CULTURAL AND CREATIVE QUARTERS: AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR PROBLEMS FROM A COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Jennifer García Carrizo
Universidad Rey Juan Carlos
Jennifergarciacarrizo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Previous urban and sociological research on cultural and creative quarters has identified gentrification, globalization and lack of citizen participation as key issues hindering the sustainability of these areas. This research analyses these issues from a communication and branding approach in three case studies of cultural and creative quarters in the United Kingdom: Digbeth (Birmingham), St. George's Quarter (Leicester) and the Ouseburn Valley (Newcastle upon Tyne). In total, 64 participant observations and 24 in-depth interviews were developed. Besides, primary and secondary sources, such as maps, brochures, tourism guides, newspapers and scientific studies about these areas were analysed, thus achieving methodological triangulation. The results obtained were contrasted through Grounded Theory, in a way that data was obtained and iteratively analysed. This study adds new evidence pointing to gentrification and lack of citizen participation as issues that cultural and creative quarters face when being implemented and communicated. Furthermore, a new problem is identified. Namely the lack of similarity between a quarter's brand identity (theoretically related to revitalization and renewal) and its brand image (real values associated by their users, linked to insecurity and dirtiness).

1. INTRODUCTION

The object of study of this research is cultural and creative quarters, conceiving them as places where "a set of economic, non-economic and institutional actors decide to use some of the shared resources to develop a common project" (Lazzeretti, 2008: 328). This work analyses the issues creative and cultural quarters face at the time of being implemented at a local level and communicated to society.

These urban areas are important not only because of their role as economic catalysts in the city, but are also relevant at a cultural, social and educational local level (Banks and O'Connor, 2017; Moreton, 2018; Gutierrez-Posada et al., 2022; Luka, 2022). Due to the huge amount of cultural and creative industries located in them, cultural and creative quarters have

traditionally been considered places where culture, creativity and public spaces are fostered (Sánchez de Madariaga and Ezquiaga, 2019). They are also essential for the promotion of citizenship, coexistence, equality, cohesion and social integration (Santos Vieira and Kamlot, 2017; Duxbury et al., 2017; Hasbusi et al., 2020; Gustafsson and Lazzaro, 2021).

Despite the existence of a large amount of research on cultural and creative quarters (Evans, 2015; Mould and Comunian, 2015; Cheng et al., 2015; Jones, 2017; Lai et al., 2021), only a few works have an approach grounded in communication and branding. There remains a need to investigate how these spaces are communicated to locals and what issues arise during this process.

Previous research coming from disciplines like architecture, urban renewal and sociology has identified gentrification (Hwang, 2016; Zukin et al., 2017; Pastak et al., 2019), lack of citizen participation (Qinghao and Zhizhang, 2014; Serapioni and Matos, 2014; Meschede and Mainka, 2020; Nyama and Mukwada, 2022) and globalization (Eton et al., 2019; Ahokpe and Sag, 2021) as the main issues for the development of cities or districts (Tallon, 2013: 275):

1. Gentrification, exclusion and privatization of the urban landscape: One of the most common criticisms that cultural quarters receive is their effect as an accelerator of gentrification in cities (Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Waterman, 1998). Problems associated with gentrification range from difficulties for the average citizen facing rental increases (Zukin, 2016) to the commodification of the cultures of the area and the exclusion of local groups (Boyle and Hughes, 1994).

2. Absence or low level of citizen participation: This is due in part to the gentrification processes described above (Zukin, 2016). Communities negatively affected by it frequently see their voice and opinions excluded from the proposals for the development of new cultural and creative projects. Their culture is kidnapped or commercialized by the city authorities, with the emergence, for example, of cultural festivals that are inconsistent with local customs and/or needs (O'Connor, 2015).

   When considering the design of a cultural and creative quarter, there may be two approaches: "top-down" and "bottom-up". In "top-down" initiatives, an institution (normally a public institution linked to the city council but also private companies or real estate services) carries out the implementation of a regeneration policy that, by building a cultural and/or creative quarter, aims to renew a deteriorating urban area. Conversely, in the "bottom-up" approach, a group of citizens, artists, activists, etc., start making use of a series of disused spaces to organically revitalize them through cultural and creative activities (Luka, 2022).

   Cultural and creative quarters created through top-down initiatives have been heavily criticized because their urban regeneration policies and approaches are often highly artificial and lack a focus on local communities and their needs (Bell and Jayne, 2004). Generally, these areas are characterized by a lack of closeness with the local community (Evans, 2005) and attention to the voices of citizens, whose urban environments have been reshaped (Hall, 2004). In many cases, these spaces are designed by institutions and organizations that do not adequately study the economic, social and environmental needs of the habitat before starting a regeneration process. Sometimes a new type of culture is

even included in the area without considering the pre-existing cultures. Regeneration programs are often developed without the inclusion of local traditional art groups, communities and cultures, introducing new icons or urban symbols and giving preference to the new, forgetting the value of heritage (Evans, 2005).

While cultural and creative quarters may evolve organically, driven by initiatives from cultural and creative figures in a specific area, or be intentionally planned by urban developers aiming to transform a region through creative and cultural industries, it is common to observe their development through a synergistic combination of both forces (Belloso et al., 2017). In the United Kingdom, for example, Lorente (2009:24) provides examples that combine private, public and semi-public initiatives in London (e.g. see the historic London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC)[1]), and in other cities, such as Birmingham, where the office and apartment complex of the Custard Factory rents studios for artists at a low price.

3. Globalization and exclusively focusing on physical and economic regeneration: Globalization has contributed to the loss of local identity and acculturation processes. The global financial and land development regimes have contributed to the development of multinational companies at the expense of small and medium-sized local and independent companies. Likewise, urban regeneration policies have often focused on short-term actions instead of long-term retention policies (Comunian, 2011). Although the diversity introduced by globalization can be positive for urban environments and their identity, these environments, and also cultural and creative quarters, reflect the unique characteristics of their surroundings, their history and their cultural development. All districts should be unique and not standardized models (Frost-Kumpf, 1998). Sometimes, replication of other cultural and creative quarters is carried out throughout a country (McCarthy, 2005), as if it were necessary for each city to have one, forgetting that what is interesting is to establish spaces that connect with their dwellers (Mould and Comunian, 2015).

Globalization and the homogenization of cultural and creative quarters are directly linked to the way they are implanted in society. Numerous studies have shown that "top-down" initiatives tend to be the most common practice, avoiding local voices to be integrated into decision-making processes (Spirou, 2011). Opinions of locals are neglected on issues ranging from the celebration of "local" or ethnic festivals (McClinchey, 2008), to brand management and the promotion of cultural quarters (Schoorl, 2005; Green, 2007) or their urban design (Hall, 2008).

Therefore, by not considering the unique characteristics of each area, urban spaces whose differentiation is null are produced. They are perfectly designed spaces that follow the quality criteria of cultural and creative quarters, but lack their own identity, like an amusement park designed to attract tourists rather than being a meeting place for locals. This is how the serialization of cultural and creative quarters and its "Disneyfication" takes place (Karachalis and Deffner, 2012: 94). These urban spaces are theoretically erected to regenerate areas, but what they achieve, instead of integration and social cohesion, is the

---

[1] Although LDDC has been at the centre of planning and regeneration debates (see Brownill and O´Hara, 2015), still it has been preferred to use it as an example, in agreement with Lorente (2009).

exclusion of the poorest sector of the population and the increase of marginalization, unemployment and insecurity (Badenes, 2007).

Some of the data reported in this article has already been published (García Carrizo, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c)as preliminary research on the problems related to cultural and creative quarters, focusing on sociological and urban aspects. However, the present work additionally adopts a branding and a communication approach, considering the strategic plans and methodologies employed by entities in cultural and creative quarters to establish and convey a distinctive brand identity and effectively communicate their spaces to its users.

This study identifies the lack of cohesion, inclusion and involvement of the actors in the aforesaid quarters as the main issues hindering their success, sustainability and legitimization. Importantly, a new problem related to the brand identity and the brand image of cultural and creative quarters is identified too. According to Hatch and Schultz (1997), brand identity is the aspirational way a company views its brand and wants it to be seen by consumers, and brand image is the actual way that consumers view that brand. Ideally, brand identity and brand image should overlap as much as possible (Miller, 2020). However, a huge distance exists between the brand identity and the brand image of the cultural and creative quarters analysed.

2. METHODOLOGY

To analyse the problems in the implementation and development of cultural and creative quarters, data has been collected through the research strategies of the survey, the analysis of three case studies, ethnography and Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 2017). Grounded Theory is used to develop theoretical explanations of social interactions and processes in different contexts (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). It is both a research strategy and a method of data analysis. Based on it, various data collection techniques (mainly in-depth interviews and participant observations) have been applied between 2016 and 2021 in the three case studies selected: Digbeth (Birmingham), St. George´s Quarter (Leicester) and the Ouseburn Valley (Newcastle Upon Tyne).

The specific selection of these case studies is grounded in the fact that, in the United Kingdom, cultural and creative spaces have been extensively developed, especially because of their post-industrial nature and the importance of the Industrial Revolution in this country. Two cultural and creative quarters located in cities of different sizes were selected for analysis, discarding those cases that have been traditionally and widely studied, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham or Shoreditch (London), to offer an analysis of novel cases that expands the existing theoretical corpus.

The cultural and creative area of Digbeth was chosen as it is located in Birmingham, the second-largest city in England, considered the cradle of the Industrial Revolution (Jefferson et al., 2006). Leicester, a small city about 65 km from Birmingham, was selected to analyse its cultural and creative area, the St. George´s Quarter. That is, two cities in the English Midlands

were chosen, geographically located at similar points, but with different socio-demographic, cultural and economic characteristics.

After analysing the data obtained throughout the year 2016 from these first two case studies and considering the scientific literature on them, a third case was incorporated in 2017. The choice of this third case study, the Ouseburn Valley (in Newcastle), was motivated after having carried out the first data collection techniques: participant observations as a complete observer in St. George's Quarter and Digbeth, as well as some interviews with experts (see Appendix 1). It was observed that one of the existing problems, both in Birmingham and Leicester, is that, located "120 miles away from London, the capital is too near for Birmingham to confidently acquire the regional independence of Newcastle or Liverpool" (Holyoak, 2009: 35). For this reason, a cultural and creative area located in the North East of England, more than 450 km from London and with regional independence from the capital, was selected as the third case study.

The case studies chosen are urban spaces theoretically settled as cultural, creative, and citizen empowerment areas. Values such as "cultural areas", "citizen participation", "creative hubs" and "social gatherings" are commonly associated with these places at a branding level (Luka, 2022). They are also allocated in cities where the regeneration process has been mainly top-down and driven initially by the public sector. Birmingham, Newcastle, and Leicester have spent the last decades re-branding themselves. Birmingham has mainly focused on its city centre:

> Its business community came together in 1993 to form the Birmingham Marketing Partnership (…) to show the city's historic "can do" spirit remained undiminished. This has since become Marketing Birmingham, an integrated public-private partnership supported by the council and 350 local businesses, working to promote it as a destination for the visitor economy, conferences, and inward investment (Stevens, 2013).

Newcastle has focused on the north bank of the River Tyne, collaborating with Gateshead (a town on the south bank of the River Tyne) to transform the area "into a single cultural and cosmopolitan visitor destination: NewcastleGateshead, [whose] mission is to inspire people to visit and to live, learn, work and invest" (NewcastleGateshead Initiative, 2024).

Finally, Leicester has focused on the representation of ethnical diversity in its city branding and on "the creation of an open urban *milieu* where ethnic groups are free to express and celebrate their own cultures through festivals and events" (Hassen and Giovanardi, 2018). Besides, the discovery of Richard III's mortal remains in 2012 and the local football club's victory in the Premier League in 2016 launched the city at an international level. Thus, Leicester has based its regeneration and branding not only on specific areas but on the whole city, also because it is a small city compared to Birmingham or Newcastle.

Appendix 1 collects the participant observations and the in-depth interviews carried out in the areas of Digbeth (Birmingham), St. George's Quarter (Leicester) and the Ouseburn Valley

(Newcastle). It also details the days of the week and the times in which the participant observations[2] were carried out and the positions held by the interviewees.

2.1. Participant observation

Participant observations were carried out as a complete observer[3] between September 2016 and December 2021 through sixty-four observation periods on different days of the week and with variable durations and timetables (see Appendix 1). The periods were selected randomly, avoiding days when big festivals or events took place, as these do not represent the day-to-day of these spaces. The activities selected were those developed daily by the actors in each space: activities taking place in the Custard Factory, The Bond or Fazeley Studios in Digbeth; those developed at LCB Depot, Leicester Print Workshop, the Curve and Phoenix, as the Last Friday event, in St. George's Quarter, and, activities developed in the Victoria Tunnel, the Ouseburn Farm, the Ouseburn Trust or different pubs, as the Cluny or the Ship Inn, in the Ouseburn. During the observations, special emphasis was placed on analyzing the degree of citizen participation in the activities carried out on a day-to-day basis and how these were disseminated and communicated in urban spaces.

During the participant observations, a total of 2,213 photographs were obtained, catalogued with the date and time they were taken (475 photographs taken in St. George's Quarter; 728, in Digbeth and 1,010, in Ouseburn). Also, information brochures were collected, as well as maps and other documents distributed in/by the cities of Birmingham, Leicester and Newcastle. These materials are primary documentation about the processes, activities, spaces and landmarks in the areas analysed.

The aforementioned observation processes were used to favour familiarization with the quarters and their actors, delving into their daily activities and the problems faced during their communication processes. Besides, participation as a complete observer also took place in part of the activities open to the public, such as guided tours, plays and musicals, cultural visits, festivals, street food markets and other creative encounters, visiting the most relevant catalyst spaces in the quarters.

---

[2] Participant observation is a data collection method "in which researchers take part in everyday activities related to an area of social life in order to study an aspect of that life through the observation of events in their natural contexts" (McKechnie, 2008: 599).

[3] When observation is developed with a complete observer role, the researcher "attempts to observe people in ways which make it unnecessary for them to take him [the researcher] into account, for they do not know he [the researcher] is observing them or that" (Gold, 1958: 221). In this study, the researcher adopted an observational stance akin to that of a visitor to the district, rather than approaching it from the perspective of someone employed within it.

2.2. In-depth interviews

Twenty-four in-depth interviews were conducted in person between September 2016 and April 2020 and were used to analyse issues related to creative and cultural quarters and their communication and implementation. Prestigious academics in the field and professional experts in the creative and cultural industries sector were interviewed, as well as institutional and cultural and creative industries representatives to whom the case studies are linked (Appendix 1). The information gathered clarified and converged with data obtained during participant observations and the research carried out from primary and secondary sources, implying a methodological triangulation of the results obtained.

The questions were open and diverse, but all of them were related to the what, the how and the why of the processes observed within the case studies. Occasionally, specific questions were asked which always had an exploratory nature, following the scheme of questions developed by Charmaz and Belgrave (2014). These can be split into three categories: changes that the place has experimented with in the last decades; the importance of citizen participation (or not); and ideas about the identity and sustainability of an area.

The interviews lasted about 45 minutes and, to preserve the interviewees' anonymity and avoid any repercussions that their statements could have on a small local community, the names of the experts, academics and actors interviewed have been omitted when presenting the results. Thus, they have been named "interviewee 1", "interviewee 2", etc. (Appendix 1).

During in-depth interviews, the premise that they should seem like guided conversations, instead of structured consultations, was followed (Yin, 2012). Impartial questions were asked facilitating a relaxed conversation. Throughout these "structured conversations", interviewees were also asked to propose their ideas or topics of interest, which were collected and served as the basis for other interviews. It was intended that interviewees, assumed the role of "informants" instead of that of "respondents", as recommended during exploratory research (Yin, 2012).

The data obtained were analysed following Grounded Theory and through open, axial and selective coding. The categories obtained through this coding process were incorporated into the results of this research, always focusing on its objective: to identify the problems of creative and cultural quarters during their communication and implementation.

3. RESULTS

After analysing the data, three categories were obtained linked to problems associated with the communication and implementation of cultural and creative quarters: 1) gentrification, 2) lack of cohesion and inclusion of their actors and 3) the existence of a gap between the brand identity and the brand image of these spaces.

3.1. Gentrification

In St. George´s Quarter, the urban space is progressively losing its cultural and creative sense and becoming a non-place (Augé, 1995) with proliferating student-rented housing. This was noticed during participant observations, evidencing how this housing type has increased in number between 2016 and 2021.

Gentrification is also identified in Ouseburn (Newcastle), where it is presented as "the biggest problem today within the cultural and creative quarter" (Interviewee 3, 2017, personal communication). Although the construction of residential environments since 2013 has been positive "in the sense that it has attracted a stable population to the Valley" (Interviewee 16, 2018; Interviewee 24 2020, personal communication), it must be pointed out that it has also had consequences that have been harshly criticized by previous users. One of the most criticized aspects has been that "The Malings -a residential complex- was built about 50 meters from the Tyne Bar, one of the best-known pubs in the neighbourhood for its live music" (Interviewee 21, 2018, personal communication). Although the developer and the construction company stated that the arrival of residential spaces would encourage the attraction of new customers to the pubs (see Ellul and Knight, 2016), the truth is that "the residents have been continuously annoyed by the noise level that these leisure places generate at night" (Interviewee 21, 2018, personal communication; see Riener, 2006).

This has led to more than 11,000 people and different businesses and catalysts in the valley to support several online petitions through platforms such as challenge.org, opposing the development of new residential environments and arguing that "they threaten the live music scene in Ouseburn" (Interviewee 21, 2018, personal communication): "they ruin the area by attracting parties, such as hen parties and other celebrations, which have little to do with the character of the quarter" (Interviewee 19, 2018, personal communication) and, at the same time, displace its original inhabitants and users (Figure 1).
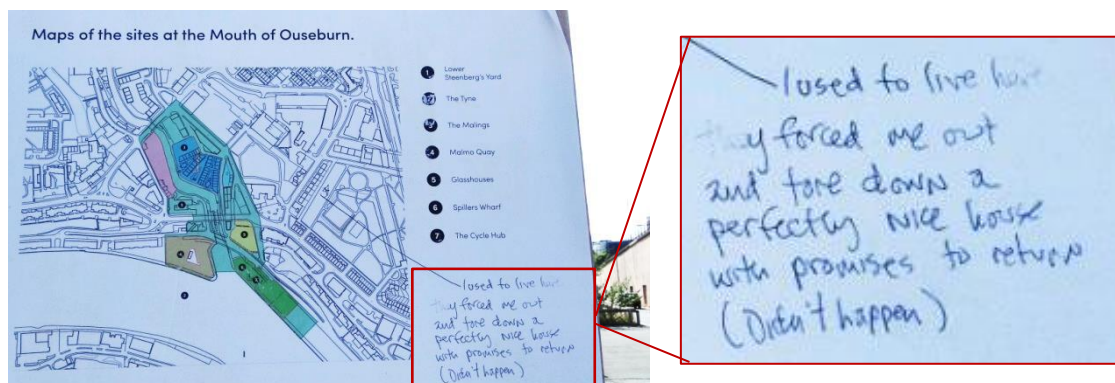

Figure 1. Photograph of one of the promotional posters about the new residential spaces to be developed in Ouseburn. In it, a note from a former resident of the neighbourhood can be appreciated: "I used to live here. They forced me out and tore down a perfectly nice house with promises to return (didn't happen)". Source: Author, 2019.

The displacement of some of the industries that are still present in part of the valley (Figure 2) and the commercialization of the existing cultural and creative spaces, are of great concern to the managers of the revitalization and conservation of an area, such as the Ouseburn Trust

(see Roberson, 2019; Interview 24, 2020, personal communication). This concern dates back a long time: the Ouseburn Trust itself was born as a citizen pressure group on the initiatives that the City Council was taking at a regenerative level, specifically to prevent the gentrification of Ouseburn (see Tornaghi, 2007).

Figure 2. Example of a business located next to The Mailings. Source: Author, 2018.

As a cultural and creative management entity, the Ouseburn Trust is fully aware of the need to continue offering affordable spaces to local artists and creative and cultural industries to continue developing activities that protect the character of the quarter. "Different complexes within the valley [were acquired] to control the price of their rentals and, consequently, that of the adjoining spaces" (Interviewee 8, 2017, personal communication). The Ouseburn Trust is also protecting the area from architectural projects that imply standardized and modular buildings, such as student housing, "which do not add anything to its character and could even damage it if the actors already present in the area forget about their activities and cultural offer to focus on a youthful, student and globalized audience" (Interviewee 16, 2018, personal communication).

In Digbeth, the development of the new train and tram stations and the interest of the owners to increase the rents of their spaces are making the quarter an unaffordable area for artists and cultural and community institutions (HUB, 2019c). This issue can easily be predicted, "especially considering the HS2 rail projects and the arrival of the streetcar in the area, which is due to take place" (Interviewee 14, 2017, personal communication). This project is expected to create 22,000 permanent jobs and will have an impact on the area's Gross Value Added of 1.5 billion pounds in 2026 (see Hodson, 2019b). This will cause "a tremendous impact on the value of Digbeth's properties" (Interviewee 11, 2017, personal communication), with the creation of a space with a large number of houses expected to attract a large resident population. This is something that has already generated tensions in the last 10 years: residents who live in newly built apartments have filed noise complaints against entertainment and nightlife venues, all of which settled on Digbeth before the new housing (Brown et al., 2010). This is an evident problem, "especially considering the catalyst role of pubs and catering services in the area" (Interviewee 14, 2017, personal communication).

There has been a perception that the revaluation of the area is causing the withdrawal of original industries and population. The average price of a property in Digbeth is below the

mean price in Birmingham (see Howarth, 2016) but, over the last 20 years, it has increased by 401%, currently being £235,997 and having risen since 2018 by 38% its value (see Seven Capital, 2020). All this confirms the gentrifying trend in the area. Institutional strategies are generating gentrification rather than regeneration, as Porter already predicted in 2009: "the gentrification agenda remains intact. Gentrification, rather than regeneration (...), has just begun" (Porter, 2009: 225).

3.2. Lack of long-term cohesion, inclusion and involvement of the actors

The second problem relates to the lack of inclusion of the actors present in a quarter. Actors are understood not only as individuals but also at the collective level, as entities, companies, organizations, etc.

The need is evidenced to integrate not only the people who make use of cultural and creative quarters, but also the companies that work in them and, above all, to do it in the long term, not through specific actions. Although the Ouseburn Valley is not an example of a bad practice regarding this aspect –or at least it is not a clear example-, the problem is evident in St. George's Quarter and Digbeth.

In Ouseburn, the integration of new inhabitants has been facilitated, as evidenced, for example, by the arrival of the new residents of The Mailings. This "has forced the original users of the Valley to open up to the rest of the locals and has shown the importance of diversity and mix-use developments[4] for the conservation of the Valley" (Interviewee 20, 2020, personal communication). However, there is still room for improvement; some actors are warning about "the importance of improving the collaboration between cultural and creative actors in the area, especially those who are not completely in tune with the Ouseburn Trust and their way of doing" (Interviewee 17, 2018, personal communication).

In Digbeth, "the lack of integration between existing communities, creative industries, cultural actors and its users is evident" (Interviewee 11, 2017, personal communication), as can be also observed in the primary sources consulted (see HUB, 2019c: 12). Independence is such that, "from the cultural actors' perspective, Digbeth is a cultural quarter and, for the creative ones, it is exclusively a creative one" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication), which "shows to what extent the existing industries develop their activity without joining forces" (Interviewee 13, 2017, personal communication). Although efforts are being made to create a Digbeth brand, this seems to mainly respond to private interests, such as those of Oval Real Estate for uniting under one umbrella brand all the spaces the company has acquired since 2019 in the area. Consequently, the diversity of the quarter and its institutions and companies is not being represented in the aforesaid brand: "each actor works for his individual interests, but not common" (Interviewee 11, 2017, personal communication).

---

[4] Mixed-used is a type of urban development, urban design, urban planning or/and a zoning type that blends multiple uses (residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, entertainment,…), into one space, where all those functions are integrated (Raman and Kumar, 2019).

At the level of citizen participation, the fundamental problem is the lack of institutional and urban developers' sensitivity and active listening to the dwellers. Citizens do not participate in Digbeth's activities and processes because they do not feel heard or welcome: "they believe that the area is made up of an exclusive network of participants that is very difficult to access" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication). Regarding Digbeth´s regeneration plans, "citizens neither can make themselves be heard" (Interviewee 13, 2017, personal communication), regardless of these plans having been designed by private companies or public institutions (see Porter and Barber, 2006; Porter, 2009; Barber and Pareja, 2010).

Figure 3. Evolution between 2016 and 2019 of the graffiti made to regenerate The Grand Union Canal area. Source: Author, 2016 and 2019.

Proof of the disconnection between regeneration plans and citizens' needs and interests is the vandalization of the graffiti specifically done to regenerate The Bond Terrace and The Grand Union Canal, workspaces for creative industries and cultural actors. This piece of urban art included "landmarks" and allusions to Birmingham´s history (Figure 3, upper) but, in just three years, this work of public art has been vandalized (Figure 3, lower). "Urban regeneration carried out without listening to the citizens or involving them in the process can result in dwellers not feeling identified with the final results and, consequently, not respecting them" (Interviewee 11, 2017, personal communication).

Regarding St. George's Quarter, the lack of integration and social inclusion is shown in the fact that despite Leicester being one of the most multicultural and diverse cities in the United Kingdom (see Clayton, 2012; Hassen and Giovanardi, 2018), "this cultural, social, political and economic diversity has not been integrated into the area, where only "a few" carry out their activities" (Interviewee 1, 2016, personal communication). When talking about regeneration and urban plans in this quarter, what is observed are specific interventions related to specific actors in the area, such as the Curve Theatre or the LCB Depot. But these "are not plans about integration, cohesion or citizen participation" (Interviewee 1, 2016, personal communication). This situation not only occurs in St. George's Quarter, but also in Digbeth, and is observed when analysing the proposed urban and regeneration plans in the area, both institutional (see citing Birmingham City Council, 2011, 2016, 2017) and private (see Turley, 2019; Grand Union, 2019; HUB, 2019a, 2019b; Oval Digbeth Ltd., 2020).

Both in the Leicester and Birmingham quarters, it is essential to implement a sustainable approach to the area by establishing a long-term vision: "only this way will it be possible to develop a coherent strategy over time" (Interviewee 13, 2017, personal communication). So far, only a few urban plans have been developed in St. George's Quarter, which are reduced to short periods between 5 and 10 years. They are more linked to political and personal interests than to the general interest and the real needs of the citizens of Leicester (Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 3, 2016, personal communication).

The absence of a long-term strategy leads to mistakes such as falling into the simplification of whether the area is a creative or cultural space. A paradoxical issue originating from this simplification can be appreciated in the fact that, in Leicester, at the official and institutional level, its quarter is termed as a "cultural quarter" under the brand "St. George's Cultural Quarter" (Interviewee 15, 2017, personal communication). However, the creative industries in the area try to determine the quarter as a "creative space" (Interviewee 23, 2018, personal communication).

Besides, in the maps collected during the participant observations, which are elaborated by cultural actors such as the Two Queens Arts Gallery, the Curve Theatre and the Phoenix Cinema (see Figure 4, top and bottom left), no reference is made to the area of St. George as a cultural and creative area. However, the maps designed by creative actors such as LCB Depot, Leicester Print Workshop and Makers' Yard refer to the St. George area as the cultural and creative quarter (see Figure 4, bottom centre and right).

Figure 4. Maps collected during participant observations. Source: Author, 2019.

In this sense, and even though cultural quarters are sometimes defined as places different from creative quarters, what is interesting is "to set up synergies between the creative and cultural industries, since much more profitable results can arise from these" (Interviewee 1, 2016, personal communication): creativity and culture actors must work together to develop

attractive and advantageous activities for their audiences; activities that allow boosting integration and social cohesion (see European Cities Marketing, 2016).

3.3. Existence of a gap between brand identity and brand image

The third issue pertains to the disparity between the brand identity crafted for a quarter and its actors at a branding level and the brand image and actual values associated with that space in reality by its users. While, in theory, these aspects should be in harmony (Alloza et al., 2013), there are instances where such alignment does not occur, presenting a significant challenge in terms of branding. Digbeth is a clear example in which it can be easily seen how "its digital footprint and its image at a theoretical level [brand identity] (webpages, social networks, communication campaigns…) are completely different from the real one [brand image]" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication). Therefore, in the *Digbeth Speaks Project* (2013), adjectives such as "creative", "artistic", "funny", "industrial", "vibrant", "Irish", and "unique" appear. These values have to do with positive ideas communicated through the social networks of companies and cultural actors in the area. However, there are also other descriptors of the area such as "dirty", "alcoholic", "disorganized" or "neglected" that make Digbeth a not-so-idyllic space to live in, work at and enjoy.

The analysis carried out by HUB in 2019 shows adjectives and nouns such as "dodgy", "garbage", "disaster", "waste", "deteriorated", "homeless people", "disaster", "chaotic", dirty", "stabbing", "dark", "abandoned", etc. are associated with Digbeth. Although values typically associated with cultural and creative areas still are present ("vibrant", "unique", "artistic", "diverse", "colourful", "community", "alternative", "independent", "cultural", "creative"), both studies show that there is a set of terms associated with Digbeth that have a profoundly negative character and that are part of its brand image. That is, at a brand identity and a digital level, an idea of perfection has been generated, but in reality and at a brand image level, Digbeth needs substantial improvements.

"The development in the area comes from the hand of lost promises that have been made for 10 years" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication) and the creative and cultural industries coexist in an insecure environment along with other industries, landfills and derelict lands (see HUB, 2019c). The observed presence in the area of car repair garages, small chemical and automotive industries and places for waste management confirms the carelessness, abandonment and "insecurity perceived in the area" (Interviewee 13, 2017, personal communication).

Digbeth has major problems linked to dirt, security, high crime rates and drugs (see HUB, 2019c), "especially during the night" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication). Although the Birmingham City Council and cultural and creative industries insist that "security is real and its lack is only a subjective perception" (Interviewee 14, 2017, personal communication), citizens and academics do not feel the same (Interviewees 11, 12 and 13, 2017, personal communication). In the observations made, a series of elements confirm the lack of security in the area. For example, all spaces owned by Oval Real Estate and available in

Digbeth for holding events have a private security team and video surveillance cameras (see Oval Digbeth Ltd., 2020). Besides, the existence of signs indicating that the area is not safe and the car crime warnings (Figure 4), make it clear that the area is not completely safe.

Figure 5. A vandalized car and signage warning of the possibility of vehicle theft in Digbeth. Source: Author, 2018.

There are also Twitter accounts, such as @Digbeth2, that report the "reality" of the area (Figure 6), moving away from "the sweetened vision that is generally given of the quarter on social networks and the internet" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication). These types of accounts usually have a very short life, quickly disappearing.

Figure 6. Tweets and comments made by the Twitter account @Digbeth2, alluding to the "ugliest" of Digbeth and giving a different view. The account was active at the end of 2019 but was deleted in January 2020. Source: www.twitter.com/Digbeth2

Crime and lack of security have been associated with Digbeth for a long time. Indeed, "narratives and legends are commonly linked to the period when the space was in its industrial era, as people recognize that the allure of the space is partially rooted in its industrial aesthetics" (Interviewee 13, 2018, personal communication). This is a charm that some actors,

especially those related to entertainment, music and party environments, try to take advantage of through aesthetics linked to vandalism and graffiti (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Ghetto Golf Birmingham, an example of how vandalism and graffiti aesthetics are used to create social and entertainment environments. Source: Author, 2020.

However, these negative values can affect the cultural and creative industries settled in the area. This is the reason why attempts have been made to establish "security paths" and safe transit spaces (see Turley, 2019). Safe routes have been created using lighting, aiming to "increase the visual interest of the area and its safety" (see Birmingham City Council, 2011: 56).

Different signage elements designed by Oval Real Estate have been placed to guide passers-by and facilitate the identification of the spaces it owns in Digbeth. However, this signage does not include other cultural institutions outside of its boundary that are key in the area, such as Grand Union or Eastside Projects (Figure 8).
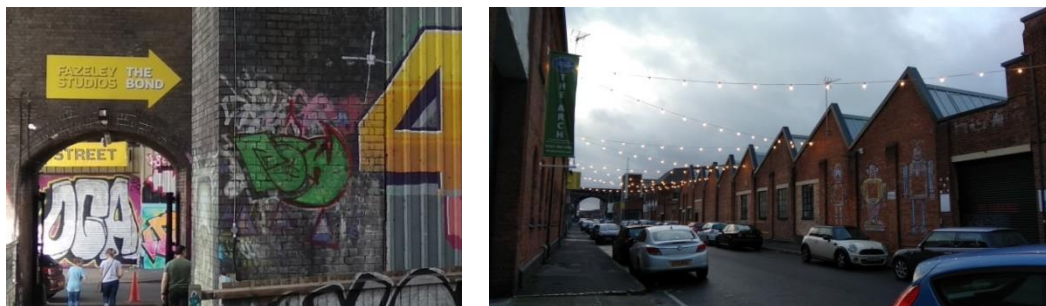

Figure 8. Signage placed in Digbeth to trace "safety" routes that connect some of its main actors, such as Fazeley Studios, The Bond and the Custard Factory. Lighting has been added to the route to make it easier to recognise and increase the illumination of the area, improving the perception of safety at night. Source: Author, 2019 and 2018.

There is plenty of evidence about dirt, urban disorder and the absence of good-quality public spaces in Digbeth. On the one hand, there is a high level of street parking, which congests public spaces (see Hub, 2019c). Digbeth is still currently understood as a "parking space" (Interviewees 12, 13 and 14, 2017, personal communication). On the other hand, once out of the main routes, a whole series of abandoned and dilapidated spaces arise with signs of vandalism and garbage accumulated. Besides, despite the regeneration plans designed by the Birmingham City Council and its cultural and creative actors placing special emphasis "on conserving the edges of the canals" (Interviewee 14, 2017, personal communication), these

are generally full of rubbish, weeds and vegetation (Figure 9). "Digbeth´s public spaces are vandalized and full of garbage" (Interviewee 12, 2017, personal communication).

Figure 9. Digbeth and signs of vandalism, deterioration and dirt. Source: Author, 2019, 2018 and 2020.

Problems linked to the safety of the area, garbage and the absence of good-quality public spaces also appear in the other two case studies analysed. In Ouseburn, there are "specific examples of spaces in disuse and with an abandoned and vandalized appearance" (Interviewee 9, 2017, personal communication) (Figure 10). Likewise, The Clean Green Ouseburn Team, a citizen group created five years ago to preserve the area and its environment, is proof of the need to "clean" the Ouseburn Valley and protect its green spaces (Interviewees 4 and 7, 2017, personal communication).

Figure 10. Vandalized vehicle and one of the disused buildings opposite the Ernerst pub, in the Ouseburn Valley. Source: Author, 2017 and 2018.

In the case of St. George's Quarter, issues related to the security of the area are also identified. The cemetery and the gardens of St. George Quarter's church are considered spaces with a

notorious incidence of crime at night (see Martin, 2018). Thus, attempts have repeatedly been made to remove trees and add lighting to this specific area to reduce petty offenses and drug abuse there (see Leicester City Council, 2016). However, the plans proposed by Leicester City Council have always been rejected. Although the Council has repeatedly argued that the removal of some of the trees would not compromise the green space and that it would help the conservation of the church building, plans have not been able to continue (see Leicester City Council, 2010).

The primary sources analysed, such as audio-visual materials on the memories of St. George's Quarter (see Threlfall, 2019), show how citizens emphasize the importance of developing good quality public spaces that include elements such as fountains, tables, benches and gardens. Citizens also claim that public spaces are necessary to promote cultural diversity and encourage citizen participation. Therefore, it is crucial to show that the community is open to more than just what is traditionally categorized as "high-culture," welcoming anyone with even a modest interest in cultural pursuits (but see Threlfall, 2019).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Through this research, three fundamental problems have been identified regarding the development and communication of creative and cultural spaces: 1) gentrification, 2) lack of cohesion, inclusion, and involvement of quarter´s actors in a long-term perspective and 3) the existence of a gap between the brand identity and the brand image of a quarter, related to the way the area is communicated and the reality perceived by its users.
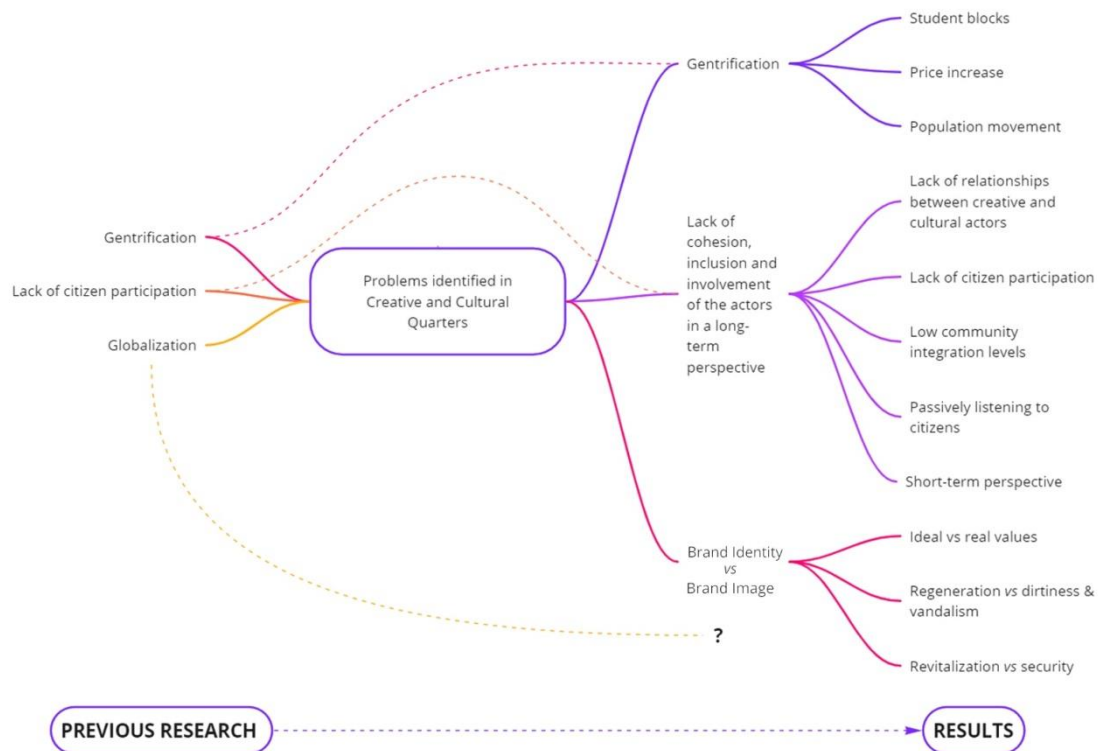

Figure 11. Previous research *vs*. results obtained. Source: author.

Two of the problems reported are in clear consonance with findings from previous studies (Figure 11). Both gentrification and lack of actors' participation have already been identified as problems in cultural and creative areas (Evans, 2005; O´Connor, 2015; Hwang, 2016; Zukin, 2016; Belloso et al., 2017; Zukin et al., 2017; Pastak et al., 2019; Meschede and Mainka, 2020; Nyama and Mukwada, 2022). Additionally, this research has shed light on new aspects regarding the last idea and fine-tuned some of its details. Specifically, when talking about the lack of actors' participation, the results from the present study suggest the importance of considering other aspects beyond citizen participation, such as 1) boosting the relationships between cultural and creative actors, 2) the need for higher community integration levels, 3) the need to make citizens feel heard and 4) the need of long term thinking. Besides, to avoid gentrification, globalization and communication misrepresentation it is important to establish a vehicle of control in these areas. Setting up a community or business-led development trust would be worth considering. These organizations, such as the Ouseburn Trust in Newcastle, can improve the land control, and development and consultation processes. Otherwise, development is piecemeal and challenged by conflicting agendas, an arena in which powerful players (e.g. real estate companies) are most likely to win.

Regarding globalization, which has previously been identified as a main problem in cultural and creative areas (Comunian, 2011; Karachalis and Deffner, 2012; Tallon, 2013; Mould and Comunian, 2015; Eton et al., 2019; Ahokpe and Sag, 2021), this research has not shown any evidence about how it affects the development of cultural and creative quarters. Probably, globalization has not arisen as a problem category because of two main reasons: 1) this study has been developed in very specific areas of the city and these creative and cultural areas have not been much internationalized and are not well known, 2) the areas analysed are not top-down developer-led regeneration areas. The outcomes of this research could have varied if case studies had been selected from areas with international influence and substantial tourist footfall, thereby facilitating globalization. Examples of such locations include Soho in New York, Shoreditch in London, the Gay Village in Manchester, or the Cathedral Quarter in Belfast. Further research is needed to prove whether this is happening because big global players only come in these areas after the success of the bottom-up approach has been proven and the risk has been taken by other actors.

This study has revealed a notable gap between the perception and the factual conditions of these areas (branding image) and the theoretical ideal communicated (branding identity). It has been observed how actors usually try to deliver a sweetened image of a space and how it is being revitalized and regenerated. However, when cases are analysed in-depth and observed in situ, problems generally linked to dirt and lack of security may appear, with still much room for improvement.

Overlapping the brand identity and brand image of these spaces is crucial, as discrepancies create dissonance, leading users to feel deceived (Villafañe, 2006). Asserting that a district is chic, modern or cool lacks credibility if issues like dirt and vandalism persist. Faced with this challenge, two options emerge: 1) Acknowledging the reality and creating a brand identity around a potentially negative aspect, turning it into an attractive concept (e.g. some audiences are drawn to disorder and randomness). 2) Transforming the actual state of the space to align with the desired brand identity. However, in pursuing the latter, there is the inherent risk of

losing the unique "charm" associated with an abandoned and post-industrial area, and this is why the purpose of branding strategies should be to tell the benefits of a given space creating a brand identity based on reality and without "masking" it (Zavattaro, 2014), which may disenchant the current users of the area (Roodhouse, 2006) and have negative effects on their loyalty.

The purpose of branding a cultural and creative area should be to publicize its activities and, consequently legitimize it socially, positioning it as a public good through which social inclusion, equality and sustainable development are promoted. A quarter-brand image is thus meant to increase the fidelity of its users, as corporative brands do (Grace et al., 2019; Cavalcante, 2022), and to make the importance of the area known among the rest of the dwellers at a local and regional level. Successful city brands started off being directed at residents. For example, in the mid-70s, New York City was suffering from high crime rates and the state was close to bankruptcy (Bernabi, 2011), so the "I ♥ NY" logo together with a whole city branding strategy was designed to attract truism to the area again but also to make citizens proud of their city.

In this sense, it is interesting to start by strengthening the values associated with a space. The challenge arises as these districts often grapple with the inadequate or partial implementation of branding strategies. While some concentrate on promoting themselves through logotypes and corporate colours, they fall short of establishing a comprehensive brand. Today, we recognize that a brand encompasses more than its visual identity—it extends to the internal culture, its interactions with external and internal publics, and its overall operational approach (Simoes and Dibb, 2001). The challenge lies in the fact that these districts often fail to fully grasp the concept of a brand as an immersive experience. Instead, they tend to adhere to branding approaches rooted in the 20th century. Nowadays, working on what values should be associated with a quarter and improving its corporate culture and sense of belonging is essential for the development of brands related to cultural and creative areas. Future research may specifically focus on the mechanisms by which brand images benefit through actions like the aforementioned.

In a nutshell, this study has confirmed previous evidence about gentrification and lack of cohesion, inclusion, and involvement of a quarter's actors as the main problems hindering the implementation and sustainability of cultural and creative spaces. But most importantly, another existing problem in cultural and creative quarters has been identified that previous research had not evidenced; namely, the existence of a significant gap between the brand identity and the brand image of these spaces. The results obtained, restricted to three specific but representative case studies, may be generalized to others in a way capable of developing future theories of urban development and branding regarding cultural and creative quarters. Generalization is analytical and not statistical, with findings being generalized in a way analogous to how experimental laboratory results are generalized to theory (Yin, 2013). Therefore, the present study may have significant implications for researchers and practitioners, who should consider using branding and communication as tools for making locals aware of cultural and creative quarters and their variety of activities and improving citizen participation.

5. REFERENCES

Alloza A, Carreras E and Carreras A (2013) *Reputación corporativa*. Madrid: Corporate Excellence.

Ahokpe KW and Sağ NS (2021) Urban Regeneration in Cultural Quarters: Example of Porto-Novo (Benin). *EKSEN Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi Dergisi* 2(1): 11-33.

Al Halbusi H, Jimenez Estevez P, Eleen T, Ramayah T and Hossain Uzir MU (2020) The roles of the physical environment, social servicescape, co-created value, and customer satisfaction in determining tourists' citizenship behavior: Malaysian cultural and creative industries. *Sustainability* 12(8): 3229. DOI: 10.3390/su12083229.

Augé M (1995) *Non-places: introdution to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.

Badenes D (2007) Comunicación y ciudad: líneas de investigación y encuentros con la historia cultural urbana. *Question* 14 (1).

Banks M y O'Connor J (2017) Inside the whale (and how to get out of there): Moving on from two decades of creative industries research. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 20(6): 637-654. DOI: 10.1177/1367549417733002.

Barber A. y Pareja M. (2010) Leadership challenges in the inner city: Planning for sustainable regeneration in Birmingham and Barcelona. *Policy Studies* 31(4): 393-411.

Bell D y Jayne M (2004) *City of quarters: urban villages in the contemporary city.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Belloso JC, Quintanas A, Rueda V, Ellis A, Ferey J and Tasheva E (2017) *Branding Cultural Districts and Destinations. A joint research by Future Places and the Global Cultural Districts Network*. Available at: www.gcdn.net/product/branding-cultural-districts-and-destinations (accessed 17 March 2022).

Bernabi A (2011) *A Brief History of the "I Love New York" Logo*. Available at: https://logoworks.com/a-brief-history-of-the-i-love-new-york-logo (accessed 17 November 2022).

Birmingham City Council (2011) *Big City Plan*. Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council (2015) *Sustainability appraisal of the Birmingham Development Plan. Revised Sustainability Report.* Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council (2016) *Birmingham Big City Plan. Curzon Investment Plan.* Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council (2017) *Birmingham Development Plan 2031 (BDP)*. Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

Boyle M and Hughes G (1994). The politics of urban entrepreneurialism in Glasgow. *Geoforum* 25: 453-470.

Brown J, Lutz J, Gibney J, Barber A, Chapain C, Murie A and Lee P (2010) *Policies and strategies for the creative knowledge economy in Birmingham and the West Midlands Region How to enhance the city's competitiveness.* Amsterdam: AMIDSt.

Brownill S and O´Hara G (2015) From planning to opportunism? Re-examining the creation of the London Docklands Development Corporation. *Planning Perspectives 30*(4): 537-570. DOI: 10.1080/02665433.2014.989894

Cavalcante WQF, Fortes N and Quezado TCC (2022) The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Ethics on Brand Fidelity. *Sustainability 14*(5): 2962. DOI: 10.3390/su14052962.

Chen A, Peng N and Hung KP (2015) Examining tourists' loyalty toward cultural quarters. *Annals of Tourism Research* 51: 59-63. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2015.01.004

Clayton J (2012) Living the multicultural city: acceptance, belonging and young identities in the city of Leicester, England. *Ethnic and Racial Studies 35*(9): 1673-1693. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2011.605457

Comunian R. (2011) Rethinking the Creative City: the Role of Complexity, Networks and Interactions in the Urban Creative Economy. *Urban Studies 48*(6): 1157-1179. DOI: 10.1177/0042098010370626.

De Marchi V, Lee J and Gereffi G (2014) Globalization, recession and the internationalization of industrial districts: experiences from the Italian gold jewellery industry. *European Planning Studies* 22(4): 866-884. DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2013.771624

Duxbury N, Kangas A and De Beukelaer C (2017) Cultural policies for sustainable development: Four strategic paths. *International Journal of Cultural Policy 23*(2): 214-230. DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2017.1280789

Ellul H and Knight B (2016). *Dancehall 12*. Available at: https://issuu.com/psykickdancehall/docs/dh12_web (accessed 17 March 2022).

Eton M, Ayiga N, Constant OO, Fabian M and Gilbert U (2019) Globalization and its implications on the growth of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Western Uganda. *International Journal of Research in Management, Economics and Commerce* 9(2): 7-16.

European Cities Marketing (2016) *City branding is not just for tourists*. Available at: www.europeancitiesmarketing.com/city-branding-is-not-just-for-tourists (accessed 17 March 2022).

Evans G (2005) Measure for measure: evaluating the evidence of culture's contribution to regeneration. *Urban Studies* 42: 959-983.

Evans G (2015) Rethinking place branding and placemaking through creative and cultural quarters. In: Evans G (ed) *Rethinking place branding.* Cham: Springer, pp. 135-158.

Frost-Kumpf HA (1998) *Cultural districts. The arts as a strategy for revitalizing our cities*. Springfield: Illinois University.

García-Carrizo J (2021a) Comunicación y gestión de marca en distritos culturales y creativos: una metodología para la detección de problemáticas comunes a atajar mediante la gestión de la imagen de marca. *Pensar la Publicidad* 15(1): 91-114. DOI: 10.5209/pepu.72135

García-Carrizo J (2021b) *City-branding. Fundamentos y aplicaciones de marca en espacios culturales y creativos*. Madrid: Fragua.

García-Carrizo J (2021c) Globalización, gentrificación y falta de participación ciudadana: pesadillas de los distritos culturales y creativos. In Nogueira MX and Agrelo Costas E (eds) *Cidadanía e identidades.* Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, pp. 109-123. DOI: 10.15304/9788418445415

Glaser BG and Strauss AL (2017) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. London: Routledge.

Gold RL (1958) Roles in Sociological Field Observation. *Social Forces 36*(3): 217-223. DOI: 10.2307/2573808

Grace D, Ross M and King C (2020) Brand fidelity: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services 52:* 101908. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101908.

Grand Union (2019) *Official website*. Available at: https://grand-union.org.uk/junction-works/ (accessed 17 March 2022).

Green G (2007) Come to life: authenticity, value and the Carnival as cultural commodity in Trinidad and Tobago. *Identities* 14 (1/2): 203-224. DOI: 10.1080/10702890601102670.

Gustafsson C and Lazzaro E (2021) The Innovative Response of Cultural and Creative Industries to Major European Societal Challenges: Toward a Knowledge and Competence Base. *Sustainability* 13(23): 13267. DOI: 10.3390/su132313267.

Gutierrez-Posada D, Kitsos T, Nathan M and Nuccio M (2022) Creative Clusters and Creative Multipliers: Evidence from UK Cities. *Economic Geography* 99(1), 1-24. DOI: 10.1080/00130095.2022.2094237.

Hall M (2008) Services capes, designs capes, branding and the creation of place-identity: South of Litchfield, Christchurch. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 25(3/4): 233-250. DOI: 10.1080/10548400802508101.

Hall T (2004) Public art, civic identity and the new Birmingham. In Kennedy L (ed) *Remaking Birmingham*. London: Routledge, pp. 63–71. DOI: 10.4324/9780203643976.

Hall T and Hubbard P (1996) The entrepreneurial city: new urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography* 20: 153-174. DOI: 10.1177/030913259602000201

Hassen I and Giovanardi M (2018) The difference of 'being diverse': City branding and multiculturalism in the 'Leicester Model'. *Cities* 80*:* 45-52. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2017.06.019.

Hatch M and Schultz M (1997) Relations between organizational culture, identity and image. *European Journal of Marketing* 31(5/6): 356-365. DOI: 10.1108/eb060636

Holyoak J (2009) Birmingham: translating ambition into quality. In Punter J (ed) *Urban Design and the British Urban Renaissance*. London: Routledge, pp. 35-50.

Howarth J (2016) *Why would you live in Digbeth?* Available at: www.birminghammail.co.uk/homes-and-property/would-you-live-digbeth-11224645 (accessed 17 March 2022).

HUB (2019a) *Birmingham Central Bus Garage Engagement Summary*. Birmingham: Kaizen.

HUB (2019b) *Digbeth Bus Garage*. Available at: www.hubgroup.co.uk/projects/digbeth-bus-garage (accessed 17 March 2022).

HUB (2019c) *Exhibition Boards*. Available at: www.hubgroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Digbeth-exhibition-boards_DTM17_191017.pdf (accessed 17 March 2022).

Hwang J (2016) While some things change, some things stay the same: Reflections on the study of gentrification. *City & Community* 15(3): 226-230. DOI: 10.1111/cico.12188

Jefferson I, Rogers CDF y Hunt DVL (2006) Achieving sustainable underground construction in Birmingham Eastside. In VV.AA., *Proceedings of 10th Congress of the International Association for Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG)*. London: The Geological Society of London, pp. 1-13.

Jones AL (2017) Regenerating urban waterfronts—Creating better futures—From commercial and leisure market places to cultural quarters and innovation districts. *Planning Practice & Research* 32(3): 333-344. DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2016.1222146.

Jones P (2008) Different but the same? *City* 12(3): 356-371. DOI: 10.1080/13604810802478987.

Karachalis N and Deffner A (2012) Rethinking the connection between creative clusters and city branding: The cultural axis of Piraeus street in Athens. *Quaestiones Geographicae* 31(4): 87-97. DOI: 10.2478/v10117-012-0038-0.

Lai S, Zhang S, Zhang L, Tseng HW and Shiau YC (2021) Study on the Influence of Cultural Contact and Tourism Memory on the Intention to Revisit: A Case Study of Cultural and Creative Districts. *Sustainability* 13(4): 2416. DOI: 10.3390/su13042416.

Lazzeretti L (2008) El distrito cultural. In Soler V (coord) *Los distritos industriales*. Almeria: Fundación Caja Mar, pp. 327-351.

Leicester City Council (2010) *Addendum to the July 2003 St George's Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Confirmation of Special Interest*. Leicester: Planning Policy and Design. Leicester City Council.

Leicester City Council (2016) *St George's Churchyard.* Leicester: Leicester City Council.

Lorente JP (2009) ¿Qué es y cómo evoluciona un barrio artístico? Modernos internacionales en los procesos de regeneración urbana impulsados por las artes. In Lorente JP and Fernández Quesada B (coords) *Arte en el espacio público*. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, pp. 15-38.

Luka M (2022) Creative Hubs: Sites of Community and Creative Work. In Thompson C and Campbell M (eds) *Cretive industries in Canada.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars, pp. 157-181

Martin D (2018) *What next for St George's Churchyard after councilors refuse plans for £900k revamp of the crime-ridden part of the Cultural Quarter?* Available at:

www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/what-next-st-georges-churchyard-2323928 (accessed 17 March 2022).

McCaffrey SJ (2013) Tacit-rich districts and globalization: changes in the Italian textile and apparel production system. *Socio-Economic Review* 11(4): 657-685. DOI: 10.1093/ser/mwt005.

McCarthy J (2005) Promoting image and identity in 'Cultural Quarters': The case of Dundee. *Local Economy* 20(3): 280-293. DOI: 10.1080/02690940500190978.

McClinchey K (2008) Urban ethnic festival, neighbourhoods and the multiple realities of marketing place. *Journal of Travel & Tourism* 25(3/4): 251-264. DOI: 10.1080/10548400802508309.

McKechnie LE (2008) Participant observation. In Given LM (ed) *Encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. London: Sage, pp. 599-600. DOI 10.4135/9781412963909.n309

Meschede C and Mainka A (2020) Including citizen participation formats for drafting and implementing local sustainable development strategies. *Urban Science* 4(1): 13. DOI: 10.3390/urbansci4010013.

Miller M (2020) *Your Key to Success: Align Your Brand Elements, Positioning, And Personality*. Available at: www.melinakmiller.com/your-key-to-success-align-your-brand-elements-positioning-and-personality (accessed 03 February 2024).

Moreton S (2018) Contributing to the creative economy imaginary: universities and the creative sector. *Cultural Trends* 27 (5): 327-338. DOI: 10.1080/09548963.2018.1534575.

Mould O and Comunian R (2015) Hung, Drawn and Cultural Quartered: Rethinking Cultural Quarter Development Policy in the UK. *European Planning Studies* 23 (12): 2356-2369. DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2014.988923.

Mould O and Comunian R (2015) Hung, drawn and cultural quartered: Rethinking cultural quarter development policy in the UK. *European planning studies* 23(12): 2356-2369. DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2014.988923

NewcastleGateshead Initiative (2024) *NewcastleGateshead Initiative markets NewcastleGateshead on a national and international stage*. Available at: www.ngi.org.uk (accessed 1 February 2024)

Nyama V and Mukwada G (2022) Factors Affecting Citizen Participation in Local Development Planning in Murewa District, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. DOI: 10.1177/00219096211069643.

O'Connor J (2015) Intermediaries and imaginaries in the cultural and creative industries. *Regional Studies* 49(3): 374-387. DOI: 10.1080/00343404.2012.748982.

Oval Digbeth Ltd (2020) *Official website*. Available at: digbeth.com (accessed 17 March 2022)

Pastak I, Kindsiko E, Tammaru T, Kleinhans R and Van Ham, M (2019) Commercial Gentrification in Post-Industrial Neighbourhoods: A Dynamic View From an Entrepreneur's Perspective. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 110(5): 588-604. DOI: 10.1111/tesg.12377.

Porter L (2009) Struggling against renaissance in Birmingham's Eastside. In Porter L and Shaw L (eds) *Whose urban renaissance. An international comparison of urban regeneration strategies*. London: Routledge, pp. 214-225.

Porter L and Barber A (2006) The meaning of place and state-led gentrification in Birmingham's Eastside. *City* 10(2): 215-234. DOI: 10.1080/13604810600736941.

Qinghao WU and Zhizhang W (2014) The problems and countermeasures of citizen participation in urban community governance. *Canadian Social Science* 10(4): 94-100. DOI: 10.3968/%25x.

Raman R and Kumar U (2019) Taxonomy of urban mixed land use planning. *Land Use Policy* 88: 104102. DOI: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104102

Riener F (2006) *Cultural Ouseburn. The Ouseburn Valley Regeneration Area in Newcastle Upon Tyne*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Ouseburn developments.

Roberson N (2019) *Gentrification within the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle Upon Tyne*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Northumbria University.

Roodhouse S (2006) *Cultural quarters, principles and practices*. London: Intellect.

Sánchez de Madariaga I and Ezquiaga JM (2019) *El futuro de las ciudades. Fundación Juan March: la cuestión palpitante.* Available at: www.march.es/videos/?p0=11646 (accessed 17 March 2022)

Santos D and Kamlot D (2017) Stuck in the middle of nowhere: Cultural policy, development and creative industries in Brazil. *Creative Industries Journal* 10(2): 139-154. DOI: 10.1080/17510694.2017.1318255.

Schoorl F (2005) On authenticity and artificiality in heritage policies in the Netherlands. *Museum International* 57(3): 79-85. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0033.2005.00532.x.

Serapioni M and Matos AR (2014) Citizen participation and discontent in three Southern European health systems. *Social Science & Medicine* 123: 226-233. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.06.006.

Seven Capital (2020) *The Digbeth Property Market*. Available at: sevencapital.com/property-investment-digbeth (accessed 17 March 2022)

Simoes C and Dibb S (2001) Rethinking the brand concept: new brand orientation. *Corporate Communications* 6(4): 217-224. DOI: 10.1108/13563280110409854.

Spirou C (2011) *Urban tourism and urban change. Cities in a global economy.* New York: Routledge.

Stevens A (2013) Focus on Birmingham – City Brand Leaders. Available at: www.creativebrief.com/bite/focus-on-birmingham-city-brand-leaders (accessed 15 November 2022)

Strauss A and Corbin J (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Tallon A (2013) *Urban regeneration in the UK.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Threlfall J (2019) *Leicester's Cultural Quarter - Improving the Cultural Quarter.* Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=46GSdF_rvN4 (accessed 17 March 2022)

Tornaghi C (2007) *Questioning the social aims of public art in urban regeneration initiatives. The case of Newcastle Upon Tyne and Gateshead (UK)*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Newcastle University.

Turley (2019) *Digbeth consultation process 2019.* Available at: www.consultdigbeth.co.uk (accessed 17 March 2022)

Villafañe J (2006) *Introducción a la teoría de la imagen.* Madrid: Ediciones Pirámide.

Waterman S (1998) Carnivals for elites? The cultural politics of art festivals. *Progress in Human Geography* 22: 54–74. DOI: 10.1191/030913298672233886.

Yin RK (2012) Case study methods. In Cooper H., Camic PM, Long DL, Panter AT, Rindskopf D and Sher KJ (eds) *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 141–155. DOI: 10.1037/13620-009.

Yin RK (2013) Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation* 19(3): 321-332. DOI: 10.1177/1356389013497081.

Zavattaro SM (2014) *Branding through Phases of the Image*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137394514_1

Zukin S (2016) Gentrification in three paradoxes. *City & Community* 15(3): 202-207. DOI: 10.1111/cico.12184.

Zukin S, Lindeman S and Hurson L (2017) The omnivore's neighborhood? Online restaurant reviews, race, and gentrification. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17(3): 459-479. DOI: 10.1177/1469540515611203.

APPENDIX 1. CHRONOLOGICAL DIAGRAM OF THE DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES APPLIED

Date	Technique	Other relevant data
06/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday,- 12-15h.)
10/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Saturday, 12-18h.)
15/09/2016	Part. observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 12-17h.)
18/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 13-14h.)
21/09/2016	In-depth interview	Interviewee 1 – Creative and Cultural Industries expert – De Montfort University
21/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 13-18h.)
23/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Friday, 10-12h.)
26/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 15-19h.)
28/09/2016	In-depth interview	Interviewee 2 – Festivals and Local Events expert
28/09/2016	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 10-12h.)
16/08/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 10-18h.)
17/08/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 10-12h.)
24/08/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 3 - Newcastle City Council - Culture & Tourism Area
08/09/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Friday, 10-16h.)
10/09/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 12-14h.)
20/09/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 4 - Ouseburn Farm
20/09/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 5 - Hoult Yards
20/09/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 6 - Toffee Factory
20/09/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 9-14h.)
02/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 18-20h.)
02/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 9-12h.)
09/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 7 - Ouseburn Futures
09/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 12-14h.)
11/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 8-. Ouseburn Trust
11/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 9- 36 Lime Street Funder
11/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 10 - Seven Stories
11/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 10-18h.)
12/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 13-17h.)
23/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 9-15h.)
23/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 11 - Digbeth Social Enterprise
24/10/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 13-17h.)
24/10/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 12 – Urban Regeneration & Creative Communities Expert - University of Birmingham
14/11/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 9-21h.)
14/11/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 13 – Media & Cultural Studies Expert - Birmingham City University
14/11/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 14 – Planning & Development Office – Birmingham City Council
16/11/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 11-15h.)
27/11/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 10-17h.)
27/11/2017	In-depth interview	Interviewee 15 - LCB Depot
05/12/2017	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 9-21h.)
15/02/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 16 - Ouseburn Trust
15/02/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 13-17h.)
31/05/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 9-19h.)

Date	Technique	Details
04/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 18-19h.)
05/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 9-14h.)
06/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 11-14h.)
18/09/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 17 - Chilli Studios
18/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 15-16h.)
19/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday - 11-14h.)
19/09/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 18 - Ouseburn Trust
20/09/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 19 - Biscuit Factory
20/09/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 11-14h.)
02/10/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 11-17h.)
02/10/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 20 - Ouseburn Farm
16/10/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 12-13h.)
17/10/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 21 - Ouseburn Farm
17/10/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 22 - Seven Stories
17/10/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 13-23h.)
28/11/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday - 10-17h.)
28/11/2018	In-depth interview	Interviewee 23 – LCB Depot
29/11/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 13-16h.)
02/12/2018	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 12-14h.)
03/06/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 19-23h.)
27/06/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday,- 14-15h.)
29/06/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Saturday, 18-19h.)
07/07/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 11-15h.)
14/07/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 15-18h.)
03/09/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 12-14h.)
19/09/2019	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 10-18h.)
28/02/2020	Part.observation	Complete observer (Friday, 14-19h.)
01/03/2020	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 9-16h.)
05/03/2020	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 17-19h.)
06/03/2020	Part.observation	Complete observer (Friday, 12-21h.)
07/03/2020	Part.observation	Complete observer (Saturday, 14-16h.)
03/04/2020	In-depth interview	Interviewee 24- Ouseburn Trust
03/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Friday, 19-21h.)
04/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Saturday, 9-12h.)
04/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Saturday, 16-21h.)
05/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 9-11h).
05/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Sunday, 15-18h).
06/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 9-13h.)
06/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 15-17h.)
06/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Monday, 18-21h.)
07/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 10-14h.)
07/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Tuesday, 16-21h.)
08/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 8-10h.)
08/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 12-14h.)
08/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Wednesday, 16-21h.)
09/12/2021	Part.observation	Complete observer (Thursday, 9-14h.)

Table 1: Chronological diagram of the data collection techniques applied in Digbeth (yellow), St. George's Quarter (orange) and the Ouseburn Valley (grey). Source: author.