

CHAPTER 7

Sustaining a Brand through Proactive Repair: The Case of Manchester

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The current global recession has created economic and social pressures on governments at national and local level. Currently regional and urban governments in England are under pressure from two directions – the national government’s rejection of regional development mechanisms in the form of regional development agencies and their replacement with ad hoc “local enterprise partnerships”, and the bottom-up dissatisfaction and unrest resulting from the consequences of severe austerity measures.

In August 2011 the bottom-up reaction was expressed in an extreme form in London, with the civil unrest which spread from the north to the south of the capital with considerable damage to property, before erupting in four other major cities. Five lives were lost in addition to the fatal shooting by police which triggered the initial Tottenham riot. These disturbances preceded the “Occupy” movement, part of a wider and more focused international expression of dissatisfaction with the governance of financial institutions and national government austerity programs.

In the run up to the 2012 Olympics, and as the main tourist destination for the UK, as well as being the financial center, London was most widely affected by the perceived loss of confidence in urban governance and the consequent damage to its brand image, a situation not helped by the draconian sentencing of a range of minor offenders. *The Guardian* newspaper reported that a Manchester mother of two was jailed for five months for receiving a pair of shorts given to her after they had been looted from a city center store; while in London, a 23-year-old student was jailed for six months for stealing £3.50 worth of bottled water from a supermarket (*The Guardian* 2011a). While satisfying some elements of public opinion these sentences gave the impression of a deeply threatened system of government.

Unlike the other affected cities, London has had a Greater London Assembly (GLA) since 2000. This is the successor to the Greater London Council, which was abolished in 1985 along with other English metropolitan counties. The GLA enjoys

jurisdiction across the whole London conurbation and has powers over the regulation of public transport and strategic policy that is denied to other English authorities. The other cities affected have had fewer direct controls with which to counter reputational risk and brand vulnerability.

At the time of previous extensive unrest in 1981 several cities were attempting to develop forms of “municipal socialism” (Cochrane 1988) in opposition to the policies of the national government. By the following decade, budget reductions and compulsory outsourcing of services had removed many of the means to pursue alternative strategies from the direct control of local authorities. While the Manchester region still aspires to the role of alternate metropolitan growth pole to London and the south-east (e.g. Peel Holdings 2010), it has fewer direct mechanisms with which to pursue this aim than the capital city.

With such limited governance options, what might help to facilitate place brand sustainability are reputational risk assessments. However, Cartmell (2010) reports a hostile reaction from NGOs to the Burson-Marsteller consultancy’s Brand Vulnerability Index (BVI), which is aimed at “identifying emerging risks, allowing pre-emptive engagement and mediation; and assessing comparative risk against competitor brands”. This is achieved through a database of 3,000 NGOs and a summary of the issues they are currently talking about in reports, online and in the media. Burson-Marsteller argue that trends toward overt campaigns can be predicted through the monitoring of building momentum around the issues 12–18 months before mainstream media coverage begins. The BVI is intended primarily to assess and counter threats from NGOs which might target any number of areas and issues from supply chains to marketing strategies. However, the developers and managers of place brands must monitor an even broader range of potential threats. While Knowles (2006) suggests that the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan may not actually have characterized the key uncertainties of a political environment as “events dear boy events”, it is events like those of August 2011 which can unsettle a carefully planned brand strategy and demand a rapid response.

Immediately after the civil unrest of 9 August 2011 Manchester launched a set of campaigns and coordinated events to repair the city brand. The same social media alleged to have been used by rioters were combined with traditional channels to coordinate innovative and established events. The context of this reaction to the

events of that month in the defense of the city and region brand is the subject of this chapter. **Brand Manchester: From Cottonopolis to Madchester**

Place brands, whether for countries, cities or regions, retain a strong element of path dependence. Braun (2011) explores this in relation to Rotterdam. Liverpool leveraged its status as 2008 EU Capital of Culture to consolidate a strong and positive culture brand. In doing so it produced a selective narrative of the city's recent past, and significant events were only re-acknowledged in subsequent years (Little 2009). Nevertheless, when seeking visibility in north-west England's knowledge economy of science and life sciences, the Liverpool First agency found that Merseyside, beyond the Liverpool city core, retained older negative connotations. To escape these, new brands with different and wider spatial references, such as the "Mersey Corridor" or "Atlantic Gateway", were required.

Manchester's path dependence has a literal element, as the city pioneered a number of key transport innovations in its industrialization and is currently a strong supporter of the HS2 high speed rail proposal recently approved in principal by the UK national government.

Manchester's status as the international center of the cotton and textile processing industries during the 19th century was reflected in its unofficial name, "Cottonopolis". For the author Charles Dickens the archetypal northern industrial textile city was CokeTown through which he satirized the more extreme forms of utilitarianism which led the economic development of north-west England (Dickens 1854). While Dickens is thought to be referencing the Lancashire city of Preston, Manchester's present day pragmatism owes something to these origins, as when a 1996 IRA bomb attack in the city center was leveraged into effecting a review and a completion of the post-war redevelopment of the area (Quilley 2000). This commercial and civic robustness coupled with technical innovation constitutes the mainstream narrative of Manchester's development.

The visit of the Iwakura mission from Japan in 1872 was a significant step in the global diffusion of the Manchester brand. The principal focus of this mission was on military and transportation technology. Manchester factories subsequently delivered over 350 out of 1,023 railway locomotives between 1890 and 1911 (Checkland 1998), but more significantly a cotton industry was established around Osaka, utilizing the best Manchester technology. Over 100 years later the term

“Manchester” is still used to indicate cotton and fabric goods in Australian department stores.

Three major innovative projects were landmarks in the creation of the infrastructure which supported this global presence. In contemporary terms they would qualify as “megaprojects” under the rubric of Flyvbjerg *et al.* (2003), and they characterize the 19th-century vision of Manchester.

The Bridgewater canal

Manchester's 19th-century prominence was derived from a range of innovations in both technology and transport infrastructure. The switch from water and steam power in Manchester and its surroundings gave an advantage over locations to the north and east in the Pennine valleys which provided the superseded waterpower. The demand for coal to generate steam led to the construction of the Bridgewater Canal, the first component of what became a national canal transport system. Developed by the Duke of Bridgewater to transport coal from his mines at Worsley to the Manchester mills, the canal opened in 1761, becoming the first not to be based on an existing watercourse, crossing the river Mersey on the first aqueduct of the modern era.

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway

The improvement of technology in the first decades of the 19th century increased output dramatically. This in turn led to a bottleneck in the importation of raw materials and export of finished textiles. Manchester was reliant on the Port of Liverpool, and by the 1820s the capacity of existing roads and canals was inadequate. Proposals for a railway between Liverpool and Manchester gained approval from Parliament in 1826. The choice of locomotive over stationary steam haulage using cables to haul trains was made relatively late in the planning, but, when completed, the railway contained a range of innovations which became commonplace in subsequent railway construction.

The Manchester Ship Canal

By the end of the 19th century port to rail transshipment between Liverpool and Manchester were regarded as restricted and expensive in a time of prolonged recession. The project to create a 36 mile (58 kilometer) long ship canal utilizing the rivers Mersey and Irwell and incorporating sets of locks to lift vessels some 60 feet (18 meters) to Manchester was completed in January 1894. The 18th-century Bridgewater aqueduct was replaced with the Barton swing aqueduct that permitted ocean-going ships to pass. Its construction made extensive use of mechanical equipment alongside the navvies or navigators – the labor force that had constructed the narrow canal system and the railways by hand.

Opposition from Liverpool delayed the passage of the necessary Act of Parliament by three years, but the £15 million investment made Manchester, 40 miles (64 kilometers) inland, Britain's third busiest port.

The Parallel Narrative: Social Infrastructure

The technocratic narrative of commerce, transport and manufacturing technology set out in Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry (www.mosi.org.uk) is paralleled by a different pathway depicted in the People's History Museum (www.phm.org.uk), one which is framed by unrest from the 18th to the 20th century.

Manchester has a history of social and political dissent and innovation. The city raised a company in support of the Jacobite uprising of 1745–46 which sought to restore the Stuart monarchy. The following century was the locus of a succession of social campaigns.

On 16 August 1819, in what is now St Peter's Square, Manchester, over 60,000 peaceful campaigners for parliamentary reform gathered and were attacked by armed cavalry, an event which became known as The Peterloo Massacre. Although this event is a key moment in the history of Chartism and the emergence of popular democracy in England, the memorial plaque at the site was amended from "subsequent dispersal by the military" to "men women and children ... attacked by armed cavalry resulted in 15 deaths and over 600 injuries", only after a campaign this century. The narrative remains sensitive after almost 200 years. These events occurred during a period of immense political tension and mass protests when fewer than 2 percent of the population could vote and agricultural protection had made bread unaffordable.

Subsequently Manchester became the center of the Co-operative movement. The North of England Co-operative Wholesale Industrial and Provident Society Limited was created by 300 individual cooperatives in Yorkshire and Lancashire, becoming in 1872 the Co-operative Wholesale Society. The successor organization remains a major UK retailer.

Manchester was the home of the Pankhurst family and a center for the women's suffrage movement of the late 19th and early 20th century. A campaign based in Manchester organized the Kinder Scout mass trespass in 1932 which led to legislation on countryside preservation and access, including a system of national parks being established after the Second World War and a legislated "right to roam" implemented in 2005.

Moss Side and Madchester

In July 1981 riots returned across British cities, including Manchester, with unrest in and around Moss Side, south of the city center, lasting for some 72 hours. Local shops and others in Rusholme to the east were burned and looted. Moss Side had been a migrant destination, particularly for Caribbean immigrants, over the previous decades. Contemporary commentary blamed, alternatively and in combination, racial tension, mass unemployment and policing methods. At the time, the government insisted that the disturbances were criminal and not political. However, in August 2011 Prime Minister David Cameron contrasted the 1981 “political” riots with the 2011 “criminal” disturbances.

The opening of the Hacienda nightclub, an initiative of Factory Records, in May of the following year, marked a turning point for Manchester’s popular music culture, providing the basis for a favorable comparison with neighboring rival Liverpool. The strong club culture that grew up around this initiative gave rise to the term “Madchester” and was instrumental in attracting students to the city's growing universities, as well as in underpinning pride and identity for the region's youth.

Such key informal and counter-cultural initiatives were eventually included in the corporatist narrative of a shifting local government ethos. The “Gay Village”, which is now a key sub-brand within Manchester’s leisure sector, was initially a political response to the policing policies of the chief constable associated with the 1981 riots. Binnie and Skeggs (2004) describe the contradictions of its current situation and suggest that this reflects Žižek’s (1997) identification of the division and incorporation of previously marginalized groups by late capitalism.

Cochrane (1988) suggests that, following the re-election of Margaret Thatcher’s conservative government in 1983, the post-riot period of the 1980s saw a shift away from building “municipal socialism” as a bulwark against a neoliberal national government and toward an alignment with private sector interests in order to achieve relatively limited policy objectives. Quilley (2000) suggests that Manchester is the most interesting case of transformation from municipal socialism, not least because of its relative success in the physical and cultural transformation of the city. This shift paralleled the rebranding of the national Labour Party as “New Labour”.

Official attempts to raise the positive profile of Manchester went ahead strongly in this period. The city bid for the 1996 Olympic Games, eventually hosted by Atlanta, being eliminated in the first round of voting, but it did reach the third round in 1994

for the bid for the 2000 games, eventually held in Sydney. These unsuccessful bids forged regional networks and built the confidence which underpinned successful bids for high profile Millennium lottery funded projects and for a successful bid for the Commonwealth Games.

Cochrane *et al.* (1995) argue that the politics of Manchester's Olympic bids powerfully symbolize many of the supposedly transformative features of the new urban politic presented more widely as "New Public Management" (e.g. Boston *et al.* 1996),

as the old images of municipal welfarist (bureaucratic) politics have apparently been superseded by those of a dynamic and charismatic (entrepreneurial) business leadership. But while there are superficial similarities between these developments and those highlighted by analysts of US "growth coalitions", the Manchester case reveals how they are as much about struggles over the role, meaning and structure of the state, as they are about urban growth. Manchester's Olympic bid committee resembles not so much a growth coalition as a grant coalition. This said, it is important not to underestimate the significance of the new urban imperative to talk about growth in order to get grants.

To borrow a phrase later adopted by the City Council as its new slogan, the new politics he symbolised had to be about "Making it happen". This was portrayed as a common-sense and apolitical approach. (Cochrane *et al.* 1995, pp. 1319, 1324)

Following the successful Commonwealth Games bid Manchester was one of eight cities to host the 1996 UEFA European soccer cup. It was also the target of a massive truck bomb detonated by the IRA. This devastated a substantial area of the city center, fortunately with no fatal injuries, largely due to the significant level of policing for the tournament.

The 2002 Commonwealth Games represented the culmination of the physical renewal efforts that Manchester had driven forward in the wake of the bombing. The

main athletics stadium was designed for conversion to the new home ground of Manchester City, the “other” soccer team, and formed the centerpiece of a regeneration corridor into east Manchester. This was intended to be reinforced by an extension of the city’s “Metrolink” light-rail system which was eventually scheduled to open in 2012:

This (the 1996 bombing) cleared the way for a £1.2 billion root and branch redevelopment which has transformed the cityscape, opening out the River Irwell for the first time since the industrial revolution, and allowing for the construction of palatial new developments (the world’s biggest M&S opposite an equally superlative Boots). But if the IRA inadvertently created the opportunity, it is also true that the speed and imagination of the subsequent redevelopment was only the logical extension of the previous ten years of regeneration – both in terms of the sustained vision of what the city could be like, but also the high-level partnerships which have been further consolidated with each development and with each phase of boosterish hype. (Quilley 2000, p. 610)

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The most recent civil disturbances in Manchester reflected the contradictory stresses created by top-down government policy-making in the face of recession. This included the dismantling of regional policy and the substitution of poorly resourced alternative partnerships under the banner of “localism”.

Riots began in Tottenham on Saturday 6th August following a specific incident – a fatal shooting by police. This had spread to 12 areas of London by the 7th and nationally to 44 areas by Monday 8th August, lasting five days in total. (Riots Communities and Victims Panel 2011, p. 44)

Between 6 and 10 August 2011, an estimated 13,000–15,000 people were actively involved in the riots across England. By the time the interim report of the Panel had been drawn up, more than 4,000 suspected rioters had been arrested. Nine out of ten were already known to the police. In total, more than 5,000 crimes were committed, including five fatalities, 1,860 incidents of arson and criminal damage, 1,649 burglaries, 141 incidents of disorder and 366 incidents of violence against the person.

In Salford reported crimes totaled 186, in Manchester 388, although there were differences between the two areas. In Salford looting and arson at a local shopping precinct accompanied an almost ritual stand-off between youths and police outside a local police station. In Manchester it was the core of the city retail area which was subject to attack. The disturbances of 1981 were confined to inner suburbs associated with deprivation and to the destruction of relatively local resources (Newburn *et al.* 2011).

As an eyewitness I can confirm that the febrile atmosphere in the city center on the night of 9 August was strongly reminiscent of that in the city center on the Monday following the IRA bombing during the Euro 96 soccer tournament. The prompt reaction of Manchester city council in closing down the city center saw the bemused patrons of the venues there mingling with potential rioters as one group replaced the other.

Taken together, the interim report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2011) established by the national government, and *The Guardian* and London School of Economics joint inquiry into the August disturbances which involved 270 interviews with rioters (*The Guardian* 2011), place the summer disorder in context:

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The rioters were not a homogenous group of people all acting for the same reasons. They acted differently depending on why they decided to riot and what they wanted to get out of it. We break down those present at the riots into five broad categories:

- Organized criminals, often from outside the area.
- Violent aggressors who committed the most serious crimes, such as arson and violent attacks on the police.
- “Late night shoppers” – people who deliberately travelled to riot sites in order to loot.

- Opportunists – people who were drawn into riot areas through curiosity or a sense of excitement and then became caught up in the moment.
- Spectators – people who came just to watch the rioting. (Riots Communities and Victims Panel 2011, p. 11)

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A difference from the events of 1981 was arguably the speed with which unrest spread across England over four nights, with the media highlighting the BlackBerry messaging service that enabled “flashmobs” to congregate at prearranged locations (*The Guardian* 2011). In 1981, serious riots in Brixton, south London, pre-dated by four months similar disturbances in Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham. However, these later disturbances then spread across five cities within a week.

The Guardian and the London School of Economics’ joint inquiry argues that the rush to blame communication technology is nothing new:

The government mistakenly blamed social media such as Twitter and Facebook for the "viral" spread of the August 2011 riots. During the LA riots, rolling TV coverage was the scapegoat, while riots in France in 2005 were partly explained by reference to young people communicating via text message, email and blogs. (Newburn *et al.* 2010, p.)

The Guardian/LSE report cites scare stories from 1981 that, in Manchester and London, rioters were communicating using “£10 radios” – the Citizens Band radio fad which pre-dated cellphones by a decade. It argues that social media was as significant in the coordination of community resistance to robbery and arson as it was to the organization of disorder. The Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2011, p. 12) also argues that social media networks should not be shut down during any future disturbances. Evidence from several cities that social media were used to coordinate grass-roots “clean-up” campaigns in the immediate aftermath of the violence supports this position.

Riots and Brands

In contrast to the 1981 riots, attacks on retail and commercial premises were not confined to the inner city areas of high relative deprivation, and arguably this visibility in the commercial core triggered the subsequent punitive sentencing.

The Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2011) reflected on the rise of consumer brands and their impact on aspirations and as markers of individual self-esteem. They argue that we live in a society where conspicuous consumption and self-worth have become intrinsically interlinked. In interviews the desire to own goods which give the owner high status (branded trainers and digital gadgets) was seen as an important factor behind the looting, with certain brands and products repeatedly targeted:

Businesses and brands do not operate in a moral vacuum where right and wrong do not apply. We want to explore how ethical thinking influences the way business operates, especially given the challenging economic times we are now experiencing. Brands have a special relationship with their customer and the Panel is keen to explore how brands could use their powerful influence positively for the good of the community. (Riots Communities and Victims Panel 2011, p. 104)

There is an equal imperative for civil authorities to consider their own brand and identity; and Manchester responded to this.

I ♥ MCR

Immediately after the civil unrest of 9 August 2011, “Love Manchester” appeared. The city had launched a campaign utilizing the slogan derived from I ♥ NY. This widely imitated campaign originated as an initiative taken in a troubled decade for that city, in which local government debt impacted on services and perceptions. Countless cities, including Manchester, had already created their version of the iconic slogan, but the city council now placed it at the core of a campaign which also co-opted the same social media alleged to have been used by the rioters to avoid police and to coordinate attacks.

I ♥ Manchester was only one of a number of complementary initiatives emerging immediately in the aftermath of the disturbances in Manchester and Salford:¹

The I ♥ MCR campaign launched at the end of last week in response to the disturbances that took place on Tuesday 9 August, with the aim of promoting civic pride across Greater Manchester.

There are a number of events and initiatives going on in the city to encourage people to come into the centre and make the most of the shops, restaurants and bars and show their love for Manchester. (Comment at <http://beproudlovemanchester.com>, 22 August 2011)

Free parking on street and off street in the city center was offered, along with free tram travel, vouchers offered on-line and in the city's evening newspaper.

In addition to free entertainment across the central business district, the site promoted the "Manchester Moment", in effect a local authority sponsored flashmob at the center of the unrest in the Market Street shopping area:

If you are taking advantage of this Sunday's free travel into the city why not participate in the "Manchester Moment"?

The "Manchester Moment" will be a simple way of bringing people together to show the world the true face of the city. Shoppers will be given posters to hold aloft for the Moment, which takes place at 2 p.m. on Market Street. There will also be music and entertainment.

It is our way of showing the world that Manchester is back in business. All proud Mancunians are invited to Market Street, near American Apparel, to gather from 1.45 p.m. on Sunday to take part in the Manchester Moment at 2 p.m. (Comment at <http://beproudlovemanchester.com>, 22 August 2011)

¹ See <http://beproudlovemanchester.com>, www.ilovemcr.com, www.i-love-manchester.co.uk/ and www.facebook.com/IloveManchesterOnline.

Friday 26 August was designated “We Love MCR” day and those unable to attend were urged to take party by tweeting “messages of love for the city by including the hashtag #ILoveMCR in your message – and help put Manchester on the global trending map”.

More traditional events and branded apparel were also promoted, but the city had in effect co-opted the social media used both by both the rioters and the community resisters, building on a grass-roots community-level reaction to events. The co-optation of such spontaneous events by both authorities and media led to a heated on-line debate on the level of genuine as opposed to manipulated activity. Critics used terms such as “broom fascism” to describe the televised clean-up activities in affected locations, while some active volunteers made a point of displaying notices to the effect that they were not subscribing to the government’s “Big Society” slogan and agenda.²

New Infrastructure and New Momentum

Manchester maintains a strong affection for large infrastructure projects, and the £35 billion HS2 high speed rail project qualifies as a megaproject (Flyvbjerg *et al.* 2003). Construction could begin in 2017, following completion of the major Crossrail project in London, with the first trains running as far as Birmingham by 2025.

Manchester’s continuing aspirations are still evident. With the completion of its orbital motorway in 2000, the section of the M62 Mersey to Humber motorway, utilized to form the complete circuit, was renumbered to create the M60 in imitation of the M25 London orbital motorway.

Air transport and aerospace have been strong presences in the regions, with the opening of Barton Aerodrome in 1928 as the first municipal airport in the UK, to the present Manchester Airport, opened as “Ringway” just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. A second runway was added in 2001 in face of environmental activist opposition and site occupation. It is now the largest UK airport outside the London region and remains in public ownership through a holding company representing the ten local authorities of Greater Manchester, with Manchester City Council as the largest shareholder.

² See for example the heated discussions at <http://universityforstrategicoptimism.wordpress.com/2011/08/10/riotcleanup-or-riotwhitewash/>.

The Manchester ship canal is now privately owned by Peel Ports, whose plans include redevelopment, expansion and an increase in shipping from 8,000 containers a year to 100,000 by 2030, as part of their Atlantic Gateway project. The framework for this, agreed between Liverpool and Manchester and supported by the North-West Regional Development Agency (NWDA), aims to boost the economic potential of a region spanning from Merseyside to north Cheshire, Chester, Halton, Warrington and into Greater Manchester. With the abolition of the NWDA in April 2012, the private Peel Holdings has become a major proponent of these strategic plans for the region (Peel Holdings 2010). However, Peel's interests and objectives are not entirely in accord with those of the local authorities. As owners of the Trafford shopping center they opposed the adoption of a congestion charging system in Manchester, which was promoted vigorously by the city council, and as owners of Liverpool airport they have campaigned for the privatization of Manchester airport, currently owned jointly by the Manchester local authorities.

The Atlantic Gateway framework has been used to link a number of significant projects, including the Media City UK development. Situated on the banks of the Ship Canal, in neighboring Salford and close to Manchester city center, this development is reaching a critical mass after a long gestation with the arrival of significant departments of the BBC during 2011. The relocation of BBC radio news resources and other programming to Salford began in 2010 and greater visibility of Manchester and north-west England is evident at a national level.

The importation of a model used in both Dubai and South Korea, complete with the deputy director of the Seoul Media city, represents a traditional approach to job and capacity creation, building on existing but relatively limited capacities. However, the leveraging by local higher education institutions, with a faculty of the University of Salford relocated within the development, reflects an understanding of the role of intellectual capital in the so-called "knowledge economy". The expansion of the region's capacity in the mass media and social media through this support suggests the possibility of a convergence of the strands of social and technical innovation that have characterized Manchester's past.

Such a globally connected initiative fits with Kraetke's (2003) concept of an urban hinterworld which he defines as "the pattern of a city's relations with other cities across the world". He measures this by aggregating the level of service provision that is available in a city for doing business in another city. As a second tier

city in the context of the UK, Manchester's creative industries are linked to those in London which are in turn linked to the United States. Since the 1990s, high capacity information and communication technologies have allowed the almost instantaneous transfer of digital media for post-production work. Building on a long tradition of north-west media production, the visibility of Media City UK provides the prospect of more direct global networking that could transcend the territorial trap (Agnew 1994) of the national government's emphasis on "localism" and reassert Manchester's historic global prominence.

The local authorities have recovered some of the tools that had been denied them since the 1980s. The former Greater Manchester Council, abolished by the Thatcher administration in 1985, along with all other Metropolitan Counties, has been reconstituted on a new, lean legal basis. A new single legal entity allows coordination between the Greater Manchester authorities, which previously had been done through the voluntary Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.

The Combined Authority which came into being on 1 April 2011, complements the recent announcement of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership and will ensure a coordinated approach is delivered in the ten local authorities that make up the Manchester City Region. This sits alongside the agreement of local government across north-west England to continue to operate as "North-West England" following the abolition of the NWDA at a European level, where DG Regio deals in such levels of aggregation for funding purposes. These complementary initiatives are indicative of the level of proactive and reactive interventions necessary to the maintenance of a place brand in times of uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

In many ways Manchester retains its historic aspirations. The presence of nationally and internationally significant universities and research institutions in and around the city, and the convergence of technical and social innovation through the vehicle of Media City, indicate that the city retains its capacity for innovation and impact.

The city council has been close to successive Labour governments but remains very good at negotiating with all comers. Involvement in an abortive referendum on road charging, which promoted a more sophisticated but more complex version than the central London scheme, reflected its metropolitan aspirations. Despite the logic of

the road charging scheme – that it would fund the completion of the embryonic Metrolink light rail system – it is now being completed across the Greater Manchester region.

In the immediate aftermath of the disturbances of August 2011 Manchester local authorities deployed traditional communication forms as well as co-opting the social media identified by some commentators as central to the propagation of the unrest and criminality (Ball and Lewis 2011). These were combined into the existing repertoire of public events such as the “Manchester Mela” (www.manchestermela.co.uk/) and smaller local events.

These efforts sit within a continuing process of brand management and development in which Manchester, as a city within the reconstituted greater Manchester region and within the broader context of north-west England, was able to call upon a related set of nested brands and identities. Wider messages, directed at external audiences, continued through large-scale projects with which the city has long been associated. The shifts in local politics described by Cochrane (1988) and Quilley (2000) continue, and both public and private resources are now entwined in urban governance and service delivery, although not necessarily closely aligned.

This is exemplified at the street level by the privatized for-profit enforcement of council regulations. A significant part of Manchester’s “offer” to citizens to reoccupy the city center was the suspension of parking regulations which were only recently extended into the evening and weekends. The continued outsourcing of front line services and the ceding of enforcement to for-profit entities carries a logic which can undermine the wider objectives of local authorities, leading to a focus on rent-seeking behavior directed at replacing former financial resources. This is exemplified by the pre-Olympic environment in London where the enforcement of parking regulations for the entire city is being undertaken by a German based and French financed multinational corporation. Vigorous enforcement by a profit driven external agency creates a very different visitor experience than that sought through the impression management and branding initiatives of local authorities such as the “Olympic Borough of Hackney”, one that is no longer under the direct control of local authorities.

The process of corporatization and depoliticization continues with the familiar forms of corporate communication replacing democratic discourse. The cumulative

effect of this continuing erosion of this aspect of legitimation is falling voter turnout and ill-considered remedies such as directly elected mayors and police chiefs.

In the face of these internal tensions, the extent to which the “municipalization” of social media in campaigns such as that developed in Manchester under the immediate pressure of civil disorder can help to sustain a city and region identity and brand becomes a research topic of some significance.

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