

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL STUDIES
CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR URBAN REGENERATION¹

AVIEL YELINEK

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Background

The years following World War II saw the gradual development of the suburbanization, a phenomenon that primarily took the form of affluent and middle-class families moving from the city center into the suburbs. Living in the suburbs in a single-family house with a garden was perceived by a growing number of middle-class families as better than living in the city which had, over time, become synonymous with noise, air pollution, crowding, traffic jams, & crime. The rise in the number of private cars and city planning policies encouraged this phenomenon by investing in broad highways and allocating land in the suburbs for building low-cost single-family homes.

A similar phenomenon took place in the commercial sphere. The overcrowding, difficult access and high rents in the downtown areas encouraged businesses to move to the suburbs as well. The principal expression of this was the construction of large shopping centers on the outskirts of the cities, which were very popular due to their easy access. Large shopping centers were built, for the most part, adjacent to highways and major freeway interchanges. They offered plenty of parking and made it very easy and convenient to get there by car, a mode of transportation that was becoming more and more popular.

In addition to these two factors, structural changes in the world's economy also contributed towards the decline of cities. This phenomenon is mainly linked to cities that had grown around industries such as steel, auto manufacturing, chemicals and textiles, industries whose status was waning because of increased competition and economic outputs in the international marketplace. As a result, these cities suffered from higher unemployment and lower economic status as they headed towards a "post-industrial" era.

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Taking this new reality into consideration many cities were forced to compete with one another in an effort to display their cultural, human or physical uniqueness so as to emphasize its advantages over other cities. This competition between cities is reflected in their attempt to attract high-tech industries, to invite investment from the private sector, and to become a center of tourism and cultural attraction both in the national and international arena.² Increased competition led many cities to advance processes of urban regeneration aimed at highlighting their uniqueness and differentiating them from other cities. Culture plays a key role in these processes.

In many cities around the world government works to promote culture as a major tool for the physical and economic regeneration of cities. A great body of professional literature has been written in recent years regarding the role of culture in urban regeneration processes. Culture is perceived by policy-makers and planners as an important factor for preventing urban decline, while private investors and public institutions see culture as something that can elevate property values and hasten development. Various urban initiatives promote the cultural sector and cities make it a top priority as part of their urban regeneration policies.

Furthermore, this pattern stems from an increased awareness that tourism can help leverage and accelerate a city's economic development due to the relative decline in airfares and tourist packages, the ease with which tourists move from one place to another, greater leisure time and tourists' growing interest in urban vacations. These factors have led cities to employ culture as a tool to try and attract a significant part of international tourism and to entice the private sector to invest in the city.

European City of Culture

In 1985 the European Union decided on a new initiative to be known as "the European City of Culture" (in 1999 the designation was changed to "European Capital of Culture"). This initiative sought to grant the title to a different city in Europe every year and highlight the cultural activities taking place there on the assumption that such an announcement would provide an impetus for even further cultural development that would have a positive impact on the city. The title serves to recognize the city and its

² P. Hubbard, (1995) "Urban Design and Local Economic Development: A Case Study of Birmingham" in Cities, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1995, p.244.

efforts in the cultural sphere and to provide an economic push for a range of cultural performances to be held during the designated year.

The first city to be granted the title was Athens, followed by Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris. A certain change was noted in 1990 when Glasgow was selected, the first time a city was chosen that was not known as an international cultural city. It was also the first time the EU chose a city that was in dire financial straits due to its history as an industrial city, and Glasgow was selected to a large extent because of the city's intention of using culture as a tool for economic revitalization and to restore its image. Glasgow, the European City of Culture for 1990, is a prime example of the long-term impact this event can have in drawing visitors to a city. In the years following the event there was an 88% increase in the number of British visitors to Glasgow, and a 25% rise in the number of foreign visitors to the city.³ Glasgow's successful efforts encouraged other cities with an industrial past to use a cultural strategy for urban regeneration. Since 1990 many of the cities that have been designated as the European City of Culture were not classic cultural cities, but rather cities struggling with serious economic issues such as Antwerp, Rotterdam and Lille.⁴

Research conducted on the European Cities of Culture project has indicated varying degrees of satisfaction from one city to the next. The city of Rotterdam, for example, was long overshadowed by that of Amsterdam, and city leaders came to the conclusion that Rotterdam's relative weakness was due to a lack of cultural infrastructures at the international level. For this reason they decided to employ a cultural strategy for urban regeneration and the European City of Culture event was part of this strategy. During the course of one year there were 500 different cultural events that attracted 2.5 million visitors. In addition, the city's cultural infrastructures were upgraded with the opening of the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam and the introduction of a new museum quarter in the city.⁵ Events surrounding the European City of Culture were an enormous economic success and brought about a positive change for the city. Rotterdam

³ G. Evans & P. Shaw, (2004), The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK, A Report to the Department of Culture, Media & Sport, p. 27.

⁴ R. Griffiths, (2006) "City/Culture Discourses: Evidence from the Competition to Select the European Capital of Culture 2008," European Planning Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4, p.417.

⁵ G. Richards, and J. Wilson, (2004) "The Impact of Cultural Events on City Image: Rotterdam, Cultural Capital of Europe 2001," Urban Studies, Vol. 41, No. 10, pp. 1938-1939.

still lags behind such classic cultural cities as London and Paris, but it received a boost in its competition against cities such as Antwerp and Glasgow.⁶

Compared with Rotterdam and Glasgow, European City of Culture events held in Thessaloniki in 1997 were perceived as a failure. This is because of the large sums of money that were invested, the few long-term results generated, and the inability of the city's leaders and major economic forces to work together to create a shared vision and ensure its realization.⁷ Among other things, it is claimed that despite the varied cultural program and the development of numerous cultural infrastructures in the city, the event was unable to bring about any significant change in the city's image and did not boost the residents' pride in the city or contribute towards improving their economic situation. However, in spite of this, the city was able to enhance its cultural infrastructures. The event also transformed the relative indifference of city residents towards cultural events and since then there has been an increased demand for various cultural performances.

Liverpool "Capital of Culture 2008" was perceived as a big success hosting more than 350 cultural events. The budget was £110M (2005-2008), half of it from the municipality, the rest from the UK government, the EU and private sponsors. The project brought a drastic increase of visitors in the city cultural centers of 50-70%. In an interview with sky news Liverpool Culture Company's creative director stated that "*So far it's boosted the local economy to the tune of £800M, In total £4bn invested in the physical transformation of the city.*"⁸

Cultural quarters

One of the more common policy strategies in the cultural sphere is the establishment of "cultural quarters," which include museums, galleries, convention centers, cultural halls, theaters, cinemas and more. Cultural quarters are typically active at night as well, and attract cafes, pubs, restaurants, discotheques and additional leisure activities. Other businesses can often be found near cultural quarters and these may include book stores, galleries, music shops, designer clothing stores, artists' workshops and the like.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 1946-1947.

⁷ A. Defner, and L. Labrianidis, (2005) "Planning Culture and Time in a Mega-event: Thessaloniki as the European City of Culture in 1997," International Planning Studies, Vol. 10, No. 3-4, pp. 257-259.

⁸ Interview with Liverpool Culture Company's creative director, Phil Redmond, Sky news, January 2009.

The cultural quarter in downtown Dublin is one of the more successful examples of this process. The Temple Bar district, which was an economically distressed industrial and commercial zone, became the city's bustling cultural quarter. The buildings were cleaned and renovated and a variety of cultural and entertainment institutions were opened, including cinemas, theaters, galleries and performance spaces. With time, fashionable cafes, restaurants, pubs and clubs were added. Today this area is considered one of the greatest successes of using culture to promote urban regeneration in downtown areas. Most of the criticism is of the fact that the quarter has lost some of the *avant-garde* feeling it originally had and has become too trendy and overly popular.⁹

The Northern Quarter of downtown Manchester is another example. The district, which was once famous for its textile factories and clothing stores, suffered from decline and decay following the collapse of the textile industry in Great Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. This decline was reflected in negative migration and abandoned buildings, and the district became deserted. In the 1990s, artists and young residents came to the area because of the low rent. The Manchester city government took advantage of this to initiate a comprehensive regeneration program in the area in cooperation with local businesses and residents, and it established the "Northern Quarter Association." This Association worked on several levels to renovate the area: developing housing, rehabilitating the public space, development cultural functions and various other combinations. The cultural development made a tremendous contribution towards the success of the urban regeneration process and the area now includes cultural centers, performance clubs, a center for handicrafts, a Chinese art center and a yearly festival.

The physical strategy employed for the Northern Quarter is based on preserving, renovating and developing existing buildings rather than on constructing new large-scale buildings. Thus, the physical characteristics of the area are preserved. This strategy helped raised people's sense of identification with the place while ensuring new uses for old buildings.¹⁰ To date the area is once again being used as a commercial and shopping

⁹ J. Montgomery, (2004) "Cultural Quarters as Mechanisms for Urban Regeneration Part 2," in Planning Practice & Research, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ M. Wansborough, and A. Mageean, (2000) "The Role of Urban Design in Cultural Regeneration," Journal of Urban Design, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 188-193.

district, but it also serves as an entertainment and leisure center and contains music halls, cafes, pubs, clubs and art galleries.¹¹

The *Museumquartier Wien* – the Museum Quarter project in Vienna – was completed in 2001 with a view towards integrating varied cultural offerings and includes a museum of contemporary art, a gallery that holds rotating exhibits, a modern dance center, two performance halls, a theater, and smaller buildings that present various exhibits and performances. The giant complex also includes offices and workshops for local and international artists, cafes, restaurants and various businesses.

Traditionally, the image of Vienna was such that it attracted mainly tourists who were interested in high culture, classical music, Old World art and architecture. As part of the broad marketing strategy introduced by the city, the project's goal was to attract a new, younger and varied tourist crowd to the city. The project was geared towards rebranding the city as a place that offered a varied and more dynamic culture, and to combine this with developing related businesses.

The new Museum Quarter was built in conjunction with the local government in an area that was close to downtown which had served, until the early 1920s, as horse stables and later on as a fairground. The architectural model chosen was characterized by a mix of old and new, a combination that would express the city's grand past together with its future urban regeneration.¹²

The main criticism aimed at the new cultural quarter in Vienna was similar to that heard regarding similar projects in other cities. Detractors argued that the area in which the cultural quarter was located was part of the city's historic center which is typified by an old architectural style and contains many buildings slated for preservation, and that the new project would stand out like a sore thumb due to its grand scale and different architectural style, thereby eclipsing its surroundings. Additional objections claimed that construction of the new project required a great deal of public funds that could have been used for other purposes. Arguments were also made that the project, because of its international style, was like a foreign element that did not represent the spirit of the city or its inhabitants.¹³

¹¹ J. Montgomery, (2004) p.10.

¹² M. De Frantz, (2005) "From Cultural Regeneration to Discursive Governance: Constructing the Flagship of the '*Museumsquartier* Vienna' as a Plural Symbol of Change," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Vol. 29, p.53-54.

¹³ M. De Frantz, (2005), pp. 61-62

This case highlights the controversy heard in many historical cities which, in this global era, must compete economically with other cities and employ cultural-physical strategies for urban regeneration. The new strategy raises questions concerning the city's cultural heritage, its image, its character and the nature of its built-up environment. It provokes arguments between those who claim that large-scale cultural projects can contribute towards revitalizing the city, and those who feel that the city's advantages are contained in its past, its heritage and traditional culture and that buildings of this type would not have a positive impact on the city's standing when competing in the international arena.¹⁴

Arts and culture in public space

In many cities around the world, great part of culture today takes part in public and open space. This includes also the use of art in public space. The growing use of art in public space in recent decades is given also to the rising interest in the positive outcomes it can contribute towards urban regeneration. Cultural events such as fairs, street performances, street presentations, street theatres, wall murals, food festivals and film screenings can attract visitors, enhance the image of the downtown areas and turn them into lively and vibrant centers of activity.¹⁵ Furthermore, public art plays a growing role in initiatives relating to a city's physical, economic and cultural development.

Research literature demonstrates that art in public spaces is likely to contribute towards several aspects of the urban regeneration process. First, art is a tool for developing a sense of community among city residents and helps increase their sense of pride. Second, it can be used to enhance the connection between people and place, resulting in better preservation of public space. Public art can promote cultural diversity and thereby supports the integration of marginal groups, especially by encouraging them to participate in artistic projects. Third, art in public space entails an educational component that can be accompanied by educational programs or used to symbolize certain educational values. Fourth, public art has a considerable tourism aspect that can help with the city's marketing efforts, can improve the city's image and can be used as a spotlight for attracting visitors to the city.¹⁶ In general, it would appear that the important role that can

¹⁴ Ibid, p.63.

¹⁵ ATCM, (2006) Adding Value and a Competitive Edge: The Case for Using Arts and Culture in Town Centers, A Report Commissioned by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), Pp. 40-41.

¹⁶ ATCM, (2006), pp. 10-16.

be played by art in public spaces in the urban regeneration processes derives from the numerous facets towards which it can contribute.

The understanding that art in public space can contribute towards urban development was reflected in the policy employed by the British government in the 1990s, when it decided to implement a program called "One Percent for Art." The essence of the project was to transfer one percent of urban regeneration budgets for public art. The issue of developing art in public space continued to grow and in 1994, 21% of all municipalities in England employed someone to be responsible for developing public art.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the use of art in public space does not always provide the positive outcomes hoped for by city leaders. For this reason there are those who argue that the budgets used to provide public support for artistic projects in public spaces could be more beneficial if used for other projects. Another argument against the use of planned art is that it reflects the goals defined by the establishment rather than fulfilling a critical role, and thus fails to carry out its traditional role of being a tool for critical expression and becomes something that represents the status quo.¹⁸

"Street level" culture

For more than a century, the mark of a cultured city has been to have a major art museum, a symphony orchestra, an opera company and a ballet. People today seek also for other, more dynamic, more connected to the local people, "street-level" culture¹⁹. This form is not typically found in large venues but in multiuse urban neighborhoods where many of its patrons live near by.

The culture is "street level" because it tends to cluster along certain streets lined with a multitude of small venues such as coffee shops, restaurants and bars, some of which offer performance or exhibits along with food and drinks. Others are art galleries, bookstores, small theatres and hybrid spaces like a bookstore/tearoom/little theatre or gallery/studio/live music place. This scene often spill out to the sidewalks with dining tables, musicians, vendors, performers, all of which make the street more vivid and

¹⁷ T. Hall & I. Robertson, (2001) "Public Art and Urban Regeneration," Landscape Research, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ J. McCarthy, (2006) "Regeneration of Cultural Quarters: Public Art for Place Image or Place Identity?," Journal of Urban Design, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 244-245

¹⁹ R. Florida, (2002) The Rise of the Creative Class and how it's Transforming Work, Leisure Community and Everyday Life. New York, Basic Books, p. 182.

vibrant.²⁰ It may not be just one scene but many: a music scene, an art scene, a film scene, outdoor recreation scene, nightlife scene and so on – all reinforcing one another. Street level culture provides another set of visual and aural cues people look for in a place to live and work, and is of growing importance for cities in their competition for human capital.

Integrating culture with “creative” urban design

Attempts at changing cities’ images and “recreating” them is also related to the strategies of using the physical urban design as a means of changing their old-fashioned image. The claim here is that throughout history, the nature of urban construction was a result of society’s economic development; while today, the nature of urban design and construction have turned it into a tool through which city leaders hope to achieve economic development.²¹ One of the features of the new urban design is promoting and constructing spectacular, grandiose projects with “creative” designs that can become a “flagship” for urban regeneration. These new buildings often house cultural functions or are used to hold cultural events. These projects usually include convention centers, institutes of higher education, cultural centers, museums, etc. In many cases they are built downtown as part of the policy to attract capital and a strong population base to the city center. At times, construction is carried out in port or shipyard areas that are no longer being used, and these are converted into cultural, residential or commercial spaces, or offices and entertainment centers.²²

Creating an attractive and more pleasing image for a city is perceived as an economic measure aimed at attracting capital investment, new residents and tourism. Among other things, the aim is to invite business tourists who participate in conventions or business conferences – an industry that is growing rapidly and promises a healthy economic income for a city and its residents.²³ Large-scale projects that highlight innovative architecture are an important feature of the new urban design, and they usually include other projects related to the esthetic improvement of public space. These aim to create the

²⁰ R. Florida, (2002), pp. 183-184.

²¹ A. Gospodini (2002), “European Cities in Competition and New ‘Uses’ of Urban Design,” in Journal of Urban Design, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 59.

²² P. Hubbard, p.244.

²³ A. Bradley, T. Hall & M. Harrison, (2002) “Promoting New Images for Meeting Tourism” in Cities, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 62.

image of a flourishing, attractive and friendly city, and they are key steps in a strategy aimed at upgrading the city and encouraging capital investment as well as commercial and social activity in the public space.²⁴

Many cities in Great Britain have, in recent years, employed unique urban design in various “flagship” projects as a tool for urban regeneration. Among the more prominent of these projects are the Albert Dock Development in Liverpool, which took an old, abandoned port and turned it into a lively and prosperous entertainment and cultural center, London’s Canary Wharf Office Complex, and a variety of projects in the city of Birmingham (which I will refer to again later on).²⁵

Preserving buildings and sites

The goal of preserving buildings and areas of historical, architectural and cultural importance is to create a richer urban environment that combines old and new. Building preservation plays an important role in urban regeneration processes. Preservation creates an interesting and unique environment, and a place that gives physical expression to local identity, history, heritage and culture. In addition, it can help make people feel more comfortable in the urban environment, and enable a connection between the modern-day human reality and the history that preceded it. Unique historical buildings serve as a tool for generating a sense of pride and identification for the city’s residents. From an economic aspect, preservation often serves as a means of drawing new residents of a higher socioeconomic status to neighborhoods of low socioeconomic status. In addition, preserving building heritage is a key tool for strengthening the unique nature of cities and city centers and attracting tourism. In many cases, large-scale preservation has succeeded in contributing towards creating extensive economic tourism activity and contributing to the development of businesses related to culture, recreation and leisure.

The issue of building preservation in the urban environment is gradually winning greater attention from decision-makers and planners in many countries worldwide. Back in 1990, the European Union issued a study on the topic, which emphasized the importance of

²⁴ J. Temelova, (2004) Contemporary Buildings and City Promotion: The Case of Prague and Helsinki, UrbEurope Research Network, p. 5.

²⁵ P. Loftman, and B. Nevin, (1995) “Prestige Projects and Urban Regeneration in the 1980’s and 1990’s: A Review of Benefits and Limitations,” Planning Practice and Research. Vol. 10, No 3, p. 301.

architectural preservation of old buildings. The study urged EU countries to adopt active initiatives to preserve buildings that symbolize the heritage of the European cities.²⁶

Historical areas at the heart of European cities that have undergone a preservation process now constitute urban districts that are much more vibrant and attractive. This can be seen in a city such as Prague, which has become one of the most popular tourism destinations in Europe and a cultural center of the first order, among other things, due to the comprehensive preservation of the city center and the inner city. The old quarter in central Barcelona (the *Barrio Gotico*) is filled with cafés, stylish pubs, fashion shops and restaurants. In this district, homes and the public space have been renovated, and it has largely become closed to motor traffic so that pedestrians can move freely within it. This district currently serves as one of the greatest selling points for tourists coming to the city, and is also a center of domestic tourism. In recent years, the Barcelona Municipality has been working to preserve another district, the Pueblo Nuevo, near the city center, and turn it into another culture and leisure district. The plan includes preservation of 114 buildings were once used for industry and offices, and converting them to fashion, recreation and leisure businesses.²⁷

Use of building preservation within a broader strategy of culture-led urban regeneration can also be seen in Budapest. Budapest has always played a key role in drawing tourists to Hungary, and is responsible for about 70% of the country's tourism revenue. It houses the major cultural institutions and hosts large cultural events, and its built-up environment is the most impressive in the country, embodying centuries of history. This unique built-up environment gives the city its character and "sense of place." The city's architectural style is mainly characterized by 19th century construction, but incorporates chapters from the city's older history (mainly from the Roman Empire period and Middle Ages) and from the many conquerors who have passed through it. As UNESCO described it, "the Budapest city center displays the continuity of history, expresses the country's periods of glory, and is one of the most outstanding urban landscapes in the world. Therefore, it is a fine example of a multi-layering of space that depicts numerous

²⁶ The European Union, (1990), Green Paper on the Urban Environment, Paragraph 5.3.

²⁷ Barcelona city council site (last accessed: 27.12.08)
http://w3.bcn.es/V01/Serveis/Noticies/V01NoticiesLlistatNoticiesCtl/0,2138,1653_35144087_3_171463071.00.html?accio=detall&home=HomeBCN&nomtipusMCM=Noticia

historical periods, each of which is expressed in government buildings and reflects different social values.”²⁸

The city’s tourism policy was based less on putting up new buildings or new attractions, but rather focused mainly on existing sites, expanding cultural institutions, adapting their content to demand and marketing them differently. New tourism development included attractions such as a museum with items related to the city’s fascist and Communist past, and cultural buildings that display more modern culture.

Budapest “Cultural Avenue” is a new project aimed at rebranding tourist attractions in one package, by creating a walking route in which the tourist can enjoy the city’s known sites in combination with less familiar sites or new attractions. The route includes 59 different sites and also features businesses, leisure spots, cafés, restaurants and spas. The purpose of the route is to make it clear to the visitor that Budapest’s cultural assets are too widespread to be seen in one visit, and increase the chances of another visit to the city.²⁹

²⁸ T. Ratz, et al, (2008) "New Places in Old Spaces: Mapping Tourism and Regeneration in Budapest," in Tourism Geographies, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 433-434.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 445.

Different measures for culture-led urban regeneration – Examples from cities around the world

Cities in Great Britain

Britain attributes a great deal of importance to the role of culture in urban regeneration measures, and it is one of the pioneering countries that have identified culture's potential as an essential factor in hastening urban economic growth. In recent years the British government has implemented a pro-culture policy with a view towards promoting the role of cities as a basis for regional and national economic growth. Against this background a document was prepared by the British Ministry of Culture entitled "Culture at the Heart of Regeneration," whose main assertion is that cultural elements can be used to motivate regeneration processes in a city and revitalize the downtown area.³⁰ One of the positive outcomes of this use of culture is the physical regeneration of decaying areas, such as abandoned commercial buildings, industrial zones and ports by rezoning the areas for cultural institutions. The main characteristic of cities adopting cultural strategies in Britain is that they are former industrial cities that suffered when their production lines moved to Third World countries and found it difficult to adjust to the post-industrial era.

Birmingham, the second-largest city in Britain with more than one million inhabitants, is a good example of a city that "used" urban design as a major tool for revitalizing the city and changing its image. The city of Birmingham is located in the heart of the West Midland region, which for years had been considered a predominantly industrial region. Industry in Birmingham flourished throughout the 1950s and 1960s, particularly thanks to three sectors: auto manufacturing, steel works and electricity production. Birmingham was so clearly based on industry that in 1961 65% of those employed were industrial workers as compared with the national average of 39%.³¹

The city's strong dependence on industry resulted in tremendous hardship following the decline of heavy industry during the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1971 and 1986, in a span

³⁰ S. Miles & R. Paddison, (2005) "The Rise and Rise of Culture-Led Urban Regeneration," Urban Studies, Vol. 42, No. 5, p. 835.

³¹ J.S. Pollard, (2004) "From Industrial District to Urban Village: Manufacturing, Money and Consumption in Birmingham's Jewelry Quarter," in Urban Studies, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 175.

of 15 years, the city lost 191,000 jobs, which constituted 29% of all jobs in the city.³² The city's industrial base was irreparably damaged. The result of the industrial crisis was that in 1982 the rate of unemployment in the city reached 20%, twice the national average for that year.³³

Against this background steps were taken to improve the city's image and to rehabilitate the public space in order to create a cleaner, more beautiful and primarily a more profitable atmosphere.³⁴ Starting in the mid-1980s but mostly in the early 1990s, Birmingham began a conscious process "to reinvent itself" in order to attract visitors and new residents to the city by highlighting its modern, dynamic and creative side, its vision and its desire to change. Efforts regarding its image were also connected to place representation symbols, which were reflected in investing in cultural buildings.³⁵ These activities included construction of a modern convention center, a concert hall, a multi-purpose facility for performances and sporting events – all of which had "modern" and "creative" designs by well-known architects. This strategy included activity to improve the urban public space, such as cleaning and upgrading the old water conduits that were used for industrial transportation and turning them into culture, leisure, tourism and recreation sites. The public space was also upgraded using public art (sculpture, wall murals), by installing benches, planting trees and more.³⁶

The process of change in Birmingham is considered a tremendous success. Researcher Diane Lister claims that the process undertaken by the city in a relatively short period of time turning the city from "a cultural wasteland into the most lively and vibrant urban center outside of London is an amazing story of vision and imagination." She adds that "the city's achievements have placed it on a par with other cities at the center of the international arena."³⁷ Furthermore, researchers Patrick Loftman and Brendan Nevin

³² N. Flynn and A. Taylor, (1986) "Inside the Rust-Belt – An Analysis of the Decline of the West Midlands Economy" in Environment and Planning A, Vol. 18, p. 867.

³³ J.S. Pollard, p. 175.

³⁴ P. Hubbard, p.246.

³⁵ F. Webster, (2001) "Re-Inventing Place: Birmingham as an Information City?," City, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 35.

³⁶ P. Loftman, and B. Nevin, (1996) "Going for Growth: Prestige Projects in three British Cities," Urban Studies, Vol. 33, No. 6, p. 998.

³⁷ D. Lister, (1991) "The Transformation of a City: Birmingham," in M. Fisher and U. Owen (Eds.) Whose Cities, Penguin Books, p. 60.

concluded that investments made by the city in cultural and other projects made “a major economic contribution to the city in particular, and the West Midland region in general.”³⁸

Gateshead is a city with 190,000 inhabitants. In the past it had been an industrial city but due to the post-industrial era it suffered from continuous negative migration and jobs in manufacturing, mining and heavy industry were lost. Because it had based itself on these industries the city was left with many additional urban problems, such as polluted land, increased unemployment and deserted inner city buildings.

Thirty years ago city leaders introduced the use of art in its urban regeneration plans. At first there were small local initiatives, but these expanded into broader projects with substantial capital investment. Construction of a cultural quarter located near the southern banks of the Tyne River was recently completed, and this will be used to stimulate the development of a new housing project for new middle and upper class residents, as well as the regeneration of other residential districts located nearby.³⁹

In 1986 the Gateshead municipality initiated a new project called “Art in Public Space.” The program included large-scale environmental art exhibits relating to the city’s industrial heritage and traditional way of life. The purpose of the project was to enhance the architectural esthetics of the public space and to give residents a sense of belonging and identification with the city. This program was accompanied by a public arts festival and continuing projects, such as a sculpture park on the banks of the Tyne that was established on the ruins of an abandoned factory.⁴⁰

In 1998 the construction of an enormous sculpture, entitled “Angel of the North,” was completed. The sculpture stands 20 meters high and the angel’s wing span measures 54 meters across. The sculpture was designed to be a monumental display welcoming visitors to the city, and to add a cultural dimension to its image. Construction of the sculpture also symbolized a change in the scope of cultural investments in the city and spurred the development of an urban cultural quarter that now holds two large-scale projects: the Baltic Art Gallery and the Sage Centre for Music and Performing Arts. The art gallery, which opened in 2002, was established in a building that was once used to

³⁸ P. Loftman, and B. Nevin, (1996), p.1002.

³⁹ S. Cameron and J. Coaffee, (2005) "Art, Gentrification and Regeneration – From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts," European Journal of Housing Policy, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 47

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 47-48.

store wheat and has now become a place for creating and displaying works of art. The Sage Gateshead Music Centre was dedicated in 2004, and is housed in an imposing glass-enclosed edifice with a modern and innovative design. The total investment in these two projects was £70 million.

The culture-led policies followed in Gateshead turned the city, in the opinion of many, into a cultural centre on a national scale. It is also claimed that Gateshead has become an engine of growth for the entire region.⁴¹

Glasgow, is yet another example of a city that suffered from post-industrial era syndrome: The flight of heavy industry, loss of jobs and the decline of inner city facilities. Evidence of the city's situation can be seen in the negative migration from the city, whose population had been 1.1 million people in 1961 but dropped to 662,000 in 1991; and the collapse of various industrial spheres – 279,000 workers were employed in industry in 1960, compared with only 82,000 in 1989, while unemployment rates rose from 2.8% in 1960 to 15.8% in 1989.⁴²

Beginning in the mid-1980s efforts were made to market Glasgow through a media publicity campaign under the heading of “Glasgow’s Miles Better.” Concomitantly, more individual marketing efforts were undertaken emphasizing the city’s creative side, its flourishing culture and its tourist attractions. All of these sought to “reinvent” the city by changing its image – from a declining industrial city to a creative, revitalizing and inviting city that was a tourist center and the focus of economic investments by the private sector. At the center of the change was downtown Glasgow.⁴³ It is important to note that the image change was not only external but internal as well. The goal was to raise morale among the city’s residents, to intensify their pride and keep them from fleeing the city.

The cultural policy in Glasgow included its designation as a European City of Culture in 1990, making 1996 the Year of Visual Arts and declaring Glasgow as UK City of Architecture and Design in 1999. The creative industries were perceived as being capable of contributing towards the city’s growth and thus spheres such as the visual arts were

⁴¹ S. Cameron and J. Coaffee, (2005), p.49.

⁴² R. Paddison, (1999) “City Marketing, Image Reconstruction, and Urban Regeneration” in, Urban Studies, Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 345.

⁴³ M. Gomez, (1998) Reflective Images: The Case of Urban Regeneration in Bilbao and Glasgow, Blackwell Ltd., p. 111.

funded by the city. In 2001 there were 32,000 people engaged in this sphere, which constitutes some 8% of the city's manpower.⁴⁴

Edinburgh was able to market itself as a city of festivals, the most famous of which is the Edinburgh Festival, which takes place annually and is billed as “the biggest arts fair in the world.” During the month-long Edinburgh Festival there are, essentially, five different festivals taking place simultaneously: the Edinburgh International Festival, the Fringe Festival (with theatrical performances as well as dance, music, entertainment, etc.), the Jazz and Blues Festival, the Book Festival and the International Film Festival.

Many tourists attend more than one festival and spend more time in the city than they would have had they been visiting at some other time of the year.

The total cost of the 2008 Festival was 9 million pounds. The budget was composed 48% from ticket sales and sponsorship and 52% from public sector funding.

Despite the fact that August is Festival month, there are other, smaller festivals, such as the Hogmanay Festival held on New Year's Eve, the Beltane Fire Festival held in April (based on a pagan holiday marking the end of winter and the arrival of spring), the International Science Festival and many more – all of which serve to maintain a festival atmosphere all year round. The festivals contribute greatly to the city's Economy, cultural life and international profile. Patricia Ferguson, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport stated referring to the 2004 festival that “*The festival delivered a collective economic boost of £135M and supported 2,900 full time jobs*”.⁴⁵

The number of tourists has elevated in recent years and in 2007 amounted to 1.1M.

In addition to marketing Edinburgh as a city of festivals, a master plan to renovate the downtown area highlights quality of life for both residents and visitors. Most of the resources allocated for this program are spent on improving the quality, safety and cleanliness of the public space, while involving all the relevant agencies. This helps create a supportive environment that promotes commerce and attracts visitors. This

⁴⁴ J. McCarthy, (2006) "The Application of Policy for Cultural Clustering: Current Practice in Scotland," *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 399.

⁴⁵ The Scottish Government internet site (Last entered in June 2009):
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2005/01/20143302>

emphasis stems from the city's understanding that public space is a key factor that can turn the city center into a place that is attractive for business, entertainment and housing. In addition to its willingness to invest funds in creating a public space suited to a capital city, the master plan sets high standards for managing and maintaining the revitalized public space. The desire to attract visitors to the downtown area, both the city's residents and tourists, led to the construction of infrastructures that were convenient for pedestrians; the development of strict hospitality standards aimed at visitors to downtown; and marketing the area as a center for business, shopping, tourism, culture and leisure activity – even when there are no festivals in town.⁴⁶

Swansea was a regional center for iron and steel manufacturing, mining, and exporting coal, copper and zinc, since the 19th century. As with other cities, Swansea also suffered from the decline in industry and the subsequent negative impact on the city; to date most of the city's employees work in the services and public sector. Following the city's decline it was decided in the 1990s to begin a policy aimed at “reinventing the city” using marketing and place promotion strategy, the purpose of which was to improve the city's image by highlighting its uniqueness. Using poet Dylan Thomas who was a native of Swansea was one of the key means employed for this purpose.⁴⁷

One of the city's main assets is the fact that it is a tourist city on a national scale that combines a rural region and the sea coast. The use of Dylan Thomas was added to the existing tourism strategy and was integrated with investment in a broader cultural approach. The rationale underlying the use of the author's image was his ability to help attract tourists who would want to visit the places related to his personal life, places mentioned in his writings, or locations that inspired him. Furthermore, branding Swansea as “the birthplace of Dylan Thomas” helped to elevate the city and improve its image.⁴⁸

The poet was used primarily for image and marketing purposes and included renovating the house in which Thomas resided, displaying his image on billboards throughout the city, and naming cultural institutions, restaurants and cafes after him. In addition to these efforts, the city also invested in additional cultural aspects that included holding various

⁴⁶ M. Halevy and H. Samuel (2008). “Culture in Jerusalem,” A vision for Jerusalem: A plan to restore Jerusalem, Israel's capital, G. Ofer (Ed.), Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, p. 228.

⁴⁷ H. Watkins and D. Herbert, (2003) "Cultural Policy and Place Promotion: Swansea and Dylan Thomas," Geoforum, Vol. 34, p.252.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 253.

cultural events. The city hosted the annual British Year of Literature in 1995, and since then has held an annual festival for arts and culture (bearing the poet's name, of course). The city also established several cultural projects, such as a national center for literature that also serves as a museum depicting the life and works of Dylan Thomas.⁴⁹

Other European cities

Berlin

The cultural wealth of Berlin is unique compared to other cities in Europe and around the world. Three opera companies, nine orchestras, 880 choirs, 140 theaters, 350 art galleries and a substantial number of museums make Berlin not only a city with the most cultural institutions in German, but in all of Europe. Add to this a variety of international festivals held annually in the city, such as the International Film Festival, JazzFest Berlin, the Berlin Theater Festival and more. Another of the city's unique feature is that, in contrast with other capital cities such as London or Paris, most of Berlin's cultural budget comes from the municipality rather than the central government.⁵⁰

Culture in Berlin has a clear geographical delineation. The urban centrality was critical to the city fathers and therefore in Berlin, as in many other European cities, most of the theaters, opera houses, concert halls, art galleries and museums are concentrated in the heart of the city.⁵¹

Berlin's reunification in 1990 brought about many changes in all spheres of life in the city, including changes in cultural life and the distribution of its cultural institutions. A fringe scene sprung up in the eastern portion of the city, especially in the Mitte Quarter, which included the opening of a large number of small theaters; jazz, rock and electronic music clubs; and literary cafes. The growth of this alternative culture in the eastern part of the city was the result of the cultural vacuum that remained following the fall of the Communist regime and low real estate prices compared with the western part of Berlin.

This cultural growth in eastern Berlin influenced its physical and cultural regeneration. The Spandau Vorstadt area to the north of the Mitte Quarter, which had been in decline under East German rule, changed following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Due to the

⁴⁹ H. Watkins and D. Herbert, (2003), p.257-258.

⁵⁰ B. Gresillon, (1999) "Berlin, Cultural Metropolis: Changes in the Cultural Geography of Berlin Since Reunification," in *Ecumene*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 285.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 288.

availability of cheap housing and its proximity to cultural sites developing in the area, the neighborhood was inhabited by students and artists which resulted in the establishment of coffee houses and entertainment venues. Evidence of the dramatic change that took place here was the opening of a new facility in a building that had been preserved from the beginning of the 20th century, housing art galleries, theaters, clubs, cafes and pubs.⁵²

Barcelona

Barcelona is one of the world's ten most popular tourist destinations, and almost all of its attractions are culture related. The number of tourists visiting the city elevated from 1.7M in 1990 to 7M in 2007.

Culture plays a central role in Barcelona's strategic plan as an engine for urban regeneration processes. Barcelona's cultural budget has almost tripled in the last 15 years to a sum of €100M.

The first major step in this context was playing host to the 1992 Summer Olympic Games. This event brought about culture-led momentum that hasn't stopped to this day. Subsequently the city's old Gothic Quarter was renovated, a museum for contemporary art was built, a center for contemporary culture was opened, and a number of festivals and cultural events were held, such as the Barcelona Forum 2004.⁵³

Since the 19th century the Poblenou district had been an industrial area and its importance was such that it was known as "Spain's industrial engine." But as industrial production waned the district slowly changed and at present it serves as a center for high-tech industries and other businesses. Interesting buildings in the area include the La Farinera cultural center, which was founded in 1999 in a building that had once served as a flour mill, and the Technological Center of Catalonia, which is housed in a building that was once a factory.

The largest and most ambitious of all the cultural projects of the past decade was the Barcelona Universal Forum of Cultures, which took place in 2004. The Barcelona Forum 2004 was a cultural and tourism event held over a period of five months and co-sponsored by the City of Barcelona, the Spanish government and UNESCO. This event was an engine that spurred the construction of several large-scale projects, such as the

⁵² Ibid, p. 292.

⁵³ C. Gdaniec, (2000) "Cultural Industries, Information Technology and the Regeneration of Post-industrial Urban Landscapes: Poblenou in Barcelona – a Virtual city?," in *GeoJournal*, Vol. 50, pp. 381-382.

Center for Peace, the Forum Conference Center, the Water Theater and a municipal amphitheater. In addition, formerly industrial areas were allocated for use as work spaces for local artists. An extensive facility was set up near the sea and most of the events were held there. There were more than 450 dance performances and theater productions, performances by famous singers and countless street performances, circus acts, puppet shows, dance and cooking workshops – and all taking place in an international atmosphere of cultural exchange and diversity. Additionally there were public dialogues between intellectuals from all around the world on topics relating to culture, art and human rights, as well as a parliament on religions. As part of the Forum there were four major exhibits held at the Miro Museum, the Picasso Exhibit, the National Museum of Catalonian Art and the Museum of Modern Art. The common denominator linking all of these exhibits was intercultural cooperation with an emphasis on issues relating war and peace and globalization.⁵⁴

Bilbao

The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is described as the first art museum that not only contributed towards a city's regeneration, it actually "reinvented" the city. This cultural icon designed by Frank Gehry, which cost over £70 million to build, succeeded in turning the city into a sought-after tourist destination and during its first year more than 1.3 million people visited the museum. The museum was able to bring a great deal of economic momentum to the city of Bilbao. Urban regeneration efforts in Bilbao also included municipal investment for infrastructures, a new light rail system, a river esplanade and the construction of a new airport terminal designed by architect Santiago Calatrava with a capacity of 2-2.5 million tourists annually. Despite government claims and statements on the project's success, opinions are divided as to just how successful it was. The success of the first year was followed by a drop in the number of visitors to the museum to 760,000 in 2001, although primarily foreign tourists. There is also a discussion between scholars on the extent to which it contributes to the Basque economy.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the boost of tourism is impressive. In 1994 there were

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 384.

⁵⁵ G. Evans, (2003) "Hard-Branding the Cultural City from Prado to Prada," in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Vol. 27, pp. 432-433.

practically no tourists visiting Bilbao (only 25,000) but since the opening of the museum the situation changed dramatically to reach 620,000 tourists in 2007.

North American cities

Milwaukee efforts to reinvent itself as a regional economic and cultural center are based on a publicity campaign aimed at creating a new image as a city that embodies the values of “the Old America,” which nostalgically holds on to the traditional values of its past. The cultural capital upon which the new-old image was based was its grand industrial past and the conservative heritage of its residents.⁵⁶

The new image campaign that began in 1995 was aimed at creating for Milwaukee a new-old image as a city that represents traditional America and its roots, or the “real America.” Thus the catch phrase chosen for the city was “a Genuine American City.” In this way, the city’s leaders linked the city’s image with the culture and traditional values that were common during the early 20th century, with the intention of creating an image of a city with solid architecture, honest people, and family-oriented tourism attractions. This message hoped to create a balance between the image of a diverse and vibrant city, but one that was also convenient and safe.⁵⁷

This image change entailed several physical and cultural projects. One of the larger ones was the new convention center, which was built in downtown Milwaukee and was designed in the style similar to commercial buildings that typified the city at the end of the 19th century. Another project was recently opened (in 2008), a museum dedicated to one of the most famous of the city’s factories, the Harley-Davidson Museum.

In addition, many of the buildings that had once been used for industry and remained abandoned for some time have been renovated in recent years to be used for housing, commerce and culture. One such building is now being used by the College of Design, while others have been refurbished for various commercial uses including designer stores. Numerous industrial buildings adjacent to the river have been turned into luxury housing for the upper class.⁵⁸

A good example of the city’s efforts to preserve its cultural and traditional values is the project in Milwaukee’s historic Third Ward, located near the river and downtown. In the

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 76.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 79-80

⁵⁸ G. Evans, (2003), p. 86.

past this area served as a warehouse district but in recent years it has undergone extensive renovations and there are now numerous businesses, galleries, museums and a college of art, and it is one of the more vibrant parts of the city.

Milwaukee has also advertised itself as a "City of Festivals" hosting different annual festivals as the summerfest music festival, the Pride festival and different ethnic festivals.

In **Philadelphia** a project was undertaken that used culture (mainly visual arts and theater arts) to revitalize the downtown area. Broad Street, the city's main thoroughfare, was home to a large number of cultural institutions and art schools, but there was no connection between them and there was no accompanying cultural life nearby. The program aimed to connect the institutions and turn the entire area into a lively 24-hour entertainment center by using the existing institutions and supplementing this with developing the adjacent physical space. For this purpose, the city founded "Avenue of the Arts, Inc." (AAI), an organization that deals with planning and development, marketing the area, and maintaining and beautifying the urban space.

Branding Broad Street as a cultural center was based on the existing cultural institutions and theaters, but over the years a substantial number of new performance and exhibition venues have been built along the avenue. By upgrading the public space the Avenue of the Arts earned a unique identity. Along with the physical development there was a process of branding, part of which included designing a logo that appeared on advertising relating to the area and has become an icon for the avenue.

According to the planners, branding the avenue as an area of cultural regeneration was economically worthwhile. Initial investments were returned and generated income and jobs for many in the city. In addition, various "culture-complementary" businesses have opened up over the years such as restaurants and shops, without any public investment. Because of the broad range of building uses and the relative crowdedness along the avenue, visitors do not come merely to see one of the performances being offered there; they also dine, shop, and look for reasons to stay there. The atmosphere that has been created shines anew on the cultural institutions and schools that maintain the avenue.⁵⁹

Montreal has seen efforts in recent years to change the city into an international center for design and to brand the city as such. As part of this policy, the city holds an annual

⁵⁹ M. Halevy and H. Samuel (2008). p. 226.

competition to choose businesses with the nicest or most interesting architecture or interior design. This competition, known as Commerce Design Montréal, encourage large and small businesses to make esthetic and creative changes and is one aspect of a broader policy whose goal is to improve the “urban experience” and make the city attractive for international tourism. In 1992 the city appointed someone to be “in charge of urban design policy,” a position that did not exist previously. This person was the one who initiated the design competition using a relatively small budget of \$7 million annually, but which had a major international impact among those interested in design and architecture.⁶⁰

The project’s international effect led to its imitation in other cities. The city of St. Etienne in France, for example, in collaboration with the city of Montreal, also initiated a similar design competition aimed at improving its image. The design competition was part of a larger process based on the city’s design and art schools and was geared towards making the city more esthetic and increasing its attraction. To help in this area the city implemented an annual design festival and recently established an international design center.⁶¹

City in Asia

Shanghai

Starting in 1949, when China became Communist, the growth that Shanghai had enjoyed since the end of the 19th century was halted, and the city went into decline. In the past few years, an urban regeneration strategy has been adopted in Shanghai, which is based to a large degree on a culture-led policy. The strategy consists of developing cultural industries, holding large cultural events and building new cultural institutions. Cultural industries are developed by promoting three main industries: film and television, print and publishing, and art and entertainment.

In order to become a global cultural center, a number of huge cultural buildings were constructed in the city, and international cultural events were held there. The budget earmarked for developing cultural infrastructure was doubled between the years 1996-2000; among other things, a new art gallery was established, along with a museum for

⁶⁰ M. N Rantisi and D. Leslie, (2006) "Branding the Design Metropole: The Case of Montreal, Canada," in *Area*, Vol. 38, No. 4, p. 365.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 372.

ancient art objects, a large theater hall, a grand convention center and one of the biggest libraries in the world.

Hosting national and international cultural events is another important tool that has been employed by the city. Throughout the 1990s, a large international cultural event was held at least once a year, such as the International Film Festival, a television festival, an arts festival, an Asian music festival, fashion festivals and other cultural events.

The cultural strategy also included preservation of the city's old building heritage values. In this context, it was decided to renovate and preserve 250 buildings in the old Bund quarter, and to renovate the port area by preserving buildings and rezoning them as government and residential buildings.⁶²

Contribution of the "creative class" to urban regeneration

Another aspect of the issue of culture and its contribution to the city is related to the view of researcher Richard Florida about the rise of the "creative class" and its contribution to the city and its regeneration.⁶³ Florida includes in the creative class people who add economic value through their creativity, thus it includes a great many knowledge workers, analysts, doctors, and professionals in knowledge-based industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services and business management.⁶⁴ Florida argues that cities competing today for human capital has to take account that lifestyle frequently trumps employment when people choose where to live and that people today expect more from the places they live⁶⁵. Cultural attractions are therefore a main element of cities looking to attract human capital and private investments.

Florida also includes in the creative class a variety of people who create art and culture, such as painters, sculptors, actors, singers, musicians and more. He argues that cities that are searching for ways to accelerate regeneration processes should attract these populations and give them space in which to create. These populations serve as "cultural agents" for the city and contribute towards hastening urban regeneration processes. These artists often settle in less-developed areas of the city due to the low rental fees, and draw

⁶² W. Wu, (2004) "Cultural Strategies in Shanghai: Representing Cosmopolitanism in an Era of Globalization," in *Progress in Planning*, Vol. 61, pp. 167-171.

⁶³ R. Florida, (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class and how it's Transforming Work, Leisure Community and Everyday Life*. New York, Basic Books.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 224-225.

more and more artists in their wake, who gradually cause the cultural, human and aesthetic development of the district where they live, to the point of creating a pluralistic and diverse cultural site. In doing so, they also serve as agents of urban regeneration and contribute to the area's development: Creating an infrastructure of galleries, performance venues, cafés, pubs and more.

In this context, a common means of reviving rundown areas is the attempt to attract young population and students. Researcher Darren Smith view students as agents of urban regeneration. His main proposition is that drawing students to rundown areas of the city can serve as a tool for cities to start up a gentrification process; he even coined a special term for this, known as "studentification." His research shows that a large group of students that gathers in a certain space in the city will often lead to a rise in housing prices, which is a process that creates new opportunities for investment in the housing market and can lead to the physical restoration of buildings.⁶⁶ Furthermore, a young population serves as an agent for development and regeneration for three additional reasons: First, this is a population that goes out, consumes culture, fills leisure spots and creates demand for additional entertainment spots and commercial development. Second, this population does not own a private vehicle, for the most part, and is therefore more suited to living in inner city areas, some of which are closed to private traffic. And third, the younger population is lively and vibrant, which is precisely the image that cities wish to project as part of the regeneration process.

Cultural "homogeneity" versus local and fringe culture

Culture-led urban regeneration processes face a problematic contradiction. Attracting new consumers and investors frequently requires large public investments that do not always achieve the desired results, and are oriented more towards new businesses and tourists than the local population. An interesting and original urban culture may contribute to this, but on the other hand, the success of this strategy means higher rents and driving out the creators of the alternative culture, which reduces the real and authentic cultural diversity of the city. A large part of post-modern cultural production is designed to sell the place as part of a broad cultural package. The outcome is that many

⁶⁶ D. P. Smith, (2005) Studentification: A Guide to Challenges, Opportunities and Practice, Universities UK, London.

cities try to differentiate themselves but ultimately find themselves engaged in serial replication of the dominant cultural homogeneity.⁶⁷

Cities with a well-developed alternative culture enjoy an advantage over other cities. They do not need to replicate the dominant culture, but rather to invest and provide incentives for the developing of existing authentic culture. In the city of Cork, Ireland, for example, the municipality's development program was criticized by the local artists' community, which argued that the cultural program in which the city was investing represented "high culture" and ignored local culture. Many artists said that the programs did not have a real cultural dimension, and were only intended to serve as a tool for economic regeneration. Another critique argued that the new programs did not provide a response to the social and economic needs of low socioeconomic status residents, and were thereby increasing polarization in the city.⁶⁸

Another critical approach came out against the cultural regeneration policy and argued that dealing with the economic fruits of culture diverted attention from an equally important factor: The influence of culture on social forces in the city, which also play an important role in city design. In different cities, the attitude towards alternative culture ranges from an attempt to institutionalize it to marginalizing it, and from those who wish to preserve its "authenticity" to those who advocate its commercialization. Critics say that the municipal establishment should recognize sectors that are marginalized by mainstream public discourse, because they produce a different and more diverse kind of culture.⁶⁹

The Mitte quarter in Berlin is an example of a process of this kind. As noted above, this area is where alternative Berlin culture developed in the years after the city's reunification. Bars and clubs opened there spontaneously, and abandoned buildings were populated by alternative artists and marginal groups. In this context, it is argued that gentrification processes and approval of large development plans drove out alternative culture and caused particular damage to Berlin's unique music scene.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ D. P. Smith, (2005), p.153.

⁶⁸ C. O'Callaghan, and D. Linehan, (2007) "Identity, Politics and Conflict in Dockland Development in Cork, Ireland: European Capital of Culture 2005," in *Cities*, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 319.

⁶⁹ K. Shaw, (2005) "The Place of Alternative Culture and the Politics of its Protection in Berlin, Amsterdam and Melbourne," in *Planning Theory & Practice*, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 149.

⁷⁰ K. Shaw, (2005), p. 152.

Alternative culture is perceived as representing different streams of “opposition.” It is characterized by innovation, originality and divergence from dominant culture and by the fact that it challenges the latter and tries to redefines its limits. Alternative culture is usually relegated to the sidelines by the dominant culture or distances itself deliberately, but its influence on dominant culture may be significant nonetheless.⁷¹

In the 1970s and 1980s, the population of central Amsterdam was characterized by a relatively low socioeconomic status, many buildings were abandoned and districts were undeveloped. In these years, an alternative anarchist movement flourished whose members entered abandoned buildings and lived in them as communities. In the 1990s, the city’s economy experienced a quick growth spurt, which was accompanied by a boom of development and private construction in the city center. Against this backdrop, many of the anarchist communities were removed from buildings, at least some of which had become vibrant centers of alternative culture over time. The alternative culture was consigned to the shipyard area, but here, too, it was driven out by a gentrification process.⁷²

In the 1990s, alternative culture gradually disappeared in Amsterdam. The city’s leaders understood that it was necessary to rein in this process, which was harming the city’s pluralist nature, and initiated a project designed to offer 2,000 buildings for residential and work purposes in the inner city. The Amsterdam Municipality worked to purchase buildings that had been illegally entered by squatters and upgraded additional spaces in old industrial buildings or abandoned schools. These buildings were sold or rented at a low and subsidized cost to artists’ communities for engaging in non-commercial cultural initiatives.⁷³

Summary and conclusions

In recent years, the relationship between culture and urban regeneration has become clearer. Culture is becoming a significant factor in attracting economic and human capital, increasing the number of visitors to the city and boosting commercial and economic activity. Cultural events serve to promote the cities’ image and turn them into lively and vibrant places. Culture serves as a drawing point for tourists, makes them stay

⁷¹ Ibid, pp. 150-151.

⁷² Ibid, p. 153.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 161.

longer on each visit, and therefore spend more money. Cultural events may also contribute to positively branding the city on the national and international levels.⁷⁴ In addition, culture is perceived as advancing the city's competitive potential versus other cities; it increases its drawing power, and thereby serves as a catalyst for urban economic growth. From a physical standpoint, culture is a factor in the revival of older districts and urban regeneration. Cultural institutions and various cultural districts generate activity in their environment and contribute to increased traffic and the physical restoration of the surrounding environment.⁷⁵ Cultural activities are not limited to specific hours, and therefore they can contribute to attracting different people at different times, thereby generating economic and human activity in the evening and night hours as well ("night-time economy").

From a social standpoint, culture is perceived as a factor that contributes to the inclusion of various sectors of society and gives expression to its diversity. This role is of great importance in easing ethnic, class and racial tensions, particularly in diverse or complex societies. In addition, culture plays an important role in investing public space with content and creating vibrant and vital urban areas. In this way, and in combination with the built-up environment, culture can contribute to creating a "sense of place." Cultural projects serve, in this context, as important symbols that give meaning to the built-up environment and play an important role in urban regeneration. In combination with urban design, culture can contribute to differentiating the city, giving character to the region and raising the inhabitants' sense of pride. Culture is a central component in the urban space, because it contributes to consolidating the city's identity and thereby to creating a "healthy" urban expanse.⁷⁶

Despite this, it should be remembered that like any other strategy, cultural strategies also have limitations, and they raise several dilemmas. First, when the policy's primary goal is to attract investment from private investors, it is feared that culture may serve to distance or exclude vulnerable sectors of the urban population. With correct guidance by the authorities, culture can serve as a tool for expressing a variety of views so as to ease

⁷⁴ Adding Value and a Competitive Edge: The Case for Using Arts and Culture in Town Centers, A Report Commissioned by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), pp. 40-41.

⁷⁵ G. Evans, (2005), "Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration," in Urban Studies, Vol. 42, No. 5, p. 967.

⁷⁶ M. Wansborough, and A. Mageean, (2000), p. 184.

ethnic, racial or class tensions, but when the stated goal is to draw a stronger population to the city, there is a danger of the opposite effect, of increasing tensions and a sense of deprivation.

Second, establishing cultural districts and large cultural institutions requires a large investment of public funds, funds that could have been invested for the direct benefit of a majority of the city's residents by other means. Investment in cultural institutions poses a certain risk because they do not generate large sources of employment and do not provide large tax revenues, in comparison with other potential investments. This means that in a simple cost-benefit analysis without a broader perspective, it is difficult to justify the investment.

Finally, when one of the main goals of culture is to serve as an instrument for attracting visitors and tourists and filling hotels and restaurants in the city, there is a danger of commercializing culture and rendering it superficial. In this context, it is feared that placing too great an emphasis on the economic advantages of the cultural strategies will obscure the fact that making money for the city can never be the main goal of culture.

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