GREG RICHARDS and LIAN DUIF

SMALL CITIES WITH BIG DREAMS

Creative Placemaking and Branding Strategies

Routledge

Small Cities with Big Dreams

How can small cities make an impact in a globalizing world dominated by 'world cities' and urban development strategies aimed at increasing agglomeration? This book addresses the challenges of smaller cities trying to put themselves on the map, attract resources and initiate development.

Placemaking has become an important tool for driving urban development that is sensitive to the needs of communities. This volume examines the development of creative placemaking practices that can help to link small cities to external networks, stimulate collaboration and help them make the most of the opportunities presented by the knowledge economy. The authors argue that the adoption of more strategic, holistic placemaking strategies that engage all stakeholders can be a successful alternative to copying bigger places. Drawing on a range of examples from around the world, they analyse small city development strategies and identify key success factors.

This book focuses on the case of 's-Hertogenbosch, a small Dutch city that used cultural programming to link itself to global networks and stimulate economic, cultural, social and creative development. It advocates the use of cultural programming strategies as a more flexible alternative to traditional top-down planning approaches and as a means of avoiding copying the big city.

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Poor is the spirit that always uses the inventions of others and invents nothing themselves.

Hieronymus Bosch (*c*.1450–1516)
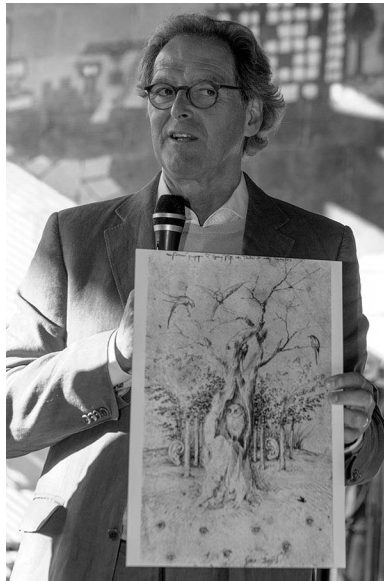
Ton Rombouts, Mayor of 's-Hertogenbosch with the picture 'The wood has ears, the field has eyes' by Hieronymus Bosch with his inscription: 'Poor is the spirit that always uses the inventions of others and invents nothing themselves' (armzalig is de geest die steeds gebruik maakt van de vondsten van anderen en zelf niets bedenkt) (photo: Ben Nienhuis).

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Preface

"Rotterdam Is Many Cities" was the slogan adopted by the Dutch port city for the construction of its programme for the European Capital of Culture in 2001. The slogan was devised by Intendant Bert van Meggelen based on a reading of Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities*. The idea was that every city, big or small, is actually many cities—the city of work, the city of leisure, the city of culture, the city by day, the city by night, the city of the migrant, the tourist, the artist. It was within this programme in 2001 that a major exhibition of the works of Dutch medieval painter Hieronymus Bosch was staged, attracting over 220,000 visitors. This in turn became the inspiration for a programme of events in the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch 15 years later, on the 500th anniversary of the painter's death. It is perhaps no surprise that Rotterdam was successful with its version of the Bosch exhibition: it is a relatively large city (for the Netherlands) and it also owns works by Bosch. But for its much smaller and unpronounceable cousin, 's-Hertogenbosch, staging an exhibition was at first sight an impossible task: it had no reputation as an art city, little in the way of resources, and (most importantly) not one single artwork by Bosch.

This book tells the story of how 's-Hertogenbosch achieved what the *Guardian* newspaper termed a miracle: staging a world-class cultural programme with no apparent means at its disposal. We draw on the experience of the programme developed in 's-Hertogenbosch, as well as examples from other cities around the world, to illustrate how creative placemaking can help to improve small cities. We analyse the different elements of creative placemaking practice to show how any small city can potentially change its fortunes and put itself on the map.

This story would not have been possible without the hard work of a large number of people, and this book is no different. We were lucky to be able to draw on the experience and knowledge of a number of key informants who were engaged in different aspects of the placemaking process in 's-Hertogenbosch over the years. In particular we are grateful to the former Mayor of 's-Hertogenbosch, Ton Rombouts, for his insightful overview of the development of the city over the past 20 years—also for his encouragement to persevere with this project. We also got valuable

input for the book from Ad 's-Gravesande, Director of the Hieronymus Bosch 500 Foundation; Joks Janssen, Director of BrabantKennis and Professor of Spatial Planning and Heritage at Wageningen University; Jos Vrancken, General Director of the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions; and Wim van der Donk, Commissioner of the King for the Province of North Brabant. In addition we are grateful to Lénia Marques, who made valuable comments on the initial draft of the book, and to Ben Nienhuis and Marc Bolsius, who gave permission for the use of photographic material.

Given the immense variety and diversity of small cities, a book such as this can never claim to be exhaustive. Inevitably we have made a selection of cases based on our own experience and knowledge. The central case is the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch, where we have worked for many years researching and developing programmes. Many of the other cases are also drawn from Europe, which is our principal area of study. We also focus on cultural programmes, because we believe that these offer considerable opportunities for cities in terms of creative placemaking potential. As a whole, the cities presented in this book reflect our belief that all small cities can progress if they apply themselves to achieving big dreams.

1 Small Cities, Big Challenges

Introduction

Cities have been profoundly affected by the challenges of economic restructuring and positioning in a globalizing world. They have struggled to reshape themselves physically to create new opportunities, or to rebrand themselves to create distinction and attract attention. Their strategies often draw on a limited range of "models", taken from large industrial cities undergoing economic restructuring, such as the Baltimore waterfront development or the "Guggenheim effect" in Bilbao.

What about smaller cities that may lack the tangible resources and expertise to undertake such grandiose schemes? How can small cities put themselves on the global map? They don't have the muscle and influence of their larger neighbours, although they struggle with the same challenges. We argue that the adoption of more strategic, holistic placemaking strategies that engage all stakeholders can be a successful alternative to copying bigger cities.

We use the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands to illustrate how small places can grab attention and achieve growth, prosperity and social and cultural gains. This provincial city of 150,000 people put itself on the world stage with a programme of events themed on the life and works of medieval painter Hieronymus Bosch (or *Jheronimus Bosch* in Dutch), who was born, worked, and died in the city. For decades the city did nothing with his legacy, even though his paintings were made there. All the paintings left long ago, leaving the city with no physical Bosch legacy, and no apparent basis for building a link with him.

Eventually the 500th anniversary of Bosch's death provided the catalyst to use this medieval genius as a brand for the city. The lack of artworks by Bosch required the city to adopt the same kind of creative spirit that his paintings embody. By developing the international Bosch Research and Conservation Project, 's-Hertogenbosch placed itself at the hub of an international network of cities housing his surviving works, spread across Europe and North America. The buzz created around the homecoming exhibition of Bosch artworks generated headlines around

Photo 1.1 The "Hieronymus Bosch: Visions of Genius" exhibition in 's-Hertogen-
        bosch (photo: Lian Duif).

the world and a scramble for tickets that saw the museum remaining
open for 124 hours in the final week. A staggering 422,000 visitors
came, grabbing tenth place in the *Art Newspaper's* exhibition rankings,
alongside cities like Paris, London, and New York. The UK newspaper
The Guardian said that the city had "achieved the impossible" by staging
"one of the most important exhibitions of our century".

This "miracle" did not happen overnight. Many people worked
long and hard to make 2016 an unforgettable year. An idea that was
originally met with scepticism grew into a national event, with major
cultural, social, and economic effects. 's-Hertogenbosch put itself on the
global map. But it doesn't end there. As one participant said: "Dare to
keep on dreaming big dreams. It is not over. You can create new dreams
again" (Afdeling Onderzoek & Statistiek 2017: 9).

's-Hertogenbosch is not an isolated example. All over the globe smaller
cities and places are making their mark in different ways – through events,
new administrative models, community development programmes, inno-
vative housing, new transport solutions, and other creative strategies. For
example, Chemainus (British Colombia, population 4,000) was made
world-famous by its outdoor gallery of murals (see Box 9.1). The for-
merly run-down city of Dubuque, Iowa (population 58,000) revitalized
its Mississippi riverfront and now attracts well over 1,500,000 visitors a
year (see Box 7.2). Hobart in Tasmania (population 200,000) has been
rejuvenated by the MONA museum, as well as new events and festivals
(see Box 2.1). Over one million people, including 130,000 international
visitors, attended the 2016 Setouchi International Art Festival, which is
held on twelve small islands in the Seto Inland Sea, Japan.

Although small places can be very successful in regenerating themselves, most attention is still focused on big cities; places with big problems, big plans, and big budgets. These are the cities that can hire starchitects and international consultants. They go for big, bold solutions, because they have little choice. Small cities may not have problems of the same scale, but they face their own challenge: how do they get noticed amongst the clamour of cities vying for attention? They can't stage the Olympic Games, they don't all have philanthropists to fund a museum, and they can't afford to hire Frank Gehry or Richard Florida – so what can they do?

They can begin to play to their own strengths. They can mobilize the tangible and intangible resources they do have, link to networks, use their small scale creatively. This book highlights how small cities can become big players. As Giffinger et al. (2007: 3) note with respect to "medium-sized cities":

> Contrary to the larger metropolises, relatively little is known about efficient positioning and effective development strategies based on the endogenous potential of medium-sized cities. Therefore a recommendable approach is to draw lessons from successful development strategies applied in other medium-sized cities tackling similar challenges and issues.

We follow this advice by reviewing what successful small cities have done, and drawing lessons for others.

We also highlight the possibilities created by the new economy. In recent decades, the intangible resources of cities have become far more important in their positioning and success. Cities have a wider range of tools and materials available, as well as a broader range of potential partners. In the "collaborative economy" it is no longer necessary to own resources: you can borrow and collaboratively develop many of the tools you need. This book outlines the implications of these changes for the small city and the possibilities they present.

This chapter reviews the place of the small city in the contemporary urban field and sketches the challenges and opportunities they face. We hope the chapters that follow will help inspire a new developmental agenda for the small city.

Throwing the Spotlight on Small Cities

There has been a lot of attention paid to cities in recent decades. With 3.3 billion people now living in cities, the 21st century has been dubbed the "urban century" (Kourtit et al. 2015). Most of this attention has been focused on large cities, particularly the fast-growing mega-cities such as São Paulo, Tokyo, New York, and London. The big names in

urban studies and planning also tend to focus on the biggest places. One list of "Top 20 Urban Planning Books (Of All Time)" features texts by Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford, Peter Hall, and Kevin Lynch, among others, dealing with cities such as New York, San Francisco, Montreal, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Paris, New Delhi, Moscow, and Hong Kong (Planetizen 2016). Anne Power's (2016) book *Cities for a Small Continent: International Handbook of City Recovery* covers cities such as Bilbao, Sheffield, Lille, Turin, and Leipzig. These are not exactly small cities, with an average population of almost 750,000.

In spite of the volume of work on large places, recent years have also seen growing academic and professional interest in smaller places. This trend became evident around 2005, with a surge in books dealing specifically with the situation of small cities. Almost all of these volumes contrasted the position of small cities with those of the metropolis. Garrett-Petts's (2005) *Small Cities Book* argues that Culture (with a capital C) was equated with big city life. In subsequent studies of cities of under 100,000 people for the Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance (CURA), Garrett-Petts found that small cities tended to position themselves either as a scaled-down metropolis or as a small city with a big-town feel. Collected volumes by Bell and Jayne (2006) and Ofori-Amoah (2006) also paid specific attention to small cities and the urban experience "beyond the metropolis". Daniels et al. (2007) produced the first *Small Town Planning Handbook* (now in its third edition). At the same time Baker (2007) produced a guide to destination branding for small cities. A small-cities research agenda emerged, driven at least in part by what Jayne et al. (2010: 1408) argued was "[d]issatisfaction with urban theory dominated by study of 'the city' defined in terms of a small number of 'global' cities". This new agenda for research on small cities spawned yet more studies, with Connolly (2012) looking at the plight of industrial small cities, and Norman (2013) examining the effect of globalization, immigration, and other changes on small cities in the USA. He concluded that the influence of such factors is more nuanced in small cities than in their larger counterparts.

In 2012 Anne Lorentzen and Bas van Heur edited a volume on the *Cultural Political Economy of Small Cities*, arguing that smaller cities and their often distinct cultural strategies had been largely ignored. Criticizing the "metropolitan bias" of scholars such as Alan Scott and Richard Florida, they focused on culture and leisure, which they saw as key drivers of development in recent decades. Wuthnow (2013) also studied *Small-Town America*, through over 700 in-depth interviews, and concluded that the "smallness" of these places shapes their social networks, behaviour, and civic commitments and produces a strong sense of attachment. Walmsley and Kading (2017) also considered the plight of small cities in Canada confronting serious social issues in the

post-1980s neoliberal climate. They conclude that while some cities have managed to develop inclusionary responses to external change, others have singularly failed. As well as these general reviews of the small-city condition, specific small cities have also been analysed. Trenton, New Jersey, is seen by Richman (2010) as a "lost city" in the post-industrial age. Dikeman (2016) charts Mayor Dan Brooks's career in North College Hill, Ohio, showing how he helped to put this small city on the map. A more global view is offered by Kresl and Ietri (2016), who use data from both the USA and Europe in their analysis of *Smaller Cities in a World of Competitiveness*. In the contemporary urban world, they point out, one of the imperatives is competing for attention.

There is clearly more attention focused on smaller cities now, although there is still a lack of coherent analysis. In particular, there is relatively little known about the process of small-city development – how and why particular small cities succeed. To start addressing this question, we first need to look at the urban field as a whole, and the position of smaller cities within it.

The Global Urban Field

In 2014, the United Nations counted 28 mega-cities of over 10 million people, containing around 12% of the global population. However, there are many more smaller cities than large ones: around 43% of the world's population live in cities of 300,000 inhabitants or fewer. In the European Union, approximately half of the cities have a population of between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. In the year 2000, slightly more than half of the USA's population lived in settlements with fewer than 25,000 people or in rural areas (Kotkin 2012). These places of fewer than 25,000 residents make up the vast majority of "urbanized areas" in the US. As the Atlantic City Lab (2012) notes: "Of the 3,573 urban areas in the U.S. (both urbanized areas and urban clusters), 2,706 of them are small towns" – or almost 80%.

As Horacio Capel (2009) noted, what "small" means depends on context. Studies in Europe (Laborie 1979), Latin America, and North America all have differing size categories for "small" or "medium" cities. "Small" might therefore be viewed more as a state of mind: Bell and Jayne (2006), for example, describe small cities as having limited urbanity and centrality, so that they have limited political and economic reach beyond their immediate surroundings, matched by limited aspirations, and self-identification as "small" places. Language also affects our idea of what the city is and therefore what constitutes "smallness". For example, the English language distinguishes between a city and a town, a distinction which is often (although not always) related to size and function. But this distinction is not reflected in the use of the words *ville* in French or *ciudad* in Spanish.

Capel (2009: 7) further notes that the competitive situation of small cities has changed in recent decades:

> In the current situation of generalized urbanization, the meaning of middle and small cities is changing, with respect to what happened in the past. While it could long be asserted that urban growth was a very positive fact (the larger, the better), since the 1960s, when the controversy about growth limits was raised, this perspective began to change.

These days there is more attention paid to balanced growth – an area in which small cities may have significant advantages in terms of innovation, easy access to knowledge and culture, links to areas of dynamic economic development, and above all being very agreeable places to live in (Capel 2009).

The recognition of these qualities of small cities means that the population decline that characterized many smaller cities until recently has now been reversed in many places. Smaller cities can offer a better quality of life and as a result they are often growing faster. "Many of the fastest growing cities in the world are relatively small urban settlements" (United Nations 2014). Europe has witnessed population shifts from urban to rural and from larger to smaller cities (Dijkstra et al. 2013: 347):

> large cities no longer play the driving role in the second decade of modern globalization since the turn of the millennium that they did during the 1990s, the first decade of the modern globalization. Economic growth in Europe is increasingly driven by predominantly intermediate and predominantly rural regions, as well as predominantly urban regions.

In spite of the relative importance of smaller cities, according to Kresl and Ietri (2016) there has been a lack of theorization and comparative research. This means we know a lot about larger cities and their problems, but a lot less about small cities and their challenges and opportunities. There is some evidence to suggest that we cannot simply apply what we know about large cities to smaller ones. Size matters, because the growth of cities produces qualitative changes in the mixture of residents, their housing, transport, and other infrastructure, and the provision of services. Larger cities provide the density to support a level of service provision that smaller places find it hard to replicate. In the Netherlands, Meijers (2008) concluded that simply adding small places together does not provide the same level of amenities per head of the population as found in larger cities.

Small cities are therefore qualitatively different from large ones. This is partly a question of population, and also of levels of influence,

connectedness, or the ability to attract jobs and investment. Size matters, because cities increasingly need to compete for resources. In the past, smaller cities were relatively protected by national structures from competition, but "smaller cities now confront greater challenges than has ever been the case", while the need to plan strategically and mobilize assets has never been greater (Kresl and Ietri 2016: 7). Giffinger et al. (2007) underline the increasingly competitive context for small cities: "changes in economic, social and institutional differences make cities more similar in their conditions and competition is scaled down from the national level to the level of cities and regions." So small cities need a strategy to compete effectively.

In this competitive struggle, Kresl and Ietri (2016) argue, small cities have disadvantages, and also important advantages. The main disadvantages are:

- lack of recognition and distinctiveness
- lack of vision;
- risk aversion;
- lack of strategic planning;
- lack of endogenous resources;
- spatial disadvantage, such as lack of density.

Smaller cities are also often ill-equipped to deal with such challenges. Renn (2013) reports on the plight of many smaller "post-industrial cities" who "for the most part [...] have really struggled to reinvent themselves". De-industrialization has left deep scars in many smaller places, which have often lost investment and talent and find it hard to recover:

> And even with growth, the most ambitious and best-educated people will still tend to leave places like Hull (UK). Their size, location and demographics means that they will never offer the sorts of restaurants or shops that the middle classes like.
>
> (Renn 2013)

The implication is that small cities find it difficult to be as strategic or creative as large ones. This is often because large cities face much greater challenges, and so they have to confront and attempt to solve their problems. Smaller cities can often be comfortable places to live and to visit, and this can also lead to a lack of ambition. So why should small cities change? Why should they nurture big dreams? Does every city need a big dream?

Apart from the basic competitive argument, which holds that standing still will eventually lead to decline, there is also an increasing need for small cities to adapt themselves to the changing external environment. Global communication systems and the "network society"

(Castells 1996) provide new opportunities for small cities. It is no longer necessary to live in the heart of London or New York to be well-connected. Growing numbers of people can work from anywhere, so why not from a small city with a higher quality of life? In fact, we argue in this book that the changing environment of cities is also changing the way they need to act. The possibilities of linking and collaborating with other cities in the "we-economy" (Hesseldahl 2017) means that cities should increasingly think about their role as platforms for a wide range of economic, social, and cultural processes that can combine to develop new business models, new ways of doing things. For small cities it is not just about falling behind in a competitive race, but also about seizing the new opportunities offered by a rapidly changing world.

The Advantages of Being Small

In the new economy, much emphasis has been placed on the role of "soft infrastructure" such as networking, meeting spaces, cultural clusters, and "atmosphere" (see Chapter 2). This is also an area where small cities can develop advantages:

> Contrary to what one might expect, the population size of a city does not determine its performance in culture and creativity. On average, small and medium-sized cities score relatively well compared to larger ones, particularly on "Cultural Vibrancy" and "Enabling Environment".
>
> (Montalto et al. 2017: 23)

Small cities therefore have some important advantages over larger ones, which according to Kresl and Ietri (2016) can include:

- location – they are often close to resources important for traditional industries;
- cultural assets;
- high quality of life;
- high levels of happiness;
- higher-education resources (universities were often founded in smaller places);
- high social capital;
- start-ups and innovation.

There is a growing body of evidence for these advantages of living in small cities. For example, Okulicz-Kozaryn (2017) found that smaller cities in the USA have higher levels of happiness, or subjective well-being. He concludes that "people are happiest in smallest areas despite that these places seem largely forgotten by academics, policy makers, and

businesses" (p. 144). This is a pattern also evident in many European countries. For example, in the Netherlands Marlet (2016) concludes that recent years have seen the rise of "monumental cities", which are characterized by an attractive built heritage, with a highly educated population. Many of these cities are small, such as 's-Hertogenbosch. Because of their attractive cityscapes and the presence of well-heeled consumers, they have more culture, better restaurants, and fewer empty shopfronts than other small cities (Garretsen and Marlet 2017).

Lorenzen and Andersen (2007) also found that the creative class tended to be more prevalent in middle-sized cities of between 70,000 and 1.2 million people. They argue larger cities are unattractive because "the creative class may respond particularly adversely to urban congestion problems" (p. 5). In the UK, Lee and Rodríguez-Pose (2015) analyse data from the British Small Business Survey and conclude that there is little evidence that firms in larger "creative cities" are more innovative than those elsewhere. In Canada, Denis-Jacob (2012: 110) also found that the presence of cultural workers is not clearly related to city size:

> While most cultural workers remain concentrated in major metropolitan areas, some small cities are also successful in attracting them. Small places such as Stratford (Ontario), Canmore (Alberta), Port Hope (Ontario) and Nanaimo (BC) have indeed a high share of their working population employed in cultural industries.

Oliver (2000: 361) argued that social capital, measured in terms of civic engagement, tends to be higher in smaller US cities. "Controlling for both individual- and city-level characteristics, people in larger cities are much less likely to contact officials, attend community or organizational meetings, or vote in local elections […] People in big cities are less likely to be recruited for political activity by neighbors and are less interested in local affairs."

Changing residential and lifestyle preferences are therefore helping many small cities to grow. In the future the size disadvantage of smaller cities may also be overcome because of changes in technology in terms of production, transportation, and communication, which will erode the current advantage of large cities (Okulicz-Kozaryn 2017). The decline of central government financial transfers also means that larger cities will have less advantage from these in future. Okulicz-Kozaryn (2017) also argues that the advantages of smaller places are likely to increase, thanks to our growing ability to work from anywhere. So it seems that small is the new big. As McKnight (2017) points out:

> Small towns are hot. They're hip. They're attracting investment. Am I crazy? Don't think so and here's why. Large urban centers and small towns have more in common than you may first think. Big

cities are really a mosaic of small towns (neighbourhoods) that share a common economic market.

This highlights the point that the areas in big cities studied by Richard Florida, Sharon Zukin, and other urbanists are often really "urban villages". These give people at least some of the benefits of living in a small place, even in the heart of the big city.

McKnight also argues that other factors are reducing the gap between big and small. Technology has rendered the work place and markets more mobile and flexible, and choices about where to live or locate a business are increasingly based on personal preferences and the ability to attract talent with fewer geographic market constraints. In particular, millennials are moving into small urban centres, renovating old industrial spaces, creating art districts and co-working spaces. They want a small-town community feel, with the amenities commonly found in larger urban centres and at lower cost (McKnight 2017).

The important question for the many people living in smaller cities is – how can these places deliver a better quality of life than big cities? The answer seems to be that if small cities can generate sufficient economic opportunities, then the inherent quality of life advantages of being small will win out. The economic dynamism of small cities is also becoming evident:

> Forbes' Best Cities For Jobs survey […] found that small and mid-sized metropolitan areas, with populations of 1 million or less, accounted for 27 of the 30 urban regions in the country that are adding jobs at the fastest rate.
>
> (Kotkin 2012)

In this climate, as Kresl and Ietri (2016: 25) argue, "the fascination with mega-cities […] is therefore beginning to wear a bit thin". Bell (2017) even asks whether big cities should be learning from small ones. He argues that small cities are more nimble, and can therefore act more quickly, if they have the structures in place. They are friendlier, more sociable, and there is a greater sense of local community. They integrate smart and sustainable development into their future planning and are able to attract talent. And they are able to make an impact on a larger proportion of the population through their projects and programmes.

Getting Back to the Human Scale

The success of small cities or older cities relative to newer industrial centres can arguably be explained by their retention of human scale. Because of their relatively compact form, they offer many spaces where residents and visitors can interact. They are readable and navigable for

people on foot. This is one of the key reasons why many American cities are now redeveloping or creating new downtown areas (e.g. West Jordan, Utah; Lakewood, Colorado; Carmel, Indiana; Bend, Oregon).

Danish planner Jan Gehl (2010) underlines the importance of designing public space to make people feel welcome, to enable them to interact. The key is to invite people to walk, bike, and stay in public space, increasing safety, sustainability, and liveliness. This idea is being implemented in many cities around the globe. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) identifies a rising concern with the need for human scale in cities, with groups such as the New Yorkers for a Human Scale City group (NYHSC) seeking "to guide future development towards a human-scaled future – one that protects rather than destroys New York's historic fabric". New Yorkers for a Human Scale City (NYHSC) is a coalition of 84 neighbourhood, public space, and civic organizations. According to Montgomery (2013), promoting human-scale development is basically a choice between two planning options – either concentrating on constructing buildings, thereby increasing corporate wealth and ultimately GDP, or focusing on mixed-use and human-scale public places which foster community well-being.

As PPS points out, human scale in any given community depends upon what that community perceives as human scale. Very often it refers to the need to prioritize pedestrians over cars, as Jan Gehl argues. More pedestrians mean more human interaction, which positively affects well-being as well as health. However, as Dix (1986: 274) pointed out, the advantages of small size and human scale go much further:

> The positive advantages of smaller, secondary settlements lie in the possibility of developing in them a sense of identity, a corporate spirit and outlook covering the whole population. This may not only make government easier but also encourage civic development initiatives and responsibility.

Box 1.1 Is there an optimum size for cities?

For many scholars, size continues to be an important factor in determining the quality of urban life. The studies quoted above on city size and happiness, social capital, and the presence of the creative class all seem to suggest some kind of "optimum" city size above or below which the quality of life will begin to drop. In the early 1970s some studies suggested that the optimum city size at which the cost of public goods was minimized was around 250,000. In this "traditional" view, large cities are good for firms and bad for people (Albouy 2008).

(Continued)

More recent research that considers the "soft" factors of location comes up with differing estimates of optimum size. For Lorenzen and Andersen (2007), the cities with the highest density of creative class numbered between 70,000 and 1.2 million inhabitants. Okulicz-Kozaryn (2017) seems to suggest that over a threshold of around 10,000 people, happiness decreases with size. He also quotes research from Chinese cities suggesting that optimum happiness is reached at between 200,000 and 500,000 people.

So there is little agreement on what the optimum city size might be, from either an economic or a well-being perspective. There is also little agreement on what constitutes a "small city". Kresl and Ietri (2016) studied "small cities" of between 250,000 and 2 million, whereas the Small City Economic Dynamism Index in the United States includes cities of between 10,000 and 500,000. In Canada, Garrett-Petts (2005) analysed small cities of fewer than 100,000 people.

In recent years, however, these advantages of smaller cities have been contrasted with calls for larger cities that can provide greater agglomeration advantages. For example, Richard Florida (2017) champions the role of "superstar cities" in creating wealth. What do we need – smaller, more intimate cities, or larger, superstar cities? Is there an optimum city size that supports a good quality of life and strong economic performance (Box 1.1)?

How Can Small Cities Compete?

One important question is whether small cities can compete effectively with larger places. Getz (2017) sees cities as playing in different leagues: "Cities and destinations compete in 'leagues' with parameters set by their resources, venues, willingness to take risks and professionalism. If they want to advance into a higher league they will have to invest heavily." However, Evans and Foord (2006) argue that small cities cannot compete effectively if they think like big cities: "by thinking big, small cities have been seduced into entering a culture-led city competition in which the stakes are high and the prospects of success limited" (p. 151). The problem, according to Evans and Foord, is "reliance on flagship cultural buildings, iconic cultural institutions, cultural and heritage quarters alongside cultural events, festivals and markets […] to kickstart both physical regeneration and visitor economics" (p. 152) – a reliance which is pushing cities towards a consumption-based economy and ignoring social goals. Problems emerge when cultural projects are

neither home-grown nor locally embedded, and small cities engage in copycat strategies.

Similar patterns emerge in Canada, where Lewis and Donald (2009) argue that creative capital theory has a narrow view of creativity and provides a discourse of "creativity competition" in which smaller cities are bound to fail. The indicators used to measure the creativity of cities tend to favour big-city features such as technology and innovation poles, large corporations, and immigrants, which "ultimately prevents smaller Canadian cities from becoming 'success stories'" (Lewis and Donald 2009: 34).

Previous studies have suggested two basic strategies by which small cities can effectively compete with bigger ones. One is through specialization, such as the development of creative experiences, creative spaces, and innovative products, especially for niche markets (van Heur 2012). The other is by "borrowing size" from their larger neighbours. By working with nearby larger cities, small cities can "punch above their weight" (Kresl and Ietri 2016: 12). However, both strategies are essentially framed by size. The first avoids direct competition with big places by sticking to small niches, and the second makes small places bigger in order to compete.

However, small cities don't need to become bigger cities or find small ponds to be big fishes in. In this book we outline a number of alternative strategies that take into account the new possibilities being offered by changes in the global economy. In the contemporary network society, a number of shifts are converging to provide new possibilities:

- Intangible resources are becoming more important. This means that some advantages of size (such as having more physical resources) are declining.
- Collaboration with other cities and citizens is more important in urban competitiveness. You don't have to be big to collaborate, particularly as this makes it possible to access resources that are above your size. You can use co-creation and coopetition strategies to reach your goals.
- The shift from comparative advantage to competitive advantage places more emphasis on how you use the resources you have or can obtain.
- In the network society, power is related not just to the content you have, but also to the use of networks and particularly the development of hubs and platforms to distribute knowledge and other resources.

The new complexities of the changing role of the city in the network society mean we need to rethink the interrelationships between cities, their inhabitants, their resources, and the ways in which cities compete

in the urban field. In the past this has been analysed largely in terms of industries, talent, or amenities. These factors tend to accrue more readily to bigger cities, whereas the advantages of smaller places can be found primarily in the relational and creative spheres.

Small cities need not grow physically to compete with their bigger neighbours. Instead of quantity, they should grow in terms of quality. They should try and find fields in which to excel, and acquire the benefits of size without physical growth. New opportunities for doing this are now emerging in the form of the networks which are connecting people, organizations, and places in ways which were not possible before. The increased circulation of information and ideas has sparked developments such as the rise of the collaborative economy, which enables ownership and control to be conceived of in new ways. To use the potential provided by the network society, small cities should think about how their relationships, both internal and external, can deliver value and help them to achieve their ambitions.

Small Places Creating Big Dreams

Capel (2009) emphasizes that cities need projects. Without clearly formulated projects that are widely accepted by citizens, the city can't advance. A small city needs initiatives and projects for the future. There are plenty of possibilities for endogenous development through social, intellectual, and cultural relationships in small cities, if they have the imagination to succeed. The need for endogenous development, for building from within, is important economically and psychologically – cities need their own ideas, their own dreams. As Dutch soccer star Johan Cruyff once remarked: "It's better to go down with your own vision than with someone else's." If you follow somebody else's dream, it is easy to blame them. If you follow your own dream, you can make your own path – and be more motivated to follow it.

Overcoming the disadvantages of being small means that smaller cities need to work harder on their dreams. Getting cities to work harder is a question of creating goals, giving direction and focus, and maintaining momentum. For large cities, the goals are often evident – they often urgently need to house people, provide jobs, organize efficient transport, reduce crime. Because smaller places don't usually have the impulse of huge problems, they need a catalyst to create movement – dreams to follow.

A big dream doesn't need a vast scale – it just needs the right scope, form, and tone to move people. The vision and the plan should be holistic; they need to engage everybody, not just one group. This is also one advantage that small cities have – ideas can more easily encompass the city as a whole. In a city with human scale big dreams don't need to compete with other dreams – they have the room to mature and grow.

This is important because one of the arguments in this book is that placemaking involves a synergy between top-down and bottom-up processes, with a considerable investment of effort, resources, and time to make it work (see Chapter 8). The city as a whole needs to be involved, otherwise it is unlikely that the dream will take root.

Marano (2005) argues that small places need to first develop a vision:

> the most successful towns, large or small, are those with a clear vision of what they want to be. Whether it is a town like Waynesville, Ohio (pop. 2,500), the "Antiques Capitol of the Midwest;" Sprague, Connecticut (pop. 3,000), "A 19th Century Town Restored for 21st Century Commerce and Recreation;" or Berthoud, Colorado (pop. 4,839), "The Garden Spot of Colorado," growth management starts with community vision.

As part of establishing a vision, successful communities usually develop a strategic planning initiative (we provide a summary of some of these visions in Chapter 3). Armed with a vision and a plan, a city can then go about formulating measures and processes allowing it to manage its growth and become the place it wants to be. How can it put these processes in motion?

One of the characteristics of many of the successful smaller places is that they have inspirational leaders. As Bernstein and McCarthy (2005: 15) note: "Some places develop despite a lack of natural attraction or specific economic function. They do so because of visionary leadership and effective co-operative programmes of development." Many big cities have done it; now some smaller ones are doing it too, with the help of big thinking.

Landry (2015) identifies "cities of ambition", which are often smaller cities located in peripheral regions, such as Östersund, Tampere, Aarhus, or Umeå in Scandinavia. "They have all done things well beyond their expected circumstances," and their thinking is strategic. These places are creative, and there are many leaders and many levels of leadership. Most importantly, these places get things done. Doing things is important, as Pratt suggests: Landry's "thesis is not about consumption, but about process. It is about an inclusive and participatory city where arts and culture are a means and a practice of place-making and living" (Pratt 2008: 35).

Our vision for cities is not based on size or location: we argue that every city has potential, no matter where, no matter how small.

Towards a Creative Mode of Placemaking

Placemaking is different from place marketing, which seeks to use marketing tools and a customer-oriented philosophy to sell the city to

customers (Eshuis et al. 2014), or to turn a place into a destination. Placemaking, on the other hand also involves non-market processes and an effort to improve the quality of the lives of all those who use the place. An attractive external image should be a by-product of placemaking, not the goal. If a place is made more liveable for those who are already there, it should also become attractive to others.

For this reason we have framed placemaking as a form of social practice, or a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several interconnected elements, such as objects, forms of thinking, understandings, know-how, states of emotion, and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002). Shove et al. (2012) identified three basic elements of a social practice as materials (things, technologies, resources), meanings (symbolic meanings, ideas, and aspirations), and competences (skill, know-how, and technique). All three elements are essential to the practice. In driving, for example, the material object, the car, is needed to drive, and so are the competences or knowledge of driving and the meaning that is created by driving (the car as means of transport, status symbol, etc). An important element of studying practices is that attention shifts from the actors themselves to how the practice is constituted or "carried" by its performers. In the case of driving this would include an understanding of how driving becomes to be seen as an essential part of life by many, how attached we become to our cars, and how these support people's lifestyles and identities, for example. The social practice of driving as a whole explains why increasing numbers of cars choke our roads every day and why people ignore more sustainable alternatives.

We recognize, as Shove et al. (2012: 15) indicate, working with only three components or elements "is at the expense of simplifying what social practices are about" (Spaargaren et al. 2016: 7). In spite of this risk of oversimplification, our analysis of different cases shows the importance of combining these three elements across a wide range of placemaking cases.

By considering the materials, meanings, and competences in the practice of placemaking, we can consider how cities are made. Cities also develop certain ways of doing things, or practices. The practices of placemaking have often been dominated by the needs and habits of big cities. This volume attempts to frame practices of placemaking that are suited to the needs of small cities as well (away from models, megaprojects, and starchitects and towards human scale and appropriate ways of doing).

Our approach to placemaking tries to consider the different dimensions of place and how these articulate with processes of change. We have therefore adapted the social-practice model of Shove et al. (2012) into a form more suited to the context of cities. Mirroring the concepts of materials, meanings, and competences, we have identified three broad elements of placemaking practice:

- Resources: the tangible and intangible resources available to the city, or which it can obtain. We draw here on Schatzki's broader concept of material arrangements which includes "humans, artifacts, organisms, and things of nature" (Schatzki 2010: 129).
- Meanings: engaging stakeholders and linking people emotionally with the places they live in and use, and initiating the processes needed to change and improve the city.
- Creativity: weaving narratives to link tangible and intangible resources and meanings into a coherent story that can capture the attention and support of the city's publics, and making creative and innovative use of resources.

We view placemaking as a practice that combines these three essential elements so as to produce specific outcomes – and ultimately to improve the quality of place for all. All three of these elements need to be present for the system to work effectively. The resources a place has will only be used creatively if they have meaning for people.

In our conception of the placemaking practice for cities, we have changed Shove et al.'s "materials" into "resources" because we would argue that cities comprise much more than just physical things: they also use intangible resources and people to achieve things. We use "meanings" in a similar sense to Shove et al. (2012), but because of the collective nature of meanings in cities we see meaning-making as a process that is engaged in by a diverse group of city stakeholders. Finally, we have replaced "competences" with "creativity". This is partly because we feel that more than simple competence is needed to develop places – there is always a creative aspect. As Amabile (2012) suggests, creativity involves skills and competences, but also the idea of making something new, of progressing beyond the routine or the ordinary, and the motivation to be creative. We also wanted to steer clear of "competences" in the case of cities, because this word is too closely related to the powers or jurisdiction possessed by city authorities. Most importantly, we feel that creativity is the act that can transform placemaking into a positive force for change.

We therefore see placemaking as a process of setting the available and potential resources of a place in motion by giving them meaning for the many actors who can use them to improve the quality of place. Again, we emphasize that the placemaking vision should encompass the whole city (all the different groups using the city), because equality is an important basic principle, without which placemaking is bound to fail.

Once the placemaking process is set in motion, the small city should engage external as well as internal audiences in the discussion. The local dream needs to be disseminated so that the city can secure the resources it needs. External interest also stimulates the local community to become

even more involved – because the world is watching them and showing interest in what they do. It gives them the confidence and the courage to make sure their dream is realized in the long term.

Placemaking is a process of change that can enable a city to meet both internal and external challenges more effectively.

The Elements of Placemaking

Let's examine the elements of placemaking practice in more detail.

Resources

The basic tangible and intangible resources, or the materials (tangible, intangible, existing, potential) that belong to and make places, provide an important basis for action. Economists have long concentrated on material factors of production in their analyses, which makes it inevitable that bigger places will have more resources. However, the transformation of the economy in recent decades means that more attention is now being paid to intangible resources, which can reduce the resource disadvantage for smaller places.

Copious material resources are often sufficient to provide large cities with meaning. They are the capital cities, the financial or industrial centres, the crossroads, the gathering places. But this also means that these different resources begin to compete (e.g. festivals and museums fight each other for funding and visitors) and it is difficult for each one to gain a unique spotlight.

In smaller cities immaterial resources are particularly important, because the culture, creativity, and skills available within the city allows them to make better use of the relatively limited means at their disposal. This is why in the case of 's-Hertogenbosch, for example, the development strategy has been based on a combination of culture and education – increasing the tangible and intangible resources of the city at the same time as building people's capacity to make use of those resources. Chapter 2 deals with the question of resources in more detail.

Meanings

Lefebvre (1991) argued that space is about more than materials: it also about how space is represented, or given meaning. Of course places mean things to the people who live there, work, visit, or invest in them. These meanings can also be changed and challenged. Key questions for cities now include: How can negative or neutral associations be turned into positive ones? How can we make places mean something to people who have never been there? How can we ensure the city means something positive for all its inhabitants?

The meanings attached to places are often linked to ties – ties of belonging, ownership, identity, home, origin and heritage. In the past, status was often gained from the strength of these ties – how long people had lived in one place, or how many people they knew. In a globalized world, status is now often attained by breaking existing ties, and making new ones. Movement and mobility are the new badges of rank in the developed world. This very mobility produces interesting new challenges: for example, how do new residents feel at home in a new city? Cities have to try and bond with new residents, with visitors as "temporary citizens", and make them feel it is their place too. New arrivals can also be a lever for change: they challenge established ideas and can ease problems of lock-in for small cities.

This process of reattachment to place holds some of the secrets of changing meanings. This is a process that has been going on as long as there have been cities. And it is gathering speed as flurries of marketing and branding campaigns succeed each other. Small cities are also at a disadvantage here. If you are not known as a city in your own right, then as well as borrowing size, you might be tempted to borrow reputation. If you can't be Venice, you might manage to become the Venice of the North (Stockholm), or of the East (Souzhou, Wuzhen), or one of the many other copies of the original Venice (Richards 2016):

> Venices of the North include Amsterdam, Bruges, Manchester and Stockholm. Western Venices include Venice, California … and Shannon in Ireland. There are many contenders for Venice of the East. Bandar Seri Begawan, capital of Brunei, Suzhou in China, Osaka in Japan and Udaipur in India all lay claim to this much-acclaimed title.
>
> (Tourdust 2015)

Our argument is that if places want to be distinctive and successful, they need to create their own image and identity on the basis of their own DNA – not borrow somebody else's. The process of unearthing and making meaning from your city's DNA is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 6.

Creativity

Making the DNA of a place meaningful to a wide range of stakeholders is not easy – it requires creativity. Creativity can capture the imagination and put things on the move, change perspectives, and make connections between people and places. To develop meaning out of the resources available to cities, creativity is essential. It can be the key to giving meaning to the rich array of resources the city has.

As Fuchs and Baggio (2017: 6) emphasize, "innovative places and attractive destinations should be characterized and understood as open,

free and well interconnected territories whose unique history and specific beauty shapes and fosters the creativity of place-makers capable to transform inherited location factors into assets with high symbolic value and meaning."

For the placemakers of a city, one of the essential creative skills is storytelling. As we will see in Chapter 6, one of the key success factors for 's-Hertogenbosch was having an irresistible story that had meaning for large numbers of people. Such stories depend on the uniqueness derived from place and time: why here, why now? They also need to mean something not just to those living in the city, but also to people elsewhere. Uniqueness is not only something that comes from within; it can also be identified from outside. Sometimes the unique features of a place consist of things that locals have turned their back on, because they are not modern, or trendy or popular, or have simply been forgotten. Hieronymus Bosch has not always been the hero for 's-Hertogenbosch – at times he has been an irrelevance, an embarrassment, or simply ignored.

Developing the key elements of the story often falls to the selectors, curators, or 'switchers' of the city. Castells (2009) identified switchers as people or institutions who can link different networks together, helping to articulate the city to its wider environment, and creating new links and opportunities. Whereas in the past these switchers might have been limited to the political class or business people, today there is a wider range of options, including the creative industries, artists, sports personalities, journalists, media figures, or bloggers. Many argue that these are more likely to be found in larger cities, although Den Dekker and Tabbers (2012) show that 'creative crowds' are also prevalent in smaller places. Even though small in number, the tendency of creative crowds to coagulate around specific creative hubs in the city ensures that there is sufficient critical mass to support the exchange of ideas that Potts et al. (2008) see as the essential driver of the creative industries.

Creativity is therefore important as a source of new ideas and change, and because it links to other places and increases place attractiveness. However, creativity is not something quantifiable, or an abstract quality that can be used to rank places. Any city can be creative given the right tools, and the vision to develop new meanings for the resources at its disposal.

The Need for a Programme

The creative mode of placemaking implies a dynamic relationship between resources, meanings, and creativity. Good placemaking is not something that you can switch on at the flick of a button – it takes time (as we outline in Chapter 8). Taking time, timing, and tempo are all important – what is needed is not just an idea, or a single project, but a whole programme.

Placemaking should involve coherent *programmes* that can mobilize a wide range of stakeholders over a sustained period. A programme can include many different types of actions – physical infrastructure, events, or projects. These individual elements need to be arranged in a way that they support and reinforce each other.

Our definition of a programme is: a coherent series of strategic actions that are developed over time to maximize the effects of civic policies and increase the quality of life of those using the city. Developing a coherent series of strategic actions takes time. It takes time to develop hubs and to scale up from the local to regional, national, and international levels. Building an ambitious plan (or dream) for small cities means that you should create space in your strategy for future growth in order to reach the next level.

Programmes arguably have advantages over more traditional thinking about urban development in terms of:

- *Attracting Attention*. The function of a programme is to highlight particular issues that are important for the city. A well-designed programme should be able to act as a focus of attention for the city and its stakeholders, as well as attracting attention from outsiders.
- *Building confidence*. A programme implies a logically structured sequence of actions undertaken over time. In contrast to a one-off project, a programme signals serious intent and long-term commitment, building confidence between the partners.
- *Developing attractiveness*. A programme can be used to enhance particular features of the city in order to increase its attractiveness to residents, visitors, businesses, and those who may want to invest in the city. This will often include some element of storytelling – the development of narratives about the city, its DNA, and its people.
- *Generating catalytic effects*. A well-designed programme can dynamize the city, synchronizing agendas and stimulating different stakeholders to move more quickly towards their shared dream.

In this book we examine how small cities can combine resources, meaning, and creativity to realize their dreams and make themselves better places.

Outline of the Volume

This book is based on over 25 years of placemaking and city-marketing expertise. It moves from the concrete local example of one small city ('s-Hertogenbosch) to draw lessons at a global level. It is aimed at smaller places, rather than concentrating on larger cities with richer resource bases and larger talent pools. It challenges conventional placemaking models by developing a more holistic approach to urban development,

which links vision, governance, and process to open new strategic possibilities to transform places in ways that improve the well-being of local people. It attempts to shift the focus of discussion about placemaking from small-scale material interventions to ambitious programmes based on the use of tangible and intangible resources.

The book moves progressively through the process of placemaking and place branding in small cities, setting out the main elements of placemaking practice and providing examples of small cities that have done big things.

In the second chapter we look at the essential building blocks of place – the resources, both tangible and intangible, that cities can draw on to build their dreams. When you don't have much, you need to be more creative with what you do have. Many small cities have been successful in mobilizing resources to stimulate development and change. In the past, many small cities have tried to "borrow size" from their larger neighbours, but we argue it may be better to "create size". This means looking outside the city to mobilize resources and people, exporting the dream – creating a mission, and therefore a reason for the small city to achieve big things.

The process of collaborative placemaking is outlined in Chapter 3. In a globalizing world, new strategies are needed to gather and retain the support of an increasingly complex range of stakeholder groups. How can people be persuaded to put their energies into the placemaking process? What strategies can a city adopt to take it forward over a period of 10, 20, 30 years and keep the stakeholders on board? Collaboration is analysed as an essential skill that small cities need to learn and perfect in a competitive world. Finding the right partners and keeping them on board is an art that requires creating shared interests – convincing people to ask not only 'What can the city do for me?" but also "What can I do for the city?" These discussions underline the importance of connections, and of building networks for creativity.

Once collaborations have been built, structures need to be put in place to guide the process. The art of getting things done is the focus of Chapter 4. We examine the need to develop relationships and networks to gather resources, and how stakeholders can be persuaded to participate. The networks developed by 's-Hertogenbosch and other cities have proved crucial in helping them to achieve things they could not do alone. This chapter considers the principle of "network value" applied to smaller cities, and argues that the city needs to develop a position for itself in the world and the networks it joins and creates.

Chapter 5 deals with issues of governance. Attention is paid to the shift from government to governance and facilitation, and how the city can identify those aspects of development it can influence. The use of different governance models, and the creation of arm's-length bodies to develop programmes, are discussed. We also consider how governance

models work in different political and cultural contexts, drawing on cases from different parts of the world.

The importance of branding and storytelling is the focus of Chapter 6, which examines how to use the DNA of the city to develop new stories and icons to attract attention and mobilize stakeholders. To succeed in this, we also argue that small cities need to take risks. The small "opportunistic city" is not an irresponsible city, but one that takes calculated risks to capitalize on the opportunities it can create.

A programme makes little sense unless it benefits the city. Chapter 7 examines the impacts and effects of programmes, asking what the city stands to gain, and also what are the potential costs of getting it wrong. In the case of 's-Hertogenbosch, the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Hieronymus Bosch (the Bosch500 programme) brought 1,400,000 people to the city, created over €150 million in direct spend impact, and generated almost €50 million in national and international media value. This has put the city on the global map, created confidence in it, and boosted the ambition level of stakeholders. But the "soft" benefits – including increased social cohesion and local pride – are perhaps even more significant. These are important political considerations in terms of the effects of the 2016 programme, and also in ensuring that the support for such projects continues in the long term. We also consider what smaller places need to invest in the placemaking effort, and whether the effects are more lasting, widespread, and equitable than those of other strategies – such the icon-building efforts often found in major cities.

Chapter 8 looks at the question of investment. Good placemaking takes time, perseverance, and money. How can cities gather the resources required for a good story, develop a high level of ambition, and attain important goals? The 500th anniversary of the death of Hieronymus Bosch was a golden opportunity for the city of 's-Hertogenbosch, which needed an intelligent marketing strategy, a brand, and a new vision of the future for an old city. Building the coalitions to support the vision took ten years – a marathon instead of a sprint. Keeping the momentum going was a major challenge, particularly given the short attention span and impatience of politicians, residents, and the media.

The final chapter draws lessons from the experience of 's-Hertogenbosch, identifying the key success factors as well as the pitfalls. How do you get the placemaking model to work? What are the most important keys to success? In the case of 's-Hertogenbosch, political will and long-term vision, the development and embedding of a storyline in the city, and collaboration with a wide network of partners were all crucial factors. The experience of 's-Hertogenbosch also shows that the time required can also be one of the major pitfalls. Although such events provide a sense of urgency and catalysing effect, the preparation phase is fraught with difficulty.

Photo 1.2 National New Year's concert by the Dutch Wind Ensemble dedicated
          to Hieronymus Bosch (photo: Lian Duif).

How Is This Book Different?

The recent wave of academic studies on small cities shows the growing
interest in these places. Most previous studies have been based on aggre-
gated analyses of empirical data or snapshots of individual cities. This
book is different, because it is grounded in a rich case of a single city
observed over time, which in turn is linked to a range of other small city
cases around the world.

   We focus on the "how" of placemaking: what skills, resources and
knowledge are required to make a small city stand out in a global market?
And we follow the placemaking process over the long term, drawing on
personal experience and primary research data, rather than just con-
sidering the end result. Cities should be seen in terms not just of what

they have, but also of what they can become. In this process-oriented approach, we pay more attention to the soft infrastructure of small cities, the networks that they can harness to gather more resources, and we underline the need to look at outputs, such as increased quality of life, or equality, rather than inputs.

Big cities, rich with opportunities for contacts and employment, can be congested, cold, lonely places; small cities, with their human scale and ready access to open spaces, can be stultifying. Each should be respected for its advantages as well as its disadvantages. The question is not whether big or small cities are better, but rather how we can make both better places to live in. There has been much attention paid to larger cities; in this book we try to outline some possibilities for smaller cities. We also highlight some of the things that big cities can learn from their smaller counterparts.

In doing so, we also try and address some of the weaknesses in previous analyses. These include looking at size as a state of mind, rather than just a question of population. Studies of agglomeration advantages or the amenity growth paradigm often lack theoretical understanding of the dynamics of economic, social, and industrial structures in the growth and decline of cities. As Chen and Bacon (2013) noted in the case of Hartford, Connecticut, smaller cities have become "detached from theory", problematizing the generalization of urban models and ideas.

Urban theories usually predict the demise of the small city; so why do these places persist and, more importantly, succeed? How do we account for the relative success of some small cities? This book provides an analysis of successful small cities, and looks at the strategies they have developed. As our placemaking framework suggests, this requires ambition, having a big dream to follow, and also making effective use of the resources that the city can muster on its own, or obtain through partnership and networking. This strategy should be consistent with the DNA of the city, which can give meaning to its programmes for locals and outsiders.

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