Making Sheffield's heritage craft industry sustainable

Who we are

- Dr Innan Sasaki is Professor of Organisation and Work at Warwick Business School
- Gaby Harrison is this project's Research Assistant with an academic and personal interest in craft and culture.
- Daniel Carpenter is an Executive Director of the Heritage Crafts Association (HCA)
- Professor Davide Ravasi is a Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, UCL
- Funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

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HERITAGE CRAFTS

The Heritage Craft Industry

Economy

- The heritage craft industry is estimated to add £4.4 billion in gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy in 2012 (*Mapping Heritage Craft*, Creative & Cultural Skills).
- Recent research has shown that younger people are looking for experiential purchasing opportunities, to buy in-person or a product that comes with a story (*The Market for Craft*, 2020).
- New innovations are often inspired by traditional material and techniques.
- Italy's "traditional craft regions" support local economies by attracting a constant flow of visitors and exporting internationally. These local economies supply luxury brands.

Tourism and Local Pride

- Placemaking is important for two main reasons, first it creates **a sense of belonging** in the local community which will encourage residents to invest in local infrastructure. Also a unique local identity encourages **tourism**. People leave their homes to experience something different to their everyday, and the craftsperson lifestyle provides this idyllic escapism.
- In Kyoto, Japan the regional government aims to "protect the local heritage craft that is the nation's and the world's treasure" Therefore, the city's heritage is closely interlinked with the identity of the community.

Environment and sustainability

- If craftspeople have the opportunity to produce and sell locally this reduces emissions from transporting products, while also stimulating the local economy.
- Craft can promote a sustainable mindset among producers and consumers.

Health

- Craft can contribute to maintaining physical and mental health, and provide meaningfulness to work.

Education

- Part of the Levelling Up initiative is encouraging employers to take on apprentices, to create a generation of skilled workers without student debt. Heritage crafts lends itself to this scheme, particularly because the training and the resulting employment can be done in rural areas, which discourages migration to the more economically stable metropolises.
- The traditional craft regions of Italy are supported by local institutions, vocational schools and apprentice systems that ensure the preservation of unique skills and the economic sustainability of the sector.

But…

- HCA research from 2010 found that only 17.42% of local councils have an officer whose remit includes traditional craft. They also found that there is great regional disparity in these provisions and that overall there is a lack of understanding of traditional crafts.
- No UK policy safeguarding ICH and the problems in measuring heritage crafts, often local government aren’t sure whether they come under culture, or small businesses, or manufacturing.

Successful Craft Regions

- So far, we have identified some existing successful craft regions in the UK such as Somerset, Sussex and Northampton and established the key factors that have engendered this success.

- These regions are successful in comparison to the UK as a whole. It is for this reason we use a wide variety of regions to compare with, each exemplary in their own key factor.
- According to our analysis, Sheffield shares a lot of these factors and has been known as a craft region in the past. However, recent research suggests that lack of support from local government is putting Sheffield's craft industry at risk.

Sheffield: Potential Craft Region

- Sheffield's **landscape** takes centre-stage in local tourism and cultural strategies, dubbing itself the Outdoor City. However, craft is part of the landscape and is currently an untapped resource.
- As more modern innovation and tech companies set up in Sheffield, more young professionals are moving to the city. These young people are becoming a large market for heritage crafts, as they look for more experiential purchases.
- Sheffield remains to be the metalcraft centre of the UK, still today there is a large concentration of craftspeople in the centre. However, these craftspeople feel overlooked and under supported.
- All these success factors already exist in Sheffield, but it needs local government's support to bring it all together.

Recommendations

- We would like to help create additional cultural and economic value for Sheffield's through heritage craft.
- Our recommendations are designed to be cheap and easy, with a high return on investment on the local economy and regional identity.
- Equally, we believe that implementing these recommendations foster long-term relationships between local government and craftspeople so that both parties continue to benefit for many years to come.

Thank you all for listening!