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Regeneration and Tourism
Development. Evidence from
Three European Cities



Regeneration and Tourism Development. Evidence from Three European Cities

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Abstract

This paper discusses a key issue in the framework of modern urban development policies: the role of cultural tourism in processes of urban transformation. The analysis focuses specifically on how the emphasis on the symbolic in the restructuring of certain areas of the city may function like a spin-wheel for the regeneration of urban economies, and on the stability of this process. The paper presents the cases of three European cities -Barcelona, Manchester and Rotterdam-, all of which are believed to be templates in cultural planning, and have been successful, to different extents, as tourism destinations. In the three cities, the peculiar relationship between area renewal through cultural development projects and tourism has unravelled in different ways that are revelatory of structural, as well as contingent, differences in tourism policy organisation and contexts, and that present different challenges for the future.

Keywords

Urban revitalization, urban development, cultural tourism, immaterial cultural assets

JEL Codes

O52, R00, R58, Z10

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1. Introduction

In the last three decades, cities have been spending more and more on cultural activities and related infrastructure: the restoration and “packaging” of cultural heritage, the construction of new landmarks and architectural icons, the organization of large-scale cultural events, as well as cultural programs refocusing local identity in combination with social policies for the integration and empowerment of ethnic minorities. Through the redefinition, valorization, and branding of their cultural profile, many — if not all — cities in Europe are trying to accelerate the transition towards a post-industrial “knowledge economy”, with a new role for inner cities as highly symbolic consumption spaces and interaction arenas.

Enhanced social cohesion and the attraction of new economic agents who are seen to critically influence the positioning of places in the global economy are also part of this strategy. Creative-friendly urban environments *à la Florida* provide the best conditions for dynamism and innovativeness in their economies (Florida, 2002). It is particularly interesting to note how traditional industries in crisis have been able to “reinvent” themselves by coming in contact with the new cultural mediators. Advertising and design are just a few examples of service industries in which creativity and technical skills coalesce to produce a comparative advantage in mainstream economic sectors.

Yet the most immediate area for “infection” from culture to mainstream business is arguably tourism. By enhancing the aesthetic and functional profile of public spaces in specific parts of the city through investments in “hard” and “soft” landscape elements, the chances of symbolically-charged visitor consumption are increased, boosting the value of business and real estate in the area. Thus cultural tourism development parallels the growing interest of international visitors in urban “cultware” (Van den Berg *et al.*, 2001) — large cities being the preferred destinations for short breaks (Richards, 2001) and day trips — and the possibility to cash in on visitor interest, so that large investments in infrastructure become viable for venture capital and private-public partnerships. However, there is uncertainty with regard to the type and magnitude of the returns which may be expected from such initiatives, as well as ample evidence of waning consensus in community and academic circles (Bianchini *et al.*, 1992; Eisinger, 2000; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2001; Miles & Paddison, 2005).

The next section focuses on particular process aspects of area regeneration, highlighting their interlinking with cultural tourism development initiatives, and making reference to the cases of three European cities that were studied by the European Institute for Comparative Urban Research (EURICUR) within a project on the “impacts of culture on the economic development of cities”¹.

2. Presentation of the Case Studies

Facts and figures

Barcelona, Manchester and Rotterdam are considered among the most successful cities in Europe in turning previously existing disadvantages into strong points for cultural tourism. Table 12.1 illustrates the key figures of the cities in question. Their metropolitan areas vary in size from 1.3 million inhabitants to almost 5 millions. Both Barcelona and Rotterdam’s inner cities are losing population to the suburban areas, while Manchester is notably reurbanizing in absolute terms. Unemployment is high in all three cities compared to the national figures, and tends to be higher in the centers than in suburban regions.

[INSERT TABLE 12.1]

The population is remarkably mixed in all three cities. While the number of non-EU foreigners officially residing in the three cities is around 10%, the number of people with “non-white” descent or born abroad is much higher, a reflection of the colonial legacy of Spain, the UK and the Netherlands, and of the dense flows historically existing between the former colonies and the motherland. Ethnic diversity is at its peak in Rotterdam, where the non-white population has surpassed the autochthonous, but it is growing fastest in Barcelona, where residents born outside Spain accounted for 15.9% of the population in 2006. Social diversity is enhanced by higher education students (HE), who are most numerous in comparison with city size in central Manchester. Barcelona and Rotterdam also have large student populations, but they are more spread out within the metropolitan region, which hosts large suburban universities in both cases.

These cities are all important tourism destinations in their national system, albeit at different levels. Barcelona is an outright international “star” that presently attracts more than 10 million overnight stays per year (but reaching 30 million if the metropolitan region is considered, as this includes important surrounding coastal destinations), and 20 million arrivals at its airport, almost doubling the figures of ten years ago. Manchester is an important national and regional destination with 5 million overnight stays,

¹ The cases of Manchester and Rotterdam have been carried out within the EURICUR project “The impact on culture on the economic development of cities” (2002-2004), whose results are published in Van der Borg and Russo (2005), while the case of Barcelona has been developed within the EURICUR project “Know-how to redevelop”, whose results are published by Pol *et al.* (2007).

but more than 12 million excursionists every year, and an international airport serving more than 19 million people yearly. Rotterdam is also a national destination for day trips, while its importance in terms of overnight stays is shadowed by the proximity of top international destinations like Amsterdam and Brussels. It receives around 850,000 overnight stays yearly (approximately 60% nationals).

Cultural highlights

All three cities have a number of cultural strong points, which they use to brand themselves as tourism destinations and attractive locations for firms and new residents. Barcelona is probably one of the cities in the world with the most clear-cut “cultural” image, due to its modernist architectural icons, but also the medieval core and the 19th century developments. Yet, most of all, Barcelona is a city of intangible cultural charm, with vibrant nightlife, clubbing and fashion scenes, a reputation for tolerance and diversity, a first-class supply of international events and traditional celebrations, and a pervasive “social culture”, an expression of the singularity of the Catalan identity, reflected in political commitment, popular art, folklore and gastronomy. Barcelona cleverly used the 1992 Olympics as a springboard to refresh its image and renew the urban infrastructure. Since then, it is on the map of “cool cities”, with staggering growth rates in international tourism and a very positive image in the media and among cultural trendsetters. Moreover, it is the gateway to one of the most successful coastal regions in the Mediterranean to diversify its market orientation towards culture, leisure and active tourism.

Manchester and Rotterdam cannot possibly match Barcelona’s status, but they have made giant steps in the last 15-20 years towards developing a unique cultural image which has functioned as a powerful tourism magnet. Former national industrial hubs, plagued by social problems since the early 1970s, both cities have used their cultural strengths for the best, taking advantage not only of their built heritage (the redbrick factory in Manchester and the maritime architecture in Rotterdam) but also of their identity as working-class, tolerant communities with a strong proclivity to creativity. This has been furthered to the present day through their large immigrant population, a true melting pot of knowledge and cultures. Instead of subtracting from this vitality, the social problems have become spearheads of these cities’ *culture*. The edgy rock (and later clubbing) scene of Manchester has opened the way to booming music, media and fashion industries, to the point that for many years “Madchester” has been considered the music capital of the UK, and still attracts many young people to clubs and events at weekends. Rotterdam has successfully blended non-white urban cultures and far more identity claims into its cultural DNA, developing as a major hub for the performing and plastic arts, and the location of an important media and video-making industry. In addition, Rotterdam is an architectural laboratory with no equal, as the large

availability of disused industrial land and the peculiar maritime cityscape permit large-scale experimentation.

Area regeneration, cultural clustering and urban development

In this context, area regeneration refers to the enhancement of specific sections of the city through a cycle of economic revitalization, upgrading of the housing stock, the improvement of the quality of life of the local population and the attraction of new residents. The starting point of area regeneration processes is generally the spatial concentration of new economic activities to substitute declining functions and land uses. These mostly comprise service sector organizations, with an orientation for “urban” settings where interaction and contacts with patrons and consumers is maximal. Among these are knowledge-intensive sectors like business services, higher education (Russo & Capel-Tatjer, 2007), telecommunications, and creative and cultural industries, or industries involved in the production and manipulation of the “symbolic” (Scott, 2001). Focusing on the latter, Mommaas (2004) presents a taxonomy of cultural cluster development models, based on different combinations of seven elements, including internal differentiation, leadership and inclusiveness in the participants’ network, funding regimes, top-down or bottom-up origin of development initiatives.

Most cities have concentrated culture-led regeneration initiatives in declining and marginal areas. Mostly, it has been the case of historical quarters, that progressively lost relevance and centrality during previous stages of the urbanization process as described in Ashworth and Turnbridge (1990). Yet, they are now seen as a valuable asset in an era in which cities seek, above all other things, distinction and a clear identity: with competition between cities getting more intense every day, none can afford to under-exploit their landscape qualities. The industrial peripheries of cities, characterized by “voids” left over from the deindustrialization process, have been another recurrent focus of regeneration efforts where diversification and an increased “compactness” of the urban supply are pursued. Certainly the three cities studied do present a wide typology of area regeneration programs both in the dilapidated historical core and in former industrial areas in the suburbs.

[INSERT FIG. 12.1]

In Barcelona’s recent history, two contrasting models have been applied in different areas of the city. The first is the regeneration of historical districts like the Raval, a part of the medieval Ciutat Vella (Old City), mostly based on social interventions, the development of cultural infrastructure, and the renewal of the degraded building stock through state-subsidized interventions, a program which is still ongoing and is currently extended to other historical quarters of the city. The second is the development of idle

suburban lots and the adaptation of former industrial buildings to new residential and economic uses, especially in “new economy” sectors, leisure, and administration. The latter approach was notoriously spearheaded with the 1992 Olympics, which led to large-scale changes in the waterfront areas of the city, and more recently has been extended to a larger section of Northern Barcelona and to the South in the direction of the airport. Regeneration programs have been very successful in changing the image of a city that only regained its social and cultural freedom after 1975 — when a democratic government replaced the Franco dictatorship — to that of an international hub of culture and entertainment. The Raval area, a former sanctuary of Barcelona’s underclass, is now celebrated as the hottest place in the city, a diverse, accessible, bohemian “edutainment” district where immigrants live side-by-side with foreign students and creative workers from all over the world (Figure 12.1).

The number and range of business in the neighborhood has risen substantially in the wake of the location of new iconic cultural infrastructure in this area, like the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB) and the annexed Museum of Contemporary Arts (MACBA), designed by J. Meyer. As a result, between 1998 and 2002, culture-related businesses increased from 174 to 468, and art and events professional organizations from 25 to 103. These new buildings, as well as smaller but no less important developments, like the refurbishment of the National Catalan Library, and the opening of many theatres and cultural centers in the area, have established a creative image of the Raval, to some extent representing “epicenters” of widely participated cultural activities: events, lectures, festivals, etc.

Rotterdam, a city where unemployment peaked at 20% in the late 1970s when the port economy underwent deep crises and subsequent restructuring, has a peculiarly “North American” urban structure, with declining inner city neighborhoods — boasting the remains of the historical city destroyed by bombs during the second world war, and the oldest section of the port — and affluent suburban districts, separated by large tracts of industrial land and infrastructure. The regeneration of the inner city has attempted to rejoin these disconnected areas and reestablish their relation with the water, while, at the same time, developing a contemporary, dynamic image especially through iconic architecture and the redevelopment of public space, which to some extent recuperate and modernize the “maritime” theme projecting it into the twenty-first century.

The physical reconstruction of the city has been actively pursued by the municipality (owner of the largest share of land and real estate in the city) engaging in public-private partnerships with various business partners. The other staple of Rotterdam’s regeneration has been the impulse to culture and creativity, through extensive support given to art organizations and neighborhood associations, the provision of a world-class infrastructure, including art, music, theatre and sports venues, the staging of top events,

and the celebration of its ethnic diversity and international orientation. Over the past twenty years Rotterdam has invested a total amount of some € 140M in capital funding, and approximately € 90M every year on culture and the arts, roughly 8% of the municipal budget available for discretionary spending. Hosting the European Cultural Capital event in 2001 was the main achievement in the city's cultural strategy in the 1990s. The event, though not completely successful (Richards & Wilson, 2004), leveraged an additional € 25M in capital expenditure for the thorough renovation of one of the most attractive canals in the city (along which the Cultural Capital office was located), € 18M for the expansion of several museums, and some € 40M for the new Luxor theatre that opened in 2001 (Weeda, 2001).

The city has used its cultural strong points to develop various forms of cooperation among cultural producers. This approach has concretized in a full-blown "cultural quarter" in the Witte-de-Withstraat area (Figure 12.2), a thematic "appendix" to the Museumpark's avant-garde stylistic offer, which includes the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the Dutch Architecture Institute, a couple of iconic buildings of the 1930's that survived destruction, and Rem Koolhaas' Kunsthall. The area is conceived and managed as a highly experimental cultural cluster (the "Art Axis", www.kunstas.nl, last consulted 20/02/2008), including art galleries, a design hotel for long-stayers, trendy boutiques, fusion eateries and stylish bars, coffee-shops, and a very fashionable hairdressing salon (Figure 12.3). It has created its own "marketing instrument" with an area portal, which congregates information on the cultural facilities on the route between the Maritime Museum and the Museumpark.

[INSERT FIG. 12.2]

However, the clustering strategy of the city has recently moved in another direction, under the pressure to "cash in" development gains. The new approach is illustrated by the Lloyds Quarter, a waterfront area formerly dedicated to port-related activities and located in Delfshaven (a historical part of the old harbor incorporated in Rotterdam's municipal territory since 1886). The redevelopment of the area was started as a 10-year project in 1996 by the Development Corporation of Rotterdam, the owner of the land. One of the main projects concerns the Schiecentrale, a former power station, which was refurbished for the purpose of hosting an audiovisual and ICT cluster. At the time of writing, 75 companies were located in Schiecentrale with more than 400 people employed in the creative sector. Most of them work in film, TV and video production, in the multimedia and internet sector, and in the recording industry. Another attempt to develop a business-oriented cultural cluster is the Van Nelle Factory, formerly a tea, coffee and tobacco manufacturer. Designed in the late nineteen-twenties, it is a striking example of industrial architecture, considered for inclusion in the UNESCO world heritage list. In 1995, when the Van Nelle company decided to leave Rotterdam, it was decided to designate the complex as a business location centered on architecture, design and high technology and, in 1997, the "Van

Nelle Design Factory” project was approved. Partly due to the economic stagnation of the following years, the ICT target group has been dropped in favor of the leisure sector. Nowadays the Van Nelle Design Factory hosts approximately 40 firms — most of which were previously located outside Rotterdam — mainly in the sectors of architecture, design, and events organization.

Manchester has a long experience of turning social ills into community development opportunities: the success of its pop music scene of the 1980s illustrates how the sparkle of entrepreneurship can turn eccentric talent into a profession and an economic specialty in a city. “Madchester” is now gone, or reabsorbed into mainstream business frameworks, but the attention for the creative potential is still very present, thanks to the work of dedicated agencies like the Creative Industry Development Service.

Manchester’s approach to cultural planning has possibly been the most advanced and complex of the three cities. At the end of the 1980s, the city embarked on a vast regeneration program which explicitly recognized the attraction and staging of cultural initiatives, the generation of a “creative climate”, and the development of creative clusters as central elements in urban development. Quilley (2000) argues that the first significant achievement was the redevelopment of the Canal Street area, intending to provide suitable residence to workers in the surrounding up and coming business areas; in this way the “Gay Village” was built, almost by chance. City centre regeneration has been frantic since then, accelerated further by the needs of the 2002 Commonwealth Games. Developments in Castlefield and Salford Quays started as an effort to revitalize old and neglected docklands and other infrastructure dating from the city’s industrial past. The councils of Manchester and Salford boosted private sector investment through the establishment of partnerships thus enabling the overriding of local planning legislation.

The renovation of infrastructure included the recovery and new provision of buildings and services, a residential building program, a thematic tourist facility associated with TV production, the creation of the Museum of Science and Industry, the new Imperial War Museum and Bridgewater Hall. Castlefield is now one of the most popular areas of the city, and the area connecting it to the suburban town of Trafford is a highly successful media cluster attracting major national and international companies (Figure 12.3).

[INSERT FIG.12.3]

The development of Castlefield, Salford Quays and St. Peter’s Fields could be described as a “top-down” process, with large-scale investment, property-led development, and a thematic streamlining of museums, heritage and other tourist sites. As in the case of Barcelona, the mirror approach was followed in another area of the city, the Northern Quarter. This area attracted little planned investment; yet — and possibly because of

this — it became a haven for creative businesses. In the 1960s, the main street in this area was Manchester's most popular commercial area. A dwindling but still sizeable working class community stayed in the area after the demolitions of the early 1970s. On account of the low rental costs, laxity with planning permission, the centrality of location, and the opportunity to exploit some of the remaining commercial premises and disused warehouses, alternative cultural businesses began to re-colonize the area. The Northern Quarter's bohemian atmosphere drove the area to become a prime site for youth culture in the UK, principally in the music, fashion and design industries. New businesses were attracted: relatively small, predominantly run by young people, embedded in dense networks, their activities closely linked to the local scene, as in the case of members of rock bands wearing "street fashion" designed in local ateliers and often involved in their management. In a few years, the Northern Quarter grew to host over 300 small and micro cultural businesses including clothes boutiques, music shops, the vibrant Craft and Design Centre — the largest provider of studio/retail space and support for designer-makers in the North West region—, bars, restaurants, and professional services.

On account of these developments, the three cities have all boosted their cultural and creative production sectors over the last decade. In spite of heterogeneous accounting and estimation methodologies, it can be stated that "traditional" cultural activities — including productions and performances in the fields of fine arts and the arts market, performing arts and entertainment, music, museums and libraries — are a very large sector compared to the size of the local economy only in Rotterdam, where it represents around 4.5% of employment, while they are very small, at around 0.5% of total employment, in Barcelona and Manchester.

The picture changes significantly, when the creative industries are taken into account. Employment in sectors such as architecture, audiovisual and graphic arts, fashion, design, literature, publishing, music recording and production, print media, software, multimedia, games, and internet is large and growing in Barcelona and Manchester, totaling 4.5% and 11.6% respectively if sports and tourism are also included, while Rotterdam has only 3.3% of its workforce employed in creative industries, less than in the "core" cultural sectors. Estimates of the impacts of culture, with methods again differing substantially and reference years varying from 2001 to 2004, range from a € 400M impact in the case of Rotterdam (2.2% of the city economy) to € 935M (plus € 1,685M indirect) in Manchester "City Pride" metropolitan area, while no data are available for Barcelona but a 1.2% estimate of total added value of all Catalonia (Marlet & van Woerkens 2004; Regional Intelligence Unit (various years); Cambra Oficial de Comerç, Indústria i Navegació de Barcelona, 2005).

3. Cultural and Creative Clusters as Tourist Attractions

In areas that do manage to develop as creative clusters, new social networks are established, and novel value systems overlap and in some cases replace existing ones, attracting a larger palette of user groups. These areas tend to become “interaction arenas” typical of the post-modern urban environment: trendy, animated, diverse and tolerant, and to some extent pacified (Zukin, 1995: 28). But most notably in the scope of this paper, regenerated areas attract symbolically-charged consumption, which is leveraged by appropriate planning solutions such as the development of “open malls”, including galleries, eateries, bars and clubs, musical venues. From this point of view, nowadays it is hard to draw a clear distinction between indigenous and “tourist” patronage of such areas, as consumer behavior and social modes of participation to the visual and symbolic construction of the new cultural quarters are converging.

It could even be argued that today area regeneration and urban tourism development initiatives tend to blend as far as the effects that they produce are concerned (Degen, 2003). In fact, Maitland (2007) argues that the strategies for the attraction of the “backbone” of competitive cities in the global economy -the creative class- are substantially no different from a clever marketing strategy of urban areas and neighborhoods to culture-aware, curious and allocentric visitors, while, on the other hand, areas with a strong “sustainable tourism” profile tend to stir the interest of new global dwellers in search of animated, “hot” places with a positive and “green” image. Tourists come to be the leading animators of creative clusters, *prosuming* creative experiences, and defining a whole new *glocal* landscape based on reflexive interaction, as opposed to the confrontation implied in Urry’s “gaze” (1990).

Barcelona’s Raval is probably the best illustration of tourist success from area regeneration. Though just a few steps away, until recently tourists crowding the Ramblas and the Gothic Quarter were reluctant to venture into its narrow streets, warned off by hotel managers, tourist guides and locals. Yet today the Raval is an obliged detour for cultural tourists, boasting an exuberant street life, small-scale events, countless bars, cafés, restaurants, music clubs and galleries, from stylish to more down-to-earth, which give the whole area a pleasant, dynamic feel. Visits to CCCB and MACBA total around 350,000 and 250,000 per year respectively, to which some 400,000 participants to other cultural activities in the Raval should be added (estimates by Subirats & Rius, 2005: 51), rounding up to a million cultural visits in a part of the city which, at the beginning of the last decade, could barely attract 200,000. Yet the supply of the Raval is only in part ascribable within traditional conceptions of art and culture. “Ravalejar” — meaning wandering around the Raval, and getting in touch with its multiple cultural manifestations — is rather a *lifestyle brand* for both local and foreign young people; as such, it made some impact as a sticker identifying trendy shops and cultural facilities in the area.

Among the new attractions that define this user segment, the SONAR festival is probably the one most worthy of quoting. Started as an underground festival of electronic music in 1994, it has now grown to be the most important European festival of this type, attracting a yearly audience of 80,000. Mostly including DJ sets and collective performances organized around the CCCB-MACBA complex, it is estimated that, at least in terms of directly-generated income, local spin-offs, media exposure and public perception, it makes a bigger impact on Barcelona's economy than the mass-scale Forum for Culture of 2004. Today the SONAR program has been extended to other parts of the city in order to minimize the stress for residents due to "noisy" acts, but it is still identified very closely with the new creative heart of the city, epitomized by the CCCB and its surroundings. It also became an export industry for Barcelona, having been "reproduced" in different formats in Amsterdam and Tokyo.

The process of "tourismification" of the neighborhood has been an important side-effect of the rehabilitation of buildings and public space, of cultural investments, and of social policies aiming at integration and the improvement of the residents' quality of life. To a large extent, the tourist success of the Raval has also meant greater social cohesion and opportunities for development for the large immigrant population of the district, as many foreign residents (mostly Pakistani, Filipino, Moroccan and Ecuadorian) are now employed in restaurant and bars or are owners themselves. This extraordinary choice became a strong point in Barcelona's tourist product, providing cheaper and more varied experiences than the traditional Catalan cuisine. However, the social profile of regeneration in this and other neighborhoods is today contested, as it increasingly gives way to speculative pressures and seemingly "unnecessary" infrastructure projects.

Greater Manchester attracts some 17 million visitors each year (4.5M staying overnight), with an expenditure of approximately € 22M, a third of which is in the city itself. Tourism and visitor activity contributes around € 800M per year to the city's economy, while the total impact on the local economy is estimated at some € 40M (5.5% of the GDP of Greater Manchester) and 31,500 jobs (Regional Intelligence Unit, 2004). The leisure infrastructure of the city expanded significantly as a result of public and private sector investment in mall projects, such as The Triangle, Printworks, Great Northern and Spinningfields. Such initiatives, together with cultural programming, contributed to making Manchester one of the most attractive destinations for short breaks and day visits in the UK. The 2002 Commonwealth Games event, attended by half a million visitors, boosted the city's outreach for tourism further. Manchester also developed a world-class infrastructure for congress tourism, with venues such as the G-MEX, the Bridgewater Hall, the Manchester International Conference Centre, as well as new university facilities and top-class hotels.

Commentators argue that the cultural motive is not decisive for attracting visitors, at least not as much as shopping facilities, sport events and entertainment. Cultural attendance is rather seen as a complement to these types of visits. However, the question is raised whether tourism marketing takes full advantage of the rich cultural endowment of the city: the fact that 80% of the cultural audiences are in the wealthier segment of the population gives an idea of the potential impact of pointing more decidedly on the idiosyncratic primacy of the city in the “night-time cultures”.

In spite of a similar starting point, Rotterdam’s regenerated city-centre areas, such as the area of Witte-de-Withstraat, the Old Port and the Waterstadt, or the ethnic Western neighborhoods, have a long way to go to become the next Ravals or Canal Streets, but there are elements in common, including the conviction that investments in culture and leisure could be levers of change, and that diversity in uses and residence schemes is the key to a more sustained and socially balanced regeneration process. These neighborhoods can hope to attract only a few visitors; indeed, accommodation capacity in the whole centre of Rotterdam is limited. The image of an industrial city — rather known as a business city, *a place to work* — and the city’s proximity to Amsterdam, the real selling point of the Netherlands, has left Rotterdam at the margins of the tourist market, occasionally doing well with business and congress tourism and with large sporting events.

In recent years the city has tried to promote the development of the leisure sector and culture has played an important role in it. During the European Cultural Capital year, more than 14.1 millions of visitors attended Rotterdam’s attractions, events, museums and theatres, without counting the regular shoppers, commuters and sports attendants. Almost 2.2 million visitors came with the purpose of attending the ECC event (16% of total), injecting some € 62.7M into the local economy (OBR, 2002). Since then, however, the tourist market has shown contradictory signs of development. On the one hand, in the 2000-2003 period tourist expenditure in the city increased by € 44M (3.2%) and there was also a 9.6% increase in employment (1,600 jobs). On the other, the number of hotel guests and overnight stays decreased in the 2001-2003 period by 23.8% and 18.4% respectively. This may be a signal that the 2001 event failed to provoke the structural break in tourism positioning that was hoped for, and that a “temporal substitution” effect has prevailed: people came to Rotterdam in the year of the event and did not care to come back afterwards or to spread positive impressions of the destination. The slight increase in average expenditure reveals that nowadays there are more opportunities to spend in Rotterdam, which confirms the growth and the increased sophistication of the supply side, culture included.

It can be asserted, however, that Rotterdam is highly attractive to specialized visitor niches: industry-themed tours in the port, art events, architecture itineraries, and sports events cater for small but passionate

numbers of patrons. And it is rather the qualitative profile of visitors that is so striking, as they represent a thoroughly different segment of cultural consumers from the prevailing model of a day-trip shopping destination, as was pointed out for instance in Richards & Wilson's (2004) account of the changing social construction of a 'Cultural Capital of Europe'. While the top visited attractions, mostly by locals and excursionists, include the zoo, the casino, a water-attraction and cruises on the Maas river, the most visited venues are the cinemas and the Ahoy Hall (hosting pop concerts and fairs) (OBR, 2002). People accessing key cultural attractions and events were found to be in the higher levels of scholarization, and a substantial proportion of them had high-income jobs in the cultural and creative industries. For them, Rotterdam represents a highly creative, experimental playground; they value its diversity, engaging with the conflictive elements in the local society; they seek to blend in with the locals, adopting a "latin", extroverted, relaxed attitude during their visit to the city and its most explicitly "mixed" creative areas, such as Witte-de-Withstraat.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGENERATED AREAS

While it should be recognized that not all cluster development efforts are successful -and even when they are, they could be rapidly disbanded (Mommaas, 2004: 515)- a more intriguing issue is that, even in the case of success, the "cultural revolution" which started the process of change may wane with time. The increased level of expenditure in regenerated areas and the improvement of their image open the doors to housing renovation and a general rise of real estate prices as well as of commodities. In the long term, these factors may underplay the extent of the social impacts that are expected in area regeneration programs — and in some cases justified them in the first place- namely: inclusion, diversity, economic vibrancy. Only the commercial results of the operation are guaranteed in the end: high land values, the privatization of public space, and the "sanitation" of the areas, which tend to stabilize as white upper-class residential neighborhoods or central business districts.

However, in the scope of this paper a stronger argument is that the very tourist profile of gentrified areas is at stake in this development. A common reading of recent urbanization trends is that flagship investments may be leading to a global convergence in cityscapes (Muñoz, 2006; Richards & Wilson, 2006): iconic buildings, bridges and public spaces with a similar design are erected everywhere, often by the same architects and with the same materials, depleting rather than enriching urban uniqueness. Furthermore, intangible factors that explain the attractiveness of "creative quarters" as tourism attractions are affected: the institutional and social networks on which they were based thin out and disperse to other "up and coming" areas of the city; communication barriers get erected between heterogeneous groups as underground cultural actors go mainstream; a

commercial relationship between the creative community and the increasing mass of tourist gazers replaces genuine cultural exchange.

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This does not need to be the endpoint for the cultural tourism attractiveness of a city or for its vitality: the “creative arena” may simply shift where new favorable conditions are met. Large cities have sufficiently diverse resources to continuously redesign their cultural map, blending tradition and innovation, and staying attractive to successive waves of culture-motivated travelers. However, the capacity to sustain such a “seek and destroy” model of cultural tourism development could be limited by the availability of adequate spaces in the city. These should remain sufficiently cheap, with a concentrated structure of property rights, and not too peripheral with respect to the key attractions in the city.

It is thus a challenge for policy and planning to keep the process of development in motion, and to explore alternative, more resilient development models. The conditions that are necessary for the vitality of cultural tourism, like spatial coherence, social mobility and access to cultural resources, but also networking and cross-fertilization within the cultural clusters and at their edges, should be maintained even at later stages of the regeneration program. This demands incursions into policy areas that are not normally in the portfolio of tourism planners, such as the establishment of a working collaboration with underground movements (pioneered by Amsterdam with its *Breeding Places* program: cf. <http://bureaubroedplaatsen.amsterdam.nl/>, last consulted 20/02/2008), the capacity to take on risks — resisting speculative pressures and, instead, fostering the development of spaces and functions with a fuzzy and long-term return profile — and an active role in the creation of platforms that link currently disconnected key agents.

To support these recommendations, reference can again be made to the three case studies, which provide ample evidence of successes and failures in their attempt to “keep tourism going” in rapidly gentrifying urban environments. In Barcelona’s Raval, small business in the service sector now provide approximately a quarter of the jobs in the district (from practically nil a decade ago), although unskilled labor still represents a major part of the market (Bonet Esteve, 2005). The area is presently subject to a large inflow of “new” residents, mostly in the higher scales of the job market, single households, or higher education students sharing low-quality flats, without substantially altering its atmosphere and yet improving its economic profile. Tourists, and especially long-stay tourists, share some traits with these groups, and their impacts on the area are remarkably similar. The engagement with the place of culturally-aware and implicated tourists, as is mostly the case with Raval’s *connoisseurs*, is certainly to be preferred to the unreflexive attitude of mass tourists flooding the Ramblas. The Subirats-Rius report (2005) quoted earlier presents four evolution scenarios, which are seen to depend on two dimensions: the integration of new residents in existent social networks and the formation of new ones, on

the one hand, and the diversity of economic activities, on the other. The dangers to avoid are the two “high-low” combinations, which would lead, respectively, to a divided, gentrified Raval, or to a “normalized” quarter; however the most promising development is one in which both economic diversity and social integration are accentuated, leading to a uniquely creative, attractive and cohesive neighborhood.

The toughest challenges in this sense come from speculative pressures, that often take the form of “house-mobbing” against long-established low-rent tenants, and social integration, which requires moving to a higher gear in fighting the marginality that still lingers in the area. Interestingly, this very marginality and its superstructure (tolerance to drugs and prostitution, illegal bars and meeting-places, house squatting, etc.) are a substantial part of the tourist attractiveness of the area. For this reason, it is becoming a very delicate ground for policy, as is another conflict arising between the liberal character of the area and the pressure to protect the decency and décor of the public spaces for the local residents. The outlook is not for the better: after a long negotiation, a new large 5-star hotel is under construction on the Rambla del Raval: a space charged with symbolic values of integration and empowerment by the local ethnic communities, which the new building is likely to challenge.

Despite the reputation gained as a creative city and the innovative approach taken in its cultural strategy, Manchester remains a community with more problems than many other British regional capitals: unemployment, low skills, poor educational attainment, ill-health and crime, and even deprivation and social unrest in some of its wards. Paradoxically, the wave of pop artists who generated the fame of “Madchester” were an expression of such social diseases. Bravely, Manchester turned huge problems into strengths, becoming a fashionable, hip and “sanitized” city, and attracting wealthy groups back to live in the city, as well as a large tourist market. Putting together the strong ethnic character of the city and the city’s international reputation for sport, the Commonwealth Games were an opportunity to shift the discourse on “sustainability”, as a long-term, balanced and inclusive result of regeneration. Yet the transformations in the social and cultural capital of the city did critically affect the creative strengths of the city, as in the case of the Northern Quarter, now virtually a pacified “partying area” that has lost much of its original cultural vibrancy. Further threats come from the standardization of the centre under the pressure of global consumerism and landscaping.

Such developments are the inevitable result of a process of privatization of space through the production of fenced communities and shopping arcades. Even if, in the initial stages, such manipulation may be seen as benign, it does pose a potential threat to the quality of public space in the long-term. Animation in these spaces is invariably constructed through leisure and cultural events, such as concerts, festivals and street markets aimed at encouraging tourism expenditure in the area. Such activities do raise

questions with regard to the vibrancy and vitality of street-life once the festivals and events are over.

The image of Rotterdam among its own residents has been improving steadily (City of Rotterdam, 2004). Yet it is still insufficient to recentralize the suburban middle class (70% of the population still thinks that the city should become more attractive) or to achieve a dramatic rise in international tourism. In order to attract the medium-high income groups, Rotterdam set out to enhance the quality of its housing stock by providing approximately 3,000 new top-market housing units per year, which are changing the face of various city centre neighborhoods. However, the “mother” of all regeneration projects, the waterfront redevelopment on the southern bank of the Maas, has so far delivered only part of what it had promised (Van der Berg *et al.*, 2003). While it certainly added a stunning new visual element to the city and valuable business and cultural infrastructure, it failed to catch up with the surrounding area — the original reason for huge public investments in this area was to involve the Rotterdam South community in the jobs generated there and to recoup the physical and cultural distance that keeps the two sides of the city separated — and to become the real centre of the cultural and leisure activity of the city. Instead, while the new stylish housing stock and business facilities have sold at record prices, the city’s invisible dividing line has merely shifted southward. There is not much going on in the Kop van Zuid apart from the odd night-time event; a testimony of this is the very poor performance of the many restaurants and bars that opened in the yachting marina at the end of the 1990s and shortly afterwards started to close down. This is a peculiar demonstration of how regeneration projects based on cultural development, albeit involving prestigious flagships, are doomed if they lack attention to the “social embedding” of the new facilities, even at a very local scale. While it is not clear that tourists or Rotterdam residents are motivated enough to cross the Erasmus bridge, it is equally unlikely that any of the disadvantaged communities in the south, whom the city wants to integrate, will see the new facilities as an opportunity for participation and inclusion.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, the importance of policies that redefine the relation between culture and place has been highlighted, signifying a dramatic change of pace in the transition towards post-industrial, experience-based economies, embedded in global networks of knowledge and international labor mobility, but at the same time gaining from distinction, “localness”, and idiosyncratic talent. The construction of “glocal” cityscapes has been crucially related in urban scholarship with a process of integration of the “cultural” with the “economic” realm, which is exacerbated by the growth of importance of creative production sectors and their capacity to re-valorize formerly declining areas and “void” spaces left over from deindustrialization. Tourism is regarded as the most immediately available

medium to link excellence in creativity to economic development. To some extent, success in the formation of creative clusters and their development as tourism areas depends on specific circumstances which are hard to recreate artificially. Policy and planning can steer the process in order to make it more resilient and to boost its “regenerating effect”, yet it must be considered that traditional institutions and policy approaches are ill-prepared to come to terms with the fuzzy, anarchist social structures typical of the creative city (Landry 2000).

Evidence from the three case study cities confirms that there seems to be a thread linking their success in creative cluster development, the change of status and image of the areas, and the overall orientation of the local economy and image towards tourism; and that, to some extent, this process is cyclical, because it tends to affect and shift in space the conditions that triggered this development in the first place.

Thus, Manchester, the city that has arguably the longest history in using culture and creativity to renew declining areas of the city and generate opportunities for social development, is clearly the most successful as a post-industrial hub, attracting global economic functions, investments, new residents and millions of visitors to its refurbished shopping streets and venues. However, it is also the one facing the toughest challenges from possible loss of identity and vibrancy, as its anarchist creative impulses, which motivated cultural policy in the first place, are slowly being diluted in the gentrified city-centre environment. Similarly, Rotterdam did not completely succeed in developing a tourist edge to its numerous redevelopment efforts because these lack social embedding and consistency with the peculiar conditions that define contemporary culture, especially inclusion and multiculturalism. Finally, Barcelona has performed very well until now, and the development of the Raval as a tourist area is certainly a good example of achievement in “sustainable regeneration”. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether or not the area will be able to resist the speculative pressures brought about by “tourismification”, once the current generation of tenants is replaced by new residents. Furthermore, control over the process seems less binding today, as local politics is shifting towards different models, focusing more clearly on “cashing in” on the gains from land redevelopment (as is happening in the north-eastern neighborhoods of the city).

Finally, it can be stated that evidence from the three case studies shows that funding grassroots initiatives, fostering networking at all levels, (un)planning public spaces, and in this way inducing creative interaction between visitors and local agents, are innovative areas for policy which may, in the long term, prevent redevelopment from offsetting a neighborhood’s original qualities. Area regeneration should therefore be a continuous process involving a program of investments in training and education, support for small businesses, and the refurbishment of buildings for mixed uses, rather than the construction of spaces for pre-determined

“cultural” activities, with the overall objective of retaining tourism attractiveness in the long term.

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Table 12.1. Basic data on case study cities, various years

		BARCELONA	MANCHESTER	ROTTERDAM
Population (1,000) †	<i>city</i>	1,505	418	599
	<i>metro area</i>	4,804	2,512	1,362
	<i>national rank</i>	2 nd	3 rd	2 nd
Pop. Growth †	<i>city</i>	–	+	–
	<i>metro area</i>	+	–	–
Unemployment rate †	% <i>unempl. on active population, year 2001</i>	10.8% (10.6% in metro area)	7.8% (3.8% in metro area)	5.9% (4.1% in metro area)
N. foreigners †	<i>Per 1,000 inh., year 2001</i>	5% foreigners	19% “non white”	> 50% “non white”, 17.6% born abroad
N. HE students □	<i>year 2003</i>	35,000 (metro area)	133,700 (inner city)	50,000 (inner city)
N. of visitors □	<i>overnight stays by foreigners, 2003</i>	21 Mo	2.5 Mo (including excursionists, 17Mo)	250,000
	<i>overnight stays by nationals, 2003</i>	9.6 Mo	2.5 Mo	435,000

Source: † EUROSTAT Urban Audit, data 1991-1996-2001; various municipal sources, city websites

Figure 12.1. An icon of playful new Barcelona: Botero's "Gato" in the Rambla del Raval



Source: Authors.

Figure 12.2. TENT: iconic art space in regenerated Witte-de-Withstraat's "cultural axis"



Source: Authors.

Figure 12.3 Regenerated Manchester: the Lowry centre at Salford Quays



Source: Authors.