

Summary Paper of the 5th Kufstein Summer School for Arts Management 2014

Key Words: Self-Screening of Arts Managers, White cultural Spots on the Map, Re-Discovery of Cultural Values and Goods, "Psychoanalysis for Smaller Cities", Community Building

**Topic 2014: Returning from centers to periphery.
The power of emerging cultural communities in Europe.**

Starting Point of Reflection:

For many years attention has focused on the cultural development of big cities including Rome, Paris, London, New York or Rio de Janeiro. Demographic changes show that many people move from the so-called peripheries of their countries to the centers, as do many artists and arts managers, strengthening the cultural vibrancy of large towns and cities. With regards to the awarding of European Capitals of Culture it can be seen that there is indeed a movement out of the centres into the forgotten spaces in the peripheries. While for many years only the culturally more significant cities were selected to become European Capitals of Culture, recently there is a trend that cities like Linz, Pafos or Marseille are selected by the jury.

Goals and Central Questions:

During the Summer School lecturers, artists and participants discussed in a first step whether there really exists a tendency towards a shift of returning to peripheries. Current arts management approaches are based on the assumption that the structure of centers and peripheries is always a result of a social, historical or economical construction (see Shils 1961; Henze/Wolfram 2014). Therefore the whole cultural space consists of visible and invisible parts and structures. As these parts are emphasized with a different intensity of cultural visibility, interspaces arise, which offer the potential for new interactions in smaller destinations. But how can arts managers reflect these spaces? And how can they use their own critical reflection of the given space in order to stimulate cultural governance processes to enhance a creative atmosphere for the establishment of "small global cities"?

Spaces and Structures of "Little Global Cities"

As soon as arts managers enter a new field of possible intervention they are automatically confronted with their own existing cultural values and stereotypes in addition to the culture they enter. To understand the sociocultural specifications of the place they operate in, they first need to understand about the relevant cultural objects, stakeholders and beliefs. For this purpose a standardized method of a "screening process" can help them to explore the field and to gain legitimization to act as mediators. As there is often a wide gap between different fields of interactions (e.g. cultural politics vs. civil society), arts managers become "masters of interspaces" (see Föhl/Wolfram 2013). Structural holes between certain sectors can be bridged by them in order to initiate collective action that leads to further cultural development and higher visibility of the forgotten space.

After arts managers have screened their own perception and evaluated their connection and disconnection with the intervened space, they have to consider the formal and informal structures of the place itself. Here it is important to note that not only the "internal" structures are of importance for local mechanisms but also "external" influences from the environment have to be taken into

consideration. A variation of methods can help arts managers to map these structures in advance. One key element of the mapping process is to identify so called "local heroes" who already maintain influence on the local community and are trusted by the citizens (Gernot Wolfram). These persons function as "gatekeepers" and as "opinion leaders" who gain access to the local culture.

Methodological approaches:

One approach to make smaller destinations more visible and to activate local citizens focuses on the development of strong "narratives". The city of Berlin for example is known to be "poor but sexy" (as its mayor Klaus Wowereit once used to say). Ulrich Fuchs suggests a "psychoanalysis" for places where people have forgotten about the potential of the place itself – often because the given space is associated with rather negative images due to historical reasons. Here it is the task of arts managers to think about new ways to change the perception of the place and to involve citizens in the renewal-process. Soft-power approaches do not necessarily need to cost any money but make use of the creative potential of single artists who work together with the community and can help to maintain a common neighbourhood identity.

Another approach to foster a creative climate in small regions is to strategically build up so called "issue networks". This means that arts managers, after the screening process, are enabled to reflect on the given structures of the place of intervention. As they now know about the missing links between certain sub-networks, they can act as mediators between local stakeholders and bridge the missing links between these groups. An "issue" can be a specific project where stakeholders use their variety of resources for the stimulation of creative innovation. As soon as the project ends it can happen that the involved persons move away from each other and the network structures change again. But these short-time interactions can be very sustainable as the whole local network gets denser in terms of connectivity over time. The creation of trust and the better understanding of the relational culture of other local sub-networks help the community to become united.

Regarding the final realisation of a project it has to be taken into consideration that places are dependent on many local specifications. An arts manager cannot only rely on his experience but needs to take a closer look at issues such as the given infrastructure, the budget, the public support, opportunities for post-use (also think about the Olympic Games) and legacy, the match with existing local structures and finally also the environmental issues (Robert Kaspar). Additionally, the arts manager needs to ask himself: "What image does the city currently have and how shall it be perceived in the future?"

Hilary Carty suggests six strategic hits that can change the local cultural landscape. Besides the conceptualization of creative clusters programmes, also the formation of trans-European partnerships, local area partnerships, public-private collaborations, knowledge networks and beacon projects can be used by arts managers to fulfil their task. In this sense the big cities can be seen as "greenhouses", that means spots for innovation, that offer arts managers knowledge and ideas they can implement in rural areas (Patrick Föhl). But the flow of creative ideas can also go the other way around which means that the "art waves" can reach the centers from the peripheries.

Finally, the Summer School participants came to the conclusion that the main task of arts managers is to convince local people to take over responsibility for the flourishing of their cultural life.

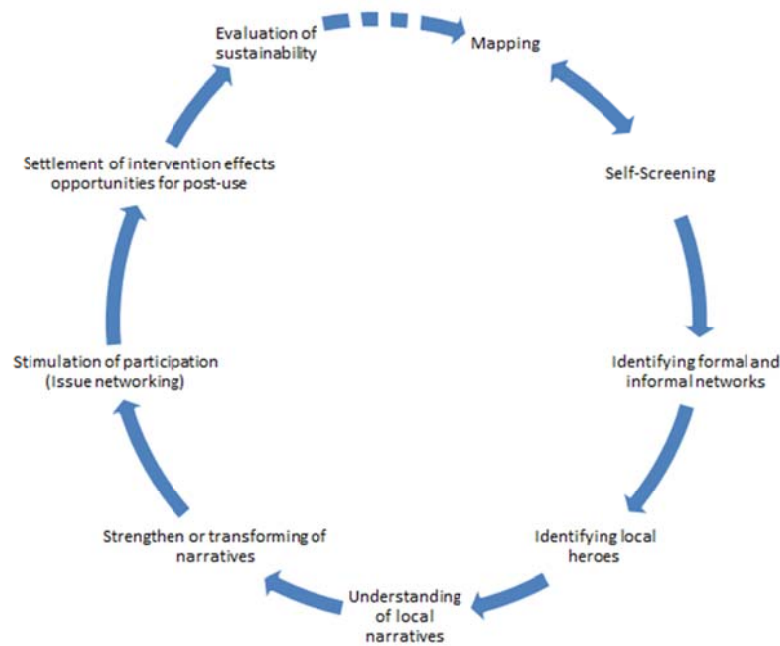


Image 1: Methodological Cycle

Examples:

To make these approaches more tangible there can be named several cases how peripheries became the centers of cultural activities. For example Linz in Austria, which is an industrial city, was awarded for being European Capital of Culture. It was analysed that the trauma of this specific forgotten space was its historical national socialist background. The project of being ECoC was used to overcome this trauma in the population and build up a new image (Ulrich Fuchs). Within the ECoC decision process the focus is rather on the need of the title than of awarding for existing cultural heritage.

But the turn to peripheries goes beyond the projects of European Cities of Culture which shows that there is indeed a tendency towards a new focus on peripheries, also in an international context.

The example of Portland can be seen as a best practice case that inhabitants have the power to transform the city using existing structures and putting them into a new context. As it can be seen in Portland some issues have led to an overall movement which constantly stimulates cultural life. New forms of cultural community life emerge as a consequence of flexible boundaries between different societal fields of interaction (Bill Flood).

Obviously, the need for change does not always have to be fulfilled by new investments in the cultural infrastructure but by using existing non-seen elements in the city environment. This is true for the example of an outranged water tower in Ekaterinburg which reminded on former times but was literally forgotten. Therefore, the French artist Mathieu Martin initiated himself to paint the tower. He reactivated the forgotten tower which stands for a whole epoch and build up a new consciousness about the identity of the city (Gernot Wolfram).

In all these cases arts managers were needed to bring the artistic innovation in a sustainable form and to overcome static structures that were identified as the main barriers for cultural innovation. Cultural Policy can help to support the engagement of civil society and to maintain visions for smaller places to become more visible over the time but in the end it is up to the local community to communicate with each other and to share resources for the stimulation of creativity. To bring

together these separated local innovators can be finally understood as the key task of arts managers in the future.

To cite Bill Flood by the end of this paper: "Culture is the glue that brings us together or tears us apart."

Lecturers (in alphabetical order)

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- Dr. Ulrich Fuchs, General Manager Marseille-Provence 2013, European Capital of Culture, France
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