

# Culture-led urban regeneration: a selection of key themes and issues

## Some big challenges

Crises of trust, hope, morality, truth,  
language, political ideologies

Public expenditure cuts have reduced  
the already insufficient budgets for urban innovation

But innovation is more and more required:  
many European cities are stuck for solutions  
to economic, environmental and social problems

Deep and long term social and cultural exclusion

The 'Brazilianisation' of Europe: hedonism and fear go together (G. da Empoli)

The return of tribalism (Amy Chua *Political Tribes*)

Inglehart and Norris: 'cultural backlash' is more important than socio-economic inequality as a factor of change

David Goodhart: 'Somewheres' v. 'Anywheres'

New 'culture wars'?

## Some issues in urban cultural strategies today

An uneasy coexistence of urban cultural policy rationales from different historical periods

- 1) the intrinsic and civilising value of access to culture (1940s-1950s)
- 2) the transformative potential of 'cultural democracy' and active participation (1970s)
- 3) culture as a tool for economic development and place marketing (1980s-1990s)
- 4) cultural actions to change the behaviours of individuals and communities (1990s): examples from Colombia

## **Some issues in urban cultural strategies today**

The crisis in local (public and private) cultural funding

Closure of libraries, museums and other cultural services

Strengths and weaknesses of strategies focusing funding on consumption activities, (iconic) buildings and city centres

Social exclusion: the importance of access policies, 'soft boundaries' and public space networks

Problems of immobility, social isolation and anti-social behaviour in deprived areas

## **Urban cultural policies in the context of the economic downturn since 2008**

Decline of community facilities

Impact of reductions in availability of benefits

Less money for culture-led regeneration projects

Lower priority to artistic and creative practices  
in schools

An ideological attack on culture?

Lower cost of premises for cultural activities

More opportunities for experimental artistic interventions

Less bureaucracy and red tape: a more positive attitude to risk?

Possible new funding partnerships – e.g. with Universities, the NHS, property developers

New participatory and intercultural forms of artistic expression

Growing appetite for cultural participation among people from all social backgrounds

# The issue of immigration and debates around the concept of 'interculturalism' and its applications

Definitions

What makes a place intercultural?

Cultivating 'cultural literacy':  
creating new local glossaries

*The Intercultural City*, by Phil Wood and Charles Landry,  
London, Earthscan, 2008



## **Creating an Intercultural Civic Identity and Culture**

Creating intercultural architecture and urban design

Reshaping collective memory to include “the other”

Shaping collective self-image through intercultural public art strategies

The Council of Europe’s “Intercultural Cities” action research project

Fragility of intercultural projects in the current political climate

## Urban cultural policy and citizenship

Citizenship as 'civic identity'

Citizenship as 'empowerment'

Citizenship as 'consumership'

The need for a balanced approach

## Thinking culturally (and artistically) about urban policy

'Cultural planning' as 'the strategic and integral planning and use of cultural resources in urban and community development' (Colin Mercer)

## **Learning from the processes of cultural production, which tend to be:**

### **1) collaborative and interdisciplinary**

e.g. cittadellarte, Biella, Italy ([www.cittadellarte.it](http://www.cittadellarte.it))

### **2) innovation-oriented, experimental, not narrowly instrumental**

opening up policy systems to young talent  
pilot projects and R&D budgets

removing obstacles to creativity

understanding the differences between 'creativity' and 'innovation'

## Collaborative projects in urban lighting:

*Luci d'artista*, Turin

Lyon

*Valon Voimat* (Forces of Light) festival, Helsinki

Light Night, Leeds

'Made in Hull' (January 2017)

See Zenobia Razis *Reflections on Urban Lighting*

Comedia, 2002



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## **Towards collaborative approaches to place marketing**

Chris Murray *Making Sense of Place* (2001)

Revealing and discovering, not designing and  
selling, place identities

Going beyond product marketing

Celebrating complexity and layering



## Some data from Murray's research

Local people - friendly	163
Local people - other references	15
Local culture - diversity	157
Local culture - homogeneity	495
The present	223
The past/heritage	1,134
Uniqueness (non-specific)	218
Uniqueness (specific)	61

**Learning from the processes of cultural production,  
which tend to be:**

**critical, questioning, challenging**

welcoming conflicts and contradictions as a creative resource -  
e.g. 'Cities on the Edge' project, Liverpool European Capital of  
Culture 2008

Projects on the Third Reich legacy, Linz European Capital of  
Culture (EcoC) 2009

*In Dialogue* project Donostia/San Sebastian ECoC 2016

*Seasons of Power* project, Rijeka ECoC 2020

**Learning from the processes of artistic work,  
which tend to be:**

**cultured, and critically aware of history, local  
distinctiveness and of traditions of creativity and  
cultural expression**

- \*documenting local distinctiveness (also through cultural cartography)
- \*creating a local 'image bank'
- \* drawing inspiration from traditions of creativity and innovation

## Researching and mobilising local cultural resources

### A definition of local cultural resources:

- Arts and media activities and institutions
- Sports and recreation
- The tangible & intangible heritage
- The local 'image bank'
- Places for sociability
- Nature and landscape
- Intellectual and scientific milieux and institutions
- Creative inputs into local crafts, manufacturing and services activities

## Researching and mobilising local cultural resources

### A definition of the urban 'image bank':

- Media coverage
- Stereotypes, jokes and 'conventional wisdom'
- Cultural representations of a city
- Myths and legends
- Tourist guidebooks
- City marketing and tourism promotion literature
- Views of residents, city users and outsiders

One *gestalt* of the urban imaginary?

The politics of symbolic contestation

'Official' urban narratives can be sterile

## The importance of mapping

- entrepreneurial opportunities and desires, not just needs
- obstacles & constraints, not just opportunities
- power, privilege and disadvantage
- gatekeepers, gateways, networks and collaborations
- local talent & creative & innovative milieux
- different moral, aesthetic, philosophical, organizational and policy concepts and styles
- The importance of making innovative links between different types of cultural resources – e.g. food and crafts, or dance and sport

## **Implementing a cultural planning strategy**

Training needs

Institutional arrangements for effective partnerships

The need for international cultural strategies: the Lille3000 example

## **Emerging professions:**

The cultural planner

The intercultural mediator

The cartographer of local cultural resources

The specialist in linking culture and social  
policy/social action



The cultural industries support specialist

The specialist in linking culture and place marketing

The specialist in linking culture and property development/urban renewal

The specialist in international urban and regional cultural strategies

The culturally sensitive urban planner and designer?

## **Cultural mega events and urban regeneration:**

### **the primacy of politics, the autonomy of culture or a creative solution in between? Examples from European Cities/Capitals of Culture (ECoCs)**

There are often conflicts between local politicians and ECoC creative teams, and between City Councils and ECoC companies

The ECoC year is in some cases the exception to the normality of neglect of culture by local politicians

Sustainability is difficult if politicians don't make long term investments

Many different agendas: who owns the ECoC event? The City Council? The EU? The cultural sector? Local citizens? The private sector?

What are the ingredients of successful partnerships?

## Some operational issues

ECoC teams need training in international cultural co-operation

'International' is not the same as 'intercultural'

The difficulties of a year-long event

Evidence of the ECoC's popularity

ECoC funding trends and problems

Important impact of ECoCs in terms of 'symbolic'  
urban regeneration

1) Contested narratives of change following industrial decline and economic restructuring:

Glasgow 1990

Porto 2001

Genoa 2004

Lille 2004

Liverpool 2008

## 2) Cities linking heritage with contemporary creativity

Bologna 2000

Bruges 2002

Salamanca 2002

Graz 2003

Sibiu 2007

### 3) Economically strong cities wanting to enhance their cultural status

Graz 2003

Luxembourg 1995 and 2007

Stavanger 2008 (also though initiatives aimed at refugee artists)

Linz 2009

#### 4) Cities using the ECoC title to counteract marginality

Lisbon 1994

Weimar 1999

Helsinki 2000

Cork 2005

Pécs 2010

Kosice 2013



5) Cities celebrating cultural diversity and exchange as social, intellectual, artistic and economic assets

Brussels 2000

Rotterdam 2001

Essen for the Ruhr 2010

Marseille-Provence 2013

# A 360 degrees approach to evaluation?

Economic impacts

Social impacts

Artistic/cultural impacts

Environmental impacts

Educational impacts

# A 360 degrees approach to evaluation?

Media impacts

Image and local identity impacts

Creative milieu impacts

Gathering the views of different stakeholders and social groups

See work by Impacts 08 group on Liverpool 2008

# Evaluation of Hull UK City of Culture 2017

Five impact areas:

arts and culture;

place making;

economy;

society and well being;

partnerships, development and legacy

*Cultural Transformations* preliminary outcomes report  
and conference (March 2018)

# Our Approach to Evaluation

The research into the impacts of UK City of Culture explores outputs and outcomes across five inter-connected impact areas



**The preliminary outcomes report has been produced just months after the end of the UK City of Culture year, and represents an early stage assessments of the outcomes so far.**

**The final evaluation report will be published in 2019, alongside plans for the longitudinal study of the long term impacts of the project.**

# Hull 2017 in Numbers

**365 DAYS**

of transformative culture



**4 CULTURAL SEASONS**



**5.3 MILLION**  
audience visits



More than

**2,800**

events, cultural activities, installations and exhibitions

**300+**

**VENUES AND SPACES**



**465**

new commissions  
(against a target of 60)

**1 IN 2**

commissions inspired by heritage



# Step Change 1: Raising aspirations and skills through increased participation and learning

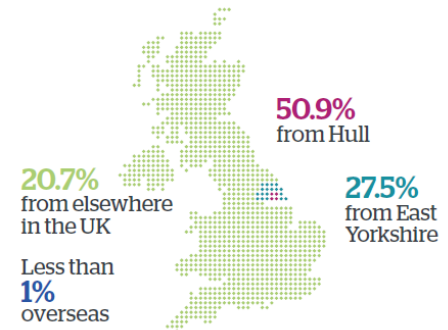


**MORE THAN  
9 IN 10** residents engaged in at least one cultural activity

**+9%**

Increase in the confidence of residents to take part or join in with cultural and non-cultural activities



## Origin of Audiences



**Over 2400** volunteers > **84,000** shifts > **337,000** HOURS of volunteering > Equivalent to **38.5** YEARS

 **100+** schools engaged in the No Limits learning programme

 **56,000** children and young people

**34%**  reported improvements to self-esteem of children and young people 

## Some Reflections

The Hull 2017 experience has highlighted the importance of:

- sustaining cultural participation and reaching the most vulnerable, isolated and non-engaged residents
- strengthening the city's appeal as a destination for international cultural tourism

### **Lessons from Hull 2017 for future Cities of Culture:**

importance of citywide Volunteer programme, high quality mini-arts festivals at neighbourhood level, and new creative learning models

integration of heritage and history into the cultural programme

crucial role of partnership with the BBC

importance of strong start and of concluding season

Potential to experiment with a broader definition of 'culture' to appeal to students and young people





## Some Reflections

- Many of the impacts will take three, five, ten years or longer to be fully realised
- This evaluation study shows the importance of local high quality arts provision
- Hull 2017 as a stage in a longer term process of culture-led regeneration: a clear need to maintain momentum and investment
- The potential for culture to be at the centre of the public policy agenda.

## Some possible cultural planning actions

Linking culture and property development/urban renewal

Developing international urban and regional cultural strategies

Building on the power of intercultural exchange

Bringing the worlds of creativity and innovation together

Creating new political alliances

Problems with NOT doing cultural planning:

containers without contents

unsustainable flagship projects

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