

**RESEARCH ON URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE SOCIAL IMPACT  
OF CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES –  
A SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Azmier, Jason J. *Culture and Economic Competitiveness: An Emerging Role for the Arts in Canada - A Western Cities Project Discussion Paper*. Calgary: Canada West Foundation, March 2002.

While this study primarily focusses on the economic impact of the arts, it also cites evidence on how the arts contribute to quality of urban life in three social areas: 1) better health and well-being of citizens; 2) enhanced community identity and social cohesion; and 3) community revitalization and re-development of inner cities.

Baeker, Greg and Donna Cardinal. *Beyond Garrets and Silos: Bringing Communities Together Through Cultural Planning?* in *SRA-607 - Building Sustainable Communities: Culture and Social Cohesion*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, December 2001.

This paper describes major elements of “Beyond Garrets and Silos”, the Municipal Cultural Planning Project (MCP) which involves 25 Canadian municipalities. The goal of this project is to tap cultural planning ideas as a source of insight to strengthen the knowledge base for municipal planning and decision making. Cultural planning takes as its point of departure the benefits and contributions that culture can make to civic life – for example by supporting civic participation and social cohesion.

Bianchini, Franco and Michael Parkinson. *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.

This book examines cultural policy in ten Western European cities, commenting favourably on those cities that adopted a cultural planning approach to addressing growing societal cleavages. This approach adopts an expanded view of local cultural resources to include the assets and practices of minorities that are often excluded from traditional cultural policy and urban development discussions.

Bulick, Bill, Carol Coletta, Colin Jackson, Andrew Taylor and Steven Wolff, *Cultural Development in Creative Communities*. Washington: Americans for the Arts, 2003.

This monograph examines Portland, Oregon as a creative city case study. While the focus is mainly on economic impacts, the report notes the symbiotic relationship between commercial and non-commercial cultural activities. It observes that this melange of creative activity has helped to make the inner city more livable by converting and re-using older building stock and has contributed to both sustainable growth and civic engagement (in the form of new political, social and environmental coalitions and movements).

Chatterton, Paul and Robert Hollands. *Urban Nightscapes: Youth cultures, pleasure spaces and corporate power*. London: Routledge, 2003.

This book examines the impact of corporate entertainment venues on the neighbourhood fabric of commercial cultural activity, such as local clubs, bars and restaurants. The authors argue that many groups of people and local night-time spaces are being marginalized by processes of gentrification and corporatization (characterized as the “McDonaldization” of urban nightscapes). They suggest that corporatization of traditional venues, such as pubs, is changing them from meeting places for local citizens to sanitized and “cleansed” environments where patrons are selectively chosen through subtle class cues, such as dress codes and expensive beverage lists.

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Cohnstaedt, Joy, John Shields and Monica MacDonald (eds). *401 Richmond - New Workplace Commons: A study of innovative support for cultural and social enterprises in both the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors*. Toronto: Graduate Programme in Communication and Culture, Ryerson University and York University, September 2003.

This study examines a significant “clustering” of cultural organizations in a converted inner city factory at 401 Richmond Street West in Toronto. It documents the recent history of the site and the factors that sustain it and enable its success. These include: the promotion of social cohesion among the tenants; the creation of a dynamic and diverse environment for creative exchange; the development of both social and cultural capital; and the role of innovative investment in cultural infrastructure on the cultural value production chain. This study also briefly examines other models of restored, multi-use cultural facilities in various Canadian cities, including the Khyber in Halifax, the Belgo in Montreal, Artspace in Winnipeg, the Laurel Packinghouse in Kelowna and the Distillery District in Toronto.

Culture of Cities Project (Description of publications available at [http://www.yorku.ca/culture\\_of\\_cities/public.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/culture_of_cities/public.htm) )

This is an ongoing international cultural research initiative that focuses on the cities of Montreal, Dublin, Toronto and Berlin. Over a five-year period, the project is producing a series of comparative studies on a wide range of topics. These include the building and rebuilding of city structures, the circulation of objects and artefacts, representations of locality, the status of the arts, and the character of urban citizenship. Key research activities with regard to the social impact of cultural infrastructure include “arts and communities” (led by Susan Bennett, University of Calgary and Janine Marchessault, York University), and “locality, public space and street life” (led by Keiran Bonner of St. Jerome’s University).

Donald, Betsy and Douglas Morrow. *SRA-674 - Competing for Talent: Implications for Social and Cultural Policy in Canadian City-Regions*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, May 2003.

This study looks at the intersection of the “talent model”, as expounded by Richard Florida, and the social policy objectives of eradicating exclusivity and promoting social inclusion and cultural tolerance. Three social policy areas are examined in detail: 1) policies for economic opportunity and social inclusion; 2) policies for nurturing cultural vitality in land development and urban public space; and 3) policies for promoting social inclusion in everyday cultural consumption activity. In the second category, the study discusses the social impact of investments in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and cultural landscapes.

Duxbury, Nancy. “Exploring the role of arts and culture in urban sustainable development: journey in progress” in *SRA-607 - Building Sustainable Communities: Culture and Social Cohesion*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, December 2001.

This paper, presented at an SRA workshop, outlines steps taken by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Greater Vancouver Regional District to develop quality of life indicators and to measure the social benefits of the arts. Many barriers stand in the way of developing such indicators, including a lack of thinking about arts and culture goals for communities, lack of cultural sector involvement in quality of life projects and a lack of

conceptual research linking arts and cultural development to quality of life and social sustainability. The paper also describes three projects – the Social Impact of the Arts project, the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building project (both in the United States), and the Local Government Cultural Development Collaborative Benchmarking National Demonstration project in Australia – that may help to fill the conceptual gap.

ERC Services Subcommittee, Workgroup on Creative Industries. *Creative Industries Development Strategy - Propelling Singapore’s Creative Economy*. City of Singapore, September 2002.

This report focusses mainly on the economic impact of the cultural industries, but its recommendations do recognize that cultural infrastructure investments must become socially embedded in the community. For example, it recommends investments in public art, media arts programs, museums and “creative towns” to integrate arts, culture, design, business and technology into community planning and revitalization efforts.

Eurocities Network. *Eurocities Awards on Innovative Urban Strategies, 2002 - Culture as a Driving Force for Cities*, Brussels, November 2002.

This publication describes projects that received awards in 2002 from the Eurocities Network under three categories: i) innovative projects on cultural diversity and social cohesion; ii) innovative projects on culture and urban regeneration; and iii) innovative projects on culture and new technologies. Examples of projects described under category ii) include the regeneration of the historical quarters of the city of Brussels, the conversion of a former tram depot in Dortmund, Germany into a centre for artists, media and the neighbourhood, and the City of Glasgow’s efforts to become a “social landlord” to arts and cultural bodies in the inner “Merchant City” zone.

Florida, Richard and Gary Gates. “Technology and Tolerance: The Importance of Diversity to High-Technology Growth”, *The Brookings Institution Survey Series*. Washington: June 2001.

Richard Florida is well-known for his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which develops a number of indices to assess how attractive cities are to members of the “creative class” – people who are the key to success in an information-based economy. In this article, Florida and Gates elaborate on the linkages between a metropolitan area’s level of tolerance and its success in attracting talented people. In terms of cultural infrastructure, Florida and Gates suggest that such tolerance translates into an amenity-rich city with a vibrant street-level culture consisting of outdoor cafés, restaurants, art galleries and a “pulsating music scene”. In their opinion, this measures tolerance, diversity and economic dynamism better than the presence of traditional cultural amenities, such as museums and symphony orchestras.

“General Overview of the Think Tank on Culture in the City: Facts, Experiences and Challenges – Quebec City, May 2003”. *Surviv - Bulletin de la recherche et de la statistique*. No. 10, November 2003.

This document describes a research seminar held in Quebec City in May 2003 that focussed on new practices for developing local culture. One of the conclusions of the seminar was that culture is an important factor in the quality of life of a community.

However, there are research gaps in our understanding of culture's role in development and in the measurement of the impact of this role. For example, many local cultural activities do not appear on researchers' radar screens – activities such as emerging forms of culture, cultural volunteering or culture that takes place in non-cultural venues (e.g. schools, outdoor areas, community centres, churches and shopping centres). Yet many of these activities appear to be vital to the social inclusion of young people and the underprivileged.

Hall, Peter. *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation and the Urban Order*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998.

This book is perhaps the most wide-ranging and in-depth historical overview of the role of culture in innovative urban environments. Hall examines the “golden ages” of several great cities, describing how cultural creativity has been at the heart of solutions to problems of order and organization in those cities. He argues that quality of life, whether measured mundanely by the safety of streets or more aesthetically by artistic performance, is becoming crucial to city survival in a global economy. He suggests that such quality of life must be studied using a systems approach, which looks at the interaction of individuals in their social and cultural environment, in order to understand how creative behaviour is generated and sustained.

Hannigan, John. *Fantasy City - Pleasure and profit in the postmodern metropolis*. London: Routledge, 1998.

This book is an extensive critique of urban planning centred around cultural “retail” destinations such as theme parks, casinos and multiplex cinemas. These urban developments, Hannigan argues, are usually filled with consumers of culture, to the exclusion of those who create and produce it. Such spaces are governed by the principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control, and tend to drive out the diversity that fosters an active and creative street life.

Jones, Ken, Tony Lea, Tim Jones and Sue Harvey. *Beyond Anecdotal Evidence: The Spillover Effects of Investments in Cultural Facilities*. Centre for Commercial Activity, Ryerson University, 2003.

While this study looks primarily at the economic impact of investment in cultural facilities, using geomatics-based analysis of spatial data, it also examines changes in neighbourhood character and changes in the social environment (such as crime rates and community engagement) that followed on the investment in three cultural facilities – two in Toronto and one in Vancouver. In general, the authors found that the cultural investments studied were correlated with positive changes in the social environment of the neighbourhood where they were located.

Landry, Charles. *The Creative City - A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Comedia and Earthscan Publications, 2000.

This book is a wide-ranging examination of creativity applied to urban regeneration around the world. It looks beyond artistic and technological creativity to examine social and political creativity in an urban environment. It also outlines a range of approaches and methods to help decision makers “think creatively”, “plan creatively” and “act creatively” in addressing urban planning issues. The book includes descriptions of several cities where

this is occurring, including Huddersfield in the United Kingdom (the Creative Town Initiative) and Helsinki in Finland (where “Valon Voimat” – the “Forces of Light” festival acts as a venue for cultural expression and commercial activity throughout the urban area).

Landry, Charles, Lesley Greene, Francois Matarasso and Franco Bianchini. *The Art of Regeneration - Urban Renewal Through Cultural Activity*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Comedia, 1996.

This book profiles 15 case studies of cities in Europe and the United States where investment in cultural infrastructure has been used as an engine for urban regeneration (e.g. Barcelona, Boston, Birmingham). The authors argue that, while capital investment has been an effective tool in urban economic development, it must be coupled with an approach that sees local people as one of the principal assets in urban renewal. Participatory arts programs, in their view, are one of the most effective ways of engaging citizens and addressing both social policy issues (such as poverty and social exclusion) and neighbourhood renewal.

Lloyd, Richard, “Neo-Bohemia: Art and Neighbourhood Redevelopment in Chicago”, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 5, (2002) 517-532.

This article explores the tensions between traditions of cultural innovation in an older city neighbourhood (Wicker Park) and economic redevelopment. The author argues that, while the historically embedded culture of cities is the raw material for new productive processes, it also generates contradictions, such as the homogenizing tendencies and higher rents that result from intensified capital investment.

Minton, Anna. *Northern Soul: Culture, creativity and quality of place in Newcastle and Gateshead*. London: Demos, December 2003.

This report describes the urban regeneration of Newcastle / Gateshead in the United Kingdom, a regeneration that has largely been driven by several high-profile cultural projects. While part of this report is devoted to the economic aspects of this regeneration, the chapters on “Investing in Diversity” and “Social Inclusion and Quality of Place” provide both positive and negative examples of how to work with local residents in building sustainable forms of urban renewal.

Markusen, Ann and David King. *The Artistic Dividend: The Arts’ Hidden Contributions to Regional Development*. Minneapolis: Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, July 2003.

While this study primarily examines the contribution of artistic activity to regional economic vitality, it also touches briefly on how the arts and arts establishments help to stabilize and revitalize inner city neighbourhoods.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Berlin - Towards an Integrated Strategy for Social Cohesion and Economic Development*, Paris: OECD, 2003.

This study examines Berlin’s “social city” strategy from a number of angles, focussing primarily on three distressed neighbourhoods. Among the study’s recommendations is that more attention be paid to unique and underdeveloped assets, particularly in the core area of Berlin. For example, several “lighthouse projects”, designed to promote cultural identity,

a sense of place and the strengthening of social ties are proposed. These projects include such cultural infrastructure investment as development of Turkish market areas, creating a museum of Turkish or Arab culture in one of the Turkish neighbourhoods, and converting old factories into multi-purpose facilities housing art galleries, museums, shops, residential units and craft industries.

*Releasing the Cultural Potential of our Core Cities* (A report by Comedia for the Core Cities Group in the United Kingdom), London: Comedia, April 2002.

This report describes the role that culture plays in English core cities (Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield) from both an economic and a social perspective (particularly in addressing problems of poverty and social exclusion). Three pilot projects emerged from this study, one of which is focussing on “Linking Neighbourhoods with City Centres”. Questions addressed include: How does culture contribute to social cohesion in cities? How do cultural networks operate in core cities? How could cities support and develop cultural networks so that they could offer diverse paths and opportunities linking marginalized neighbourhoods to networks and addressing issues of social inclusion?

Stern, Mark J. and Susan C. Seifert. *Social Impact of the Arts Project*. University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, various dates. (Papers available at <http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP/Workpapers.home.html> )

This project, funded in part by the William Penn Foundation, has conducted research on the organizational capacity of community cultural providers in support of their efforts to strengthen their role in community building. Working papers #11 and #12 describe research on the “Culture Builds Community” initiative. SIAP has also worked on the Arts and Cultural Indicators Project with the Urban Institute. The project researchers found that the neighbourhoods that experienced economic revitalization between 1980 and 1990 were both economically and ethnically diverse and had a large number of arts and culture organizations.

Toronto Culture. *The Creative City - A Workprint*. City of Toronto, Culture Division: April 2001.

In consultations on its Official Plan, the City of Toronto was told by citizens that quality of life was their top priority, and eight of 11 quality of life indicators identified by citizens related to culture. They included: diversity of cultural and art opportunities; top community cultural services; top public institutions; being at the leading edge in the world of ideas; rich neighbourhood life; interesting and vital public streets and public spaces; and inspiring buildings. This report surveys those assets, including non-profit galleries, theatres and dance studios; community cultural centres; large civic art galleries; small community exhibition spaces; museums and heritage sites. It concludes that community-based cultural activity is essential to the well-being of the city, as well as to the health of the professional arts.

Wali, Alaka, Rebecca Severson and Mario Longoni. *The Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places - Executive Summary of Final Report Submitted to the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College*. Chicago Centre for Arts Policy, May 2002.

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This study examines clusters of informal arts activity in various Chicago neighbourhoods and neighbourhood venues. The researchers found that while these clusters often contain a mix of both informal and formal sites for arts production, so-called “arts-poor” districts also contain significant amounts of informal arts participation through such venues as churches, parks and libraries. Social impacts of such activity include civic renewal, promotion of trust and solidarity and respect for diversity.

Zukin, Sharon. *Whose Culture? Whose City? The Paradoxical Growth of Cultural Capital*. Address to the “Culture of World Cities Conference” (Hong Kong), July 31, 2001.

In this address, Zukin argues that culture used to be viewed as a by-product of wealth, but now it is seen as a generator of wealth. As a result, governmental support of culture is now seen as a way of enhancing both the economy and the quality of life of specific places. The “urban imaginary” used to attract investment is not simply a matter of branding, but is also created by ordinary people whose everyday life creates the “sense of excitement” found in world cities. Zukin outlines a number of paradoxes in redeveloping older properties in inner cities as cultural “incubators”, one of which is that the resulting high rents often drive out the very people – artists and ethnic groups – who create the quality of life that made the district attractive in the first place.