

<b>Institution:</b> De Montfort University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Addressing the Paucity of Creative Data in Second Tier Creative Cities in the UK		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2016–2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Rachel Granger	Professor Urban Economies	July 2016–present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017–2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Challenging the mainstream approach to creative economies in which business location data is used as an exclusive expression of value creation in creative cities, Granger's contribution is in developing alternative economic data and analysis. Capturing more nuanced data on creative networks and knowledge transfer clusters has benefited regional cities with underdeveloped intelligence infrastructure. Granger's model permits live insights into a creative ecosystem rather than just business snapshots. It is supporting sector development in Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Covid economic responses, new network formation by local microbusinesses and new evidence-based policy in smart and transport fields.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>The current approach to researching creative economies is especially problematic for second- and third-tier creative cities in the UK – those cities that contribute regionally rather than nationally to the economy. Regional cities are disadvantaged by an absence of dedicated data infrastructure for creative analysis (such as observatories), unreliable data from official sources which becomes disaggregated at smaller city levels (e.g. Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data from the Office for National Statistics), and also from missed opportunities for dedicated research from national bodies (e.g. NESTA, the national policy and evidence centre for the creative industries, Creative Industries Foundation).</p> <p>Addressing data paucity and unreliable data availability in smaller, second- and third-tier creative cities, Granger has led on a sustained programme of work to analyse creative cities in alternative ways [R1, R2, R5]. Improved models for conceptualising creative cities have been informed by Granger's theoretical research on proxies of creative value [R3], and from her work on spatial-relational mapping models [R1, R4, R5].</p> <p>At a time when mainstream models of the creative industries dominated by macro-economic thinking embedded in cluster models continue to dominate, the distinctive contribution of Granger's research has been the provision of an alternative perspective. Developed early as a conceptual model (spatial-relational mapping), in 2017, Granger's work has been expressed as practice-based models with bespoke software. At the heart of Granger's work is the importance of relational networks as a proxy for value creation in an economy, which lends weight to the 'relational turn' in international studies of the creative economy [R1, R3]. Her research provides invaluable empirical insights into how the creative industries work in practice, some of which runs counter to mainstream models [R1, R2, R3]. The relational turn in economic geography notes the way in which an economy is situated within contexts of social and institutional relations. As Watson (2020 - doi:10.1080/00343404.2020.1738012) notes, 'given there remains an inadequate evidence base to inform policy properly, there is still a need for empirical models that reveal how these [creative] industries work within and across regional economies', going on to note the merits of Granger's relational, empirical work in this area.</p>		

### 3. References to the research

- [R1] Granger, R. (2016) 'Spatial-relational mapping in socio-institutional perspectives of urban innovation', in A. Watson and C. Taylor (eds) *Rethinking Creative Cities Policy: Invisible Agents and Hidden Protagonists*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp 49–61; ISBN 9781138890084  
Builds on Granger's notion of spatial-relational mapping to build empirical models.
- [R2] Granger, R. (2017) *Sustainable Creative Cities: A comparison of Leicester and London*, noting the data deficits for the creative industries in cities like Leicester.
- [R3] Granger, R. (2020) 'Exploring value in the creative and cultural industries', in R. Granger (ed.) *Value Construction in the Creative Economy: Negotiating Innovation and Transformation*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 3–18; ISBN 9783030370343  
Outlines a need for alternative data capture and analysis of the creative industries.
- [R4] Granger, R. (2020) 'Hidden value of underground networks and intermediaries in the creative cities', in R. Granger (ed.) *Value Construction in the Creative Economy: Negotiating Innovation and Transformation*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 217–242; ISBN 9783030370343  
Notes the way Flokk in Leicester has produced interoperability coefficients and 'bridging' in as a type of cultural intermediary in economies.
- [R5] Granger, R. (2020) 'Innovation explained: inside the black box', Leicester: InnoHouse; <http://innohouse.co.uk/Resources/>  
Cites the importance of relational mapping and toolkits like Flokk in supporting 'Doing Using Interacting' (DUI) models of innovation and 'bridging' to support local social capital in business.

### AWARDS/GRANTS

- [G1] Open Creative: Spatial-Relational Mapping Framework (2017) De Montfort University. GBP15,000 (PI); <https://flokk.online>
- [G2] Valuing Hidden Culture and Creativity, AHRC (2018–2021): GBP62,500 (PI); <https://www.seekinghiddenculture.com/>
- [G3] Leicester Smart Urban Inventory, Leicester City Council (2019): (GBP76,000) (Co-I) Leicester Smart City, Local +, Leicester City Council (2019/2020) (PI) GBP37,400. Granger has applied creative industries analysis and Flokk to support Leicester's economic analysis of its smart economy.
- [G4] Leicester Citizen Sensor, HEIF: De Montfort University (PI) (2020–2021) GBP17,700; <https://citizensensor.billymedia.co.uk/>

### 4. Details of the impact

Granger's research on alternative approaches to data capture and analysis in creative economies has been developed into 'Flokk' and 'Citizen Sensor', as practical evidence-based models. Granger's work has provided a rich set of nuanced data, which has benefited creative policy design [C1, C3, C7] and provided a set of methods adopted in other sectors with documented impact [C5, C6]. This evolving body of research has allowed Granger to build relationships with industries and stakeholders such as local authorities and local enterprise partnerships about research evidence for policy design. It has also opened up new avenues of research on hidden areas of culture and creativity in cities, e.g. AHRC research on 'Valorising Hidden Culture'.

#### (1) IMPACT ON THE RELATIONAL TURN IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

As a result of theoretical research on spatial-relational mapping [R1], Granger's research on creativity in the Midlands resulted in a report on 'data deserts' in Leicester [R2], presented at a city event 'Disruption in the Creative Industries' (8 November 2017), and leading to the

development of Flokk as a practical model for the creative sector in Leicester (<https://flokklab.online>).

Creative Coffee, the primary network of creative practitioners in Leicester, noted changes in the way practitioners in Leicester's creative sector view the sector in relational terms. Lee Tomes, Chair of the Creative Industries Company notes:

Rachel's work is highly innovative and continuously sets the bar for what the sector should be thinking and doing. In April 2019 we invited Rachel to head up our series on disruption in the creative industries and to showcase how Flokk ... supports new client bases, ... new collaborations ... new markets, and new investments ...[.], bringing the sector to life and opening up data for all actors to access and use to inform business practices [C1].

## **(2) IMPACT OF DATA ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**

As a result of Flokk, Carl Quinn, CEO of Solvers Studio notes:

Flokk makes it possible for me to examine current value chains in the local economy and to support my networking as a new SME. The extension of Flokk into Citizen Sensor extends the possibilities for co-designing in the city, ... and for this reason we invited Flokk Lab to become a resident of InnoHouse. [C2]

Granger's subsequent work with InnoHouse [R5], featured in a Covid crisis workshop (10 July 2020) and in the 2020 Leicester Business Festival (5 November 2020). Leicester Business Voice notes: '[Rachel's] relaunch of Flokk at Leicester Business Voice at the University of Leicester's Innovation Hub ... reflects a growing interest in alternative and open forms of business data for in-house data capture and analysis' [C3, G3].

## **(3) IMPACT OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE FOR POLICY DESIGN**

In January 2018, DMU cited Flokk and creative research in its evidence base for the Leicestershire Industrial Strategy, and more recently in the Covid Recovery Plans. Granger has also applied Flokk to provide core intelligence for Leicester's Smart Strategy [C4], its Cultural Plan 2021–2025 [C5] and the city's innovation plans. As the LLEP notes, Flokk improves economic intelligence gathering in Leicestershire, with more nuanced economic policy formed as a result:

Flokk is showcased as a best practice model for economies to identify innovation capability and to develop innovation networks. We are delighted to be using Flokk as a core part of our approach to the MIT Reap programme and as a longer-term economic intelligence tool for the Leicestershire Economic Recovery Plan [C7];

(See also: <https://innovation.mit.edu/resource/mit-reap/>)

Flokk has also begun to have wider impact, supporting a range of practitioners in cities like Copenhagen (capturing more than 1,500 business interactions and value chains in new smart and sustainable urban sectors). The City of Copenhagen notes the limitations of Danish statistics in identifying driving clusters in an economy, and the way Flokk has prioritised electronics to grow the Urban Sustainability sector of the new economic strategy (2021–2030). On the strength of this, Flokk has been recommended to other cities and regions in Denmark through the Data.Dk platform, providing smart data collection for wider usage [C6].

## **(4) IMPACT ON PARTICIPATORY MODELS**

Flokk's use of crowdsourcing data continues to be a source of wider inspiration, and following feedback from Creative Coffee in April 2019, Granger has developed Leicester Citizen Sensor to support residents' participation in evidence-based policy [G4]. Citizen Sensor (<https://leicestercitizensensor.online>) builds on Flokk to provide qualitative, non-business data on the lived experiences in the city, which has informed the AHRC 'Valorising Hidden Culture' project [G2], the Leicester Urban Innovation Lab (<http://leicester-lab.co.uk>), and individual communities such as Braunstone Gate and West End Community, with the latter using Citizen Sensor to support traffic changes in the locality [C8].

As the Head of Economic Regeneration at Leicester City Council states: 'Flokk sets out a model for a new wave of participatory data sourcing in smart cities, and I see Flokk and the Citizen Sensor as providing a vital service for this city' [C9]. As Leicester City Council go on to state:

Flokk lab provides a key resource for the city of Leicester and we are delighted to work closely with [Rachel] to extend the benefits of Flokk to other areas of the Council's services and as a key part of the new Urban Innovation Lab, with citizen participation centre stage of that exciting development. [C10]

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [C1] Testimonial from Managing Director of Creative Company Leicester CIC.
- [C2] Testimonial from CEO of Solvers Studio.
- [C3] Testimonial from Director of Leicester Business Voice.
- [C4] Leicester City Council Smart City Strategy, December 2019 (p 10), Leicester Smart Action Plan (Project Portfolio, p 15).
- [C5] Testimonial from Director of Tourism, Culture and Investment, Leicester City Council, outlining the work on the Leicester Cultural Plan (Summer 2020–2025).
- [C6] Testimonial from the Chief Advisor – Climate and Sustainability, Business Growth and Tourism, Copenhagen City Council.
- [C7] Testimonial from LEP Chair of Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) on Flokk as a basis for the Innovation Capability Dashboard, MIT REAP Leicestershire, and Leicestershire Economic Recovery Plan.
- [C8] Email from Deputy Chair of Braunstone Gate and West End Community Trust.
- [C9] Testimonial from Head of Economic Regeneration, Leicester City Council.
- [C10] Testimonial from Elected City Mayor, Leicester.