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Spatial Economics Research Centre

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Culture and regeneration

GLA economics has published a [new working paper](#) that looks at the link between culture and regeneration. The report concludes that "Despite much research, there have been few comprehensive evaluations of culture-led regeneration schemes and so a good evidence base does not exist. A review of the limited evidence shows mixed results and much uncertainty of the impact of culture-led regeneration."

This is certainly consistent with my own take on the evidence. I think it is also relevant for the wider debate about the regeneration potential of city centre living. As I argued in a recent [SERC policy paper](#): "There has been an increase in the number of highly skilled people living in previously run down city centres. This likely reflects improvements in levels of crime, the built environment and other amenities as well as three demand-side factors: empty nesters choosing city centres for consumption reasons; people delaying family formation; increased participation in higher education. For some cities (e.g. Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle) improving central locations has attracted more skilled people. For the majority of places, however, central locations remain highly unattractive because the amenities they offer in terms of accessibility to employment and consumption are not sufficient to offset other negative factors. This is particularly true for families as single family homes remain much more popular than any of the multi-family urban housing options. These preferences mean that while city-centre improvements may bring benefits to existing residents (including the poor) the usefulness of this policy as a means of attracting highly skilled workers to declining places is certainly overstated."

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Thursday, May 12, 2011](#)

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