

## M3C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Project Brief

<b>Project Title</b>			
Valuating the Hidden: Documenting and Measuring Cultural Value in the City of Leicester			
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>			
<b>Name of HEI institution</b>	De Montfort University		
<b>Lead regional city</b>	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>			
<b>Name of organisation</b>	Leicester City Council		
<b>Website URL</b>	<a href="http://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture">www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture</a>		
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>			
<p>This 3-year project works with De Montfort University and Leicester City Council to advance the work of Leicester’s new Cultural Ambition Panel, and to lead the way in developing more nuanced measurement tools for capturing and valuating culture in the arts and humanities.</p> <p>Leicester has one of the largest concentrations of cultural and creative industries outside of London and is home to several theatres including the flagship Curve theatre, to several festivals including the UK Comedy festival, Caribbean Festival, and the largest Diwali celebration outside of India. The City’s unique position as a ‘minority majority’ city, one of the most diverse in the UK outside London, also brings with it many opportunities for observing different cultures in practice. Using Leicester as a cultural laboratory, and working with Leicester City Council’s Cultural Ambition Panel and Culture Directorate to learn more about the rich cultural traditions and ambitions of the city, and with De Montfort University’s Creative and Cultural Industries Group, the research will develop innovative methods for documenting and measuring value in diverse forms.</p> <p>Whilst it is widely accepted that culture plays a role in social and economic development, knowledge of this in the social sciences has been handicapped by methods deployed to capture this value:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. While it is known that different cultural activities contribute to the city’s economy through its cultural and creative industries, it’s visitor economy, and through community development, the wider role of culture in promoting social cohesion, place making, improving quality of life, and developing open and connective communities has never been fully examined.</li> <li>2. The hegemonic use of economic models and tools such as the ‘Green Book’ approach remain utterly unsuitable for capturing value in cultural arenas. Quantitative approaches are unable to capture and measure the rich, qualitative value captured in tacit, symbolic, intrinsic, and even embodied forms.</li> <li>3. Some aspects of culture, and the value associated with it, remain hidden from public view. The value arising from cultural heritage, culturally symbolic practices (e.g. the making and wearing of cloths, dances, activities), and even practices that take place in the homes and meeting places of some</li> </ol>			

communities can add immeasurably to the cultural worth of a city but can never be fully captured or documented using traditional techniques.

Since the 1990s – and, increasingly, in the post-millennium period - the role of culture in communities and economies has gained considerable ground, signalling increasing public awareness of the emergence of ‘cultural cities’ and ‘creative cities’. Simultaneously, the question of value as that which ties culture, community, and economy has been fraught. In particular, the reductive nature of mainstream economic models and methods are becoming increasingly out-of-sync with the richer reality of life of many cities. While there have been some notable developments, in particular the work by DEMOS and then DCMS on cultural value and the expansion of ‘cultural economics’ as a substantive discourse, much of this work has remained conceptual rather than empirical. As a result, recent debate about the value and form of cultural cities has been handicapped by abstraction and scarce empirical analysis on which to support sound conceptual advancement. In this proposed project, the drawbacks of ‘fictitious financial instruments’ as a bearer of value will be examined, and frameworks for re-imagining value developed, which capture productive points of engagement. As such, the project is guided by three main research questions:

1. How do new digital technologies shape the production and circulation of value within cultural environments?
2. What are the techniques and discourses necessary in making financial models ‘culturally valuable’?
3. What is the value of ‘fictitious financial instruments’ under conditions of cultural activities?

It is envisaged that the research would engage with economic spending models such as ‘Economic Impact Assessment’ and ‘Footprint Analysis’ (Contribution Analysis), as well as social valuation models such as ‘Contingent Valuation’, and ‘Social Returns on Investment’. In addition, recent ICT advancements have permitted new opportunities for re-thinking value through ‘Ecology’ models, which consider relational value such as new thinking on social network analysis (e.g. spatial-relational mapping) methods developed for examining social media, and also crowd-sourcing techniques. With the emphasis on empirical application and testing, it is envisaged that the research might apply and test existing methods to diverse cultural scenarios, as a basis for developing and testing a new cultural value model. As such, fieldwork in diverse cultural settings (as case studies) is envisaged as a way of immersing in diverse cultural practices, as a way of understanding the methods and tools required for value capture, and to pilot new approaches. The principal research approach will be qualitative and interpretivist, with an emphasis on ethnographic techniques designed to observe and understand perceptions of value, social motivations, and lasting impact.

Leicester City Council’s (LCC) new Cultural Ambition Panel and prioritisation of research and research techniques for examining culture in practice, mean that this research opportunity is both timely, and an opportunity to lead on an important area of work regionally as well as nationally. As such, it is envisaged that the researcher would play a practical role in Leicester City Council’s work in this area, would work with the City Council in national developmental work in this area along with other leading cities, and gain invaluable experience of working with communities, developing ethnographic research practices, and in developing new and novel research techniques.

#### HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

<b>Lead HEI Supervisor:</b>	Dr Rachel Granger
<b>Lead HEI Supervisor Email:</b>	rachel.granger@dmu.ac.uk