

Scenario Building for Service Design at Montemor-o-Velho

Teresa Franqueira, Cláudia Alexandrino

teresa.franqueira@ua.pt, claudia.alexandrino@ua.pt

Universidade de Aveiro, Departamento de Comunicação e Arte, ID+ Research Institute

3810-193 Aveiro. Portugal

Abstract

This paper aims to showcase an ongoing service design project for the Montemor-o-Velho municipality, which is integrated in Ruas de Cultura (Streets of Culture), a project with a wider scope. The proposal of Montemor-o-Velho City Hall promotes the regeneration of several central urban spaces, through the dinamization of 3 axes:

- 1 – One unit where the Artistic Residencies will be installed;
- 2 – A Technological Centre and companies' incubator;
- 3 – Several spaces dedicated to social activities.

The ID+ participates with 2 types of intervention. The first one is centred around the development of actions/tools that can promote the implementation of an organizational and space management model based on the following premises: active incentives to sharing experiences, sharing knowledge and tasks; and a second one focused on the creation of an identity system for the project.

This article aims to highlight the axis of service design actions/tools' development, with a particular emphasis on participatory design. Based on visual representation tools characteristic of the design activity, several scenarios will be outlined in order to promote a strategic debate between all stakeholders, some of which will be detailed in this paper. The tools which will allow for the collaboration and participation of future users of these spaces will also be developed in the project.

KEYWORDS: service design, identity, participatory design

Introduction

'...if conditions are right ordinary people can make the extra-ordinary happen if given the chance.' (Landry, 2005:14).

To understand the theoretical background of this proposal, it is important to establish a few concepts, regarding new lifestyles that are emerging in this century.

There are a growing number of people, organizations and institutions behave in a creative way in the contemporary knowledge society (Giddens, 1990 and 1999; Ray, Anderson, 2000) and according to the Young Foundation Report (Mulgan, 2007), social innovations have

been moving from the margins to the mainstream.

2009 has marked a breakthrough in the recognition of the importance of social innovations, with, on one hand, the announcement of a new Office of Social Innovation by President Obama and with the discussion the European Commission has launched on how to better support and accelerate social innovation.

This reality is all the more visible in the ICT and there is plenty of literature concerning the new social tools and the growth of virtual communities in which the sharing, participation and collaboration help in the democratic process of accessing information.

Knowledge is shared and diffused collaboratively, even though people don't know each other and are based in different locations. These virtual communities are delocalised and globalised, and the sharing and diffusion of information happens between elements of the same communities whom can be based in places as far and as different as New York or Seoul, Paris or S.Paulo, and so on. The platform which allows its creation and enables the sharing and exchange of information is technological, designated as Web 2.0.

Nonetheless, there is also an emerging phenomenon of groups of people sharing, participating and collaborating in the same physical place where this process is not virtual and its existence is materialised through a platform that is entirely different from the one enabled by Web.2.0. People socialize with each other face-to-face, and the by-product of this socialization is physical, achieved through a network of interpersonal relations.

The value produced for and by this group of people in a specific place is extended to other people outside the community. Much like in Web 2.0 communities, where everybody has access via the internet to what is produced even without producing contents, in these places services and activities are also accessible through visits not to the website but to the physical site. Similarly to what happens in museums, cultural and social centres, etc., but where people can collaborate, thus becoming producers and users of the products.

Looking closely at cities it is possible to find these creative milieux. Places where groups of people put in practice urban regeneration through a focus on culture as a means of generating wealth, jobs, identity and active citizenship. These clusters are the result of a special urban creativity, deriving from the problems and potential of cities and the special response they require, where groups of people put in practice urban regeneration through a focus on culture as means of generating wealth, jobs, identity and active citizenship.

These clusters of urban creativity, characterized by specialisms and niches as well as an innovative mix of ideas, are the result of urban life itself in the sense that they result from a set of conditions only found in cities - optimal dimension or critical mass, cultural and ethnic diversity, universalism and large fluxes of exchange and interaction (Landry, 2000).

CREATIVE PLACES

Many cases of social innovation happen in some very special urban places, that here we will call: Creative Places. These places are very diverse but, at the same time, they have some strong common denominators, the most evident of which are: their being deeply rooted in their own city, but also open and cosmopolitan. And their being self-standing initiatives, but also highly connected and depending on a complex interplay of top-down, bottom-up and peer-to-peer interactions.

We have defined Creative Places as: new type of urban spaces where groups of people collaboratively promote and manage a mix of creative initiatives in the fields of art and culture, economy and production, social services and urban regeneration.

There are 3 main areas that play, and will continue to play in the coming future, a crucial role in the economic and social development of several countries, specially their cities.

_Culture, seen as one of the engines that propels economic growth, a more universal worldview and the democratic involvement of citizens.

_Knowledge based enterprises, which support a knowledge-based economy and have a key role in the attraction and retention of talent, fundamental for countries and cities competitiveness alike.

_And social initiatives, which play a major role in offsetting the emerging flaws in the traditional nation-state's welfare system.

Creative Places gather together these three phenomena that are steadily gaining momentum: artistic and cultural production (the sector of activity with more economic growth (Florida and Tinagli, 2004; United Nations 2008; The Economy of Culture in Europe Report 2006)), and whose labour force shows the lowest numbers of unemployment (Florida and Tinagli, 2004; United Nations 2008; The Economy of Culture in Europe Report 2006); knowledge-based enterprises (the shift from industrial to knowledge based society brings about new forms of value production); and social initiatives (the evident shortcomings of the welfare system motivate alternative ways of responding to needs and supplying services that used to be provided by the nation state).

The existence of these three phenomena, or areas, - Art & Culture, Knowledge-based Enterprises, and Social Initiatives – do not, by itself, define a Creative Place. It is the simultaneous mix and confluence of those activities that is its defining characteristic. And by amassing these 3 areas Creative Places work as incubators of novel developments, as well as launchpads for what may be a more socially sustainable future.

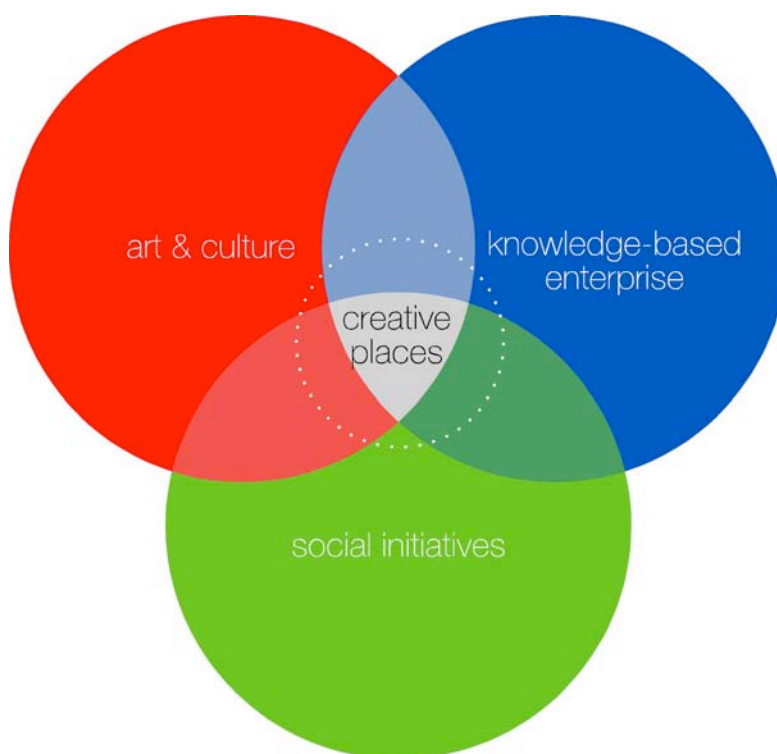


Figure 1 – Sectors of activity within Creative Places

Art & Culture - Refers to the artistic and cultural production sector, from theatre to music, media art, design, architecture, and so on.

Knowledge based enterprises - Small or medium enterprises, in which the production of value is based in the capacity to generate, share and use knowledge.

Whereas the traditional enterprises relied, and some still relying, on natural resources, labour and capital, the knowledge-based enterprises rely on creativity, information and data, intellectual capital and innovation.

Social initiatives - Initiatives regarding the social services' sphere, traditionally offered by the state or, sometimes, by religious organizations: childcare, healthcare, education, care of marginalized groups, care of the elderly, and so on.

Where these main areas mix (or overlap), we can find Creative Places.

This mix of activities echoes in other characteristics of these places, namely their creative bubblyness and talent effervescence, what makes them very promising from the viewpoint of sustainable economic growth, culturally driven urban regeneration and identity, and, above all, in the creation of a mature and sustainable knowledge based society.

The ID+ is developing this Ruas de Cultura project on the basis of this concept, with the goal of creating both the conditions for the participation and collaboration of all the stakeholders, and for the building of a brand that adds value and promotes the project.

Ruas de Cultura project

Project's Background.

The Municipality of Montemor-o-Velho is proposing a pilot project "Ruas de Cultura" in order to:

- Attract artists, creators and technicians involved in a set of complemented but differentiated sectors of the creative industries;
- create spaces for production, socialization and exhibition that allow for the Exchange of experiences and the creation of a creativity fostering environment;
- promote, within the area of the project's intervention, the settlement of companies, residential and animation spaces.

With Ruas de Cultura, Montemor-o-Velho aims at becoming a space that encourages innovation and draws agents to the cultural industries emerging sector. Montemor is a territory with a strong historic-cultural identity that is visible not only in its built heritage, but also in the countless cultural activities that are organized there, like the annual theatre festival CITEMOR, already on its 33rd edition and that draws around 2000 visitors. This festival is free and its audience mainly young (under 35 years). Montemor is also known for its PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) rice production, responsible for the region's economic development. It also has a High Performance Nautical Centre, with state-of-the-art equipment and a 2 kms channel, specific for sports like canoeing, open waters swimming, triathlon, etc. For this reason, Montemor-o-Velho is also the hosting city of many young athletes.

The Mayor's strategic vision to transform Montemor-o-Velho in a place where culture and entrepreneurship can flourish side by side have led to the acquisition of several buildings in the municipality, where the services and activities inherent to the Ruas de Cultura project will take place. The effective interaction between technicians, creators and artists in the artistic and technological development and the production of cultural goods should be the main orientation of the project, but is also key that attention is given to the promotion and business trading of services, products and cultural activities offered in Montemor-o-Velho and its area of influence.

Departing from this specific project "Ruas de Cultura", and drawing on international best practices identified through a combination of desk and field research, this project will identify and develop optimal strategies for building the necessary infrastructure in which sustainable cultural and collaborative services can flourish.

Project's Object and Objectives:

The ID+ Research Unit will be engaged in the following tasks:

To cooperate in the definition and implementation of the management and working model of the different spaces of the project. This project is based on the need to establish an organizational model for the proper functioning of the “creative industries hub” and “work and live “ spaces, having as a premise the incentive to the exchange of experiences, knowledge and tasks’ sharing.

The idea is to outline a model for collaborative work, implemented through the design of a set of actions/tools produced for this specific purpose; To endow the project with a global identity that promotes value creation and a close-knit relationship with its publics, which is central to the project’s success. The correct implementation of this identity system will allow the development of a sense of ownership on the part of all the participants and will nurture its enrooting.

A diagnosis report on the region was carried out in the first phase of the project’s development, so as to map out all the possibilities and constraints to the successful accomplishment of this project.

_To participate in inter-regional workshops and in programmes that involve the transfer of knowledge and sharing of best practices resulting from the project’s development.

_To develop the script and the rules that govern the functioning of the incubating and work and live spaces.

_To supply self-management tools and peer-to-peer collaboration models to entrepreneurs and creatives.

_To implement the Communications Plan

_Strategic analysis of the brand

_Definition and design of the Brand Identity System

_Brand Identity implementation

_Definition of the strategy and website design

Starting with these preliminary briefs, some proposals have been developed. As this is a participatory project, there will be meetings with all the partners and stakeholders involved, as well as with some of the future participants to find collaboratively some answers to their needs and to limitations in the project.

From past experiences, participants usually demonstrate difficulties in imagining some of the possible concepts (like the organizational model and self-management, the sharing of responsibilities and material and immaterial resources, and the offer of joint activities), so possible scenarios to materialize those concepts have been developed, in order to stimulate and feed discussions in the next meetings.

The pilot project can establish in Montemor-o-Velho a phenomenon based in cultural innovative actions that promote social cohesion and integration, community’s development, a sense of belonging and collective identity, sustainable behaviours and active citizenship.

The functioning strategy proposed for the project is based in the study of strategies adopted in similar cases and in the ID+ know-how.

Three functions were identified as a conceptual framework:

Cultural function - the project as a reference point for cultural activities.

Social function - the project as a hub for activities with strong social characteristics.

Urban regeneration function - the project as a hub for the creation of positive relations between the different actors, the citizens and the urban territory in which it is located.

Also, three dimensions were identified regarding the design framework for services & activities:

Quality of the human resources available and their competences

Openness to the city and its citizens

Introduction of the best practices identified at international level

From the cases studied during previous researches, it was possible to extract some models, or a mix of models and the project can be developed at two levels:

1. Management (organisational system & infrastructures’ sharing system)

2. Services & Activities (for and with the local community - offered by each artist or entrepreneur and in cooperation with others & monthly activities, workshops, courses, events).

A draft of a system map was developed, showing what spaces and resources could be shared. In the same way, a draft of a system map was developed regarding possible common activities.

Proposal for the “work and live” space.

_Organisational system: The system of management and organisation should be structured to enable responsibility sharing. A speaker should be elected, in representation of all the artists in residence. This figure is to be responsible for organising a monthly meeting between all the representatives involved in the project’s smooth running.

Also to be elected:

Responsible for the management of material resources

Responsible for the spaces’ management

Responsible for coordinating and managing the activities on offer

Responsible for the digital platform (both intra and inter net)

Responsible for communications on behalf of the project

Positions should be rotated every 6 months, allowing for the participation of all residents.

_Infrastructures’ sharing system: Besides the house and the ateliers, there are some spaces that can be shared and used by every member of the residence: a living room, a meeting room, a storage room and also the kitchen (figure 2).

A restaurant/café could further open the residence to the local community and forge stronger ties between the centre and the general public, since it is a socialisation place by nature. It can also play an important role in the dissemination of good eating habits and practices, as well as in promoting the traditional gastronomy of the region (figure 3). There could be also some culinary workshops, with the participation of local associations and the wider public – like traditional cuisine workshops to foster the sense of belonging and heritage. For instance, depending on the garden’s size and production, it can be organize an organic garden to supply the restaurant – or at least some specialities.

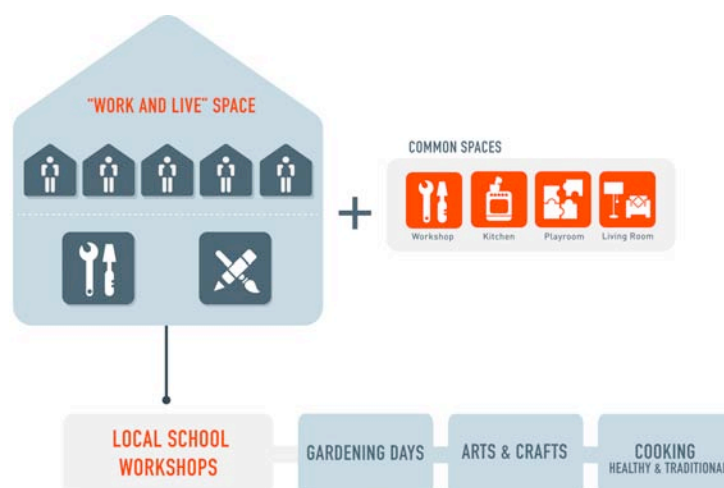


Figure 2 - Shared spaces and possible activities



Figure 3 - Scenario for strategic discussion regarding shared spaces and activities

_Services & Activities offered by single artists and in cooperation with others & monthly activities, workshops, courses, events.

Each artist must carry on with their own set of activities, independently of the others, but on a monthly basis they should get together (in groups of 3 or 4) to offer a common activity/project, taking advantage of the existing synergies and competences.

They should organize workshops for a wide public, inviting experts when possible.

Participation in those workshops should be paid, and money should be distributed between participating artists and used to finance the costs of organising them and pay possible guest speakers.

There are some possible activities to be organized in cooperation:

_Cultivating a vegetables garden

With this resource, some workshops and events can also be proposed by the local community:

Organize lectures/workshops with or for schools about farming, horticulture, etc.

Organization of open days dedicated to gardening

_Creation of an intercultural centre, with multiple activities directed at children.

Organization of workshops with local schools, leveraging the know-how and the existing resources in the ateliers.

Organization of theatre plays, with the scenarios built in the workshops.

_Creation of a lab for the development of creative skills.

Monthly they could offer workshops teaching how to play musical instruments and acting.

These could be on offer for scheduled school visits, or could be held on a regular basis, to a wider public.

Proposal for the creative industries hub space.

Regarding the creative industries hub space, the structure is similar to the Work and Live Space (figure 4).

Infrastructures' sharing system: Besides the working space, there are some spaces that can be shared and used by every member of the hub: a meeting room, a storage room and also a kitchen.

Regarding the material resources, it is also possible to share a Fax machine, a Copy machine, a DataShow and some Consumables.



Figure 4 - Shared spaces and possible activities

Services & Activities offered by a single entrepreneur and in cooperation with others & monthly activities, workshops, courses, events (figure 5).

Each entrepreneur must carry on with their own set of activities, independently of the others, but on a monthly basis they should get together (in groups of 3 or 4) to offer a common activity/project, taking advantage of the existing synergies and competences. They should organize workshops for a wider public, inviting experts when possible. Participation in those workshops should be paid, and money should be distributed between participating entrepreneurs and used to finance the costs of organising them and pay possible guest speakers.



Figure 5 - Scenario for strategic discussion regarding shared spaces and activities

These are some of the possible scenarios that can be developed in the Ruas de Cultura project. Nevertheless, all proposals will be developed on a participatory basis, i.e, with the inclusion, participation and feedback from all of the involved stakeholders. This is an early stage of the project. In the meanwhile there will be meetings and workshops with the all the people involved to define a more detailed brief.

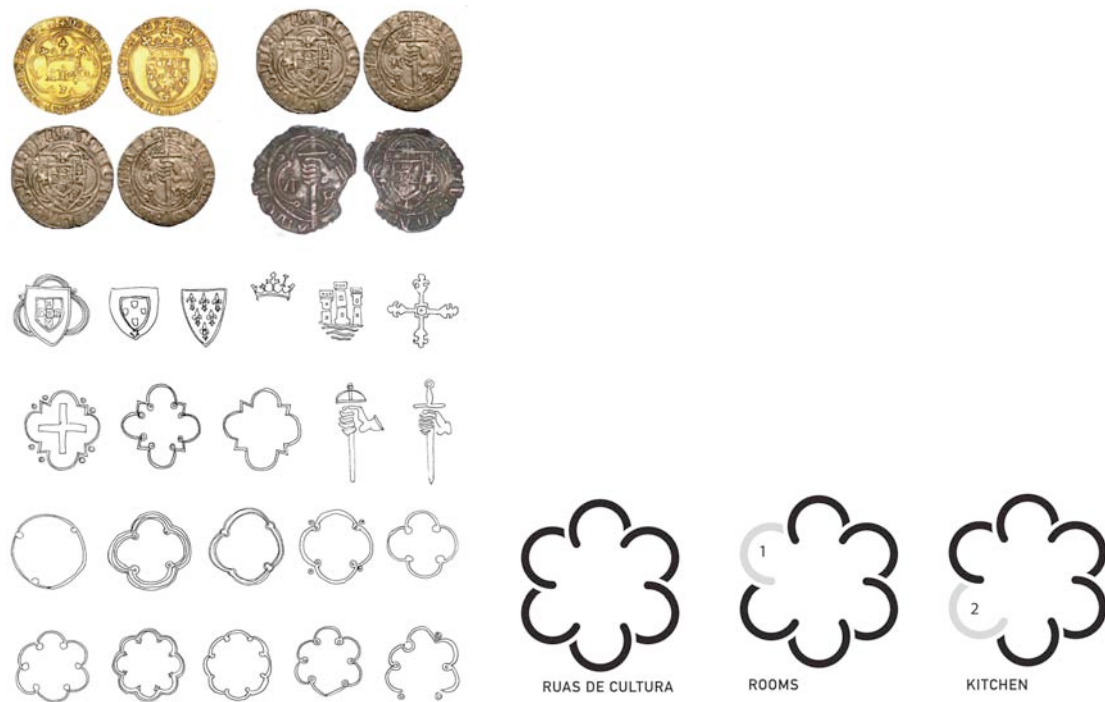


Figure 6 – Ruas de Cultura street



Figure 7 – Scenario for Ruas de Cultura street

There is also an ongoing project for the identity of the Ruas de Cultura (figure 8 and 9).



Figures 8 and 9 – Identity brand development and draft proposal

Conclusions

For too long urban design involved only architecture and land-use planning. Now other professions began to form an essential part of the city-making. We have learned that the physical alone does not make a city or a place (Landry, 2006). So our vision of a possible city is based in the idea of a Collaborative City.

In a closer look to this city, we discover its several hubs, in particular places made of and by people, which work as creativity incubators, laboratories of new cultural experiences, centres of social and solidary dynamism where new economic models are being forged.

Places where people lead sustainable lifestyles, and from where they are able to show to the remainder of society how traditional ways of life can be changed.

Amongst the possible approaches to sustainable development, we give a special focus to the design of services oriented towards new social models, in order to develop and strengthen cultural identities and sustainable lifestyles. In this sense, the innovation driven by design operates within an integrated system, with multidisciplinary teams that can help to build new social scenarios. These scenarios presuppose new attitudes towards the unsustainable patterns we adopted, implying new business strategies and new ways of promoting quality of life and well-being. This scenario offers design a different approach and a new opportunity to develop and enhance a sustainable future.

Design is about culture and creativity, is about problem solving, and these “projects” are solving problems arisen from everyday activities that people have to carry out in this complex society.

In these framework design should act as an interface between two levels (top-down and bottom-up initiatives), for top-down initiatives are strategic whilst bottom-up ones are more tactical or operative. Design has the capacity of being both strategic and tactical, this means that design can potentiate people’s and government’s visions, creating scenarios according to those same visions, benefiting city life in meaningful ways.

References

- Cohen, B. 2006. Urbanization in Developing Countries: Current Trends, Future Projections, and Key Challenges for Sustainability. *Technology in Society* 28 (1-2): 63-80) in *State of the world population 2007*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/english.html> [accessed 15 October 2007]
- Creative London. September 2005. *Strategies for Creative Spaces. Phase 1 Report*
- EMUDE (2006), *Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions, 6th Framework Programme (priority 3-NMP)*, European Community, internal document
- European Commission, 2006. *The Economy of Culture in Europe*. s.l.: European Commission [Online] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc873_en.htm#bad_nodepdf_word/economy_cult/executive_summary.pdf [Accessed 7 June 2007].
- Florida, R. 2004. *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books
- Florida and Tinagli, 2004;
- Franqueira, T., 2010. *Creative Places for Collaborative Cities: Proposal for the ‘Progetto Habitat e Cultura’ in Milan*, *The Design Journal*, Volume 13, Issue 2, PP 199–216, Berg 2010
- Franqueira, T., 2008. *Service design and urban communities - The role of design in the diffusion of creative communities services and sustainable lifestyles*. CUMULUS Conference Kyoto - Emptiness. *Reseting Design*. Kyoto Seika University. Japan. 28 March 2008
- Giddens, A., 1990. *Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Giddens, A., 1999 *Risk and Responsibility*. *Modern Law Review* 62(1): 1-10. , 1999.
- Landry, C. 2000. *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd
- Landry, C., 2005. *Publications Age of the City - Creativity and the city 2005*. [Online] Available at: www.charleslandry.com [accessed 3 December 2007].
- Landry, C. 2006. *The Art of City Making*, London: Earthscan Publications Ltd
- Landry, C., WOOD, P. 2008. *The Intercultural City*, London: Earthscan with Comedia
- Leadbeater, C. 2006. *The Ten Habits of Mass Innovation*, London: NESTA
- Manzini, E. and Jégou, F. 2003. *Sustainable everyday. Scenarios of Urban Life*, Milano: Edizioni Ambiente
- Martine, G. 2007. *The State of the World Population - Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*, New York: United Nations Population Fund
- Meroni, A. ed., 2007. *Creative communities. People inventing sustainable ways of living*. Milano: Polidesign
- Mulgan, G., 2007. *Social Innovation: what is it, why it matters, how it can be accelerated*. *The Young Foundation Report*, The Young Foundation, London: Basingstoke Press.
- Penn, M.J. 2007. *Microtrends – The small forces behind today’s big changes*. London: Penguin Books
- Ray, P. H., Anderson, S. R. 2000, *The cultural creatives. How 50 million people are changing the world*. New York: Three Rivers Press

Sassen, S. 1999. The global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton: Princeton University Press
United Nations, 2008. Creative Economy report 2008. New York: United Nations
Young Foundation, 2007. Social Innovations. London: Young Foundation
Young Foundation, 2008. The Collaborative City - Working together to shape London's future, London: Young Foundation