular culture. One of the reasons is longevity. Another is outstanding media coverage, with innovative commentary, camera positioning and editing. It has become a spectacle that transcends sport. So Bathurst as a city has been enfolded into the Bathurst 1000.<sup>69</sup> It is known for one event. Such city imaging has potentials and

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<sup>64</sup> Evans (2005).

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Salman (2008).

<sup>67</sup> Supercheap Auto is a sponsor of the car race and created a national campaign wishing viewers a “Happy Bathurst Day,” YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVg-Amb0ZpU>.

<sup>68</sup> V8 Supercars, <http://www.v8supercars.com.au>.

<sup>69</sup> The Bathurst Facebook page is actually the Bathurst 1000 page, <https://www.facebook.com/bathurst>.

Town or city	Event
<b>Cowra</b>	Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival
<b>Parkes</b>	Parkes Elvis Festival
<b>Tamworth</b>	Country Music Festival
<b>Katoomba</b>	Wines of the West Festival
<b>Lithgow</b>	Ladies Karting Event
<b>Glenbrook</b>	Australian Gnome Convention
<b>Oberon</b>	Highlands Steam and Vintage Fair
<b>Lawson</b>	Blue Mountains Ukulele Festival
<b>Blackheath</b>	Blackheath Autumn Wine Fair
<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	International Millinery Forum
<b>Guyra</b>	Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival
<b>Laggan</b>	Lavender, Herb and Chilli Festival
<b>Echuca Moama</b>	Riverboats Music Festival
<b>Mittagong</b>	Quilt and Craft Show

**Fig. 5.10** Small towns and cities emerging through event management

problems, but the location is known around the world, one of the very rare third tier cities that can claim this scale of publicity.

For the even smaller cities and towns that encircle the evocities, such as Cowra, Parkes, Blayney and Wellington, gaining any profile at all is a great challenge. But as with Bathurst—event management is the key. Not surprisingly rather odd events are configured. Here is a selection (Fig. 5.10).

This is merely a selection of the diversity of events held in these inland regional towns and cities. Sometimes there is attention to rural and regional life, such as farmers markets or quilting. However other events are completely imported, imposed, branded and sold, such as the ukulele festival or the gnome convention. Perhaps the most successful invention of tradition in third tier city marketing is in Parkes. Their Elvis Festival is now 20 years old and attracts 18,000 people per year to the town.<sup>70</sup> Parkes becomes “the Elvis Capital of Australia.” This affiliation is completely invented (Fig. 5.11).

Elvis Presley never visited Australia, let alone regional New South Wales. But so many people attend the event, that there is a special train that connects Sydney to

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<sup>70</sup> Parkes Elvis Festival, <http://parkeselvisfestival.com.au>.

**Fig. 5.11** Elvis in Australia  
(photograph by Marlene  
Bayliss—used with  
permission)



Parkes. This is a major reconfiguration of this location. Before Elvis, Parkes had one other claim to fame: its radio telescope.<sup>71</sup> ‘The Dish’ had a major film made about it<sup>72</sup> and is a tourist destination in its own right.<sup>73</sup> The reason for this fame is that Parkes was responsible for receiving the famous footage of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing.<sup>74</sup> The footage from Parkes was so clear that the vision from satellites in the Northern Hemisphere was not used. So the Parkes Shire Council<sup>75</sup> had the fortuitous climatic conditions that lead to the clarity and fame of the moon landing. But they have built on this branding through the invention of a new tradition that has nothing to do with the place or its history, but innovation, imagination, good luck and persistence. An Elvis Festival emerges in a location with no connection to the King. This innovation and imagination is an archetypal example of what can be possible in these small cities and towns, particularly if restrictive definitions of ‘high culture’ are critiqued. The focus on fun and pleasures brings the streets to life and money to a city.

<sup>71</sup> “About the Dish,” CSIRO, <http://www.csiro.au/Portals/Education/Programs/Parkes-Radio-Telescope/About-the-Dish.aspx>.

<sup>72</sup> The Dish, 2000, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0205873/>.

<sup>73</sup> “Visit Parkes Telescope,” CSIRO, <http://www.csiro.au/en/Portals/Education/Programs/Parkes-Radio-Telescope/VisitParkesTelescope.aspx>.

<sup>74</sup> Blake (2009).

<sup>75</sup> Parkes Shire Council, <http://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au>.



The Parkes Elvis Festival captures the change to marketing through the twentieth century and the increasingly intense brand positioning in the twenty first. As Simon Middleton presented in one sentence a history of marketing:

When modern marketing began, around the turn of the 20th century, it wasn't about finding customers so much as meeting the demand for products, and the trick was to show that your product had great features and unrivalled benefits—with reliable quality at a competitive price—but as the century progressed, the balance of power changed and the need was to woo customers with a distinctive offering that gave your product a different 'position' in the 'mind of the consumer.'<sup>76</sup>

The issue remains how to summon a variable—a slither—of distinctiveness. Being 'better' is not the game. Being different is. The goal is not imitation, following a checklist, but developing something quirky, distinctive and memorable. Then there must be mechanisms, channels and strategies to communicate this difference. The resultant expressed distinction is a brand story and city imaging can effectively mobilize these strategies.

Richard Florida published in the year of the financial crisis a book that appeared out of time. Titled *Who's Your City?*,<sup>77</sup> it continued his interest in "smart spots"<sup>78</sup> and economic development. But he also explored the importance of personal happiness in narratives of regional development. While the global financial crisis seemed to render most of the creative industries hyperbole redundant and damaging—which was addressed in the disturbing later Florida book *The Great Reset*<sup>79</sup>—it is timely to review some of this scholarship, modelling and theorizing. Particularly, it is important to remember Florida's subtitle for *Who's Your City?*: "How the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life." The best cities are able to hold their residents through the life cycle of their lives. But the challenge for these small cities is that certain residents—the best educated and most highly skilled—are also the most mobile. Decisions are being made on a yearly basis about the best place to live. As traditional family structures corrode and the workforce becomes increasingly unstable, many more choices are available to be mobile and move between cities. While the relationship between place and identity is incredibly important, there is an array of options available if housing, work or education standards decline. There is a need to understand how city planning, economic cycles and life cycles align. Indeed, as Florida realized, it is important to "place yourself."<sup>80</sup> The task of the next (short) chapter is to demonstrate not only the value of this 'placing' but to ensure that these small cities cluster, rather than compete and create a network of choices and opportunities for

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<sup>76</sup> Middleton (2012).

<sup>77</sup> Florida (2008).

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>79</sup> Florida (2010).

<sup>80</sup> Florida, *Who's your city?*, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

prospective and current residents. The imperative is not only create a policy suite for the present—for parents with young families to move to a small city—but to consider the development of a liveable city for diverse communities through the life cycle.

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## Chapter 6

# Urban Living Through the Life Cycle

**Abstract** After the more expansive presentations of Evocities, clustering, and the role of event management in developing a profile through dominating a (short) moment in time rather than space, this small chapter holds a distinct function. The goal is to create an analytical pause and offer a reminder of the specific challenges in research and for researchers in ‘placing’ a third-tier city and developing strategies for economic and social sustainability through the life cycle of residents. A key issue that was hinted in the last chapter is that programmes like Evocities are targeting a particular type of migrant: middle-class families with school-age children. While a workable short-term strategy, the question is: what happens as those children—and their parents—age?

**Keywords** Regional development · Third tier cities · Mobility · Ageing · Families

After the expansive presentations of Evocities, clustering, and the role of event management in developing a profile through dominating a (short) moment in time rather than space, this small chapter holds a distinct function. The goal is to create an analytical pause and offer a reminder of the specific challenges in research and for researchers in ‘placing’ a third tier city and developing strategies for economic and social sustainability through the life cycle of residents. A key issue that was hinted in the last chapter is that programmes like Evocities are targeting a particular type of migrant: middle class families with school age children. While a workable short term strategy, the question is: what happens as those children—and their parents—age?

Small cities offer distinct experiences with urbanity. For the inland ring of small cities in New South Wales, there is what David Bell and Mark Jayne described as “me-too-ism” and “inter-urban competitiveness.”<sup>1</sup> Finding a place for diverse urbanity—and displacing the pecking order of cities—is the challenge. Because these small cities have been so neglected in research, and the definition of ‘small’ is

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<sup>1</sup> Bell and Jayne (2006).

relational, university researchers have not assisted these regions with policy, innovation and imagination as much as they could. Bell and Jayne are the exception. They committed to Stoke. Yet even they moved on to ‘better’ universities.

Dwindling student admissions were a key factor—students appeared to be increasingly ambivalent about committing to the ‘unglamorous’ city of Stoke-on-Trent, perhaps attracted instead to the ‘buzz’ and increased job opportunities of larger metropolitan centres.<sup>2</sup>

Again, this is structural, systemic and layered disadvantage. Universities in small cities are more important than other institutions. The employment they generate is more significant. The skills and knowledge they disseminate are more valuable.

The problem is that there is no series of key performance indicators for recovery that applies to all small cities and towns. While this book is developing strategies, procedures and protocols for economic and social development based on functioning and successful examples, the diversity of third tier cities means that ‘the fit’ between exemplar and desired location for improvement may not work or be appropriate. There can be no checklist for development, recovery or sustainability. Instead options can be suggested and revealed that will need to be translated, migrated and transformed to be rendered appropriate for a specific location. As a theory, the transferability of strategies between struggling cities is debatable.<sup>3</sup> What may work in Orange will not function in Hastings. What operates in Galway may not be appropriate for Aberdeen. It is important to research and discover what has been successfully applied in other cities. It is necessary to translate and migrate data for new conditions. Certainly, the problems in these third tier cities have been listed. Siegel and Waxman reveal the scale of the challenges.

- Out of date infrastructure
- Dependence on traditional industry
- Transformation of their human capital base
- Declining competitiveness within their regions
- Weakened civic infrastructure and capacity
- More limited access to resources.<sup>4</sup>

There are strategies to manage these difficulties, but they require funding. Sustained and planned attention in the long term is required on modern transportation and communication infrastructure. While third tier cities are small and unable to mobilize the economies of scale, the capacities for teleworking and e-commerce in wireless environments can move local ideas and products into second tier cities and beyond.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Bell and M. Jayne “Afterword: Sizing up small cities,” *ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Baker realized that, “recommending the destination marketing practices of Las Vegas, New York City, and San Francisco to small cities is hardly appropriate. We have specifically designed this book for those ambitious communities that recognize that they must adopt the principles of a branded approach, despite having a modest budget” (Baker 2007, p. 11).

<sup>4</sup> Siegel and Waxman 2001

The city is a siren's call for the problems and possibilities of the deindustrialized economy. City imaging policies and strategies displace leisure and work in preference for consumerism and infrastructure development. Citizens become shoppers. The key is how we ensure a history of place remains in the social fabric. It is important to restate that every city cannot be world class. Regeneration at its worst creates standardization in an often desperate (and futile) attempt to satisfy, not the people already living in a city, but those they want to attract. In the end, neither is satisfied.

Mobility is a mode of power and creates choices. The effectiveness of a city, in terms of social justice, can be evaluated in terms of the social and economic choices available for those who do not drive. The walkability of cities is important. It is a proxy to evaluate the degree of social and economic mobility. Whenever there is an assumption that 'everyone' has a car, there is a blind spot in providing important facilities and infrastructure. These assumptions are not sustainable and do block the development of social justice-fuelled improvements for those with different mobility needs. Driving is linked with a suite of ideologies, like freedom, speed and independence. Freedom of movement is a metaphor for freedom of citizenship. While some groups gain from automobility, other groups do not. As a population ages, new strategies for thinking about movement beyond a motor vehicle are required. Whenever there is a discussion about a decline in public services, particularly health care, libraries or education, it impacts on those with the least choices and the least ability to move through a city.

The question is what will happen next in the narrative of third-tier cities and their universities? Greg Richards and Robert Palmer confirmed that,

Cities of today face two choices. Either they develop to meet the challenges created by the pace of global change, or they resist the impulse for transformation and stagnate. At a time when economic systems are no longer predictable, in order to remain competitive, cities are turning to strategies that focus on their own innate resources—their histories, spaces, creative energy and talents.<sup>5</sup>

For third tier cities, their industrial histories are economic anchors to redundant practices and processes, and disconnected from current social and cultural opportunities. Their spaces reveal environmental damage, and the most talented residents move to global and second tier cities where there is expansive employment, educational and social opportunities. While Richards and Palmer aimed to promote 'eventful cities' rather than event management, they also recognized the importance in creating liveable cities, containing both social connections and emotional affiliations for residents who live there all the year round.

Social, economic and city imaging strategies align. Without economic development, the provision of services suffer. Therefore the social experience of living in a third-tier city also retracts. City imaging is not a branding exercise to bring business and events to a location. It is a survival strategy. Bill Baker, in his *Destination branding for small cities*, confirmed that,

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<sup>5</sup> Richards and Palmer (2010).

in most cases, cities of this size can't always afford wide-ranging consumer research or high-profile advertising campaigns. Yet, there remains the need for them to stand out from the crowd in order to attract more visitors, more talented people, more inward, investment, and more new businesses.<sup>6</sup>

Baker realized the paradox: we are living in “the most over-communicated period in history”<sup>7</sup> yet small cities have rarely ‘managed’ their brand and expressed their story.<sup>8</sup> In an era of information glut, third-tier cities are invisible, marginal and marginalized. They disappear into their own surroundings. Martin James, a Professor at Southampton Solent University, saw both advantages and disadvantages in his university city.

Pros: small enough to get around quickly, get to know people quickly, and to get out of quickly.

Cons: far too aware of neighbouring small cities and insecure about not being Brighton.<sup>9</sup>

Once more, the competitiveness between cities remains a challenge. Particularly for university cities in the United Kingdom, the excitement of Brighton and Manchester configures all other cities as a disappointment. This means that the advantages of these smaller cities are rarely recognized, particularly in terms of building community links. After this chapter of caveats, cautions and concerns, the next chapter resumes the more positive project of researching and revealing options and opportunities, by showing how the advantages of third tier cities can be augmented by the read-write web. I will assess if digitization and geosocial networking can medicate the lack of mobility and infrastructure in third tier cities.

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<sup>6</sup> Baker (2007, p. 10).

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> M. James, Facebook Post, January 17, 2014.

## Chapter 7

# Digital Distinctiveness

**Abstract** A city is experienced through the senses. Traffic, buildings and the streets create an amalgam of sight and sound, touch and smell. As our bodies move through cities, our senses deliver information about threat and interest, alongside patterns of behaviour. Although our analogue bodies move through streets, shops and sporting organizations, digitization attends this movement through mobile phones, tablets and applications. This digitized strategy is not only detailing branding and marketing for a small city. Digitization also improves the life of those resident in a city. Progressive city administrators have discovered the positive benefits of providing free-of-charge wi-fi facilities in the hub of the city. Norwich was an early adapter of this strategy. Mandurah in Western Australia also rendered this a priority. Digitization matters to small cities. Many are located in rural and regional areas. In some nations, including South Africa, Canada and Australia, there is an incredible disparity in online connectivity, particularly with regard to broadband in regional and remote areas. This is a particularly problematic inequality. Social media have great uses for the men and women in small cities and towns. As facilities and public services leave, the online environment can manage some of these needs.

**Keywords** Digitization • Geosocial networking • FourSquare • Local • Deterritorialization • Disintermediation

A city is experienced through the senses. Traffic, buildings and the streets create an amalgam of sight and sound, touch and smell. As our bodies move through cities, our senses deliver information about threat and interest, alongside enabling patterns of behaviour. Although our analogue bodies move through streets, shops and sporting organizations, digitization attends this movement through mobile phones, tablets and applications. This digitized strategy is not only assisting branding and marketing for a small city. Digitization also improves the life of those residents in a city. Progressive city administrators have discovered the positive benefits of providing free-of-charge wi-fi facilities in the hub of a city. Norwich was an early adapter of this strategy. Mandurah in Western Australia has also rendered this a priority.

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disparity in online connectivity, particularly with regard to broadband in regional and remote areas. This is a particularly problematic inequality. Social media have great uses for the men and women in small cities and towns. As facilities and public services leave, the online environment can manage some of these needs. As the generational differentiation lessens in web use,<sup>1</sup> meaning that age is no longer the systemic injustice it once was before 2000, the potential for online connectivity in these more isolated cities and towns increases. Simon Fraser University has conducted a project on silver surfers—older users of online environments. Specifically, a focus of their study has shown that the rural and urban division is often more important than the question of age in terms of digital connectivity.<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps the great irony of digitization. The regions that gain most from high speed broadband, because of the lack of analogue services and infrastructure, must also manage non-existent, substandard or slow digital connectivity. Therefore this chapter shows the value of digitization to both regional businesses and residents.

Certainly, the early theorizations of the internet in the 1990s were overly utopic, in terms of building a global community. Not one, but many digital divides blocked such a reality from emerging. As simple software, particularly applications, and hardware emerges, the entry level for digital connection, communication and creativity is lowered. The challenge is how we affirm and value the local—the small city—as we are “gathering digitally.”<sup>3</sup>

The strategies for geosocial networking may enable development for these small cities through a reinvestment in place. Analogue and digital lives are mediated and performed in a way that is suitable to each context. In other words, we are different people on Facebook when compared to the person washing up the dishes in the kitchen. Our Twitter selves are distinct from our sporting selves. Screens are important. They separate analogue existence from digital performance. The read write web, often reified to the label of Web 2.0, enables the active construction of a self. The web delocates and dislocates users from their physical environment. This means that users can be living in Bathurst, Singapore or Johannesburg, but can (re)emerge in a deterritorialized digispace of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, chatting, watching and participating with other users around the world.

This fragmentation and community building are the fascinating elements of the post-blogging web. We are tracking—and living—a two-way movement.

1. The internet, web and read-write web deterritorializes an audience from their physical environment
2. The internet, web and read-write web reconstitutes us as an imagined online community.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Madden, “Older adults and social media use,” *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, August 27, 2010, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Older-Adults-and-Social-Media.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> “The Internet and Rural Health,” *Silver Surfers*, Simon Fraser University, [http://www.sfu.ca/silversurfers/?page\\_id=28](http://www.sfu.ca/silversurfers/?page_id=28).

<sup>3</sup> Ohler (2010).

Geosocial networking is not only part of this process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, but offers a new ontology and epistemology of urban environments. Third tier cities can deploy mobile and digital platforms to foreshadow information about analogue visits in the future. Such strategies can include Twitter feeds, Facebook pages and FourSquare promotions. These are free options and opportunities that can also cross-promote events and successes. They also provide direct contact between city representatives, residents and prospective visitors.

A collision of social, political, technological and economic imperatives has meant that an investment in the local—including these small third tier cities—can have profound consequences for the development of businesses, social life and identity. John Quelch and Katherine Jocz, in their outstanding book *All business is local: why place matters more than ever in a global, virtual world*,<sup>4</sup> recognize the cost of marketers emphasising the global in decisions about production and consumption. They confirm that there are not only diverse modalities of place, but different modes of place, including geographical, physical, psychological and virtual. Digitization must now be considered when imaging or re-imaging a city or, indeed, any form of marketing.

The Internet has also transformed marketing communications and democratized the brand knowledge and expectations of consumers around the world by accelerating the spread of word-of-mouth and viral advertising, more so even than television.<sup>5</sup>

There is now a rapid dialogue between the diverse modes and meanings of place, a fast transference between local to regional, analogue to digital, physical to cloud-based computing, past and present. Quelch and Jocz realize that while consumers have shown a desire and willingness to purchase goods online, entering their credit card details into a portal, hyper-local advertising remains crucial, often delivered by supposedly globalized websites like Facebook and YouTube.<sup>6</sup> They ask that marketers “be intelligently local.”<sup>7</sup> To provide one example, QR codes are a powerful mechanism to connect intensely local and physical spaces to just-in-time digitized information. When scanning the QR code on a poster or shop window, the reader is able to gather ‘virtual’ information to their mobile phone about their actual location or interest. In this way, new connotations and associations can be hooked from digital environments and into a precise location. To provide another example that is particularly relevant for small cities that are the hub for rural environments: food and wine. A QR code featured on food packaging and a wine bottle can provide

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<sup>4</sup> Quelch and Jocz (2012).

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> Quelch and Jocz state that, “Supposedly, the ability to make new friends and connect to people anywhere, regardless of their physical location, is one of the appeals of social media and social networking. However, one study found that half of Facebook friends are in the same metropolitan area; for teenage users, as many as 90 percent of friends are in the same area ... People use Facebook more to solidify existing or geographically near relationships than to initiate or continue geographically distant ones.” *ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

information about the places in which the food was grown and the people who make it.<sup>8</sup> This information may include a link to a YouTube video that presents footage about the place, people and product. In this way, the relationship between production and consumption is rendered more knowable, knowledgeable and aware. The potential for food tourism—and a food tourism policy—is also available. The physical and the digital align, dialogue and conflate. So while the people in third tier cities may be immobile because of challenging transportation infrastructure, the products produced within these cities and their encircling regions can move and—through digitization—support and promote a place and industry.

These digital interventions are important, particularly if they are carried on analogue goods. Such innovations feed into and resonate with one of the most remarkable and surprising elements of digitization: geosocial networking. It logs the paradox of social media. While it is possible to contact and build relationships with users around the world, the bulk of ‘friends’ for most users on Facebook are located within 50 km of their geographical location.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, mobile phones can connect users to anyone with another mobile phone. But actually, address books are filled with those in close spatial proximity. In other words, the platforms and applications that have the potential to reach every city and nation on the planet are deployed to communicate and share in local mode. Therefore with the deterritorialization and disintermediation possible through the web and social media, it is remarkable how often social networking is actually geosocial networking: mixing with people within a restricted geographical area.

Geosocial networking is a sub-area of social networking, using the geographical features of mobile devices: global positioning systems. A phone, mobile tablet or computer recognizes a user’s location and is able to locate a personal digital object in real space and time. Geographical applications include geo-coding and geo-tagging. The goal of these processes is to ensure that social media users can share their location with others. The means by which a location can be determined is via the internet provider, the email address being used, or self-disclosure, where users inform Facebook, Twitter or FourSquare of a geographical location. Mobile phone tracking can reveal this information automatically. The combination of wireless delivery and geographical positioning software navigation creates an accessible and useful combination of technology, mobility and geography. Such applications as Google Maps and Google Earth provide huge amounts of information about cities. As Vassilis Kostakos confirmed, “the relationship between computers and space is a topic that has persisted throughout the various advances in computer science.”<sup>10</sup> Although creating a positive and productive relationship between physical and digital spaces remains a challenge, the mobile phone is the conduit for its negotiation. The mobile phone is an odd object: personal, portable, customized by sound and vision through ring tones and wallpaper, individualized and creating a huge dependency on it from

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<sup>8</sup> To investigate this QR code strategy in greater depth, refer to Brabazon et al. (2014).

<sup>9</sup> De Chant (2010).

<sup>10</sup> V. Kostakos, “Space syntax and pervasive systems,” from Jiang and Yao (2010).

its owner. With the GPS chip in smartphones, location-based applications can search for data derived from their location. Further, such applications and functions like QR codes allow information to be directed—narrowcasted—to a particular website rather than the roulette wheel of Google.

Geosocial networking is not merely a digital tagging of people and locations. When a series of geo-coded or geo-tagged places are created, web maps are built. Group activity can then be logged around a place or event. There are many consequences of these applications. One concern is a security issue: if a person logs their position, then others know that.<sup>11</sup> For example in February 2010, a site called Please Rob Me was launched.<sup>12</sup> Please Rob Me sourced data from Foursquare check-ins pushed to Twitter. The point of Please Rob Me was to show the cost of releasing too much information in public. But geosocial networking also allows groups to coordinate their actions, so flash mobs, riots and protests can be organized. Examples of geosocial networking services include Yelp, Gowalla, Facebook Places, Groupon and FourSquare.<sup>13</sup> Yelp enables local searching of the web with attention to particular cities. Gowalla is a location-based social network that enables users to check into ‘spots’ or log ‘trips’ in a local community. Facebook Places arrived quite late in the social network’s development, in 2010. Users checked in via mobile devices. Groupon is a group coupon that offers deals from local companies.<sup>14</sup> Women in particular are the market for Groupon, with many ‘deals’ for health, fashion, beauty, fitness and food. FourSquare is the largest geosocial networking site. It was based on the success and expansion of smart phones with global positioning systems.<sup>15</sup> Users ‘check in’ via an application resident on the device. This ‘check-in’ releases points and badges for the user. Tiers of achievement on the basis of these locations are reached, including becoming the ‘Mayor’ of a FourSquare location.

The advantages of geosocial networking are that deterritorialized social networking is spatialized so that local users can share their interests in real space and time. But there are also major opportunities for local businesses, particularly those without more expansive branding or tourist opportunities.<sup>16</sup> I will provide a personal example to demonstrate this use. When I arrived in Oshawa, my husband and I lived in bed and breakfast accommodation. For a three day period, we were asked to relocate so that a wedding party could be housed. Upon arrival at this temporary accommodation, we had no idea where we were. We had no car, no food and seemed to be a long way from anywhere. I opened up FourSquare on my iPad,

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<sup>11</sup> P. Jagtap, A. Joshi, T. Finin, L. Zavala, “Privacy Preservation in Context Aware Geosocial Networking Applications,” [http://ebiquity.umbc.edu/\\_file\\_directory\\_/papers/563.pdf](http://ebiquity.umbc.edu/_file_directory_/papers/563.pdf), pp. 1–3.

<sup>12</sup> Please Rob Me, <http://pleaserobme.com/>.

<sup>13</sup> FourSquare, <https://foursquare.com/>.

<sup>14</sup> Groupon, <http://www.groupon.com/>.

<sup>15</sup> N. West, “Urban Tapestries: the spatial and social on your mobile,” *Proboscis*, 2005, [http://proboscis.org.uk/publications/SNAPSHOTS\\_spatialandsocial.pdf](http://proboscis.org.uk/publications/SNAPSHOTS_spatialandsocial.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> L. Evans, “Geo-Social Networks—A Local Business’ Best Friend,” *ClickZ*, March 16, 2011, <http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/2034249/geo-social-networks-local-business-friend>.

found our location, discovered local shops and restaurants, read reviews from users and found the best food, service and price within one kilometre. The great strength of geosocial networking is that even when our analogue selves do not know where we are, the smart phone or tablet has our coordinates and enables the discovery of geographically relevant information and services.

If my argument is viewed arithmetically: social networking + localism = geosocial networking. The value of geosocial networking is profoundly commercial. While social networking builds personal relationships, geosocial networking constructs relationships between consumers and business. For areas that are facing economic uncertainties, these strategies are important. While there may be challenges with infrastructure and a lack of money for marketing, these free or freemium services<sup>17</sup> can source and connect consumers to businesses. QR codes provide information for customers either via print-based publicity materials—in newspapers, magazines or white or yellow pages—but also on the shop-front of a business. To provide one example of its use: a restaurateur can provide a QR code that not only links to a website presenting a menu, opening hours and specials but demonstrates the sourcing for all the ingredients. A bookshop, even when closed, can display a QR code that provides information to customers about the specific interests of the owner, author events and featured publications.

Certainly there are negativities. Geosocial networking is part of the long term movement to realign the internet and web from a freely available, public service into an individualized, customized, oversharing, business-led, shopping-enabled, e-commerce hub. The gift of the internet was deterritorialization. People can communicate from around the world. Citizens with disabilities could create new opportunities and communication options through a life on the screen. Racism and sexism could be questioned and managed in new ways. Now geosocial networking is creating location-aware applications so that residents in a particular place can receive discounts, find their friends in a restaurant, or check into a place and become a mayor, a title without purpose, authority or status.

Social media are fragmented media. They create clusters, collectives and sub-cultures. The online future is perched somewhere between hyper-individual oversharing and global retweeting. Perhaps a less corporate shared localism is a better option, using the web to amplify social relationships within a particular space, place and community. FourSquare is a pathway to that future, enabling the survival of local businesses in third-tier cities confronting economic and social challenges. For little or no cost, marketing can be as simple as claiming a FourSquare location or configuring deals for Groupon. Without an expansive city-wide strategy, small businesses can combine digitization and entrepreneurship to create an awareness of their services.

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<sup>17</sup> Anderson (2009).

The positivity of geosocial networking in declining third tier cities is that mobile platforms can transform the relationship with the analogue environment, creating a liveable, walkable city. Much of the slow food movement was and is about buying local. Geosocial networking enables this imperative. But it also provides information about a city. QR codes provide an important example of a strategy to link a physical location with web-based information.<sup>18</sup> Such opportunities provide a way to invest our cities—particularly our downtowns—with greater interest. They become localized and sustainable. Digitization enables a richer analogue experience. This is the creation of a digital urban infrastructure that can overlay and solve many of the problems of analogue cities. Through geosocial networking, a first moment is emerging where digitization reinvests local places with meaning, and returns history to cities. Heritage trails can be organized—punctuated by QR codes. Public art can be described and understood. Buildings and people can be connected.

Place—location—remains important to people. This creates a paradox. Workers are expected to move anywhere and communicate with anyone in the world. The combination of a global growth in mobile communication and the domestication of hardware and software means that understandings of both time and place are transforming.<sup>19</sup> Yet a greater point needs to be explored. The strength of these mobile ties is still being questioned. Can geosocial networking be used to reinvest neglected places with meaning? As Quelch and Jocz realized, “City planners are concerned with the ‘legibility’ of places—that is, people’s ability to comprehend public places and to form mental maps that help steer them through these spaces.”<sup>20</sup> One way to render locations legible is to use the resources of geosocial networking to offer digital stories of physical locations. If digital media are dug into the ground, then the built environment can also live in a cloud.

Geosocial networking requires particular characteristics: portable media, networked media, global positioning systems, location-conscious computing devices and information and media literate individuals who add content and meaning to a geographical space. Ostensibly, cities were designed to keep the poor from the rich and restrict the rights of some citizens to full participation in the political process. But by retrofitting analogue cities to provide information about the lived experience of the environment, then the injustices of the 19th and 20th century may not be healed, but at least can be addressed. A desire for social change may be enabled, not through shopping but thinking, and not through driving, but clicking while walking. For pedestrian-oriented development to succeed, there must be places to visit of interest. Enlivening our small cities is a crucial step in revitalizing public spaces in a way that is imaginative, vibrant, secure and sustainable.

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<sup>18</sup> Winter (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Green and Haddon (2009).

<sup>20</sup> Quelch and Jocz *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.

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## Chapter 8

# Cities of Hope and Happiness

*Here in Dubbo, the advantages are ... close to work, shopping and activities but for me as a single, 'mature-aged' woman it has been quite difficult to make friends outside of work. Despite what I had been told about country towns before moving here, the people can be quite cliquy (L. Ghys, Facebook post, January 17, 2014).*

Linda Ghys

**Abstract** Alicia Keys breathlessly captured her love for New York as a place ‘where dreams are made of’. Global cities capture the intensity of life, nightlife, music, ambition and the future. Second-tier cities remain ‘sticky’, quirky, different and defiant. The third-tier cities are the garbage dump of the world, bearing the scars of industrialization, pollution, depopulation and decaying infrastructure. Even the schemes used to rebuild these regions focus on schools and families. While schools and families are important, there are many stages of life. While Richard Florida’s creative cities, classes and regions over-egged the excitement of bohemia, there is an importance—rhetorically at least—in claiming the value of tolerance, technology and talent. Such a strategy allows urban planners to understand city residents through their lifetime and understand the intricacies and emotions of these places.

**Keywords** Social isolation · Disconnection · Sport · Walkability · Connectivity · Happiness

Alicia Keys breathlessly captured her love for New York as a place “where dreams are made of.” Global cities capture the intensity of life, nightlife, music, ambition and the future. Second-tier cities remain ‘sticky,’ quirky, different and defiant. The third tier cities are the garbage dump of the world, carrying the scars of industrialization, pollution, depopulation and decaying infrastructure. Even the schemes used to rebuild these regions focus on schools and families. While schools and families are important, there are many stages of life. While Richard Florida’s creative cities, classes and regions over-egged the excitement of bohemia, there is an importance—rhetorically at least—in claiming the value of tolerance, technology and talent. Such a strategy allows urban planners to understand city residents through their lifetime and recognize the intricacies and emotions of these places.

Linda Ghys’s statement that commenced this conclusion captures the mixed fortunes of small cities. Time is available because of a freedom from the long commute to and from work. It is easy to travel to the cinema, a show or a gig, if the



touring schedule permits travelling to smaller cities. But Ghys captures the challenges, inadequacies and social problems that rarely appear in the literature: the social isolation and disconnection for those who move to these small places. Work can help in building relationships, but for men and women without children, the ‘family friendly’ environments can create isolation, insularity and a deep loneliness.

Through the strategies, policies, examples, models and ideas raised in this book, there is no single checklist that can build economic growth and social innovation. However what is derived from the previous chapters are ten questions that may assist policy makers, policy makers, small and medium sized businesses and public sector enterprises when considering how to develop, enhance, sustain and grow third tier cities. Each of these questions has been answered by particular small cities or initiatives explored in this book.

1. Is the city or town invisible beyond hyper-local affiliations? Consider strategies for event management to build national and international profile.
2. Are primary production, mobile goods or digitally-delivered materials key areas of economic development? Consider the development of an integrated, place-specific, social media campaign. Geosocial networking may also be an option.
3. What are the costs and benefits of marketing the city or town as ‘family friendly’? Are there facilities and opportunities to experience a good life for single people, couples and multiple age groups?
4. Does the city have a university resident within it? Is this institution being used effectively? Are academics deployed by councils and community organizations for their expertise? Are the possibilities for life-long learning promoted for the residents?
5. Are health and fitness facilities available for residents of multiple ages and abilities? If weather is not temperate, are indoor facilities available?
6. Is plentiful, fresh and high quality food available to residents? Are there a diversity of supermarkets and primary producers to provide alternatives to fast food outlets?
7. Is the city walkable? What strategies—such as geosocial networking—can be deployed to increase the interest in moving through the city?
8. Are both high and popular culture supported in the city? Can bands be formed and play and DJs perform at local events, as much as ensembles and orchestras?
9. Evaluate the local government departments and structures. Are entrepreneurial opportunities enabled, or is there a structural separation of economic and cultural development?
10. How effective is the transportation network? If there is an airport, how regular and reliable are the flights moving to global and second tier cities? How regular are trains that not only connect to global cities, but link small cities and towns? Are there possibilities to reduce the ‘hub and spoke’ travel between small cities and the capital?

This book has probed, framed and explored how smaller cities are managed, transformed or left to decline. It has—as my subtitle suggests—offered a rethinking. This project matters, and my passion for it has peppered the prose. Cities matter

because the lives, hopes, aspirations and goals of so many people are reliant on the availability of work, safe and clean food, enjoyable leisure and exercise, transportation and the capacity to build a network of friends, acquaintances and relationships. The goal is to create—as Mitchell, Frank, Harris, Dodds and Danforth have described—“the geography of happiness.”<sup>1</sup> Half the world’s population live in urbanity. The scale of this transformation means that one shoe will not fit all citizens. Creative cities—of coffee shops, tasteful ambient electronic music and polo shirts—are not the archetype of success that Richard Florida proposed. Education cities, which may be smaller and less dynamic but earnestly committed to teaching, learning, reading and thinking, may also be valued. Many of these cities are small and stable but with a rhythm punctuated by reading and thinking, rather than talking and espresso. Others may value high quality food, sport and walkability. If, as Saskia Sassen has proposed, that global cities are increasingly homogenous, then third tier cities with their different and defiant histories, odd spurts and troughs of growth and instability, may have inherent potential. They create great pride, because they offer a deep belonging. This pride can result in the story that started this book, about a white cockatoo that had been taught by Broome residents who loved their location so much, that all other competing places were only worthy of humour and ridicule. There is an edgy joy in Con’s cockatoo reminding listeners—if they dislike Broome—to “go to Darwin and starve, ya bastard.” Similarly, there is a humour, irony and power in the Parkes’ Elvis Festival. It does not make logical sense. It seems bizarre. Yet—somehow—there is authenticity amidst the irony.

While this competition between cities and towns can be productive and destructive, there needs to be attention to people in these cities and the urban systems that can help them move, make a living, enjoy family and friends and define and create the choices and changes in their lives. This book has contained the voices of men and women who live in third tier cities around the world. A request on Facebook resulted in evocative, troubling but also inspiring views about living in these often invisible and marginalized places. The resultant views captured the isolation and the loneliness, as much as the benefits, of these small cities. Policy makers must consider how their actions about traffic, shopping districts and public open spaces block or enable the building of social and emotional bridges.

Walter Benjamin described Paris as the “capital of the 19th century.”<sup>2</sup> This phrase is evocative, because he demonstrates how global cities not only occupy space, but time. Similarly—and following on from Benjamin—New York was the capital of the 20th century. That is why the destruction of the World Trade Centre’s Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 was so provocative, shocking, startling but disturbingly symbolic. The New York century was over. The capital of the 21st century is yet to emerge. Beijing or Mumbai are both contenders. They are starting to claim a domination over both space and time.

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell et al. (2013).

<sup>2</sup> W. Benjamin, “Paris—Capital of the 19th Century,” <http://nowherelab.dreamhosters.com/paris%20capital.pdf>.

Third tier cities will never dominate their space or time. But the residents within them can live local lives of resilience, sustainability, accountability, responsiveness, passion, compassion and responsibility. These cities and towns can dominate a few seconds on the national and—perhaps—international clock through a sporting event, a quirky festival or a tragic event. Bathurst, Glastonbury and Lockerbie remain provocative examples of these three categories. They jut into the light through sport, music or calamity. Yet for the men, women and children who live a life ‘hiding in the light’,<sup>3</sup> there is an opportunity to summon a new way of living, learning, earning and thinking.

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<sup>3</sup> Hebdige (1988).

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