

Title: Building the Creative Common... the potential of public space to generate creative cluster success



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Abstract:

This essay investigates the relationship between public space and creative cluster success. It focuses on the successful Old Street media and technology cluster in London where it is proposed that to support the cluster, the local authorities will build Tech City. In order to research the area, a range of inventive and experimental methods are used, including 'write on this' posters, a deep ethnographic account and an alternative map with a novel perspective. It is proposed that cluster policy has yet to recognise the full potential of public space to support creative clusters. Not only could public space encourage more social interaction, it could also help cluster workers to transgress the capitalist and city restrictions which are holding back creative clusters. This essay proposes a new idea of constructing a creative common, a non-capitalist enclave which allows for self-expression and play. In constructing a creative common, this essay contributes to the growing concept of livable cities as it suggests that city and cluster policy share the common goal of re-infusing the city with a 'human dimension' (Gehl, 2010 p.6). As a consequence, it advocates that cluster policy should focus more on the 'life between buildings' (Gehl, 2010 p.25) including how strangers interact and neo-tribes. There is also attention paid towards the smaller infrastructure which influence much of our everyday behaviour. It concludes that the Old Street Cluster would be better off constructing a creative common than building Tech City.

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Introduction

The East End of London, a place of revolution, anti-authoritarian spirit, radical thinkers and artisans. It was the headquarters for the suffragettes, the place where the dockers first took industrial action and where Stalin first met his rival to be, Leon Trotsky. A place with a hybrid culture because of waves of immigration by populations such as the Huguenots, Irish, Jewish and more recently the Bangladeshi's. In its latest transformation there has been an influx of 'urban trendies' to the area (Hall, 2005 p.46).

One of the older local residents that Hall (2005) talks to, named Solly, described the East End as a 'place to struggle and move on' and therefore suggested that these newcomers 'don't belong here' (p.46). Throughout its history the East End has been known for not only radicalism but also poverty, overcrowding, disease and criminality. However, must a place always have to be synonymous with struggle? Does gentrification always have to mean displacement? Is it wrong that East-Enders take up the opportunity offered by the Olympics, Canary Wharf and the Old Street Roundabout cluster? Perhaps only now East-Enders are recognising that they need not be just a victim of global forces, but as a local agent they could also be involved in the production of global forces (Massey, 2007). One of these 'urban trendies' is Michael Biddulph. He aptly named the area around Old Street Roundabout, the 'Silicon Roundabout' as a reference to the successful media and technology cluster that can draw parallels to the infamous Silicon Valley (London Evening Standard, 2008).

Silicon Roundabout is a thriving media and technology cluster that has existed for over a decade but has only really achieved recognition since 2007 (Cowan, 2013). It is thought

that this entrepreneurial boom was started by relatively cheap rents, a critical mass of available programming talent, and just enough outside investment to create a mutually reinforcing spirit of risk-taking (Rowan, 2012). In order to encourage further success for this ‘creative ecosystem’ (Florida, 2002 p.xix) the government has implemented a range of policies. These include creating an entrepreneur’s visa to entice foreign talent, tax breaks for early stage investors and more recently they have announced the Tech City vision for Old Street Roundabout (Cowan, 2013). This is a £50 million investment in Europe’s biggest indoor civic space, which the government claim is dedicated to entrepreneurs and start-up companies (UK Government, 2012). It will be an iconic landmark like other recent developments in London such as the Shard (Iba, 2012). Landry (2008) suggests that urban leaders often orchestrate ‘the iconic’ (p.xxiii) like this, in order to show that the city is at the forefront of development.

However, encouraging a cluster to grow is not an easy thing to do, they are complex ecosystems which require much more than just financial investment. It could be argued that clustering policy has yet to fully recognise the subtleties and nuances that are required to build and sustain a successful cluster in the knowledge economy. This is perhaps because governments have for too long underestimated the knowledge economy as being as simple as economies of the past. For instance, a lot of academics talk about successful creative cluster characteristics such as ‘tolerance’(Florida, 2002 p.249) and having a ‘creative attitude’ (Landry, 2008 p.132), but how do you implement this? It is not like making a linear production line more efficient. As Florida (2002) rightly puts there is ‘no magic bullets’ or ‘one-size fits all strategy’ (p.xxii) that creates and supports creative clusters as each place has its unique assets. Though something that policy makers and planners have for too long overlooked is public space and the ‘life between buildings’ (Gehl, 2010 p.25). Too often public space has just been categorised as ‘left over planning’

(Landry, 2008 p.119). However, if public space is thoughtfully constructed it could not only help to build a successful creative cluster, but also simultaneously help to build a more 'humane city' (Gehl, 2010 p.6) at the same time as helping us to remake ourselves (Harvey, 2012).

This essay will look to suggest a more progressive and innovative cluster policy through illustrating how we should construct a creative common. It will look into the characteristics of public space, the types of social interaction in clusters, the optimum capitalist and city conditions for creative success and finally what would be a better cluster policy. In each step of the essay, the Old Street Cluster will be used as an example.

Literature Review

A) Clustering

Since post-fordism and post-industrialisation, western cities have had to move towards a service based economy where knowledge is the most important resource (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). Landry (2008) developed the idea of the ‘creative city’ where urban places must be built to best harness people’s imagination and talent, and Hall and Hubbard (1998) developed the idea of the ‘entrepreneurial city’ where through private and public cooperation, the local government employ risky and inventive policies. These types of metropolis refer to the whole city being built upon these principles but they also are particularly in reference to creative industries (Cooke and Lazzeretti, 2008). It has been noticed that these businesses work best in urban clusters, leading to areas being called ‘learning regions’ (Scott, 2000 p.37) and ‘innovative milieus’ (O’Connor, 2004 p.132). According to Brown, O’Connor and Cohen (2000) through this, creative industries have become a tool for economic development as they help cities in their physical and symbolic reinvention after the deindustrialisation of the 20th Century. Porter (1998) suggests that the more complex, knowledge-based and dynamic the world economy becomes the more important these clusters will become. Globalisation was said to be spatially dispersing the world economy but as this localisation of businesses demonstrates the local is not just a victim of global processes, it can also produce the global processes (Massey, 2007). It is therefore the post-industrialised cities prerogative to try to form, grow and support these creative industries in any way they can.

B) Social Interaction and Clusters

Clustering is now an important process for creative industries (Malmberg and Maskell, 1997) because of it’s potential for knowledge creation and innovation (Storper and

Venables, 2004). There are many elements that make a cluster successful, however, one of its defining features is its face-to-face interaction (Pratt, 2000).

The cluster's close proximity means that social interaction in clusters can be formal, but also crucially can be informal and be of a 'planned, chance or serendipitous nature' (Pratt, 2000 p.432). It is not just the big meetings, but also the countless minor sociations that can determine a clusters success (Blokland and Savage, 2008). Johnson (2010) has described an idea as a network, it is not a euphoric moment but a long term process which often lingers at the back of people's minds. The idea therefore needs to be developed and coaxed out by these day-to-day relationships. Bathelt, Malmberg and Maskell (2004) suggests that it is the 'buzz' and stimulation created by people socialising, that can help with knowledge production by lubricating knowledge when it is sticky and tacit (Malmberg and Maskell, 2006). As Nonaku and Takeuchi (1995 cited in Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007) suggests when quoting a HP employee, communication is key: 'If only HP knew what HP knows' (p.16).

Face-to-face interaction is particularly important for rapidly changing environments where information is imperfect and knowledge is not easily codified (Storper and Venables, 2004). It also allows for informal and intangible relationships to develop between firms, sometimes known as 'untraded interdependencies' (Storper, 1995 p.62). The consideration and recognition by peers is important to firms and individuals (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007) as they can use the community as a 'test bed for ideas' (Brown, O'Connor and Cohen, 2000 p.446). These 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998 p.21) can also be useful 'reservoirs of previous trial and error' (Brown, O'Connor and Cohen, 2000 p.446).

Landry (2008) suggests that the willingness to share and contribute to the success of the cluster depends upon a high level of trust, self-responsibility and strong unwritten

principles. Putnam (2000) would define this cooperation, trust, reciprocity and civic-mindedness as social capital, something he believes is an important and yet declining facet of society. An under-acknowledged aspect of clusters is how much goodwill trust and social capital there is in comparison to the rest of society. In a cluster there are many collaborative ventures where firms are satisfied that the commitment of partners goes beyond explicit contracts and agreements (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). This trust is built by the day-to-day encounters (Scott, 2000) and the informal social relationships (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) believes that a healthy civic-minded community is essential to economic prosperity.

Also supposedly in decline is community, which The Chicago School of Thought would argue is the outcome of urbanism (Fischer, 1975). Florida (2002) looked into what types of community are good for economic prosperity and suggested that the kinds of communities required are different from the past. He says traditional notions of community, such as a close, cohesive community now tend to inhibit growth. Instead, communities with weaker ties that allow people to have a greater diversity of friendships and more individualistic pursuits will be more successful. Maffesoli (1996) equally recognised that the tribes of the past with long-term commitments are diminishing and that since the disintegration of mass culture people are re-rooting themselves in the social universe through 'neo-tribes' (p.96). These 'neo-tribes' or 'postmodern tribes' (p.96) are the small temporary groups or little masses which we are members of at different times during our day. Neo-tribes have 'strong powers of inclusion and integration' (p.16), as they rely less on previous structures such as institutions and class, although are inherently unstable, as people are free to move from one to the other. They include interest-based collectivities such as sports clubs or friends at the office, which Hetherington (1994) would argue makes them stronger than past communities because like Schmalenbach's (1977 cited in Hetherington, 1994) concept

of the ‘bund’, it is an ‘elective form of sociation’(p.2). There as yet has been little research into the role of neo-tribes in cluster success.

Power and Hallencreutz (2005) have suggested that clusters work best if they are where people can be open-minded and not entirely focused on the job at hand. They highlighted how people cannot simply be treated as inputs into the cluster production process, as the key to creativity, thus innovation in creative industries, are fun and stimulating environments. Knowledge creation is a complex process that requires experimentation and exploration (Cooke and Lazzarotti, 2008). Consequently, one under-explored research field is the role of play in cluster innovation. Play is usually reserved for just children, however, St. Jean (2013) suggests that it is just as important for adults to play as children, because it is crucial for discovery, learning and well-being. He suggests that it creates a desire to connect that lingers on even after we have stopped playing, making us more open to the world and more likely to talk to strangers. Play can also help to create community, as La Tomatina proves (St. Jean, 2013).

The research illustrates that one of the most important factors in cluster success is the face-to-face social interaction, although there could be more research done into the role of neo-tribes, reciprocity and play in a cluster.

C) Clustering Policy, Public Space and Social Interaction

One way a cluster formed in SoHo was through cheap housing and a large amount of space which attracted artists to the area (Zukin, 1988 [1982]). She noticed that the artists ‘loft living’ (p.15) in SoHo managed to regenerate an area thus demonstrating the potential of what Florida (2003) later termed the ‘creative class’ (p.7). However, as Brown, O’Connor and Cohen (2000) have noted, this non-intervention strategy is no longer an option because of the global competition for creative industries. In order to be competitive in the world

economy, cities have tried many policies to encourage clusters to form and grow. Although it is difficult to control something as complex as the city (Pile and Thrift, 2000) there have been many attempts to develop clusters, from flagship schemes and ‘imagineering’ (Hall and Hubbard, 1998 p.7) - the constant manipulation and promotion of city imagery - to growing connections to a local talent pool (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). Cooke and Lazzeretti (2008) have suggested that cluster development should concentrate on a ‘bottom-up [policy] approach’ (p.2). They suggest that no one should be in charge of the cluster, which lends itself to the idea that cluster policies should just be trying to provide a platform for learning and innovation rather than trying to interfere and control the cluster.

As already established, one of the key things to address is the encouragement of face-to-face interaction (Storper and Venables, 2004), because clusters may have close proximity but that does not guarantee good social interaction. For city development, Gehl (2010) introduced the importance of ‘life between buildings’ (p.25). This concept could be applied to creative clusters, as perhaps there should be a greater focus on not just individual buildings and businesses but on the area. Landry (2008) has suggested that the public realm can help develop creativity because it allows people to go beyond their own circle of family, professional and social relations. In public space there is the chance for discovery, surprise and mixing with people in informal and unplanned ways (Landry, 2008). They therefore see public space as having more than just an arterial function that has been championed by the modernist planners and traffic planners (Gehl, 2010), they see it as having other functions such as being a meeting place and a space of stimulation (Power and Hallencreutz, 2005). However, when cluster policy looks beyond redeveloping individual buildings, there is usually only a focus on the establishment of infrastructure such as transport and basic services (Malmberg and Maskell, 2002).

One recent encouraging government approach that has shown the potential influence of public space is ‘libertarian paternalism’ or ‘nudge’ policies (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.484). It’s aim is to steer people towards living improved lives. In terms of public space, it suggests that it is possible for ‘choice architecture’ to encourage certain behaviours, such as social interaction (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.486). Similarly, Allen (2006) has identified public space’s potential seductive power. Seduction is a mode of power that works through the suggestion of possibilities, temptation and redirecting attention. It is an ambient power that operates through proximity and inclusion: you can find yourself doing something you might have otherwise not have done, simply because you are there (Allen, 2006). Parnmore (2000) goes as far to say that in every street you enter you become part of it and the architecture becomes part of you, if only temporarily. This affects your personality, mood and character. This all suggests that greater attention should be paid to public space because of how it influences your behaviour and thus your sociability and creativity output in creative clusters. Perhaps this is why Landry (2008) calls it the ‘heart of the innovative milieu’ (p.119).

Much of the literature on cluster policy is orientated around building large structures, such as flagship towers that symbolise the change in city identity, though it could also be argued that the more ubiquitous smaller urban structures are just as effective at making it a successful creative cluster. In a city, the streets and sidewalks are the ‘vital organs’, as they bring the city and its strangers together in an intimate fashion (Jacobs, 2011 [1961] p.37). In bigger cities, strangers are far more common than acquaintances but ‘when you see a stranger three or four times... you begin to nod’ (Jacobs, 2011 [1961] p.70). Small infrastructure can be a good way of getting people to ‘see’ strangers and not just have them pass you by. Walking past someone on a pavement isn’t the same as seeing someone from the capsule of your car. Other small infrastructure, such as benches, can affect behaviour

by not only determining how you sit, where you sit and how long you sit for (Marcuse, 2000), but also if you talk to someone. Ralph Erskine once designed a ‘talkscape’ which is two benches set at a slightly open angle with a small table (Gehl, 2010 p.155). This gave people the choice of having a conversation or being alone. It demonstrates that small subtle changes to the shape of small infrastructure can heavily influence behaviour. Borden (2000) suggests that small infrastructure boundaries, such as doors, can even ask people questions, such as am I welcome here? One alternative way the small infrastructure could be used is through making them ‘territorial prompts’ or ‘mental speedbumps’ to remind people to act in a certain way (Sustrans, 2010 cited in Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.497). However, Gehl (2010) points out that not all street furniture is useful. For instance, Marcuse (2000) highlights that in Los Angeles they seem to have ‘bum-proof seats’ (p.18). Jones, Pykett and Whitehead (2010) also note how ‘choice architecture’ does not always lead to the appropriate behaviour, for instance inappropriate street furniture can be the focal point for anti-social behaviour (p.486). Consequently, effort needs to be put into designing streets in ways that encourage effective responses from street users, as well as an appreciation of the unintended consequences of such designs.

Gehl (2010) says a ‘good city is like a good party: guests stay because they are enjoying themselves’ (p.147). These places where people tend to dwell in cities, Gehl named ‘staying places’ (p.144). At these places he noticed the ‘edge effect’ (p.143), as wherever people stay for a while they seek out places along the edges of space, where you can get both good physical and psychological support. He says that cities for staying don’t just have primary seating, but also secondary seating such as rough facades and good support points. For instance, he said of Venice: ‘the entire city is sittable’(p.158). Gehl also highlights how public space can be good for encouraging play. He asks us to look back in history before the modernists confined play to play-parks, when cities had in-built

opportunities to play. This should be the aim for clusters: to try and get people to stay, socialise and play. Literature in cluster policy has yet to acknowledge the full potential of public space, despite its increasing reputation in city development policy.

D) Transgression and Legitimising Behaviour

Another cluster policy Florida (2002) argues for is tolerance, which is the third element of his '3T's' needed for cluster growth. He argues that if places are open and tolerant, for instance are accepting of homosexuality, they have an edge in attracting different kinds of people and generating ideas. His main focus is looking at trying to create low entry barriers for people in order to attract a diversity of creative people. With the idea being that diversity attracts more diversity and creates new innovative combinations of ideas.

However, an argument is that Florida does not pay enough attention to how these innovative combinations come into being. There is also a need for tolerance in the sense of a culture being supportive of bizarre ideas. Or even one step further, a culture of transgression: encouraging people to 'break rules or exceed boundaries' (Jenks, 2003 p.3).

Jenks says that transgression is a key idea for our time as our society is created by constraints and boundaries. Cresswell (1996) has highlighted how some behaviours can be judged as inappropriate not because of what they are, but because of where there are done. For instance, graffiti in cities is often considered just vandalism, but in galleries, which are 'sites of legitimate creativity in society' they are venerated (Cresswell, 1996 p.55). This demonstrates the power of place and the possibility to legitimate behaviours that elsewhere might be considered transgressive because of wider cultural restrictions, but are accepted in that place. It is not just about being tolerant to behaviours but encouraging behaviours that are different. For instance, encouraging and inviting expression in public spaces which are usually controlled by police and capitalism.

E) Capitalism and the Cluster

Florida (2002) suggests that we have great creative potential, but that we currently lack the social and economic system to harness it (p.xix). Human creativity is a virtually limitless resource (Florida, 2002) and is the precondition from which innovations develop (Landry, 2008). It would therefore be advantageous if we were able to create a city that is able to harness people's imagination, talent and encourage a 'creative attitude': an open, inventive and resourceful mindset (Landry, 2008 p.14). In order to build such a city, it is time for government policy to be more transgressive in their approach to clusters and the structures that restrict them. For instance, it is important to challenge the neoliberal capitalist system that is restricting creativity from surfacing.

Not many would deny the growing ubiquity and dominance of neo-liberal capitalism which has led to the increasing commodification of every aspect of society. However, why is it the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992 p.xi)? Why is there no alternative to the brutalities of global capitalism (Ferguson, 1999)? Gibson-Graham (1996) suggests that ironically it is not the economic discourse of the right, but primarily the socialist and Marxist traditions that have constituted capitalism as too large and embracing to be challenged. What this means is that every anti-capitalist project of social transformation and non-capitalist initiative of economic innovation has been discarded because it is deemed doomed to fail. Gibson-Graham (1996) suggests we give capitalism an 'identity crisis', so in the same way we have problematized sexuality, we should problematize the idea of 'economics' (p.261). Instead of being large and embracing, look at it as being partial, as if it was 'one social constituent among many' (p.261). They identified how capitalism co-exists with lots of non-capitalist economic activities and motivations. Capitalism is also sometimes perceived as somewhat natural, when in reality 'capitalism is performative' (Thrift, 2005 p.3). It is always engaged in experiment, as the project is

perpetually unfinished. Jones, Pykett and Whitehead (2010) have critically questioned the assumptions of rationality that have infused accounts of homo economicus. They suggest that we don't necessarily make rational choices, as we are heavily influenced by 'choice architecture's' that surround us (p.486). For instance, we are influenced to buy tobacco because of its placement behind the till in shops. However, now that we realise that economic rationality and capitalism are social constructs (Giddens, 1998) it makes it possible to think that you could mould it another way.

Harvey (2012) claims that it is one thing to be transgressive about sexuality, religion and architectural conventions, but quite another to be transgressive in relation to the institutions and practices of capitalism that are embedded into our cultural institutions. Harvey (2000) and the Marxists say nothing more than a total solution will do, else the resistance will be nothing more than just temporary and fleeting. However, Ferguson (1999) says that challenging neo-liberal globalization cannot simply be a matter of confronting it with its successor, as it is too big, we need to grow resistance. Leyshon and Lee (2003) also disagree with Harvey and suggest that alternative economic spaces, or 'spaces of hope' (Harvey, 2000) are the antecedents of a more diverse, proliferative and inclusive economic future. Gibson-Graham (1996) echoes this and emphasizes already the existence of diverse economies, such as cooperatives and alternative currencies. Leyshon and Lee (2003) suggest how alternative economic spaces do more than resist capitalism, they can also contribute to the city through building community and allowing self-expression, creativity and innovation. Whilst Jacobs (2011 [1961]) puts forward the idea that both capitalist and non-capitalist functions contribute to the vitality of the city. This all suggests that as non-capitalist spaces help in the resistance to the brutalities of capitalism they could also contribute to city characteristics which make cluster's successful, such as the allowance of the 'creative attitude' (Landry, 2008 p.14).

One key neoliberal capitalist restriction is on space, particularly in a city. Florida (2002) remarks how important it is to create a supportive social milieu or ecosystem that is open to all forms of creativity. An argument is that through capitalism's commodification of space, neoliberalism restricts creativity and the expression of ideas. Subsequently, an idea would be to make large public spaces and squares non-capitalist spaces. They could be marked out and protected like green belts or National Heritage sites. Except this time you are not protecting the environment, but creativity and the 'human dimension' of cities (Gehl, 2010 p.6). Cooke and Lazzeretti (2008) talk about 'translation zones' or 'transaction spaces' (p.9) in clusters, which are social spaces which help people to articulate and transform implicit knowledge into being explicit. However, this could go much further. In a non-capitalist space instead of just the rich being able to express themselves, everyone has the total freedom of expression, without the worry of getting paint on the wrong wall or expressing it in a way those in power disapprove. For instance, tacit knowledge refers to direct experience and expertise, which is not easily communicated (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). It is a form of know-how which is embodied in the skills and the work practices. Talking about it might not be enough, but expressing it through artistic skills, play, games, jujitsu or any other way might help. Thus changing the rules of public space in restricting capitalism and the commodification of space could allow people to express their ideas and creativity.

Florida (2002) illustrates how creative ecosystems are habitats open to new people and ideas, where people network easily and offbeat ideas are not stifled but are turned into new projects, companies and growth. He suggests we look at creativity as a common good, like liberty or security. It is something essential that belongs to all of us and that must be fed, renewed and maintained, not 'bought and sold' like other resources (p.xxvi). Landry (2008) and Harvey (2012) suggest that for creativity, diversity and difference is key, not

homogeneity. If people were allowed to express themselves more, without being regulated by capitalism, there would be more creativity and innovation. This is hence why cultural bohemian places are seen as the best places for creative clusters (O'Connor, 1998), as they are places away from centralised powers where offbeat ideas can be experimented with. Postmodernism celebrates this difference and variety (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007), however, it could be argued that postmodern cities are only half developed. The landscape of different architectural styles and the changing of attitudes is only one step. Having neoliberal capitalism so dominant and prevalent, it might actually be suppressing diversity and the knowledge economy. Planning policy needs to catch up to build a postmodern city that is suitable for the knowledge economy activities. This could be through building non-capitalist spaces that allow for the freedom and diversity needed for innovation.

One common misconception is that public space includes public gathering places such as cafes. Gehl (2010) suggests that to a far greater extent than private commercial arenas, public democratically managed city space provides access and opportunities for all groups of society to express themselves and 'latitude for non-mainstream activities' (p.28). Public, but private, spaces only allow you in if you adhere to their social conventions and also importantly if you pay to be there, for instance in a cafe if you buy a coffee. It's exclusivity therefore restricts diversity, and this is why public space is better for creativity, it allows for a more diverse social mix (Sennett, 2000). Harvey (2012) highlights how the city is where everyone mingles to produce a 'common' (p.75), which arguably only exists where everyone is welcome. Gehl's (2010) concept 'life between buildings' (p.25) includes all of the very different activities that people engage in when they use common city space. Whether that is window shopping, dancing, begging or socialising, it is not just the ones you can do that adhere to how Starbucks want you to behave. Coffee houses are good at gathering people, but they lack diversity and the ability to stimulate and inspire

people. They lack that element of chaos and unpredictability, which Johnson (2010) suggests is necessary for new and interesting ideas to come together. As Landry (2008) says, it is important to create spaces for mavericks to push the boundaries that are blocking progress. A more open city is able to give mavericks the space to operate and thus non-capitalist spaces will not only be tolerant to transgressive behaviours but will actively encourage behaviours which are different.

Florida (2002) comments on how history shows that enduring social change occurs not during economic boom times, but in periods of crises and questioning such as the 1930's and it could be argued today. So in the same way that Jones, Pykett and Whitehead's (2010) libertarian paternalism has come in as part of the role of state institutions in redressing the harmful socio-economic and environmental practices associated with the 'indulgencies' of a neoliberal society (p.485). Perhaps there is a need for the state to stop neoliberalism in indulging in commodifying too much space. As Harvey (2012) reminds us, the city is not just geared up towards capitalism, it has other functions. If the state wants to build the optimum conditions for a creative cluster, they could create non-capitalist public spaces that encourage transgression, diversity, vibrancy and creativity. Although this is not part of the anti-capitalist struggle, it is more of an appreciation of the role that non-capitalism plays in the vitality of the city.

F) The City and the Cluster

It is also important to have the correct city conditions for cluster success. Similarly to dealing with capitalism constraints, it could be argued that government policy needs to be more transgressive in their approach to cities. As creating the right city conditions encourages and legitimises certain behaviours.

In the 1960's modernism was the dominant planning ideology with its 'vision of the city as a machine' coinciding with the car invasion (Gehl, 2010 p.x). Streets that had in history functioned as social meeting places (Gehl, 2010) were only being designed by modernists and traffic planners as sites of mobility (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). This decreased prioritization of public space and pedestrianism (Gehl, 2010) meant that the streets were no longer sites of community interaction (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). Jacobs (2011 [1961]) 50 years ago prophesised that this would put an end to urban space and result in lifeless cities devoid of people. Whilst Harvey (2012) observed how before the car came along, the streets were often a 'common' (p.75) but that the automobile eroded this element of the city (Jacobs, 2011 [1961]). Since then there has been some realisation that city planners are missing the 'human dimension' in designing cities (Gehl, 2010 p.6) and that streets need to be 'repurposed' away from the movement function and towards other street functions (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.495). As Gehl (2010) says, it is important to realise that 'first we shape cities – then they shape us' (p.9), so whatever city space is provided shapes our behaviours. The more roads there are, the more traffic there is; the more invitations there are for people to stay and socialise, the more people stay and socialise (Gehl, 2010). This emphasizes how the more 'human dimension' (p.6) in planning policy and public space there is, potentially the more safe, community-orientated, lively, sociable and healthy urban life will become.

It is important to acknowledge that a cluster is not an island, it is affected by local and global networks (Massey, 2007) and its success is interdependent with the success of the city. Thus if you build a 'humane city' with carefully designed 'grammar of the city': the streets, squares and parks (Gehl, 2010 p.6), you build a healthy city and a more successful cluster. Cluster policy has not really investigated how building a humane city could also benefit a cluster.

Currently walking in a city has been likened to an ‘obstacle course’ because of the car-orientated streets (Gehl, 2010 p.123). Traffic planners just see it as a ‘pedestrian stream’ (p.19), a slow way of getting from A to B, and are totally unaware of the nuances and opportunities that surround walking. At its core walking is a ‘special form of communion’ between people who share public space (Gehl, 2010 p.19). It is more than just good for the environment and human health, it is also valuable to society as it forms a ‘togetherness’ between everyone (Jacobs, 2011 [1961] p.82). Sennett (2000) claims it is important that citizens learn how to enter into the experience and interests of unfamiliar lives. Society as a whole becomes more cohesive when people’s experiences are not limited to those who resemble them in class, race or ways of life. The media portray common spaces as places of vulnerability, where there is frequent accidents and attacks (Gehl, 2010). When in reality creating common space is actually used as a crime prevention strategy, as it is significant that people from various groups of society can meet face to face (Gehl, 2010). Subsequently, the more public space there is the more social cohesion (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010) and the bigger the ‘web of trust and respect’ (Jacobs 2011 [1961] p.74). Thus putting community back at the heart of street design (Jones, Pykett, Whitehead, 2010) will help the safety and success of both the cluster and the city.

Building better quality streets will also create a more ‘humane city’ (Gehl, 2010 p.6) through making it more sociable. As already established, sociability is crucial for constructing the social milieu needed for creative clusters (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007) but it is also crucial to people’s quality of life (Allen, 2006). People need inviting to stop and socialise, for which the built environment is ‘the stage and the catalyst’ to do this as it can create ‘staying places’ (Gehl, 2010 p.x). Areas in cities are often built for specific activities. Tourist areas are usually built as ‘staying places’, whereas work areas are usually built for functionality and movement (Gehl, 2010 p.144). Having work areas built

for functionality does not help the transfer of knowledge and ideas, whereas building ‘staying places’ would help (p.144). It might therefore be necessary to look at cluster areas as a landscape of consumption, like a shopping mall (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). But instead of consuming goods, people consume knowledge and ideas. Jones, Pykett and Whitehead (2010) noted the street’s long history as something that shapes social behaviours at a distance. The history of street design is littered with key behavioural concerns of particular eras, such as the prevention of fire through road-width by-laws. They have observed how street designs are predominantly concerned with the movement functions (air, sunshine and cars). It could be argued that now is the time to be concerned with the movement of knowledge and ideas.

The more people walk, stop and socialise the more lively and stimulating a street becomes. Gehl (2010) suggests that well designed neighbourhoods ‘inspire the people’ who live in them, whilst poorly designed cities ‘brutalize their citizens’ (p.x). Faced with the choice of walking down a deserted or lively street most people would choose the street with life and activity. A livelier street means a space where lots of things occur, not just work activities but also family and ceremonial activities (Sennett, 2000). As Winston Hazel, a local DJ points out, the reason why the Sheffield Creative Industries Quarter is not a successful music cluster is that there is ‘no reason to go there unless you have a boring meeting or have an office there’ (Brown, O’Connor and Cohen, 2000 p.444). Creative clusters must be mixed-use, as when we are in a city we are in the ‘perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty’ (Lefebvre, 1968 cited in Harvey, 2012 p.x) and it is the unpredictability of a city that stimulates us. It is this buzz and excitement that a cluster must harness for creativity, but it is also this buzz and excitement that makes a city have a ‘human dimension’ (Gehl, 2010 p.6).

Finally it is important that cluster policy is orientated around building a city and a cluster for people not for power, control and money. This is to say, it is important to both build the city in their best interests and build a city that they are able to mould themselves. Robert Park illustrates that ‘in making the city man has remade himself’ (Harvey, 2012 p.4). Subsequently we have remade ourselves over and over again, without realising how or why. Harvey (2012) suggests that this freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is one of our most precious yet most neglected of our human rights. Too often government cluster and city policy suggest they want to help to develop an area, but the underlying motive revolves around wanting to control it and take away this right. Building public space is in the ‘people’s best interests’ (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.486) because it is not designed to centralise power for the government or Multi-National Companies to seize. It gives people the opportunity to mould the city in their own image. It is the people that determine the playing rules in the common space of the city (Gehl, 2010) and it is them that would be empowered to see the city as a ‘canvas’ (Finley, 2013) if non-capitalist spaces were constructed. Finley (2013) is a ‘guerrilla gardener’ for which gardening is his graffiti. He has planted many food forests in vacant lots and parkways across the food desert that is South Los Angeles in order to educate, transform and empower the community. He describes himself as an artist refusing to accept the manufactured reality that someone else has made for him. It is this sort of attitude and self-responsibility that could grow if the city was opened up to the people. Equally public space provides the opportunity to ‘nudge’ people to behave in a way that would benefit them, for instance walking to work or socialising with strangers (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). This is almost like a ‘tough love’ approach (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.486). It is time to build a ‘new commons’ (Harvey, 2012 p.74) through top-down spatial

design and bottom-up place-building for the people's sake, which is actually also for the cluster's and city's sake.

Subsequently, the cluster is interdependent with the city. It is important to build a healthier, safer, more sociable and lively city for the sake of the city and the cluster. Even more importantly though, underlying all decisions should be the idea to build it for the people, as they are who make the city and cluster more successful.

G) Summary

The research illustrates that one of the most important factors in cluster success is the face-to-face social interaction. Cluster policy has however yet to acknowledge the full potential of public space to facilitate this interaction, despite its increasing reputation in city development policy. An argument is that in order to build the optimum conditions for a creative cluster, they could create non-capitalist public spaces that encourage transgression, diversity, vibrancy and creativity. Finally it is also important to recognise that the cluster is interdependent with the city and that cities must be built for the people, as they are who make the city and cluster more successful.

Consequently, the main aim of the research is to investigate the role that public space plays in the Old Street Cluster (OCS) success. The main research questions are:

- What characteristics of public space contribute to OSC success? In particular how does it facilitate social interaction in the OSC?
- What types of interaction contribute to the success of OSC?
- What are the optimum capitalist and city conditions for OSC success, and how could public space help to create them?
- What cluster policy would best help OSC to be successful?

Methodology

In order to investigate these research questions I came from a more humanistic approach and used qualitative research methods. I realised that this may mean that my results could be seen to be more subjective than if I was using quantitative methods (Winchester, 2005). However, I have been able to improve by objectivity and thus overcome this challenge by recognising the possible sources of bias and my researcher positionality (Phillips and Johns, 2012). I also believe that in order to investigate a city, which is full of individuals, emotions, ideas and relations it can only be done by looking at the world as a particular assemblage of phenomena not as an objective science of spatial relations (Johnston, 1997). If I had used quantitative methods the results might therefore have been valid, but not accurate. In order to create better validity and accuracy for my data I decided to use multiple research methods (Phillips and Johns, 2012). This triangulation helped give me a greater understanding of the complexities of the cluster (Phillips and Johns, 2012). Finally in order to find the most suitable location – a creative cluster that is successful beyond doubt and has good public space – I went on a couple of reconnaissance walks around potential clusters. In terms of ethnography, it was almost like a pilot experiment. ‘Silicon Roundabout’ was the one that stood out the most (London Evening Standard, 2008) and so I spend 4 days in August 2013 collecting data.

One of the methods I used was interviews, as they can provide insights into different accounts within a group and can also reveal a consensus (Dunn, 2005). I decided to use a semi-structured format for the interviews, so that it not only gave me flexibility to ask spontaneous questions but it also gave me the focus and structure to make sure I was asking the ‘right’ questions (Knight, 2002). Before the interview I prepared a set of

questions to fall back on and formulated a general direction I wanted the interview to head in. I believe that I successfully managed to reveal the 'deeper picture' (Valentine, 2005 p.111) which a questionnaire or structured interview would be unable to do. However, I am glad that I had prepared some set questions beforehand as they made sure I could redirect the conversation to cover issues that were still outstanding. I felt it was important to listen and make genuine conversation before, during and after the interview in order to build rapport with the interviewee. This helped them and me to open up and relax which yielded better data. However, the data could have been better if a more experienced interviewer was on hand to formulate unambiguous and productive questions on the spot in an unstructured interview.

Although I aimed to get more interviews, the 2 interviews I got with cluster workers gave me a good insight into the cluster. It must be acknowledged that interview samples are never meant to be representative of a population, they instead help the interviewer to understand how individuals experience and make sense of their own lives (Phillips and Johns, 2012). I realised it was important to manage the impression I gave out in order to assess your impact on the research (Kearns, 2005). Consequently, on the first interview I dressed more smartly than my usual student attire, however, I then realised that in this cluster, there is less of a need to dress smartly. As Interviewee 1 said, 'you look equally out of place in a media and advertising company in a suit, as you would do in a bank in jeans and flip-flops'. Subsequently, I wore more relaxed attire during the rest of the week. The interviews took place in the interviewee's 'territory' (Valentine, 2005 p.118) because of convenience for them and it was where I could get the most relaxed conversation. The interviews were recorded by Dictaphone in order to get the most accurate recording possible as well as allow me to concentrate on the conversation and listen back to their responses (Phillips and Johns, 2012). The only problem with this recording method was

that gestures weren't recorded and that some phrases make sense at the time but could not necessarily be transcribed.

Although interviews are still a social situation, it is not in our everyday life. It does not matter how much we are able to put someone at ease before and during an interview, it's structured format often removes the researcher from the flow of everyday life (Kearns, 2005). Subsequently, another research method I used was participant observation. It aims to understand human geographies from the inside (Cook, 2005). Jacobs (2011[1961]) once noted that the best way to learn about a city is not through statistics, but through engaging in it. Subsequently, in an attempt to engage in the city I talked to strangers, using icebreakers such as asking for the time or directions, and spontaneously tried to form new ways of gauging the city, for instance I created my own honesty test. This was all important because in this way the social interactions were becoming more than just a number and I was able to get the emotional responses that are integral to fieldwork, by feeling rejection or the excitement of meeting new people (Phillips and Johns, 2012). I also did more participant observations at various sites across the locality. This included spending long periods of time observing small urban structures such as benches. Phillips and Johns (2012) said that if you look at a place until it becomes 'banal it will then be illuminating', as only when we observe in great detail do 'we begin to see the world afresh' (p.199). Throughout these participant observations I tried to be as covert as possible, as I agree with Gans (1967) 'the researcher must be dishonest to get honest data' (p.440). The anonymity of the city helped me to be covert, whilst being a stranger to the area kept me open-minded as I had not had my perception dulled by habitual experience (Kearns, 2005). All of these participant observations infused the ethnographic diary I kept. As I spend long hours in the area, I was able to immerse myself in the practices, activities

and people of the cluster. The ethnography was really good way of compiling my thoughts, ideas and emotions into one written account.

One alternative method I used was taken from psychogeography and the situationists. By acknowledging that the modern city is made for more than a ‘utilitarian, rational functionality’ (Phillips and Johns, 2012 p.200) I replicated a project called ‘Write on this’ by media artist Jean Hester (Pinder, 2005). She encouraged interaction with walls and the atmosphere of places by putting posters in public spaces that featured questions such as ‘Where were you last time you smiled at a stranger?’ and attached a pen for convenience (Pinder, 2005). These posters invited people to engage with particular spaces and respond to their feelings at that moment. Her general aims were to nudge people to being more awake and to challenge social control (Pinder, 2005). Whereas my aims were to find out how sociable the cluster is, and also to make people reflect. I put up 5 posters that I spread across the area, with questions such as ‘When was the last time you helped someone else out for free?’ knowing that whatever came back would be in some way informative.

Across the area I took ‘electronic sketches’ (Phillips and Johns, 2012 p.117) and real sketches in order to help illustrate my observations and interviews (Cook, 2005).

Photographs are good because they can give you time to see things in the periphery you wouldn’t have otherwise seen (Phillips and Johns, 2012). However, I recognise that I have an active role in photography, as photographs are not just ‘taken’ but also ‘made’ (Phillips and Johns, 2012 p.119). I also drew sketches with the purpose of critically analysing which features of the area I emphasised in the sketch. All of the data I collected I used to create an alternative map in the form of a decision tree organigram. Pinder (2007) believes that it is important to unbind cartographies from powerful institutions and get rid of the pretence that a map has neutral objectivity. I hope that this map will provide a perspective of the area from an unaccustomed angle, the pedestrian angle or the people’s view (Massey,

2005). Maps are simplifications of the world, however, in this way I hope to have been more accurate in the representation of the city space's complexity (Massey, 2005) and helped to reveal the fractures and incoherences of socially produced space (Pinder, 2005). In this manner, it makes my research slightly postmodern, as it is acknowledging that the world is messy and that as a result the urban experience cannot fit neatly into a series of questionnaire tick boxes or 'hegemonic cognitive mappings' (Massey, 2005 p.109).

The Map

The map is designed in order to give the reader a pedestrian perception of the city. Whichever way you hold the map there are photos to guide you across the cluster, as pedestrians do not just move north. It is also from a pedestrian perspective as you are looking at images of the street, this illustrates spaces of stimulation, including those smaller structures that may be insignificant to megaplanners but I found to be vital to the success of a cluster. The usual focus of a map is from above (Pinder, 2005) and although mine is to an extent, it also shows the view of the cluster from over 300 viewpoints on the street. My aim is to reorientate the perception of the city to see beyond reducing the city to statistics and calculable spaces. This is partly why the poster is packed with information, in order to illustrate how the city is busy and complex. I wanted to convey exactly that feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to digest all the information. In order to understand the map, it is important to spend time looking at the map in great detail. My intention however was not to disorientate the reader, so I have outlined every image with a colour to make it easier to read. And although the map captures just one moment of the cluster in August, it offers an exciting, novel and interesting insight into it.

I used all my data sources to infuse this map, in order to give it a fuller sensory picture. However, it could be improved if sonic recordings, texture and smell were added as each sense would give it an extra dimension. The title: ‘the stage, the setting and catalyst...’ comes from a combination of Gehl (2010) and the idea of performativity. Gehl (2010) says that public space is the ‘stage and catalyst’ (p.v) for city activities. Whilst the thought that the cluster is just a stage implies that we are all just actors, and how the city is built heavily influences how we act. The feet at the bottom are inspired by David Hockney’s Brooklyn Bridge photo (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007), which demonstrates that we ‘the people’ are also part of the city. The two different feet illustrates the diversity and creativity of the cluster as well as tries to challenge the reader’s expectations of what you must wear to work. The sketch of the area in the bottom right hand corner is there to help people get a foot hold in the map as it is closer to the maps we are used to. However, it is a sketch in order to be consistent with the rest of the map. Finally the 7 Wonders of Old Street is a reference to the 7 wonders of the ancient world. It is supposed to be humorous but also at the same time illuminating. This is because some of them are smaller structures, thus making the point that things do not have to be big to have an influence.

Results and Discussion

Section 1: Public Space Characteristics and Social Interaction

A) Public space characteristics

One of the potential flaws in my research was that I researched the area on a sunny week in August, not in the middle of winter. However, I would argue that the weather is not the main thing that attracts people to public space.

The ironic thing about these grounds [Bonhill Burial Grounds] was that despite the sunshine, much of the area was covered in shade. One of the things that could undermine my dissertation is that public space is not as well used in the winter as it was the sunny week I studied it. And yet because of the skyscrapers and the tall oak trees, this area only had small hotspots of sunshine and the rest of it was in the shade. Yes the temperature and humidity was pleasant, but it was interesting to see that people still flocked to get here despite missing out on the sunshine. **Wednesday 28th August**

One of the reasons is that public space is often seen as a meeting place or a space to congregate. It is where everyone and anyone can come to create the ‘commons’ (Harvey, 2012 p.75).

I thought this place, the Market Street Gardens, was bit like an oasis. It was near the centre of the cluster and it gave the area colour, vegetation and a more ‘natural ambience’. Surrounding this area seemed to be just concrete blocks after concrete blocks, so it was as if this was the only place there was water. It was also like an oasis because of the large amount of people there... Some people sat alone, some in groups and others were alone but met people there. **Thursday 29th August**

This demonstrates one of the many instances where Old Street’s public spaces looked to facilitate more than just physical movement. As Gehl (2010) says it is important in cities to have ‘life between the buildings’ (p.25). This description of public space being like an oasis hints at it’s life and stimulation. It is surrounded by sameness, symbolised by the concrete blocks, which only stultifies the mind (Sennett, 2000). This area though is

different from the office blocks and individual buildings, it has more colour, more diversity of people and activities and most importantly that possibility of chaos and unpredictability that is crucial to creativity (Johnson, 2010).

An oasis is also essentially a meeting place for flora and fauna to share a resource. In this instance, people are sharing knowledge and ideas. It is important to do it in this space, because people mix in informal and unplanned ways (Landry, 2008). One important feature of Old Street Cluster (OCS) was that anyone could mix with each other, as there were no VIP areas. The spaces were open and inclusive.

I also marvelled at how this one bench does not judge anyone who sits on it, or hold onto who was sitting on it. Anyone is allowed to sit there. This could mean that a litter man could be sitting there and then 10 minutes later, a high court judge, an architect or a lawyer could be sitting there. There is no first class seat or any way for the capitalist classes to remove themselves from the rest of society. It treats everyone as equals and that is what makes public space friendly. **Thursday 29th August**

This is important to OSC's success as it means that everyone can share their ideas, not just the richest people. If only the richer people can share their ideas, there would be less diversity and therefore less chance of new innovative combinations of ideas coming together (Florida, 2002). Public spaces therefore simultaneously also bring society closer together by offering equal opportunities.

One common misconception is that private commercial areas, where the public can also congregate, are the same as public spaces. However, these spaces lack the inclusivity of public space as not everyone can afford to be there or wants to adhere to capitalist restrictions on behaviour. There was one exceptional circumstance at The Fox pub, where the pub managed to lose its exclusivity.

I guess the reason why this place was so sociable was because pubs like benches have an ambient power to make it okay to talk to strangers. The pub's trump card is the alcohol which can make people even more confident, care-free and therefore more sociable. However, its negative side is that you have to buy if you want to stay. This is what made this situation so special, lots of people standing there did not have a drink in their hand. There were also plenty of people who walked along and stopped to chat outside the pub, and clearly had bought nothing. So being outside the pub had taken away a pub's usual exclusivity. This all demonstrated to me how the pub was supporting the cluster's successfulness by helping the movement of ideas and building relationships.

Wednesday 28th August

These exceptional circumstances made the private space more open, allowing for inclusivity and the potential for chaos. This openness is what mavericks need to have to push boundaries (Landry, 2008). I stumbled upon this situation as I was on my way back to the underground, which demonstrates the importance of having flexibility in my methodology as it allowed for a lot of surprises.

Another way in which public space encouraged social interaction and therefore helped OSC success, was through having 'staying places' (Gehl, 2010 p.144).

The place [Market Street Gardens] was packed with people, with the grass area looking like a very British beach (on a mildly hot day)... On the other side to where I was, were more benches and places to sit. However, these were quickly filled up so people had to find alternative places to be comfortable. I noticed that being comfortable means not only being physically comfortable, but also being mentally comfortable or having a feeling of acceptability. The main place people felt comfortable were the side walls where there was an acceptability to lurk and loiter. Interestingly in contrast, there is no acceptability to loiter in the Old Street Station toilet, as there is even a sign 'no loitering'. I find it amazing how within a society there are constrictions on which time and space dimensions you can go in. I suppose I am used to the restrictions on space, but it is less common that your time is policed, especially for loitering or going too slowly. I suppose we are in London, a major western city, you are only allowed to do things at 100 mph. **Friday 30th August**

I think having places to stay is even more important in clusters than generally in a city. In most of the OSC people enjoyed staying, socialising and playing in the public spaces

because they were well-designed. As noticed here, Market Street Gardens had plenty of ‘edges’ which are important to have for helping people feel mentally and physically comfortable (Gehl, 2010 p.143). The more people stay, the more people will share and connect ideas.

Later on I will come onto more city restrictions that inhibit clusters, but one worth noting now is that public space is good at challenging city speed. City speed can sometimes restrict thinking time and the opportunity to interact and relax.

Another observation of this place was that although it had a certain amount of tranquillity and a cool, relaxed and ‘natural’ vibe to it. It was at maximum about 30 metres from the hustle and bustle of the busy London roads. I felt that the graveyard and burial grounds were being a sanctuary for the living and the dead. This cauldron and bowl gave people a degree of peace and a break from a hectic busy British city.

Wednesday 28th August

The city can be a stressful sensory experience, so time out in sanctuaries such as this, can help to let ideas grow and give people a chance to talk. One of the reasons why we feel more sociable in public space is that we feel more comfortable there. It seemed as though cluster workers often left their office buildings to get away from the more pressured environment. In public space, people can make space their own, if only temporarily.

As I looked around at the people on the benches I realised that how you express your body on the bench reflects your personality, character and mood. It is also interesting to see how people make the space into a personal area or a home-like space, if only temporarily, in order to feel security in a world where apparently we feel constant ontological insecurity. **Thursday 29th August**

How our bodies interact with the built environment is crucial to understanding the ambience of public space.

Whilst I sat on the other side of the road, on a concrete ledge-like thing, which you could sit on it, but it wasn't necessarily designed for sitting on. A load of other people began to either stop or sit near me. I was quite amazed that because I was sitting there, it then became acceptable to sit there or stand and wait there. I remember being quite pleased at how I had made a place where it was acceptable to stop. I had effectively created a place. At no other point that week did I see anyone else sitting there, although I did see others stop there. And yet, whilst I sat there, at least 3 other people came and sat near me. I had created a certain ambience to the place that people were feeding off of. However, I wasn't going to stay there permanently so this ambience was only temporary. Whereas the physical environment's ambience is relatively permanent. **Wednesday 28th August**

When I was sitting on the secondary seating I became a part of it, and it became a part of me (Parsmore, 2000). Arguably then, I became part of the seduction of public space (Allen, 2006). People are social animals (St. Jean, 2013) and we like to be around people even if we are not connecting, as Interviewee 1 said, 'it's nice being around people rather than just doing it [building a start-up] in your bedroom'. I was the one unintentionally suggesting and tempting people to stop, and I think well-designed primary seating has the ambience to do this by itself. And when you stop, you are more likely to socialise (Gehl, 2010).

Across the OSC, I saw the physical environment and people combining to influence behaviour.

I sat down again at Bonhill Burial Grounds and noticed how the grounds are shaped like an Oval. Subsequently, because of the Panopticon prison like area, everyone ends up looking at each other, albeit from a distance through the sporadic oak trees. In the middle is the main grass area which is rarely walked across or used, just looked at. This is apart from the odd brave soul, or more likely unaware and unobservant individuals, and also the burial grounds garden men. This demonstrates the power of this public space. The path that goes around the edge of the grass is well used and yet I had the feeling if I walked across the middle I would be transgressing the social norm... I think in this case though the main reason is the fact that over 300 eyes are watching your every movement as you cross it, it makes you think twice and take the path instead. It demonstrates the power dynamics involved in public space and that although there is freedom and agency, the urban design of the space and the structures in the place can influence people's behaviour, however random people like to suggest their movements are. These sightlines I think are the reason I also felt safe and secure. I suppose people often talk about the mob mentality and things that go wrong when we all come together. But in this instance I think the sheer amount of people, means that public space can have a self-policing element to it. There is a collective responsibility that nothing should go against society's rules. **Wednesday 28th August**

This example illustrates how public spaces are not the spaces of vulnerability the media make out them to be (Gehl, 2010). In fact having lots of people in this public space has made it safer, and has made people more likely to take the risk of talking to a stranger.

One of the most important features of public space that helps it to encourage social interaction is the smaller infrastructures. For instance, the OSC benches often created a connection between people.

Looking more closely at the small infrastructure I noticed that the benches around the edge of the grass area were all separated by a couple of metres. I felt this meant that you were more connected to the other people who were sitting on your bench and therefore you were more likely to talk and engage with them. I also think this connection lasts further than just when you are sitting together. For instance, I felt that there would be more chance of speaking to somebody you sat next to than some other total stranger, even when you were away from the bench. Or even if I met them the following day, we might not speak to each other, but as Jane Jacobs said, when you start to see a stranger a number of times you begin to nod. I think with a bench, this intensifies this relationship and connection, thus demonstrating the power of benches and small infrastructure... One negative aspect of one or two of the benches was that although all of the benches were the same size, some of them had wooden dividers to split the bench into three. I felt this separated people mentally from socialising and reduced the flexibility of how you could sit on the bench. This therefore decreased the likelihood of people connecting. **Wednesday 28th August**

In this way not all of the public space and small infrastructure in the OSC was appropriate or well-designed, I chose this cluster because the majority was well-designed. There were instances, particularly near the roundabout, where public space and smaller infrastructure could be improved.

However, there was plenty of evidence to suggest that if well-designed, smaller infrastructure can encourage social interaction and has therefore obviously contributed to the growing success of this cluster.

Behind the back Clifton Road, there was a range of different shaped wooden benches. Each one was distinctively shaped, giving opportunities for people to sit in groups, pair or alone.... As I sat there were a couple of women each grouped into couples who were talking about personal issues. Although I tried not to be too intrusive, it struck me that they didn't really know each other and yet they were acting as each other's support network. My conclusion was that if they were not sitting on the bench they would not be talking about their issues in such depth. The bench's ambient power was giving them the courage to talk about it, but also because of the way the bench was curved the privacy too.

One of the benches there was shaped almost like a jacuzzi, which made it very inclusive. From this point onwards I was realising how important the shape of a bench is. Having a straight, circular or curved bench can change the dynamics of a social situation. Sometimes a smaller straight bench might be better for privacy, but I think generally an inwardly curving bench encourages the most sociability. When I got there, two people were already sat down on the bench, though quite a distance apart from each other. I wasn't sure whether that was because they sat down together, but didn't really know each other that well. Or whether they were sitting down separately and then began to talk, or whether they just wanted to use all of the space provided. They all demonstrate a bench's ability to encourage sociability. **Thursday 29th August**

An important factor in how benches influence behaviour is its shape. If clusters are able to put more 'talkscapes' (Gehl, 2010 p.155) into public space, this would encourage more social interaction.

Another attribute of smaller infrastructure is its ability to ask people questions (Borden, 2000).

Another small infrastructure in Bonhill Burial Grounds is the pathway that goes around the edge of the grass. It is by no means a passive structure as people, because of the width of the pavement and the benches/grass boundaries, have to walk in two two's not four abreast. This changes the power dynamics through people having to decide who walks with whom. If there were three people, then often one of them transgressed and walked on the grass along side. Who is the inferior one who has to get their shoes dirty, or who is the risky one who enjoys transgressing the path/grass boundary? The public space asks people questions about themselves and about their relationship with others. I then wondered, what if you could change to question to: why don't you try talking to a stranger? **Wednesday 28th August**

It is difficult to ask the people the ‘right’ questions, so that you ‘nudge’ people in the right direction without forcing them, or causing them to do something you did not intend them to do. However, if you choose the right ‘choice architecture’ you can help give people the opportunity to connect (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.486).

In this particular encounter, I watched a policeman try to get into an office building that the bench I was sitting on faced, called ‘Victoria House’. Amusingly the main door was causing problems for everybody, including this policeman, but eventually he worked out which button to press. A few minutes later an informal minor sociation happened, when two strangers were both trying to get into the same building. It was nothing big, but they had brief moment together trying to work out the door. I couldn’t tell whether they continued their conversation inside the building or not, but because of that confusing door, the both of them were thrust into the same space making it acceptable to interact. My question would be whether you could put in more confusing doors in public space to encourage interaction, because although it may have led to nothing. It just might have led to sparking a new relationship or a new idea. **Thursday 29th August**

It is therefore important to put in more ‘confusing doors’ in the cluster’s public realm, in whatever physical structure form that is.

Smaller infrastructures therefore may be slightly anonymous at times, but they are certainly not insignificant in influence.

Immediately as I walked towards Chiswell Street I saw the Artillery Arms, a pub that looked much like The Fox or The Windmill from my cluster area. What struck me most about the pub, was not only how much people were outside in the sunshine blocking the pavement and the road, but also how loads and loads of people were using the small ledge outside of the pub. No more than 20 cm wide, though several metres long, it was filled with pint glasses – most of them still being used. It was quite incredible how well-used this inconspicuous and unremarkable small ledge was. If this ledge was not there, it would change the social dynamics of the situation. People would not be as expressive with what they were saying and there would be more spilling of pints etc. It might all sound trivial but this little ledge had loads of knock-on effects. As Jacobs says about sidewalk encounters, the sum is not trivial in the slightest. **Wednesday 28th August**

The Fox Pub: Almost everyone was outside enjoying the weather and atmosphere as they had their casual drink after work. Again the ledge that featured so prominently at the Artillery Arms Pub nearer Liverpool Street, was well-used. **Wednesday 28th August**

This small ledge encapsulates the way planning policy should move in terms of buildings cities and clusters. There is a need to recognise the subtleties and nuances of a city. Small structures may not be big in size, but heavily influence our daily behaviour in cities. The more ‘libertarian policies’ the government implements, the more potential to steer people towards living improved lives (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). However, importantly there is no co-ercive force involved, it still remains people’s choice and therefore it maintains elements of the bottom-up approach.

In the OSC, street corner’s offered the choice of interaction as well as the unpredictability, stimulation and thrill of a city.

As I walked away from the obstruction to watch a street corner, I was thinking about how extra stimulation, like the art of an uneven pavement, can really help to switch on your imagination. I was then thinking about the question whether health and safety has not only regulated our health but also our imagination. One of these stimulations that health and safety will struggle to completely eradicate is sudden corners. It gives a sense of unpredictability, a dose of the unexpected and the exhilarating thrill that anything could be around the corner. As a consequence, because it's a sudden corner, even if they are carrying straight on, everyone looks around the corner to see what is around it. Some people do it out of curiosity and others do it out of necessity to check whether or not they are going to bump into someone or thing. Therefore there must be millions of people with the same image stored in their head. I have no doubt, for most people this leaves the brain within seconds. However, it demonstrates the potential or the opportunity a sudden corner presents for urban designers. What if that image that everyone looked at was a piece of art that stimulated creativity in 10% of the population?

The sudden corner is also a meeting place. It brings strangers together much like a bench does, forcing them to interact and negotiate the space. I admit whilst I was there nobody began talking to one another but there was a couple of times people almost bumped into one another and therefore had to negotiate the space. It gives them the opportunity to meet one another, on every occasion they passed on that opportunity, but there was still that choice if they wanted it. Consequently, a sudden corner encapsulates two of the things that urban design can do for cluster innovation and creativity. Firstly, urban design can offer meeting places and sociable environments that encourage interaction and informal sociations. Then secondly urban design can also offer interesting and stimulating places to live and work in, that could aid people's imagination and creativity. You could argue that creativity isn't that important in all sectors in the economy, but I would agree with Charles Landry when he says that a creative attitude and using your imagination improves any industry. **Thursday 29th August**

In the OSC public space is fundamental to encouraging social interaction. Not all of it is well-designed and there could be improvements. However, the well-designed public spaces in the OSC illustrate its potential to facilitate social interaction. It is able to facilitate social interaction because of its characteristics such as being a meeting and a staying place, its inclusivity, ambience, diversity, safety and its relaxed atmosphere. The most important finding though was that despite smaller infrastructures size, they have a big influence in dictating social behaviour and interaction. It is also essential to mention that

private spaces often lack some of these characteristics so cannot be considered an equal alternative. Public space, never mind smaller infrastructures, has been overlooked by cluster policy, but should no longer be.

B) Types of social interaction

Public space facilitates a range of social interactions that lead to cluster success. In the Old Street Cluster (OSC), I noticed how each type of social interaction had a different way of contributing to the cluster success.

The standard social interaction takes place in formal meetings. This is usually done inside, however, as Interviewee 2 says, whenever the weather is good enough they encourage people to go outside.

Interviewee 2: Yeah okay so most people that work here will probably have meetings that are either in the office, or outside in our little area here [gesturing towards the benches and the small authentic cafe hut] and they have obviously have led to all sorts of projects coming through. But when it comes to the good weather we always try encourage meetings outside

Interviewer: Oh do you?

Interviewee 2: Because that always seems to have some sort of effect in some sort of way [laughter].

This 'effect' might be the unpredictability and excitement of public space in the OSC.

These formal meetings are good at finalising business deals. However, where they lack is that they are not very conducive to inspiring creativity and innovation.

Johnson (2010) suggests that with ideas people are notoriously unreliable at saying where they had them and he gives the example of scientists. Their best ideas came when they

were in the canteen not in the laboratory. Similarly, I think there is a case that people's best ideas don't come from formal meetings, despite a lot of people suggesting so, but from where there is less structure and more spontaneity.

However, although everyone came from work, a lot of the conversations were informal. This I think is an important side to work, the informal socialising and bonding with work colleagues as well as bridging with other cluster workers. This does not mean the topics of conversation were strictly not about work, because as Interviewee 1 said the day before, you are allowed to drift between talking about work and talking about things not related to work in these social spaces. For instance, there were two women next to me signing a contract, however, they did not spend their whole time talking about the contract. The conversation was incredibly informal, and yet important to their businesses. **Wednesday 28th August**

Meeting informally puts less restriction on the conversation, allowing it to flow between topics and ideas that are different. This creates a greater chance of sparking new ideas, even though some may consider it unprofessional and unproductive because you may go off topic.

I actually had my own informal sociation with an old school friend that just so happened to be in the area. I went to school in Oxfordshire, so meeting her was a complete surprise, and a real chance encounter. It demonstrates how the public realm is full of surprise, and this is what makes it so stimulating for creativity and innovation.

As I sat there, quite unbelievably I met an old school friend! She is from London, and I do know a few people from London, but it has such a huge population that I thought the likelihood of coincidentally bumping into two people I know was very small - the first person I met being a relation of mine on the first day. I suppose I had observed informal meetings all week, and this was my own one. I also thought it demonstrated how this public space in particular was full of flows of people and ideas.

I then figured that meeting Bukky here illustrates that what public space is to this cluster, is what a playground is to a school. You meet people who you wouldn't necessarily organise to meet up with, but when you do see each other it is well worth it.

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Public space in the OSC also offered lots of opportunities for small interactions.

Interviewee 1 describes the value of small quick interactions.

Interviewer: Yeah do you think it is less likely that they'll let you down just because you see them face to face and you ask them face to face, whereas if you did it over a phone call or even via email it might be.../

Interviewee 1: Yeah without a doubt, I mean the other day umm yeah this other startup asked me for a contact, but to be honest I had forgotten, then I had been out of the area and been busy so when I saw him again I was like 'oh right sorry don't worry I'll send that to you know' and hopefully that will... because he's Spanish and I used to work for a Spanish start-up at the current foreign exchange firm, and so he had some of the same issues and problems so I sent him some contacts of ways he can raise additional capital in Spain, through err subsidies and things like that.

Small interactions on their own are insignificant. But as Jacobs (2011 [1961]) says about the sum of the interactions on the street, combined small interactions are far from trivial. These day-to-day encounters can help to coax out ideas when the knowledge is sticky and build up trust (Johnson, 2010). Interviewee 1 has obviously had numerous small interactions with this guy and has built up a relationship that goes beyond explicit contracts (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007). He therefore feels obliged to help him, despite there being no contractual obligation. This is a good example of reciprocity and it verifies Putnam's (2000) idea that more social capital leads to more economic prosperity, as the

other person will benefit from this knowledge. Consequently the more day-to-day encounters a cluster can encourage, the more innovation, trust, reciprocity and thus success the cluster will have. Interviewee 1 certainly believes it is important to have small sociations face to face.

Interviewee 1: Yeah certainly, I mean like if you know someone every day, you see them every day. So you want to help them, and they'll, I think if you help most people on the side, they'll try and help you back.

I also observed more reciprocity during a small sociation between two strangers.

I was sitting on a bench towards the northern side of the cluster and I watched as a couple of rays of light collided. Somebody with a beaming smile comes over and asks the litter man and then me if we have a hammer she could borrow. She probably just wants to go and murder someone, but still her approach was as friendly as I had seen all week. The next surprise was that this unassuming litter man started to tell her of someone she might be able to ask. Now perhaps it isn't that unusual to find someone helpful, but what really surprised me was the depth this guy was going into, how he went out of his way to help her out. It was also surprising because he was a large 50 year old man with a gold chain and a fag hanging out of his mouth. For me, this isn't the description of somebody who is going to be really helpful. **Thursday 29th August**

This demonstrates an important element of community: the willingness to help someone else out – not because there is a chance for an obvious immediate reward, but because you feel it is the right thing to do. Clusters are reservoirs of 'previous trial and error' (Brown, O'Connor and Cohen, 2000 p.446) so not only can people build upon previous knowledge of where people have gone wrong. But also when cluster workers make an error there is a support network already in place, as people know what they are going through.

Interviewee 1 was building a start-up company and therefore risk was an inherent factor embedded into his work.

Interviewee 1: Yeah I mean it certainly is more risky, I think that was your first question. And you do have to have a bit of an appetite for that. Umm without a doubt I have seen a lot of people risk a lot of, perhaps, for instance their own capital lost earnings, which is still really significant, y'know it has been for me [laughter]. I have seen a lot of people do the same thing. And I think because it can be very stressful from that perspective, you do definitely need to talk about it and so being around people that understand the situation you are in to talk about it and relieve you of it helps, and you understand that other people are doing the same thing as well. Other people are taking those risks and other people are trying, and that really, really helps.

In this instance it was the little informal contacts with other cluster workers that provided him with some psychological support. Without this, his business and other people's businesses would struggle more. The smaller everyday sociations therefore can build trust and community as well as coax out ideas when the knowledge is sticky (Blokland and Savage, 2008).

One finding I encountered whilst I was observing the OSC in Bonhill Burial Grounds was that there were some people who chose to socialise in interest-based collectivities (Maffesoli, 1996).

For those people who were alone, like myself, the entertainment was everyone else. Again because of the direction of the benches facing inwards, everyone's sightlines were towards each other. Other people there had decided to make their own entertainment at lunch. They were still dressed in smart clothing, but had taken off their jackets and were practicing karate or jujitsu. There were about 6 of them doing it in the corner of the grounds, behind the benches, with an instructor giving them guidance. To me it demonstrated the great thing about modern cities. Yes urban places could be seen as a sea of atomised individuals, all blaze and selfish. But there is another side to it all, this sort of group is an example of a neo-tribe. Groups which are voluntarily formed around a common interest, because of the high amount of people in the area, they can be easily formed, thus suggesting that there can be community and connection in the city. It could even be said that there are stronger bonds in a city, than in say a village where you are forced to connect with someone not of your own choosing. **Wednesday 28th August**

Florida (2002) suggests that communities that allow for weaker ties, a greater diversity of friendships and more individualistic pursuits are good for economic prosperity. I think this is what the jujitsu group demonstrate. People are following an individual interest, jujitsu, and voluntarily creating a ‘neo-tribe’ that includes a diverse mix of people (Maffesoli, 1996 p.96). Thus it might not be like community of the past, but this neo-tribe is helping us to re-root ourselves in the social universe. Having neo-tribes in a cluster helps people to mix and join together innovative combinations of ideas. It also creates more community cohesion within the cluster, which encourages more reciprocity and knowledge transfers. Although public space is not the only place where neo-tribes exist, it offers a neutral space which encourages strangers to join.

These neo-tribes existed right throughout the OSC, but there was one little mass that stood out as particularly effective at encouraging social interaction.

Interestingly, even at 9:30am the benches are well used. Some of the users currently there though aren’t my favourite sort of people. To me, because I have never been a fan of it, the vultures of public space are the smokers. They have a constant presence, at the edge of office buildings and in spaces such as the one I was in. Right now I was really noticing them, because the wind was blowing smoke my way. However, I must admit that smoking can be good for two reasons. One being that the act of smoking is now prohibited inside buildings, so it’s very act is a demonstration of the freedom that public space allows. The other reason is that I can see that social smoking can actually be a really good way to meet people. Perhaps this type of socialisation can be exclusive to those who smoke, but if I am honest, there is no reason why a non-smoker couldn’t join them. Social smoking is particularly good at bringing together people who don’t know each other. It was also clear to me that a lot of people enjoy having a collective experience of smoking and that means that people meet a lot of new people in the process. **Thursday 29th August**

Smoking is a neo-tribe that does not necessarily have a goal to work towards, unlike jujitsu which has the aim of trying to improve their skills, instead it is just based around a common activity. People did it throughout the day and across the OSC. Smoking is an

interesting little mass because it is particularly unstable in terms of numbers. The composition of a smoking neo-tribe is constantly in flux, with new people arriving and leaving simultaneously. Some people may even join and leave a neo-tribe numerous times each day. This all makes this neo-tribe exciting and perpetually novel. It can bond friends together as well as encourage interaction with new and different people.

One girl who looked more my age, and also looked fairly new to the area, walked across and asked one of the social smokers whether she could borrow their lighter. Because of the introduction that gave her, she began to talk to the strangers. Again thus demonstrating - annoyingly - the benefits of smoking towards being sociable. Each one is like a neo-tribe by itself, bringing together strangers to do this common activity.

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As you can tell by some of my language, smoking is not my favourite activity but I could not deny how smoking, and the other neo-tribes that we are members of during different times of the day, were benefiting the OSC. Smoking was rightly banned from buildings because of the health effects. However, I think sending people outside, and thus branding them rebellious, has almost created a closer connection between smokers. People are thus even more likely to help out strangers, if they too are being rebellious like them and smoking.

Also as I get up, I hear the dangers of the city, through the sirens and horns of the car. But I see a different picture in this urban jungle and again it is smoking showing the way. As a guy walks past a girl sitting down at one of the Pret A Manger outside tables, he asks her for a lighter. For a moment there is eye contact and a connection, and therefore in that very moment people's theories on the idea that cities are just full of atomised individuals are destroyed. **Friday 30th August**

This passing of fire happened in traditional tribes and is happening today in this neo-tribe. I think the way in which we fuel fires has changed is symbolic of the way in which community has changed. In the ancient civilizations wood was used as fuel, whereas now

butane can be stored in a lighter. Subsequently, people nowadays can store up their generosity and give it out at intervals during a day. Thus there are weaker ties and more diverse relationships, which as already established can be good for business communities (Florida, 2002). Whereas before there had to be a commitment to making one fire to share. This symbolises the close cohesive community with long-term commitments, which would restrict the individualistic pursuits and the diversity of friendships of today.

Smoking, and therefore smoking neo-tribes, leave behind traces that they have been there. Considering I now saw smoking as a highly social act, I soon began to look at fag butts as signifiers of where knowledge transfers and innovation had occurred.

As I have already established, one thing I usually discredit but in this case almost celebrate is smoking. Although there is very little litter around, there are still fag butts that encircle the benches. Some may look at this as just litter in public space, but my perspective of smoking has changed this week, and I look at the fag butts as more than that now. It's as if they are markers of its social power and sociability. If a place is covered in fag butts it suggests to me that this is the place where many conversations, knowledge transfers and innovation sparks have occurred. **Thursday 29th August**

Smoking is one way in which strangers can spontaneously connect. Public space also offers other circumstances when people can bond with one another. Five strangers, including me, shared a moment when there was an altercation at some traffic lights.

Whilst I was at Old Street roundabout at ground level waiting to cross the road there was a coming together of one of these couriers and a taxi driver. Much to everyone's bemusement and to extent amusement, the white east-end edgy courier shouted clearly to the east-end but of an asian origin taxi driver as they took different turns off the roundabout, 'I will f***** eat you!'. Nobody knew quite what the altercation was about, or had heard what the rest of the argument was. But we all stood there as an audience to hear this phrase shouted and we all turned to each other and smiled, none of us quite sure what to make of it all. But it demonstrated the feisty and turbulent nature of the East-End and it's inhabitants as they compete for space. **Thursday, 29th**

The city brings strangers together in an intimate fashion on streets and sidewalks (Jacobs, 2011 [1961]). It also mixes a diversity of people which will inevitably create tension as well as exhilaration. It is this stimulation that could spark new ideas.

This experience also demonstrates why it is important to come into contact with the emotions of the cluster. Pratt (2000) emphasises the importance of face-to-face interaction by saying that through physical interaction we ‘feel the pulse of the city’ (p.432). I think feeling the pulse of the city is critical to any research investigating the city. The city cannot be explained by questionnaire statistics, or be read about in a book (Jacobs, 2011 [1961]). Urban space is a ‘sensuous realm’ that is imagined, lived, performed and contested (Pinder, 2005 p.386). In order to explore the city, I think it was important for me to immerse myself in the cluster with the full sensory experience, else I would not have understood it.

As I was realising the importance of benches, spontaneous interactions with strangers and subsequently struggling to get formal interviews whilst also feeling the strain of the fact that during observations ‘the researcher must be dishonest to get honest data’ (Gans 1967, p.440). I realised:

Why don't I declare my intentions to people, be honest, and use in the ambient power of benches to help get myself the interviews I need. I realised I should practice what I preach by using this power to my advantage, rather than just observing it. **Thursday 29th August**

Having this flexibility in my methodology, allowed me to explore possible methods I had not previously thought about before I started to do my research.

Although I did not document every interview I did on every bench, I must have spoken to around 9/10 people. It was a challenge every time, but at the same time an exciting and enthralling experience. My first person I spoke to was a woman who was sitting and reading a kindle on the bench. We'd been sitting there for a while so I felt it was about time I gave it a go. She must have been above 40 years old and was actually a stockbroker who worked around the corner. Although she wasn't the usual cluster worker, it was still nice to hear about her experience of the area. It turns out this was where she would get away from business and work and relax whilst she dives into the world in her book. She'd worked in the area for years and still enjoyed working here. I didn't go into the depth of the questions I asked Interviewee 1, but it was nice to get many different perspectives of the area. After about 3 minutes I said thanks and moved on, just so that I didn't take too much of her time. Again, just like many relationships in the city, it was fleeting and brief, and yet so intense and fruitful. **Thursday 29th August**

I therefore used Jacobs (2011[1961]) advice, that the best way to learn about a city is through engaging in it. These interactions again proved Florida's (2002) point that the communities that create economic growth have changed. The OSC community wanted more ties but with less commitment. People were happy to talk for a couple of minutes, but were more hesitant to commit to a formal interview.

From the 'write on this' data I collected, I realised that people were not only happy to talk to strangers, but they were even happy to talk to walls! This highlighted how people do not want to be atomised individuals, they just need to be given the opportunity to interact.

Location: Scrutton Street, Zetland House

Question: When was the last time you smiled at a stranger?

Answers:

“Today, this morning on my way to work. Thanks for asking :)”

“I DON’T SMILE :(” “+1”

“EVERYDAY// it’s the best... watch people’s reactions – they don’t expect it. **I MAKE THEM SMILE!!**”

“This morning :)”

“About 30 seconds ago :)”

The reply “I DON’T SMILE” even got a “+1” which demonstrates how people were interacting between themselves. All I had done was given them a platform to communicate. Thus as I shall come onto later, it is imperative we not only allow and tolerate these sorts of activities in public space, but that we encourage them because of their ability to stimulate us and encourage social interaction.

The other four answers again demonstrate how we want and like to have connection with other people in the city. This desire to connect and network, is particularly characteristic of clusters. For instance:

Question: What would you do here, that you wouldn’t do at home?

Answer: “??? question... who are you guys? Tell me → secretunicornlife@gmail.com”

Interviewee 1 described how one spontaneous interaction actually led to a business deal.

Interviewee 1: Yeah I mean... I met this guy called Rory just by accident and he has a start up that provides services to e-commerce companies and we have an e-commerce startup so we are actually going to do a deal with this guy's company he is in called Scurry.com and that will provide us with cheaper logistics and also on top of that he introduced me to two investors as well, so that was... really good!

An idea is that in the same way a policeman must spend time on the streets and academic staff must spend time doing research, perhaps cluster workers will begin to spend one third of their time socialising on the streets. In this way, the public space in a cluster is looked at as a 'listening post' and also a space where strangers spontaneously interact and fuse new ideas and innovations together.

The final social interaction which public space offers is play. St. Jean (2013) says that play has the ability to create a desire to connect. I think the OSC's public space, to an extent, legitimated play.

This particular public space, felt like a social space, a place where people came to socialise and play. I even thought that despite it being in working London, if somebody had got up and streaked across the middle of the park people would have just laughed and enjoyed the entertainment. **Wednesday 28th August**

OSC had a social scene as well as a working outlook, allowing people to have a more open-mind (Power and Hallencreutz, 2005).

This all demonstrated to me how the pub was supporting the cluster's successfulness by helping the movement of ideas and building relationships. It also showed to me that this was a place to socialise and play as well as work. From the journal article I read, this was why the Sheffield Central Industries Quarter failed to work as a music cluster and the Northern Quarter in Manchester succeeded. You would only go to that area of Sheffield to work whereas in Manchester there was the 'Madchester' scene. Old Street Roundabout cluster has both the work and social scene, and they complement each other. **Wednesday 28th August**

Many of the ‘write on this’ responses suggested that the OSC workers had plenty of imagination and a playfulness that is currently untapped.

1) Location: Leonard Street/Paul Street X art

Question: When was the last time you smiled at a stranger?

Answers:

“this morning. on the tube”

“Everyone who walks past!”

“Anyone who works behind a till :)”

“I can’t actually remember!!”

“The fit bird on the tube... She smiled back but that’s the end. Damn.”

Arguably, this is unharnessed potential, as people in the OSC are not really encouraged to play. I actually watched the people who wrote the last answer.

As I sat there two men stopped as they were walking past and put an answer on the poster. The nice thing was that they were laughing and joking with each other as they wrote the answer and then they put the pen back and walked on. **Thursday 29th August**

These two men shared a joke, however, importantly they had enough control not to take the joke too far. There was nothing malicious about the remark, it was just humorous and self-deprecating. This is why cluster policy must trust cluster workers to be creative and innovative and not put restrictions on what they can and cannot do, as they can be trusted to have control. I wondered what would happen if someone had wrote an abusive answer. Would the rest of the people in the OSC regulate it? Perhaps this a further avenue of research, if cluster workers were given free rein to express themselves, would they be able to regulate themselves?

The fourth answer, 'I can't actually remember' demonstrates the responsibility for the researcher to ask the right questions. Knight (2002) makes a good point that it is not ethical to engage in research without intending to make a beneficial difference to things. This I felt particularly applied to the 'write on this' project.

As I watched, many people went over to the tree to read the poster, even if they didn't answer it. Which I suppose highlights the reason for and the power of advertising and marketing. It also demonstrates the importance of asking the 'right' questions. It is important that the questions lead to positive behaviours, attitudes or thoughts. I'm not sure it would have been ethically or morally right if I was doing criminology research and put posters up asking people 'when was the last time they hit someone else?'

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Hopefully it made people stop, think and ask themselves – even if they didn't write an answer - when did they last smiled at a stranger.

I also decided to be playful myself and I made up on the spot an 'honesty test' using the materials I had around me.

Whilst I was there I decided to go one step further than just speaking to people on benches, and I decided to have a little fun by constructing an honesty test. It was not at all rigorously planned and there was little consideration for control variables, but what it did have was spontaneity and a playfulness that can sometimes illuminate a hidden structure. All throughout my time in the cluster I carried a 'disposable' water bottle that I used over and over again, which I filled up at train station toilets at the taps which have a 'this is not drinking water' sign just above them. I thought that this wasn't something too precious to lose, but would hopefully be valuable enough for someone to declare to me if I 'accidentally' left it behind. I tried this honesty test at 3 different benches in the gardens, with my superb acting skills an obvious control variable because of how consistently surprised I was. I was conscious to make it conspicuous enough to make it believable that I left it behind, but not too conspicuous that the other people on my bench wouldn't even be able to see that I left it behind. The end result was 2-1 in favour of people being honest or selfless enough to care about another person's belongings. In all fairness the people who didn't tell me I left it behind were deep in conversation. I guess this means that there is 'good people' in this area, whatever that means. **Friday 30th August**

I think it is important to do this experimentation with methods, in order to critically approach the geography of cities (Pinder, 2005). St. Jean (2013) would say this playfulness is important to progressing research.

A range of social interactions make the OSC successful. Cluster policy has so far only looked at how social interaction occurs within individual buildings. However I would urge a reconsideration of policy to concentrate on the 'life between buildings' (Gehl, 2010 p.25). Public space can help to facilitate a range of social interactions which each add an extra dimension to clusters. Formal meetings can be good at sealing business deals, whilst informal sociations, particularly with strangers, help to inspire more creativity and innovation. Smaller day to day sociations may be insignificant on their own, but added together can help to coax out ideas and build social capital. There also needs to be a re-focus on the types of community that exist in clusters, as neo-tribes seemed to have been instrumental in the OSC success. Whilst I found that although the OSC people are creative, their creativity is not being harnessed and used through play in public space.

If public space is thoughtfully constructed, through appropriate small infrastructures, it has the potential to encourage a range of social interactions that would benefit the cluster.

Section 2: How to build the optimum capitalist and city conditions for

Old Street Cluster success

A) The dangers of capitalism and the city

Although not in my cluster area, I included an area on the outskirts of the cluster boundaries in my study area. This was to show a comparison between the Old Street Cluster (OSC) built environment and an area that had bad urban design. This area demonstrated how the indulgencies of neoliberalism can diminish the ‘human dimension’ in cities (Gehl, 2010 p.6). This area had no ‘life between buildings’ (Gehl, 2010 p.25) and had lost all of it’s commonalities (Harvey, 2012). It highlighted how a city would look if the city was just geared up for capitalism.

Anyhow as I walked on I realised how I was walking closer to capitalism's core. The security guards, the high rise buildings, the City of London towers in the background and the men in suits. I suppose I had never really looked this close before, but it is all about power. The taller the building, the more economic power you must have to build it. The more security guards you have, the more power you have to protect your space. Dare I say it, the more men you have, the more aggression and power you have. It was just quite remarkable how within 100 metres it had all become so unfriendly and exclusive. There was no thought towards smart solutions, just the bigger and shinier the better. The concrete on the pavements had also changed. It was all super smooth, and boring! Accessibility and functionality is important, but it gives you no mental stimulation. I certainly did not feel inspired. There were road workers at the time smoothing over the road and painting on exclusive car parking slots. It all seemed very symbolic of capitalism's creative destruction, with the capitalists - through the use of concrete - smoothing over all of the bumps and discontent from the proletariat...

I reached City Road which was the other side of the Bonhill Burial Grounds and already noticed the difference. I walked along the uneven pavement and enjoyed its unpredictability and that it really made me think. I needed to then work out where I was going next so I sat down on some steps outside some office block called 'Maple House' without even thinking. Then at that point I realised the difference, there were no security guards watching over me and no unnerving feeling of being uncomfortable. It was then that I recognised that I had never even contemplated sitting down near Liverpool Street. That area already felt a world away.

Wednesday 28th August

Interviewee 1 had called it 'douchebag city' and the built environment certainly did not contradict this statement. Overall the area seemed to reflect both modernism's and capitalism's ideals of efficiency and functionality. This made the area boring, constrictive and impersonal – as if it was missing a soul. Arguably these are the optimum conditions for financial businesses, with this impersonal functionality. However, it could also be argued that this has just contributed to the fact that the financial services have become increasingly separated from society, leading them to make highly lucrative and risky deals without the appreciation and comprehension for the knock-on effects for others in society. Perhaps a built environment with a greater 'human dimension' (Gehl, 2010 p.6) could help those working in those services to appreciate the ramifications of their actions. This is as

they would come into more contact with the rest of society if they walked to work rather drove, or were driven, to work in their exclusive capsular cars. A built environment with a greater ‘human dimension’ may help to re-integrate and re-root banking back into society (Gehl, 2010 p.6).

These city and capitalist conditions certainly would not be conducive to the industries in my area as they would inhibit creativity and sociability. This does though bring into question the applicability of this research to all clusters, as it must be said that I would be hesitant to suggest that this research could be generalised to every cluster. However, at the very least it should be considered as an option for improvement in every cluster.

As I was there, I was constantly reminded of the dangers of the city by the sirens that were ever present.

The other thing I noticed whilst I was there was the amount of emergency services’ sirens there is. No joke there was one every 2 minutes, and it was like that all week. I thought it might have been just the 20 minutes I was there, but I was quickly proven wrong. The kid nearby to me got so used to hearing them, he repeated the noise every time one passed by. **Wednesday 28th August**

As I sit there watching and listening, I once again here the familiar sound of the constant sirens from Old Street roundabout in the background. To me they sound and are a signifier like the trumpets from Tennessee Williams’ play ‘A Street Car Named Desire’: a constant reminder of the danger of London as a city. **Thursday 29th August**

At my first look the sirens just symbolised all of the accidents and dangers in a city. However the more I reflected upon them, the more I began to realise how it is also a reminder of how road conventions can be re-written. The city may make out to be an unstoppable force, but as soon as a siren sounds the situation changes and the flexibility of the city is revealed. In our heads the car structures and conventions are set in stone, but the sirens demonstrate how that is not the case and that the city can be easily changed. The

frequency of them also highlights how easily these conventions and structures can be re-written and re-shaped. This demonstrates the potential of the city to be malleable, and perhaps how policies do stand a chance of changing the city however improbable a proposal may seem. It also underlines the importance of spending time researching the city, as I would not have fully understood the kid's reaction to the siren if I had only spent thirty seconds there. This is as the reason he was mimicking the sounds was because of the frequency of the sirens, not just because he was playing up.

B) Capitalist and city restrictions

This idea about capitalism and cities was initially not part of my research. However, because of events during my time in the field I decided alter some of my objectives. I had left plenty of flexibility in my research design in order to capitalize on any surprises such as this. It could therefore be said that this was all just unintentional on my behalf, however, as I said before, my methodology enabled me to 'put my finger on the pulse of the city' (Pratt, 2000 p.432) so to an extent this section was intended.

It all began as I was putting up my second 'write on this' poster:

I knew I'd provoke a response, or put my finger on the pulse of the place, but even I didn't expect it to come so quickly. About 40 metres away from the Paul Street/Leonard Street crossroads was a turning towards Market Street Gardens, a nice small green tasteful public space area. I therefore thought that this would be an ideal place to put up one of my posters, as there would be a lot of footfall. However, as I began to put it up, a man stopped on his bike and asked what I was doing. So I began to tell him about my dissertation, about which university I was from, and what this research method was. At this point he stops me and asks where Lancaster and Oxford is. Obviously not hugely educated in geography, which is fine, but alarm bells were then ringing in my head. I concluded my explanation, and he simply tells me that as soon as I leave he will just rip it off the wall and chuck it in the bin. Slightly startled and bemused, I asked why. He says that local people like the walls to be clean and that this sort of thing doesn't happen around here. I replied saying that this was no advertisement, this was something different and would only be up today. And then as if none of what I said went in, he exclaimed that as soon as they let anything like this go up, 'kids will start graffitiing the walls'. He had a reasonable, if a bit simplistic, argument. **Thursday 29th August**

This altercation really shook me up. In number terms, it was only one man, but it was the context and way in which it happened.

I'm not going to lie I was completely taken aback, I knew it was only one man, but it felt like the whole cluster had put a custard pie in my face. He also said it as if anyone in his position from this area would do the same as him. Not only did no one want to be in my interviews, but I couldn't even put up two posters without being told off. **Thursday 29th August**

This highlighted to me something I had previously been unaware of.

As I walked on, I noticed there were no advertisements anywhere. The graffiti I had seen around made me assume that there was freedom, but when I thought back, however random the locations seemed, at the same time they were in very deliberate spaces too. I began to dislike the area for becoming too gentrified and therefore too commodified and commercialised. You can only put up advertisements if you have permission, and if you have the money. The only sign that the area was not clean was the smoke butts that littered the area, otherwise it was fairly spotless, bar the graffiti and advertisements that someone had paid to put up. **Thursday 29th August**

As a result, I ended up putting up fewer posters, asking permission from places and contemplated taking down the posters I had put up a few hours earlier.

Anyhow, there was something in me that told me to carry on regardless of everything else that had just happened. I put two up around Market Street Gardens and then started to explore other places in the area. However, as I put them up, I felt much more awkward, seeing how there were no other posters up and because of the CCTV that was around... I decided a good way forward would be to start asking places for permission to put up my posters in or outside their office buildings. That episode ended pretty quickly, because everyone I asked just said no. Including at Tech Hub, where the receptionists pretty much laughed in my face and said that my poster would just get abused. What a difference one day makes!

I thought that the best thing to do was to take down the posters at 1pm, rather than at 5pm, that's if they even lasted until then. This is because if the posters did last until 1pm, they certainly wouldn't last until 5pm. In my head, these posters were outside the boundaries of permission that inhabit certain walls and taxi's, therefore the 'inspector's of cleanliness' would destroy them at the first opportunity. So it would be a shame if someone had actually answered one of the questions, but I'd never been able to record the response. **Thursday 29th August**

Florida (2002) suggests that we look at creativity as a common good, something that belongs to all of us and should be supported. Arguably then, these boundaries of permission are only restricting this common good, and I question whether they should really exist. Just when I was starting to lose faith, a spark of hope appeared.

Just when I thought all was lost, I got thrown a lifeline, and wow this small act transformed my day. All it was, was one small response:

Q: ‘When was the last time you smiled at a stranger?’

A: ‘This morning on the train, thanks for asking ☺’

And in that moment I realised it was worth it... I like making a difference, and although this may sound exaggerated, it really hit my heart. It was so insignificant, and yet, after putting a load of effort into preparation for my research, to be rejected at every turn was quite hard to take. I was definitely still feeling the raw emotions of being told off by the man who said he’d rip my poster off the wall as soon as I left. So I think this small act was the turning point for me. As I said before I think part of doing observations and this type of research is being able to immerse yourself in the world. This means opening yourself up to the world and emotionally experiencing the place. This is because only then can you really understand and feel the data you are getting. **Thursday 29th August**

Having methods that really put the finger on the pulse of the city made me truly engage in the city. It requires a lot of emotional investment, but I think the data was worth it. This altercation was not something I was necessarily looking for, to the extent I didn’t even realise it was a transgressive act. As a consequence I added an extra dimension to my research objectives to incorporate this protection of space, because in my eyes he seemed like capitalism personified.

I portray him as the personification of capitalism because I question why he did not complain about the paid advertisements cluttering up the place? Is there much difference between doing graffiti and putting up advertisements, both are just decorating the city.

The amount of responses from the ‘write on this’ posters illuminated how people want a platform to express themselves. The ability to express yourself, is one of the main reasons why cultural bohemian places are often seen to be the best places for creative clusters (O’Connor, 1998). The amount of people who just looked at the posters also demonstrates

how having a creative environment helps to spark new ideas, as people do look at things as they walk past.

The main thing it highlights though is the capitalist structures that restrict people's self-expression. Unfortunately, in the Old Street Cluster (OSC) there was too much commodification of public space. Even if there was not an advertisement, capitalism ensured that nothing else was put there unless it involved a monetary transaction.

As I walked along the top road I noticed all of the advertisements on the temporary boarding's that hid the construction work from public view. I thought about how symbolic this was: the advertising here was certainly not just slapped on for free, it was carefully placed in holders to make the boarding look 'clean'. Thus this, along with the carefully placed graffiti I encountered all week, highlights how advertising and more importantly art can only be legitimised by the consent of money. This demonstrates how ubiquitous markets are that they even infiltrate places of society where capitalism is trying to cover up the creative destruction going on. Everything is being turned into money, even the cover up. This shows unfortunately the constrictions of capitalism, as art is therefore no longer the freedom of expression but the freedom of expression which the capitalists like and accept. This disrupts and limits innovation, because the idea or the art is no longer just judged on merit. **Friday 30th August**

This links into Cresswell's (1996) idea of how some acts may be labelled vandalism in some places but are venerated in other spaces. Subsequently, in order to challenge the capitalist restrictions that have infiltrated into our cultural attitudes, there needs to be a redefinition of what art and what rubbish actually is. Or at the very least, a redefinition of these terms to allow legitimacy in certain city spaces.

It is important to be able to define what rubbish is and where freedom of expression fits in with this term. For instance, I think unfortunately graffiti is often misplaced as vandalism, rather than art. Similarly, I think my poster's were misunderstood by 'the man' as litter, rather than creative research. Perhaps some people have yet to open up their mind to the complexity of what rubbish actually is. This is including the local council, who maybe in their attempts to protect the cluster from vandalism and littering are hindering the area's freedom of expression, their creativity and therefore innovation.

Thursday 29th August

This simplistic attitude towards what rubbish is hinders the freedom of expression in the OSC. Florida (2002) suggests that it is the places which are most open that are the places of innovation. I think that the commodification of space is making public space more closed and thus less conducive to creativity. We should look back in history when public space was an unregulated spontaneous environment (Gehl, 2010).

I think there is also merit in the unregulated and in spontaneity as it can help to create stimulation and excitement. Rarely do people feel inspired if they work in a white square conventional box. You need to be put out of your comfort zone to challenge and succeed in life. Playing it safe and stopping originality stunts progress. This is what 'the man' symbolises, this force hindering the cluster and I think other people who are over policing the area are also damaging the area. Yes have pride in the area through keeping it tidy, but in order to allow inspiration some things need to be allowed to break the rules. As a prime example, my posters weren't pointless flyers for a new generic club in town, it was questions that will change perspectives. These sparks of creativity need to be encouraged and harnessed, not put into the same bracket as brainless marketing techniques. **Thursday 29th August**

We consequently need to harness our creative potential and I also think the OSC needs to harness the east end revolutionary spirit. Towards the east side of my cluster was a reminder of when space was less commercialised and a reminder of a time when the area did not always accept rules so easily.

Towards the South East part of my cluster was many of the supporting services of the cluster. I realise I make my cluster sound massive, but in fact it is smaller than 2km in width and length. Anyway services such as a car park, an old-style American car wash and logistic services occupy the area. If I'm honest I've never really seen a car wash like it, apart from the one in Lancaster, it is like a reminder of the past and the era when commercialisation and efficiency didn't govern society as much as it does now. I think this is what this cluster is slightly missing. Being the East End, it needs to bring back it's revolutionary spirit to really flourish. It seems to me that capitalism has tamed their freedom of expression, as it often does, particularly in terms of the commodification of space through advertising and keeping the streets 'clean' - whatever that means. I think perhaps there could be greater success through allowing freedom which neoliberalism doesn't allow. For instance, permitting more graffiti and allowing me to put up a poster, thus being more lenient on the transgression of boundaries. I see that you could run into danger with this ploy, but the East End is risky, entrepreneurial and above all exciting. Where is the spontaneity in planning everything and asking for permission? **Thursday 29th August**

A policy that could almost embrace the chaos of a city would benefit the cluster, as it would serve to feed and maintain creativity as this common good (Florida, 2002).

There was one place called Blackhall Street that did not seem to be controlled by capitalism. It was down an unassuming small alley way and the controversial content of the graffiti seemed to suggest that the artists there had unlimited expression. It is this sort of free rein, where offbeat ideas can be experimented with, that should be encouraged across the OSC (O'Connor, 1998).

As I was walking back I looked in one of the side streets just before the main road towards the northern side of the cluster. Along one side of the side road was 'revolutionary art' plastered all across the wall. I say revolutionary, because some of the messages were quite provoking and clear for everyone to see. I thought that it typified what the East End is about as it was like a stereotypical East Enders imagination had been splattered against the wall, and this was the product. Half of the art was against society and the government, such as things against the Royals and David Cameron. The other half was highly topical, for instance the image of two men kissing and a caption saying 'From Russia with love'. This was obviously an advert for gay rights and was a protest against Russia's position on homosexuality that was recently highlighted by the athletics World Championships in Moscow. I couldn't tell whether it was regulated or not, if it was it was highly controversial. But down a small side street, I wasn't quite sure. **Thursday 29th August**

It was not just capitalism that was trying to control space, but also the local authorities that put restrictions on the area. I felt that there was some unnecessary over-policing of traffic and people.

Also around the cluster was plenty of evidence of surveillance, big brother and the threat of legitimised aggression and violence, such as the car parking inspectors and police officers. **Thursday 29th August**

As I looked around at this area, I once again felt there was plenty of unnecessary policing going on. There was a huge amount of parking ticket inspectors that were buzzing around the place. But I question the reason for them? Is it just for the safety of those people who inhabit the place, for instance the cluster workers, with the inspectors stopping people parking in awkward places and causing accidents. Or is it more for the council to squeeze money out of the area by catching people out. Thus asserting their power over the area and causing confrontation? Sadly I think the reason for them should be for the former reason, but as people get greedy it slowly changes towards being for the latter. **Friday 30th August**

The local authorities therefore back up the space fetishism of capitalism. I would argue that it is not out of a fear of chaos and unsafe places, but because of the desire to have power and be in control of spaces.

If clusters are going to be more successful, there needs to be greater liberty for the people in clusters. As I have highlighted here, the OSC has numerous capitalist and local authority restrictions for people to contend with. Policy needs to go further than just tolerance of diversity towards encouraging transgression. In order for more innovation there needs to be a greater acceptance that people can ‘break rules’ and ‘exceed boundaries’ (Jenks, 2003 p.3). This conflict comes to the fore in public space, and it is subsequently where these restrictions need to be challenged, as clusters run the risk of having no ‘life between the buildings’ like there was in the financial area on the outskirts of the OSC (Gehl, 2010 p.25). This restricts creativity and reduces innovations to those only backed by the consent of money.

Section 3: Cluster Policy: building suitable public space for the future

I would therefore like to propose the idea of constructing non-capitalist spaces, like the World Heritage sites, in cluster public spaces. This would not necessarily be part of the anti-capitalist struggle but instead is an appreciation that both non-capitalist and capitalist functions contribute to the vitality of the city (Jacobs, 2011 [1961]). Subsequently, there is a need to encourage other aspects of society that don't include capitalism. These non-capitalist spaces would be like 'translation zones' (Cooke and Lazzarotti, 2008 p.9), helping people to communicate their ideas through allowing the freedom of expression. They would also look to encourage social interaction through appropriate small infrastructure nudging people towards interacting (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.484). Harvey (2012) highlights how the city is where everyone mingles to produce a 'common' (p.75) and that since the erosion of it by the automobile there is a need for a new commons. As a slight twist on this I suggest that there is a need to build a creative common. One that is inclusive, diverse and stimulating. It would not only encourage social interaction through small infrastructure, but also build spaces where people can experiment with ideas through play and expression. This space would give the small businesses, which are the seedbed of innovation, almost free research and development as they play and mix ideas. One criticism might be that people would steal ideas, however, as Interviewee 1 demonstrated one of the reasons why the OSC is successful is because of its reciprocity and the social capital (Putnam, 2000).

It would not just be about the freedom of art, I use this example because it is easy to visualize. The space would allow for any activity from begging to political protests to adults playing human chess. More directly, people might showcase their ideas. Or they

could ask people questions about which design consumers would prefer. It is therefore just as much about building an open culture with the idea that ‘everyone just wants everyone else to be successful’ (Interviewee 1) as the idea of non-capitalism. You could argue that none of this you cannot do now. However, the protection of space by capitalism and the local authorities make you feel as if you are not allowed. For me it was the ‘man’ that restricted my behaviour and stifled my creativity, even though I don’t think it was against the law.

Any expression of freedom, like a piece of art and my ‘write on this’ poster, will lead to even more people with a ‘creative attitude’ (Landry, 2008 p.14).

In this particular space there is a great big X piece of art, see the pictures to see what I am on about. Not only was it brilliant way of helping me locate myself in the cluster, but it also served as a reminder of the artistic and East End style of the cluster. It was almost like a mental speed bump, to ensure your mindset is in the East End, artistic frame of mind. **Thursday 29th August**

Thus the more people who start to express themselves more freely, the more creativity and thus the more innovation there will be. Each self-expression, be that in a permanent form of art, or a temporary form such as in the form of a playful experiment, will act as ‘mental speedbump’ to put people in that creative frame of mind, at the same time as stimulating and sparking new ideas (Sustrans, 2010 cited in Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010 p.497). This potential to change thousands of mindsets, Landry (2006) says is important when trying to construct a creative city. For example, if someone creates a sculpture and places it in the creative common, as people walk past they will be reminded that this is a creative ecosystem where all offbeat ideas are encouraged (Florida, 2002).

This policy would be a transgressive to implement for the local authorities. However, with the increasing competition for creative clusters, local authorities need to be entrepreneurial

and take risks to enact change (Hall and Hubbard, 1998). The government would need to be brave to give away their power to the people. However, it would begin to give back humanity's most neglected right: our right to make and remake the city and ourselves (Harvey, 2012). I would also argue that the chaos would become self-regulating. If an offbeat idea is offensive, someone will take it down. This is demonstrated by the self-policing that went on at the panoptical Bonhill Burial Grounds. The cluster workers in the OSC may be imaginative and creative, but they also demonstrated control. This is highlighted by the two men who wrote the answer: 'The fit bird on the tube... She smiled back but that's the end. Damn.'

This creative common would also look towards building a city for the people. The freedom of expression gives people the right to participate and mould the city in their own image. The hope would then be that people would feel responsible and empowered, as Finley (2013) was with his gardening. This would not only improve the cluster worker's quality of life, but also improve the cluster's success as the people would see the city as a 'canvas' (Finley, 2013). Too often the state claims it is giving power to the people, when in reality it is handing it to the Multi-National Companies (MNC's). States should stand up for the liberty of it's people, because currently capitalism only gives the pretence that the people have more freedom (Harvey, 2012).

I realised that doing research holds a certain amount of responsibility. The way you measure, investigate, communicate and as a consequence frame the city influences its future. As Gehl (2010) says 'first we shape cities – then they shape us' (p.9). So the way in which we research the city, influences our perspective on the city. This perspective, that has been shaped by the research, consequently influences city and cluster policy, which shapes cities, which then shapes us.

Thus instead of focusing on questionnaires with statistics and interviews with large multi-national company (MNC) bosses and local authority leaders, my focus was on studying the people of the cluster. If we want to see the city as a place for the people, we need to research the people, through taking Jacobs (2011 [1961]) advice and spend time engaging on the street. If we want to see the city remain as a capitalist and modernist place, we should continue to interview the capitalist classes and allow statisticians to reduce the cities to numerical equations. This is because the more we interview the capitalist class and value statisticians, the more their views are given a platform to overwhelm everyone else's. This is hence why Map 1 illustrates the pedestrian perspective of the OSC and not the usual 'hegemonic cognitive mapping' (Massey, 2005 p.109).

The creative common would also contribute to the growing concept of a humane and livable city. In order to encourage more social interaction, there would be a focus on getting people to walk. This is as when people walk there is a higher chance of connection and a greater chance of a lively and stimulating street, both of which would help the cluster to be more successful (Gehl, 2010). For instance, whilst I was doing a sound recording of an OSC worker's commute to work this happened:

Whilst we were still underground, some stranger, said to the person in front of me whilst pointing at her shoes 'they are wicked!' to which she simply replied 'thank you!'. I thought it was a fabulous moment: one random act of kindness that may seem like nothing, but may have made a big difference to her day. **Friday 30th August**

In order to repurpose the streets (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010), there is a need to re-facilitate the streets. The Boris Bikes highlight how if you provide the facilities, people will use them.

At quite a few places around the cluster were the Boris Bikes. Which I think are a brilliant example of how if the authorities put on the facilities, the people will use it, as undoubtedly during the times I have been in London over the past few years they have been very popular. This is particularly relevant, because Boris Bikes promote and encourage positive behaviour for the people who use them and also the planet.

Thursday 29th August

A modernist city with streets only designed for automobile mobility creates poor conditions for the knowledge economy to function and flourish. Thus it is important to build cities around pedestrians, which might seem far-fetched but as the sirens showed, the city is more malleable than we think.

As I walked back across the cluster I stumbled upon a massive crowd of people outside The Fox pub. The Fox's location is at a crossroads, so there was plenty of traffic. But because it was the end of a working day, with the last of the golden sun rays and traffic which I would describe as 'gentle mobility' - walking, cycling and mopeds - there was a really peaceful, relaxed and sociable atmosphere. As I sat and watched the crowd burgeon I noticed them spread out across the road. It seemed as if the social and road rules were being re-written in front of my eyes. With that amount of people, it then became acceptable to stand in the middle of the road with cyclists and mopeds having to weave around the pedestrians. City infrastructure usually lets the car dominate, however, this situation was playing out a different future where pedestrians are top of the food chain. It then begs the question what if infrastructure changed and the social rules were re-written to enhance the power of pedestrians, could this be a viable future for cities?

Wednesday 28th August

Public space encourages pedestrians to challenge the car in a city and small infrastructure can again have a big influence on this challenge.

The layout of this area was quite intriguing and telling. The hairpin turn at the south of the public space was virtually impossible for lorry drivers to navigate, unless you were an exceptional driver with excellent spatial awareness. One guy took about 15 minutes trying to get round this bend without hitting anything, such as the bollards that surrounded and protected the public space. The next guy, admittedly in a slightly smaller lorry, sped round it at 20mph. This all demonstrated to me how the car had to adapt itself to the pedestrian environment, when usually in cities it is the other way around. I also like the metaphor of bollards being the protectors or guards of public space against cars. They diffuse, almost like osmosis, the different types of mobility and allow only bikes and pedestrians through. **Friday 30th August**

Building the creative common would therefore benefit both the cluster and the city. It would help the cluster to become more creative and sociable, and it would enhance the city by making it healthier, safer, more sociable and lively. Subsequently, is tech city the best idea in order to try and support the OSC?

There was actually a similar set-up at Google Campus, or Tech Hub on Bonhill Street. It was a very effective set-up, particularly for small businesses. It had many of the characteristics that I have proposed are what make public space an opportunity for creative clusters. For instance, there was a complete acceptability of strangers.

Now this café was no ordinary café, it had people on laptops spread across the room and a general buzz that it seems to only occur when something exciting is happening. Maybe it was just me anticipating this atmosphere, but even so, the colours, the people, the general chit-chat suggested to me that this café had a bit more of the extraordinary to it. As I walked up the two flights of stairs and into Tech Hub, I reflected on how nobody really seems fazed that I was there. Whereas if I had walked into any other office building, I think one or two more heads would turn, and one or two more eyes would follow me in curiosity. Thus suggesting new people and new things are the norm: they are part of the Google Campus routine. **Tuesday 27th August**

I found that Tech Hub was a place of cooperation, trust, ambition, risk, support, knowledge, acceptability, community, play, tolerance, open-mindedness, reciprocity,

networks, 'no rules' and had a transgressive atmosphere. However, what it lacked was that despite all this, it was not people-orientated. It was still giving the power to the MNC as people had to pay to have space there. Thus it would not generate the best ideas, but the best ideas that had the consent of money.

Iba (2012) has questioned what the local authorities mean by 'civic space' in Tech City. For her a civic space is an area that is open to the public which has facilities that benefit people of all socioeconomic backgrounds. As Gehl (2010) points out, back in history public space filled a multiplicity of roles: a place to socialise, to hold community events or protest about politics. I would question how many lower class children, or adults would feel comfortable playing next to a big MNC office, how many children would even go there? Tech City seems to be falling into the same trap of ignoring that creative clusters must have a vibrant and diverse atmosphere to generate creativity and innovation.

The Tech City policy also once again demonstrates the fetishism for throwing money at iconic buildings. Doing this means that you are overlooking the subtleties of a creative cluster, and cities for that matter.

On a side note, I spoke to a friend's father who I bumped into at the very start of my journey on the train out of my nearest station near my home village. He spoke to me about his knowledge and take on urban design. He told me about the restrictions on the height of buildings in London, and how Boris Johnson used to stand against large buildings obstructing the views of Londoners. However, he has now changed his tune, and has perhaps given in to the capitalist tide and thirst to demonstrate their power. I had never really thought about how these tasteless finance buildings were a demonstration of power, but then I suppose everyone knows about and sees the Shard and the HSBC building. The buildings on this boundary clearly mark the different attitudes towards buildings and power. I suppose this is half my argument, in going for the big, expensive tasteless obvious structures it means that you are missing out on the nuances and subtle influences of smaller buildings and infrastructures. Just because something like a bench is small, it does not mean to say it cannot hold as much power as say a skyscraper. **Friday 30th August**

I see the attraction of flagship towers, as it is an obvious identity change from deindustrialisation (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007), but it ignores the subtlety of life.

Landry (2008) suggests we have creative potential but lack the system to harness it. I propose we acknowledge that capitalism is 'performative' (Thrift, 2005 p.3) and mould it for our own ends. Capitalism and local authorities are restricting expression, subsequently I urge we build a non-capitalist enclaves where self-expression, reciprocity and the communication of ideas can go on unchecked. I believe this creative common would be more beneficial to the OSC than Tech City would be as it gives people the power and freedom to make the city and the cluster successful. I also believe we must regulate capitalism in order to help it flourish. Children have always, and will always want to eat as many sweets and as much chocolate as they can. Adults and parents restrict the amount they can have, for the sake of the child's health. When the parents stop saying no, and allow them to eat as much as they want, they realise there is nothing to push against, they over-indulge but they don't feel that great about doing it. Capitalism is that kid, it is over-indulging and needs to have greater restrictions in order to help capitalism's health. Else the commodification will destroy the very creativity it needs to sustain itself on.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe there is a need for cluster policy to focus on the ‘life between buildings’ (Gehl, 2010 p.25) and not just on individual buildings – as frequently done in previous cluster policies. I have illustrated how public space is an underutilised opportunity to enhance the success of clusters. This is by no means to say public space is a ‘one-size fits all strategy’ (Florida, 2002 p.xxii), but I feel it is important to recognise and appreciate that it is an opportunity. If public space is thoughtfully constructed it could not only help build a successful creative cluster, but it could also simultaneously help to construct a ‘humane city’ (Gehl, 2010) and help us to remake ourselves (Harvey, 2012). This is because although it is often top-down spatial design, public space inherently emphasises bottom-up place building. Consequently, the objective would be to construct a platform for the city to be made, not to construct a city to then be lived in. As Cooke and Lazzeretti (2008) suggest with their bottom-up cluster policies, this would help to create a platform for the people. So rather than seek to interfere and control, and thus restrict the processes of the cluster, this policy would aim to stimulate and support it.

Clusters are complex ecosystems which need much more than just financial investment, they need to be thoughtfully nurtured and supported. City economies of the past were more about how to make a linear production line more efficient. However, in this post-modern era, with post-modern economies in post-modern cities there is now a greater requirement for more thought and far more futuristic visionary thinking. Within this visionary thinking, I think it is important to consider the fact that clusters are not all about money, so nor should the policies that support them be. This is demonstrated by the altruism and reciprocity shown by Interviewee 1 in the cluster and also through the ‘write on this’

poster answers. There is an argument that postmodern cities have only been half developed. Postmodernism celebrates difference and variety (Mackinnon and Cumbers, 2007), however, with neoliberal capitalism being so dominant, this has been suppressed. As a consequence, postmodernism has been restricted in its ability to stimulate creativity and innovation. I believe planning policy needs to catch up and build a postmodern city that is suitable for postmodernism and the postmodernist economy - the knowledge economy. A policy that includes non-capitalist spaces would allow for the freedom and diversity required for a knowledge economy to thrive, as it would help to revitalise streets and bring back the 'commons' (Harvey, 2012 p.75).

Harvey (2012) has suggested that there has been a loss of the 'commons' (p.75), which has been due in large to capitalism and its reconstruction of cities. This loss of the commons has reduced our potential for creativity. Mobility and the internet have gone some way through the hybridization of ideas to mask and hide the fact that the loss of the commons has come to the detriment of human creativity. But if a 'new commons' (Harvey, 2012 p.75) could be created, many cities would not only re-find their vitality and community, but also be able to build more creative and innovative clusters.

In addition, over the years the Western street has been designed for the function of movement for objects such as air, sunshine and cars (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). I would argue that in this new era there is now a need for streets to be designed for a different movement function, namely the mobility and exchange of knowledge. This is to say, that it is not just the tourist areas of cities that should be designed to be 'staying places' but also the work areas too (Gehl, 2010 p.144). This is as the more people who stay, the more people who socialise and share knowledge.

This move towards looking at in between the buildings, critically questions the idea of piling money into the ‘iconic’ and massive structures (Landry, 2008 p.xxiii). There is a case to say that a far cheaper and more effective way of enacting change and supporting a cluster is to change the soft infrastructure or the culture of the place. I understand that there is a need to for the reinvention of cities after deindustrialisation (Brown, O’Connor and Cohen, 2000) and more recently after the economic downturn. However, this need not have to be through a massive physical reinvention, a more potent solution would be a strong symbolic reinvention coupled with some physical reinvention. In Old Street Cluster (OSC), the non-capitalist enclaves would help to create a more open and sociable culture, symbolising how it is a visionary cluster and city.

It seems a little bit ironic that in trying to help capitalism prosper you must inhibit it. I suppose this could be linked in with Polanyi’s idea of ‘double movement’ (Dale, 2010 p.196). However in this case, if this cluster policy came into fruition, not only would society be protecting itself from capitalism, but society would also be protecting capitalism from itself. This regulation of capitalism to help it to succeed would come through the restrictions on capitalism’s indulgency of space. In this way the non-capitalist enclaves would serve to mould capitalism in a way that is not only the best for the cluster but also for the people (Thrift, 2005). Because is that not who the economy should be designed for? The people, and not the 1%.

Florida (2002) has suggested that enduring social change occurs not during economic boom times, but in period of crises and questioning. Neoliberalism has proved itself to be unreliable, unpredictable and inherently unfair, subsequently the time is now for radical policy change. Building the creative common, in non-capitalist enclaves like national heritage sites, would allow for the true freedom of expression, not just the ‘free’ expression that has the consent of money. These ‘transaction spaces’ (Cooke and

Lazzeretti, 2008) would help to empower cluster workers to be more imaginative, responsible and innovative. Although local authorities may mean well when they try to protect space from vandalism and littering, in reality they are hindering the freedom of expression and denying people the chance of self-responsibility. In order for new and interesting ideas to come together, there is a need for an element of chaos and unpredictability (Johnson, 2010). A policy that could almost embrace the chaos of the city would benefit the cluster, as it would serve to feed and maintain creativity as a common good (Florida 2002). The creative common policy would look to go further than just the tolerance of diversity towards encouraging transgression and thus chaos. In a creative common the lack of restricting structures would allow for greater spontaneity and for conversations that could flow between topics around work and outside of work.

The ‘common’ bit of the creative common refers to how everyone would have the chance to congregate and mingle here, whether that be cluster workers, children or OAP’s. Each would add a different dimension to the area and aid innovation through diversity and stimulation (Harvey, 2012). At the same time the place would also be a common in terms of sharing knowledge – like creative commons licensing. People would be given the opportunity to build trust, community and Putnam’s (2000) social capital. As Putnam said a healthy civic-minded community is essential to greater economic prosperity. The new types of community, which are better suited to contemporary economic activities, could also be nurtured here (Florida, 2002). Maffesoli’s (1996) neo-tribes, such as the smokers that I saw, could use the place as a base for their interest-based collectivities. This leads onto how the area would also be ‘creative’ as it would allow and encourage any form of activity. The non-capitalist enclave would look to build a place to stay, socialise and also play. It is though the encouragement of play that would really look to maintain creativity as this common good (Florida, 2002). The ‘write on this’ posters proves how the desire to

connect, network and play is inherent in cities and particularly in clusters. People just need the platform to communicate and play. This untapped playfulness and unharnessed imagination I believe is vital to creativity and the progression of society (St. Jean, 2013).

The creative common would look to facilitate many of the activities that were identified as beneficial, or at least could have been beneficial, to the Old Street Cluster (OSC). For instance, as was said before, it was found that although the OSC people are creative, their creativity is not being fully harnessed through the use of play in public space. The creative common would also look to facilitate other crucial social interactions such as the informal conversations between strangers and the smaller day to day sociations that may be insignificant on their own, but added together can help to coax out ideas and build social capital. One of the best things about the urban design of the OSC public space was that it offered both meeting places and sociable environments, as well as interesting and stimulating places to work.

A key research finding was that the small infrastructure and choice architecture, despite being smaller in size, had a large amount of influence over the behaviour of and interaction between people in public space. The creative common would look to recognise the subtleties and nuances of the city, so look to utilise small infrastructure in order to create an inclusive, diverse, safe, sociable and relaxed atmosphere. The more thought invested into how each bench is curved, sized, placed, shaped and positioned the greater the positive influence the creative common will have. It is this emphasis on the small infrastructure which epitomises the shift that is required in cluster policy. Instead of the focus being on large individual buildings, a greater focus should be on the smaller more insignificant structures and the attitudes that surround them.

As was said before, there is ‘no magic bullet’ (Florida, 2002 p.xxii), but I believe a focus on public space is the closest thing to it. Obviously there are significant differences between every cluster, as each it is it’s own unique complex assemblage of global and local flows. However, improved public space would benefit all clusters as it would increase the frequency and quality of social interactions. For one of the main reasons why all clusters exist, is to have that face to face interaction. However, as I have pointed out before this does not automatically guarantee good quality interaction and knowledge transferrals. Every cluster would therefore benefit from the creation of the creative common, if it was tailored each time to the local characteristics of the place.

Another potential limitation of this research and the creation of the creative common, is that something so novel, innovative and radical as the creative common will inevitably have unintended consequences. An effort therefore needs to be put in to understand and minimise the potential consequences of the creative common (Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2010). Some would argue that it is too dangerous constructing something that you do not know what the full consequences will be. However, I would argue that it is this cautious stand-back approach that has allowed greedy people such as Alan Greenspan to create inequality and mould capitalism in their own image. It is perhaps time to mould it a different way, and the creative common could be the symbolic marker. Also to suggest that ‘tolerance’ in the area will only lead to negative consequences is to underestimate the cluster workers. As the ‘write on this’ posters demonstrated, there can be positive unintended consequences too.

Perhaps the biggest problem for cluster policies over the years, and not something I have touched upon yet, is that a cluster policy often leads to gentrification of the area which pushes out the bohemian small businesses – which are the seedbed of innovation for a cluster. This is perhaps what Solly the local resident was referring to when he said that the

East End is just a 'place to struggle and move on' (Hall, 2005 p.46). However, is there potential to have a sustainable cluster policy, where there might be gentrification without displacement, or is this idealistic thinking too far-fetched to become a reality anytime soon? Could the property in the area look to follow in the footsteps of the proposal I have put forward for public space in de-commodifying. Not only would this stop there becoming a housing bubble, but at the same time keep the creative, innovative and bohemian people and ideas in the area. Instead of the housing being regulated by the market, it would be kept competitive by a different scale. Perhaps a worthiness to having a flat so close to the cluster – so making the whole area be geared towards innovation – or perhaps worthiness on a more humanistic scale.

Consequently, I think the main further avenue of study that I would highlight, is exploring the relationship between public space and clusters. In particular it would be researching how to construct the creative common in practical terms, so that it can become a viable alternative for local authorities to consider. More theoretical considerations could also be taken over the viability of a non-capitalist enclave and it's potential impact on a cluster. One research study that could be particularly useful would be investigating when cluster workers were simultaneously given responsibility and a free reign over an area, whether would they be able to regulate themselves? My research with the 'write on this' posters would suggest that they would be able to, but it would have been interesting if somebody had wrote something unsavoury as a response, would someone have erased it? More research could also be done on dealing with gentrification as well as the role of neo-tribes in clusters and cities. Finally, I believe that play has the potential to revolutionise the workplace, as it could help many industries to transcend some of its current barriers. Play is particularly important for creativity, learning and the vitality of the street, all three of which are crucial to the success of clusters such as the OSC.

The more time I spent on my research, the more I realised that it could contribute to the growing livable and ‘humane’ cities movement (Gehl, 2010 p.6). In trying to look at how to make clusters more successful, I realised the answer lied in trying to re-infuse the city with a ‘human dimension’ (Gehl, 2010). For instance, more walking, more social interaction, improved safety and a greater vitality enhances the cluster as well as improves the city. As a further point, the city and the cluster are interdependent entities, so perhaps in the future there should be greater crossover between cluster and city policies because they share common goals. Moreover the more livable an area becomes, the more attractive the area will become for young talent – as was the case in Portland (Speck, 2013). The primary purpose for the creative common is to try to create a space which the cluster workers can see as their canvas to express themselves on. It is therefore an attempt to build in both the people’s best interests and giving them an area of the city that they can mould for themselves. I believe that allowing the people to see the city as their canvas is essential when trying to build a livable city as it is giving them the freedom to remake themselves and feel like they live in their city (Harvey, 2012).

In order to do my research I used a range of inventive methods, with the overall aim of trying to ‘put my finger on the pulse of the city’ (Pratt, 2000 p.432). At the same time I realised that it was important to research responsibly as the way in which you record, investigate and frame the city influences both the city’s future and our own. Gehl (2010 p.9) summarises this well when he says ‘first we shape cities – then they shape us’. This approach of trying to interact with the city responsibly was epitomised by the ‘write on this’ posters. These posters allowed me to interact with the people of the cluster, and not just the elite businessmen, meaning that I gave a voice to the innovators and not the just the people in power. The posters equally helped me to ‘put my finger on the pulse of the city’ (Pratt, 2000 p.432) as it put me into contact with that man who challenged me. In

engaging in the city and as a result of this challenge by the man, I actually shifted the direction of my research towards focusing more on the capitalist and city restrictions inhibiting the cluster. This incorporation of new objectives, highlights the merit in having a flexible research method design as it allowed me to pursue surprises. Moreover I think being experimental and playing in the city, with things such as the honesty test and talking to strangers, really enriched my data as it tested the boundaries of the cluster and gave me novel perspectives of the city.

My thick ethnographic account of all of my ideas, emotions and senses was a great way to critically engage, observe and document the cluster. I think a deep immersion in the area with the reflexive documentation of my sensual experience of the cluster made the account particularly accurate and strong. The map, a product of a lot of the different data, was completely novel. It's originality offers a new perspective on the cluster, as it takes the pedestrian viewpoint of the city's complex sensual spaces. It thus highlights the things that are important to the people who walk the street, not just things important to megaplanners. It therefore simultaneously re-orientates the spectator's view at the same time as shifting power away from megaplanners to the people. I think creating a unique map that comes from an unfamiliar angle is a good way to subvert people's expectations of what constitutes an acceptable map, as well as provides a fresh perspective of the city.

As the world economy becomes more complex, knowledge-based and dynamic, the more important clusters will become (Porter, 1998). It is therefore crucial we develop appropriate and effective cluster policy to help support the fragile creative industry ecosystems. Tech City is unfortunately too much of a top-down policy seeking to concentrate power. Clusters have always been best made organically through artists 'loft living' (Zukin, 1988[1982] p.15) so this interference is more damaging and inhibiting than helpful. However, I think if you are able to implement a policy that has top-down spatial

design with bottom-up place building this can help give the power to the people. These empowered people who have greater freedom can make the cluster more successful and innovative, at the same time as feeling as though they have a responsibility to make sure their creativity has moral boundaries. The creative common would give people Harvey's (2012) right to the city: the right to be creative in the city and the right to make the city and the cluster in their own image. It is the small businesses that are the seedbed of innovation, it is those would make the cluster more creative, innovative and ultimately more successful. It is thus those businesses that cluster policy should look to support.

I therefore believe the state is going the wrong way about supporting the OSC. Although Tech City might benefit the cluster it is not giving the power to the people, and thus it will be less innovative and creative. The OSC needs to remember its revolutionary past:

On my way back to silicon roundabout I walked through the Bonhill Burial grounds, past all of the people feeding the squirrels, and realised this was no ordinary graveyard. The likes of Blake, Defoe, Cromwell and Owen were all buried here, illustrating how London and the East End is steeped in history and that although it is nice to look to the future and observe the present it is also important to consider the past. **Wednesday 28th August**

I think policy should look to be equally as progressive and entrepreneurial as those individuals, and look to build a creative common in the OSC.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Write on this data

Appendix 2: Ethnographic diary extract

Appendix 3: Interview transcript extract

Appendix 1: Write on this data

Thursday 29th August 2013

1) Location: Leonard Street/Paul Street X art

Question: When was the last time you smiled at a stranger?

Answers:

“this morning. on the tube”

“Everyone who walks past!”

“Anyone who works behind a till :)”

“I can’t actually remember!!”

“The fit bird on the tube... She smiled back but that’s the end. Damn.”

2) Location: Scrutton Street, Zetland House

Question: When was the last time you smiled at a stranger?

Answers:

“Today morning at my way to work. Thanks for asking :)”

“I DON’T SMILE :(” “+1”

“EVERYDAY// its the best... watch peoples reactions – they don’t expect it. **I MAKE THEM SMILE!!**”

“This morning :)”

“About 30 seconds ago :)”

3) Location: Market Square Gardens

Question: When was the last time you helped out someone else for free?

Answers:

“Just now, filling in this paper.”

“Thanks for the pen” [they hid it behind the paper]

4) Location: Curtain Road

Question: What would you do here, that you wouldn't do at home?

Answers:

“stay out all night, eat tofu”

“Meet a circus company who want to teach me circus things”

“Stay up all night”

“??? question... who are you guys? Tell me → secretunicornlife@gmail.com”

“Enjoy el fresco and rusty trombone” [sexual act]

5) Location: Market Square Street

Question: Do you like to discover new people?

Answer: - (poor location/postioning, slightly hidden away → affected by the ‘man’)

Appendix 2: Ethnographic diary extract

Tuesday 27th August Ethnography field notes

It was an early start, well at least for a student it was – 8:30 am train and then the oxford tube to London.

Already confused by the bus driver's instructions because of the building works going on in Victoria – who suggested that it might be better getting off before the Victoria stop to catch the underground. This already showed to me the constant regeneration and refurbishment of the city and also the flexibility of the people who inhabit it. After all it was only a small walk to Victoria. It also demonstrates my perspective of the city ie constant bafflement. I am as they say like a 'rabbit in the headlights' when it comes to city life. The buzz, the noise, the sensory overload definitely hits me hard because of my relative wilderness background in a village in West Oxfordshire.

However, London may be big and busy, but even in a massive city like this it can seem very small. For example, on my way to my accommodation in Kennington, which is in East London and as it happens is at the heart of East London culture – the Journey hostel was used for Lock Stock and Barrels and Snatch films. The hostel is therefore quite edgy and multicultural, thus making sure that I was certainly going to get the full East London experience. Anyway on my way, on a northern line underground train I happened to bump into a relation of mine – my father's cousin's boyfriend. I have no particular relationship with the man, but it was just quite a coincidence nonetheless (or perhaps not).

Anyway I arrived in Old Street, my home for the next few days, and I'm all excited and ready (I think!), that was until I end up walking the wrong way and nearly making myself late to my first (I thought of many) interviews. Unfortunately for me, I have gone through

life always being late therefore my experiences of some places have been somewhat a blur at times. Not that they weren't beautiful, but that I hadn't always allowed for enough to time to look and experience places in their full glory. Perhaps giving places this week my full attention may shed a new light on them.

I was on my way to Tech Hub which was at the Google campus. Consequently, my expectations went along the lines of a grand entrance, like the Zara facade I saw on Oxford Street shopping area on the Oxford Tube. However, when I found my way there, I had to look twice at the place. I then had to dig out of my bag the exact details of the place to check it wasn't around the corner (it wouldn't be the first time that that has happened). My background experience for looking for things on my CV includes a winter temp job at Argos, it was safe to say it did not suit me too well being out the back searching for items, obviously that bodes well for this week.

In the end I reckoned this very unassuming place must have been it. However, the only reason why you would know it was it, was if you peered through the windows: there was certainly nothing remarkable about the street or it's facade. To me this meant that perhaps they do not need to scream and shout about it, enough people know about it already. That was certainly the case whilst I was standing outside, with the door barely shutting before the next person walked along and opened it. It must be factored in that it was 1pm, ie peak time for lunch.

I walked inside to be greeted by friendly receptionists, both British, both with Southern accents but one male one female. I explained my situation and who I was trying to get a hold of and then they suggested I should phone my first interviewee, Jonathan, as it would probably be quicker that way. Unfortunately, I was having no luck. The receptionists though allowed me to go through the security doors and suggested I head upstairs to Tech

Hub. Their friendliness suggested that they were used to having strangers in the building, and therefore I felt a degree of acceptability here, despite being a bit of an alien to the place. I decided to quickly pop to the toilet whilst I had the chance, and instead of going upstairs I walked through the security doors and downstairs to the ‘Café area’.

Now this café was no ordinary café, it had people on laptops spread across the room and a general buzz that it seems to only occur when something exciting is happening. Maybe it was just me anticipating this atmosphere, but even so, the colours, the people, the general chit-chat suggested to me that this café had a bit more of the extraordinary to it. As I walked up the two flights of stairs and into Tech Hub, I reflected on how nobody really seems fazed that I was there. Whereas if I had walked into any other office building, I think one or two more heads would turn, and one or two more eyes would follow me in curiosity. Thus suggesting new people and new things are the norm, they are part of the Google Campus routine.

As I walked into Tech Hub, I again explained myself to the receptionist at Tech Hub who was again very pleasant and eager to help out. It would later transpire that this was actually her first week, so she was just getting to grips with the job and knowing who people were. Therefore in order to get hold of Jonathan, as neither of us knew what he looked like, she tried using internal messaging. Whilst I was waiting she urged me to sit down on the leather sofa, which was very modern but also very comfortable. The seating infrastructure suggested that visitors were frequent, which I experienced when I saw another two people turn up and meet people from Tech Hub in the brief time I sat there. With the rest of the room looking exactly how I had pictured it from the journals, news articles and my rekkie (reconnaissance trip) I did earlier on in the year. It was clearly an old warehouse, with an open plan area and big windows. It had then been refurbished and was now awash with technology.

Appendix 3: Interview transcript extract

Interviewee 1

Background:

I arrived at Old Street at around 12:30pm, then this interview officially began at 1pm. I walked to Tech Hub at Google Campus on Bonhill Street which is positioned towards the south west part of my research cluster area. It took a while to finally meet up but when we did we headed towards Chiswell Market, some 6/7 minute walk away and on our way back stopped at Bonhill Burial Grounds. Our plan was to go back to the office, but we ended up staying here and doing the full interview. He was eating some sort of curry (ie. his lunch) whilst we talked – hence one or two delays in his replies. I had emailed some 30 businesses (not knowing Tech Hub isn't strictly a business in the way I thought it was - it is a business that helps other start ups by offering cheap facilities), but the only concrete reply I got was Jonathan who agreed to help me from the start. The main reason being he is Lancaster Alumni. He has worked for many different companies, all related to technology, and is currently building a start-up with his brother and friend who work in Leeds. Their business is a women's fashion business, with a focus on offering jeans which are easy to measure and have calculable sizes.

Before the interview:

- Regular emails to sort out a time and place
- When there I introduced myself and the question, to basically check they were still okay to go ahead with it. It was more implicit than complicit consent

Transcript:

(As much as possible it is accurate to the conversation that took place, despite the urge to make us sound more articulate than we actually were. Subsequently some of the sentence structures and the syntax of some sentences are a bit mixed up, but you still get the message we are trying to convey. The only alterations I made were unavoidable as, some sounds have meaning in a conversation but aren't necessarily 'real' words so have been replaced with the closest words possible. These weren't profanities just incomprehensible sounds.)

(Talking beforehand)

1 (Interviewee 1): ... and that's, you get a permanent desk, so not hot desking You get an actual desk with a screen there and you get a locker, y'know but that's err £280 a month so obviously significantly more

Interviewer (Me): But you still get the location, in terms of all the people there and things, but it is a bit more private? But it's just expensive...

1: Yeah I'll show you when we get back in. It's in the same room, it's just that you get a permanent desk. So it gets you that permanent desk, you can put your computer there and you get a locker y'know, that's basically it really. Yeah, oh yeah you can be there as long as you want, with the flex you can only be there, like I don't know, like 8 till 8 or something - not at the weekends.

Interviewer: Do you have 20 hours a week, so do you share like a computer with somebody else or is it...

1: On the flex?

Interviewer: Oh I suppose...

1: Nah on the flex you just bring in your laptop and it's a first come first serve basis on the space that is there.

Interviewer: Yeah

1: That's it, but obviously for a permanent desk you've got a desk and that's it which you have for 24 hours 7 days a week so if you can afford it, it's much better. Then the next step on top of that, they have another location on old street roundabout umm and that is if you are a small team you can actually rent a square footage area. So stuff like today, this morning they had like umm a breakfast every Tuesday, so they just have beagles and stuff and everyone mingles and chat's about what they are doing y'know, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Beagles and breakfast and...

1: It's perfect for me because my other guys are in Leeds so it meant that I can work with other people doing the same sort of stuff or similar start-up stuff.

Interviewer: Okay so you've got similar businesses there?

1: Yeah, well, the guy who sits next to me, yeah he's got a fashion start up as well. I mean well, another guy who sits opposite me has a sports and fitness thing so that is different, so yeah it does vary a lot.

Interviewer: I suppose there are some things which you all overlap on, like the marketing side...

1: The fact you are all working on startup's means that you all have similar issues and like you've got like, you've a got a team, you've got people that are around you rather than just people at a coffee shop, y'know.

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