**Exploring Cultural Leadership Ecosystems and Their Role in Urban Regeneration**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** In post-industrial urban economies the importance of the role of creative industries in influencing the direction of urban development has been clearly identified (Scott, 2008). Within these industries cultural leaders act as key catalysts for urban renewal and redevelopment. Understanding who these leaders are and exactly which ecosystems they create and inhabit may be of vital importance to the success of urban regeneration projects and the wider urban ecosystem(s). However research in this area is highly debated and multi-disciplinary conceptual development remains frustratingly elusive to both scholars and practitioners alike (Dinah, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden and Hu, 2014).

**Design/methodology/approach:** In order to explore this phenomenon in detail a service ecosystem approach (Vargo *et al.,* 2010) was used in a four stage multidisciplinary primary research project to map the actor-to-actor value co-creation systems of a number of emerging and established creative industries within a city. In the first three stages of the project the cultural leadership ecosystems of individual creative industry sectors, identified as key drivers to urban regeneration in that particular city, were mapped separately using multiple research methods from a variety of disciplines. The final stage of the project will be a multi stakeholder conference, to be held in September 2015, at which the key members of the creative industries will be brought together to discuss the leadership styles and mapped ecosystems for their particular industry. A collaborative ecosystem encompassing each of the various industry sector ecosystems will be developed and key elements of cultural leadership, synergy and difference identified.

**Findings:** In this paper the mapped ecosystems from the first stage of the project will be presented in detail. The results will be analysed and an urban management model presented that has been derived from using a service-ecosystem perspective to provide structure to complex and potentially fragmented micro and meta level analysis of cultural leadership.

Research limitations/implications:

Practical implications:

Originality/value:

**Keywords:** service-ecosystems, cultural leadership, urban regeneration

**Paper Type:** Research paper