



INTRODUCTORY REPORT WORKSHOP III: CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

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In the globalised and competitive world of the early 21st century, cities are forced to position themselves in order to attract economic growth. The actions and projects initiated by city governments and planners that are conceived of as vehicles for development may both integrate the city into the network of the global capitalist economy as well as disrupt the traditional form and culture of that city. In this Workshop, papers will discuss the dilemma of retaining a cultural identity and a territorial legacy versus the demands put forward by the competitive global city. Forces of integration and disintegration frequently test the linkage between the vernacular and the spaces of economic progress.

Issues to be discussed include:

- Examples of plans that incorporate identity as a key factor –through safeguarding heritage or “inventing” it.
- Examples of plans that do not take into account identity as a factor – can these cities remain competitive after erasing built memory?
- Methods by which planners may contribute to reconcile the seemingly opposing natures of the “cut and paste city” and the genius loci.
- Has city making become a commoditised routine that replicates the iconic and perhaps cosmetic side of architecture?
- Do cities, engaged in standardised regeneration schemes, lose their distinctiveness?

The inter-related issues of heritage, conservation and urban culture are powerful dilemmas in the context of the integration or disintegration of cities. It is argued that there is a role for Local Government in supporting conservation, local cultural and historical values as a part of their programme of developing the local economy. What is the correct balance between restructuring the city to be more competitive and the need to conserve historic buildings and places that are, in part, the reason for a cities cultural status?

Another sub-theme of this workshop is that of the continuity and the making of urban space in relation to the cultural issues of the transformation of the city. The characteristic elements that constitute the spatial process of a settlement stand in contrast to the development of the urban macro form that has grown without acknowledging the spatial principles of an existing historic environment. Has the spread of the global market economy and its values, therefore, changed popular culture and has this impacted on the making of urban space?

Architecture, built form and even graffiti all play a role in the integration of culture into the life of the city. Architectural development, together with its impact on urban space formation, affects the nature of human life and are clearly expressed in the evolving form of the city.



A related and important issue is that of urban identity, especially of unique historic cities, both as valued and marketable cultural asset, as well as sites for transformation. This process of the creation of a new image and the application of the new rules of the global economy have turned many places into nodes of connection and regional integration, leaving behind several unsolved problems of spatial, social and economic disintegration. What is the effect of new projects and developments on the image and cultural heritage of ancient cities?

The issue of urban renewal is always relevant to the global debate. How should urban renewal projects deal with issues of culture and historic architecture?

Within the broad context of renewal, revitalization and transformation, waterfronts and waterfront developments present a particularly important focus point. At stake is the integrative effect of a waterfront and its impact on urban culture. What are the roles of waterfronts and rivers in enriching and integrating the life of the 21st century city?