

An Examination of The Applicability of Nonaka’s Theory in The Empirical Context of UK Urban Regeneration: A Case Study of The Creative Town Initiative in Huddersfield (2)

— Placing the Creative Town Initiative in Huddersfield in context —

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Abstract

A series of papers aims to examine the applicability of Nonaka’s theory of organizational knowledge creation to the *empirical* context of urban regeneration in the UK and the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield in particular. In so doing, in this paper Huddersfield and CTI in particular has been placed in context. After introducing the theoretical framework to apply to Nonaka’s theory, CTI in Huddersfield has been placed in contexts, including geographical, demographic, historical, local political (and institutional), urban regeneration and cultural. This paper led to be ready to examine the application / relevance of Nonaka’s theoretical frameworks to urban regeneration using CTI in Huddersfield.

Key words: Case Study, Knowledge, Huddersfield, Creative Town Initiative (CTI)

1. Introduction

There has been little empirical (and theoretical) research which has focused on ‘knowledge’ and ‘knowledge creation’ in the context of (strategy-making for) urban regeneration in the UK, where public-private partnerships are widespread. In an attempt to contribute to filling this gap, a series of papers aims to examine the applicability of Nonaka’s theory of organizational knowledge creation to the *empirical* context of urban regeneration in the UK and the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield in particular. In so doing, before examining the application / relevance of Nonaka’s theoretical framework to urban regeneration, in this paper Huddersfield and CTI in particular will be placed in context.

2. Theoretical framework to apply to Nonaka’s theory

A series of papers aims to examine the applicability

of Nonaka’s theory of organizational knowledge creation to the empirical context of urban regeneration in the UK and the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield in particular. In so doing, as argued in the previous paper¹⁾, the integrated framework of the TEAM linguistic structure and Nonaka’s five-phase model of organizational knowledge creation provided the case study’s theoretical propositions, which incorporates the four modes of knowledge conversion, including the socialization, externalization, combination and internalization modes, which are the main concepts of Nonaka’s theory (see Figure 1). A series of papers follow the theoretical propositions to examine the applicability of Nonaka’s theory of organizational knowledge creation to the empirical context of urban regeneration in the UK and the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield.

The five conditions including *organizational intention, autonomy, fluctuation / creative chaos, information*

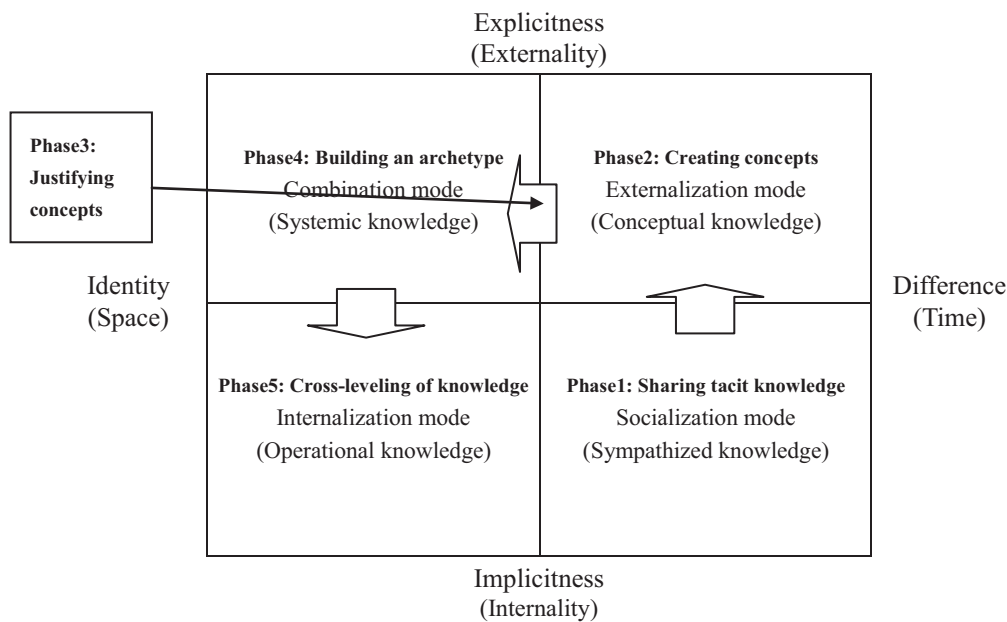


Figure 1: Integrated framework of the TEAM linguistic structure and Nonaka's five-phase model (Source: Author)

redundancy and *requisite variety*, which Nonaka assumes facilitate organizational knowledge creation²⁾, were also regarded as the theoretical prepositions to be followed during data collection for the case study.

3. Placing the Creative Town Initiative in Huddersfield in context

3.1 Geographical overview

Huddersfield is located midway between the major cities of Leeds and Manchester and is just north of Sheffield in the UK (see Figure 2 & Figure 3). Its administrative centre is Kirklees, which is the third largest Metropolitan District in West Yorkshire and the seventh largest of the 36 Metropolitan Districts in the country and the largest district not based in a major city (see CTI, 1996; KMC, 2002).

Kirklees, with an area of 408 km², constitutes a varied and complex topography and the north and south of the district have very different characteristics and local identities. There are significant contrasts and diversity between the rural and urban communities and within communities, with wide variations of affluence and poverty and settlement and industrial development. Huddersfield is located in the south of Kirklees, which

is recognized as the area of employment, retail and culture (KMC, 2002).

3.2 Demographic overview

The population in Kirklees has risen slowly since 1900 (KMC, 2003). In 1989 the population of Kirklees

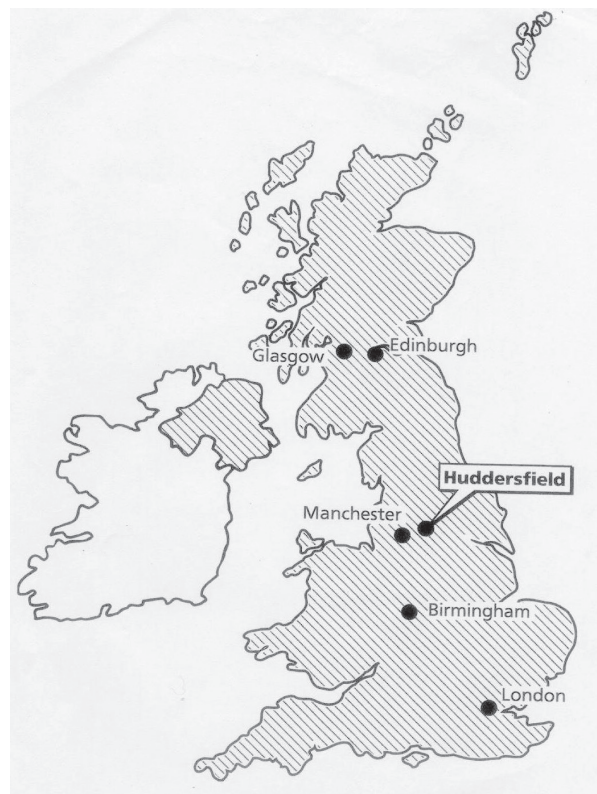


Figure 2: Location of Huddersfield in the UK



Figure3: Location of Huddersfield

Table1: Changes of population in Kirklees (Source: NOMIS)

Year	Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber
1989	377,300	4,912,400
1990	377,700	4,921,000
1991	379,000	4,936,100
1992	380,100	4,949,000
1993	382,100	4,954,100
1994	382,700	4,960,100
1995	383,200	4,960,600
1996	383,800	4,961,300
1997	383,900	4,957,600
1998	384,700	4,957,700
1999	385,300	4,956,300
2000	386,900	4,958,600
2001	389,000	4,976,600
2002	392,100	5,000,100
2003	394,500	5,026,300
2004	397,500	5,063,200
2005	400,700	5,108,400
2006	404,300	5,134,000
2007	408,000	5,164,100
2008	411,800	5,198,700
2009	414,800	5,223,300
2010	418,300	5,254,800
2011	423,000	5,288,200
2012	425,500	5,316,700
2013	428,300	5,337,700
2014	431,000	5,360,000

(Note: Figures are midyear population estimates)

was 377,300 and it had increased to 431,000 by 2014 (see Table 1). Huddersfield itself had a population of 121,620 in 2001 (ONS, 2003) and 162,949 in 2011 (census) and the total increase has been 51% between 1900 and 2000 (KMC, 2003).

Moreover, Kirklees is culturally diverse with a mix traditions and religions and therefore 21% of its population is from ethnic minority groups and this proportion is continuing to rise (2011 census). 91% of the minority ethnic citizens live in 12 of the 24 wards. The largest ethnic minority group is the Pakistani community with 10% of the total population of Kirklees, followed by the Indian community with 5%, and the Black community with less than 3% (2011 census).

3.3 Historical overview

The earliest roots in Huddersfield can be traced to Castle Hill, where there is evidence of an Iron Age fort and a Norman Castle. However, Huddersfield, as it is today, took shape during the 18th and 19th centuries, leading to the confirmation of county borough status in 1868. Huddersfield grew rapidly in the 19th and early 20th centuries on an industrial and manufacturing base of woollen textiles, engineering and chemicals (see Landry, 2000a). In this sense, Huddersfield has a history as a leading world centre of textiles and engineering (KMC, 2002) and has thus been shaped as an essentially urban industrial town surrounded by moorland countryside. From the early 1970s onwards, as textile production increasingly moved towards the Far East, industry decreased and textiles and engineering declined by more than 75%. Although the decline was initially off-set by growth in chemicals and food and drink production, there was no growth in the high-tech sector (see Pratt, 1998). Huddersfield still has more manufacturing than the national average, a less qualified workforce and lower pay (see Pratt, 1998; KMC, 2002).

Because of their over-dependence on a declining manufacturing sector and failure to adapt to globally changing economic and social environments from the 1970s onwards, the region, and inner Huddersfield in particular, like other industrial cities or towns in the UK, have suffered from ‘urban problems’ such as unemployment, social exclusion, ethnic tension, high crime rates and physical dereliction of vacated areas (KMC, 2002). For example, in 1991 the rate of unemployment in Kirklees was 10%, which included approximately 7,000 unemployed young people (38.5% of the total number) (see KMC, 2003). Kirklees was also ranked the 19th of 354 for unemployment with 13% of the population living in the most deprived 10 % of wards in England in the 1998 index of Local Deprivation developed by the Centre for Urban Policy Studies at the University of Manchester (see KMC, 2002). The loss of employment meant that the best of its local talent moved to places like London or even further afield and the commutable distance to bigger neighbouring cities, such as Leeds and Manchester, also led to the draining of skills and talent (see CTI, 1996). Moreover, there is a concentration of poverty amongst its mainly Asian ethnic minority (see Landry, 2000a). In 2014 the rate of unemployment has recovered with 6.5% of the population, which is the number of 12,766. However, unemployed young people remain high.

3.4 Local political (and institutional) context

The boundaries of Kirklees have no historical or geographical significance (Pratt, 1998). In 1974, as the result of local government re-organization, the boundaries of Kirklees administrative district were artificially created from 11 constituent authorities. This legacy has brought problems of trying to develop a public identity within the Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) in an area of diversity and a long tradition of locality and independence (KMC, 2002). Therefore, by the late 1970s, the administration was driven by many internal conflicts and in disarray (see

Pratt, 1998).

In 1988, the Kirklees municipality was reviewed by the Institute of Local Government (INLOGOV), a respected specialist public sector consultancy, which concluded that Kirklees was administratively and organizationally one of the most problematic local authorities that it had encountered (see KMC, 2002). According to the analysis made by INLOGOV, the Council was filled with a culture of fear and blame. There was no corporate working in the Council, each department behaving like a self-contained barony (with rigid departmentalism). Officials were controlled in such a way that they had no autonomy and therefore their motivation wasn't well developed. Moreover, there was political infighting and the political leadership hadn't been created. There were no partnerships with the voluntary or private sector, no openness to new ideas and there was no room for creating knowledge about how to adapt to the changing social conditions (see e.g. Pratt, 1998; Landry, 2000; KMC, 2002).

In responding to this negative analysis, a major upheaval in both office structures and Members' processes occurred in the 1989/90, which required tenacity and a certain ruthlessness (Leadbeater & Goss, 1998). The Council recognized the changing institutional map in Britain, which included competition within local authority services, the transfer of certain functions out of the Council altogether, and the growth of unelected agencies -Quangos- which controlled more resources than the local authority itself (Landry, 2000a). The Council established an organization committed to devolved management, the separation of strategic and operational management roles and instituted external partnerships working with an ever-growing range of other agencies. It also had a clear vision for improving the area (KMC, 2002). In 2015 the council announced that more than 1,000 jobs will be lost as Kirklees Council cuts £69m from

its budget over the next three years (BBC, 19 February 2015).

3.5 The urban regeneration context

The political and institutional changes made in the early 1990s have not only helped develop officers' and Members' capacity for change, but also been concentrated on urban regeneration activity in Kirklees and Huddersfield in particular. The Council adopted a vision for the regeneration of Kirklees and set itself three key goals as follows:

- A Thriving Economy
- A Flourishing Community
- A Healthy Environment

New forms of partnership with public agencies, the private sector, local people and central government were created to accelerate urban regeneration in Kirklees. Kirklees' first significant partnership was a 1989 joint venture with the Henry Boot building company to redevelop council property for housing, retail and industrial uses (see Leadbeater & Goss, 1998). The partnership's largest project was the redevelopment of part of Huddersfield town centre. The partnership gave the council a share of profits from the development. More importantly, the long-term relationship with a private company brought Kirklees access to expertise which has allowed it to address urban development issues, which had been more difficult to tackle before (see Leadbeater & Goss, 1998).

The Kirklees - Henry Boot Partnership paved the way for the council to form the partnership to develop the McAlpine Stadium, providing a new home for Huddersfield's football and rugby clubs. The stadium, which has a global reputation, is a modern monument to civic entrepreneurship (see Leadbeater & Goss, 1998). The private sector could not have built it on its own. The local football and rugby clubs did not

Table2: Urban regeneration projects in Kirklees (1990-1996) (Source, CTI, 1996)

Name of projects	Name of funds	Budget	Period
Batley Action	City Challenge	£ 45.75 million	1993-1998
Huddersfield Pride	Single Regeneration Budget	£ 15.25 million	1995-2002
Routeways to Success	Single Regeneration Budget	£ 9.15 million	1995-2002
Dewsbury: Fabric for the Future	Single Regeneration Budget	£ 18.3 million	1996-2003

have the resources, nor did the public sector. Instead Kirklees brokered a public-private partnership, which has built a stadium that is neither purely public nor purely private and it has become a community asset.

KMC also utilized the partnership approach to urban regeneration to obtain government budgets. Following the then Conservative government guidelines and directives, KMC used bids for government money in order to effectively carry out urban regeneration projects to improve its environment, tackle disadvantage and inequality and enhance its built heritage, as well as creating the conditions for enterprise of all sorts to flourish. For example, in 1990, the Council set up Huddersfield Pride Ltd, a regeneration company, in order to deliver the SRB programmes as a partnership company. This approach was called the ‘Kirklees bidding machine’ and has been copied elsewhere and is being mainstreamed in the UK (Landry, 2000a). In other words, KMC pragmatically turned government constraints into advantages and learnt that by collaboration it could win access to public funds. As a result, over a seven-year period between 1990 and 1996 Kirklees achieved a 100 % success rate in winning support from the UK government, such as from City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget, which competitively won approximately £ 90 million of public resources for the town (Table 2, also see CTI, 1996).

In addressing urban regeneration, KMC also used other funds such as the application of EC Structural Funds, notably the ERDF, based on a variety of partnership delivery mechanisms (KMC, 2002). The

Council has also been a partner in two successful bids under Regeneration Challenge for the TeCH Programme and for the 1998 Year of Photography and the Electronic Image. Moreover, it is also a partner in two other Article 10 bids. One is a transactional information society bid entitled Trans-Europe Liaison Network (Tel-Net), which is being led by the South West Regional Authority of the Republic of Ireland. The other is a bid entitled the Virtual European Market Plaza (EuroWeb Plaza), which is being led by the city of Leeuwarden in the Netherlands (CTI, 1996). KMC has also accessed Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and 13 wards qualify for Objective 2 for the period 2000-2006. Much though remains to be done to tackle urban problems such as poverty and inequality (KMC, 2002).

The UK National Lottery has also been used effectively to further the Council’s regeneration aims (CTI, 1996). Kirklees has the highest success rate of any local authority in bidding to two of the five distributing bodies: the Sports Council and the National Heritage Memorial Fund. It has also submitted a bid to the Millennium Commission entitled The Knowledge Mill, a bid for £ 19.2 million for a project to widen access to computing and information technology for the general public.

Kirklees council continued to recognise the importance of new technologies to regenerate local areas and grow their economies. It started collaborate with a company that uses digital technology to make spaces for civic engagement. The project, called ‘Who Owns My Neighbourhood’ has opened the council's land-ownership data to the public, which enables residents

to connect with others who care about their area (Guardian, 20 August 2013).

3.6 Cultural context

There is a historically strong link between culture and the development of Huddersfield. At the height of the industrial revolution, mills supported the establishment of brass bands and choirs to fill the leisure time of their employees. Much of the town's architectural and cultural infrastructure was also established at this time, such as the fine Town Hall, Concert Hall and the magnificent railway station facade. Although many of the mills are now gone, Huddersfield remains a strongly musical town. The Huddersfield and District Brass Band Association is today the strongest organization of its kind in the UK, whilst the Huddersfield Choral Society is world-renowned (see CTI, 1996). There are high levels of participation in such musical activities at school, amateur and professional levels. Ensuring that this tradition remains alive, a forward looking Music Festival is organized called the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. This is the UK's premier event for modern music, which since 1978 has provided a dynamic annual interaction between the world's greatest living composers and the local public. In this sense, the musical tradition lives on in Huddersfield.

More recent years have seen a broadening and deepening of the town's cultural life. Confirmation of this was provided recently when the town was awarded first prize in the Arts Council/British Gas Properties' 'Working For Cities' Awards, recognizing it as the town in the UK which had done the most to integrate culture within an overall programme of urban regeneration. Huddersfield was also chosen as British poetry's capital. Low rents and the low costs of living have attracted a number of poets and through their own contacts and support from KMC a snowball effect has been created so that poetry events of national significance are held regularly. Related

national organizations have moved there and, for those specialising in these activities, Huddersfield's image has changed (see Landry & Bianchini, 1995).

KMC has established a strong strategic framework for the development of culture and the Cultural Services Department in KMC has played a significant role in linking culture and urban regeneration. From early on, this department adopted a broad definition of culture, embracing issues well beyond the development of art forms. For example, arts were utilized for community development and as a potential economic driver. In 1989, the Cultural Services Department helped to set up Cultural Industries in Kirklees (CIK), a highly motivated grass roots agency which published a major document called '*A Chance to Participate: the potential of cultural industries and community arts in the economic and social regeneration of Kirklees*' (CIK, 1989). This was followed in 1994 with the adoption by the Council of a cultural policy '*Made in Kirklees*' (KMC, 1994). This has the following corporate themes;

- Celebrating Diversity
- Maintaining Distinctiveness
- Harnessing Creativity

The principles of the Policy are summarised as follows:

- Local cultural identity and pride are an essential pre-condition of achieving economic, community and environmental regeneration
- Imagination and creativity are essential elements in achieving both local identity and personal development
- Diversity of lifestyle, livelihood, culture and habitat is an asset and through the understanding and celebrating of this a tolerant society can be developed.
- Local distinctiveness takes centuries to develop, but can be lost overnight and so must be defended and

nurtured.

- Local culture is dynamic, not static, and therefore change and development are an essential partners to protection and conservation.
- Through investment, empowerment and education the creative abilities which exist in all citizens can be released for the good of the individual, the community and the economy.

The policy has a strong link with the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield in relating culture and creativity to urban regeneration. In these broad contexts, in 1995 CTI was organised and made a proposal to the European Commission under the auspices of the Urban Pilot Projects (UPP) scheme.

4. Conclusions

This paper had placed Huddersfield and CTI in the contexts including geographical, demographic, historical, local political (and institutional), urban regeneration and cultural. This examination showed because of their over-dependence on a declining manufacturing sector and failure to adapt to globally changing economic and social environments from the 1970s onwards, Huddersfield has been suffering from 'urban problems' such as unemployment, social exclusion, ethnic tension, high crime rates and physical dereliction of vacated areas. Moreover Kirklees, which includes Huddersfield as a territory, had been regarded as administratively and organizationally one of the most problematic local authorities because of no corporate working and no leaderships in the Council.

However the political and institutional changes made in the early 1990s have not only helped develop officers' and Members' capacity for change, but also been concentrated on urban regeneration activity in Kirklees and Huddersfield in particular, which, with the cultural tradition, led to creating CTI in Huddersfield. It is the main topic of a series of papers. Now it has been ready to examine the application /

relevance of Nonaka's theoretical frameworks to urban regeneration using CTI in Huddersfield itself. The next paper will examine it.

Notes

- 1) See Adachi, H. (2015) Global Studies No.10
- 2) See Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. (1995)

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