



title: **New Forms of Urban Governance in European Cities:
Focusing on Cultural Policies**

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Abstract

In this paper I will discuss the transformations in the mode of urban governance by examining urban cultural policies in European cities. The paper is part of my Ph.D. research project in which I am examining these questions more in detail by conducting comparative case studies of selected European cities. As most of the research work is yet to be done at the moment, I will concentrate mostly on exploring some background for these themes.

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1. Urban Governance and Cultural Policies

By focusing on urban cultural policies, my objective is to investigate and analyze recent changes in forms of urban, or local, governance. Central questions will be about the implications of these developments for urban politics, economy and the social sphere in European cities. The simultaneous competition and networking between cities on different levels and the use of cultural policies and culture instrumentally as a tool in this competition are particular points of interest.

I have chosen cultural policies as focus of my research partially because of practical reasons. I have worked as a researcher in Urban Cultural Profiles Exchange Project EuroCult21, which is a thematic network financed by the European Commission under the 5th Framework Program for European Research, coordinated by Eurocities -organization. There are 31 partners of which 22 are mid-sized cities and eight are universities and academic networks. Project's aims include, among other things, increasing its members networking and the knowledge of the issues concerning urban cultural policies. Besides professionals working in cultural administrations of the cities and municipalities, the scientific branch the network includes researchers from universities and research institutes from the field of interdisciplinary studies connected with urban cultural policies and local governance. This paper and research work is not, however, directly linked to Eurocult12 –project.

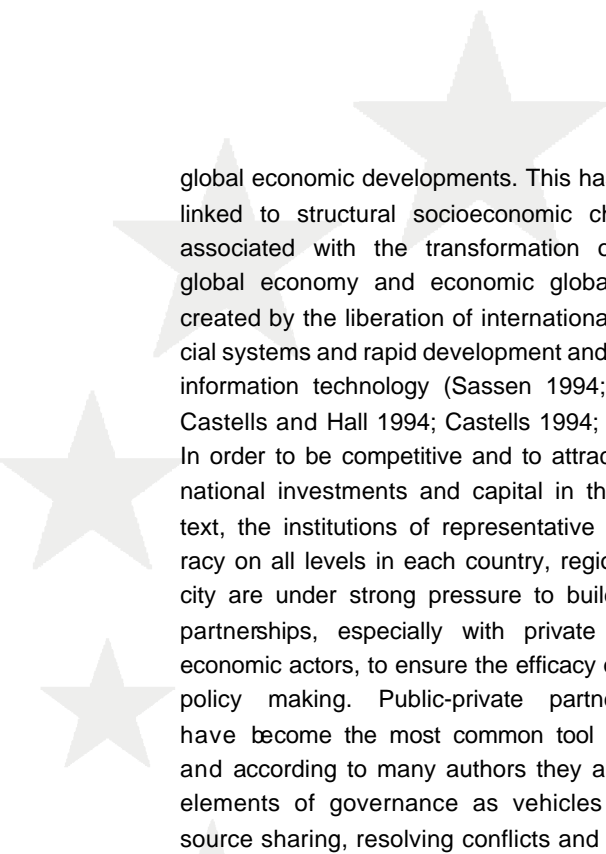
2. Urban Governance Framework

Urban governance has been vigorously discussed, debated and studied during the recent years. However, amidst all the different theoretical stances and rhetoric statements there does not seem to exist clear common acceptance of how urban governance should be defined let alone approached through re-

search, besides some general lines but those are hardly useful as tools in strict scientific analysis. This ambivalence of the concept, on the other hand, is also one of the reasons contributing to the discussion. In this discussion most common hypothesis is that government as a way of governing nation states, regions and cities has given way, or is giving way, to new forms of governing, the governance. Emergence of these new forms of governing has been particularly evident in the case of cities, city governments and metropolitan governing bodies. Many authors have suggested that transition from government to governance has already taken place as during the last two decades or so, as Europe has gone through many structural transformations in the social, political and economic spheres of societies and in the global networks.

In the subsequent discussions within the social sciences these changes have been recognized as a series of transformations in which the traditional institutions of representative democracy weaken and other actors, namely private sector, are becoming increasingly involved in public decision-making and policy-making processes. These developments are not, however, usually interpreted so that the traditional government, political decision-making and participatory representative democracy are losing their meaning or functionality. Rather, new possibilities have opened up to meet the new demands posed by rapidly changing environment. We have not only been witnessing a dramatic growth of city governments', municipal administrations' and local governing organizations autonomy and authority as political, economic and social actors but also the emerging of new forms of urban governance (Harvey 1989; Goldsmith 1995; Kooiman 1993; 2003; Le Galès 1998; 2002; Lefèvre 1998; John 2001).

In the most common governance discourse, the transformation from traditional local government to urban governance is often interpreted at least partially as a consequence of



global economic developments. This has been linked to structural socioeconomic changes associated with the transformation of new global economy and economic globalization created by the liberation of international financial systems and rapid development and rise of information technology (Sassen 1994; 2001; Castells and Hall 1994; Castells 1994; 2000). In order to be competitive and to attract international investments and capital in this context, the institutions of representative democracy on all levels in each country, region and city are under strong pressure to build new partnerships, especially with private sector economic actors, to ensure the efficacy of their policy making. Public-private partnerships have become the most common tool in this and according to many authors they are key elements of governance as vehicles for e-source sharing, resolving conflicts and discovering mutual interests. Judge, Stoker and Wolman (1995) go as far as claiming that besides public-public partnerships, public-private partnerships are key elements of governance as vehicles for resource sharing, resolving conflicts and discovering mutual interests. Public-private partnerships are, however, often considered as inherently problematic concept because of the threats they pose towards democratic communal decision-making and transparency of governance systems. To add to this, Harvey (1989) has argued that public-private partnership could very easily be a source of urban instability and potential causes for social problems because these projects are inherently speculative by nature and managed by business logic demanding always profit. Besides that, the execution and design of public-private partnerships projects is very often such that the risk is to a large extent carried by the public side of the partnership. According to distinctly Marxist view supported by Harvey, these projects contribute to the problem of over-investment and over-accumulation, which will cause in larger scale periodic crisis characterizing capitalistic economy system. On local urban scale, these kinds of projects also act as barriers to rational planning and democratic

coordinated development. It has also argued that projects based on public-private partnerships, for example urban regeneration projects, are also often more concerned with construction of place, or enhancement of the image of a specific place and the of property values, rather than improving the local living conditions (housing, health and educational services, special segregation and polarization etc.) of the city or region where the place is located (Harvey 1989). The significance of global competition is further heightened because it takes increasingly place between regions instead besides the obvious level of nation states. The abundant and broad lines of discussion about long term structural changes in economy associated with the neo-liberal politics of many national and local governments and the suggested shift from Fordist to post-Fordist phase of production and economy in western societies provides some background for these theories (Bell 1973; Aglietta 1979; Piore and Sabel 1984; Harvey 1989; Jessop 1994). For more historical background of defining urban governance and changes in governance, Harvey (1989) has argued that governance has been moving from 'managerialism' more towards 'entrepreneurialism' already since the 1973 Oil Crisis. According to Harvey, after the mid-70s the urban governance has become more and more preoccupied with trying to find new ways to foster and encourage local development and employment growth. This trend towards 'entrepreneurialism' in governance can be seen in many ways as being in strikingly strong contrast to the era of the strong welfare states of earlier decades since the second World War. During that era many urban governments, especially in many European countries, were preoccupied with their redistributive roles, meaning the local provision of services and facilities to whole urban population. It should also be noted that some authors such as Lefèvre (1998), make a negative distinction between the current developments in urban governance since late 1980s and '*the other boom period of urban governments*' in the 1960s and 1970s claiming that a

different approach is needed in examining these two periods.

There seems to exist more of an agreement on what Harvey (1989) presented early on about how the fundamental shift in the philosophy and practices of urban governance has been related to changes in macro-economic relations between nations, regions and cities in the global level. The process of globalization brought along with it increasing instability, which manifested in the de-industrialization of areas of the former western and northern industrial core countries. The declining power of the nation-states to control multinational capital flows almost forced urban governments to take a more proactive stance as these developments have been advancing (Castells 2000). This has been clearly evident in Europe throughout the whole nineties and continues to be even more so now in the 21st century.

As a consequence of this and in this climate of changes many European cities are have rebuilt, or have been building, their roles in relation to the power vacuum that has appeared as national states have been gradually losing their authority and political power, as a consequence of globalization of economy, European Union integration and accelerating competition between nation-states, regions and cities (Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000; Le Galès 2002). In this sense we are not only witnessing a dramatic growth of city governments', municipal administrations' and local governing organizations' autonomy and authority as political and economic actors but also the emerging of new forms of urban governance. This is not to claim that city administrations are not substituting national states or challenging their legitimacy but instead they aim at using their resources and newly found political power in much more effective way. Within the current attempts to reconnect formal politics to economics and social spheres of

society, there are struggles over whose discourse will dominate the recasting of governance forms and whose strategies and interests are promoted by emerging new modes of governance (Coaffee and Healey 2003).

3. European Cities and Urban Governance

European cities, more particularly those that together make up the urban structure of Europe – a fabric of older cities over 100 000 inhabitants, regional capitals or smaller state capitals as well as perhaps the huge conurbations such as London or Paris.

(Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000)

One of the key concepts of my research project is the European city as defined above and the theoretical framework of this paper is based on the argument that European metropolitan areas, or in administrative sense of the term cities, have become international and transnational actors by building multiple networks and actively developing foreign policies thus challenging nation-states which previously had a monopoly over the relations at the international level (Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000). Seen this way, European city becomes a major political, economic and social actor for which governance is the most important tool in running the city in all the spheres of the society. Historically this is by no means a new phenomenon as networks of cities, national or regional capitals or local centers have formed the fabric of urban Europe since the medieval times. On one side the recent development can be seen leading to returning to the classic role of the European cities as autonomous political actors as defined and historically identified by Max Weber in his classic work, "The City" (1958). Haila and Häusserman (2003) discuss this theme and argumentation further in their article about of the neo-Weberian framework in current governance research in the European context.

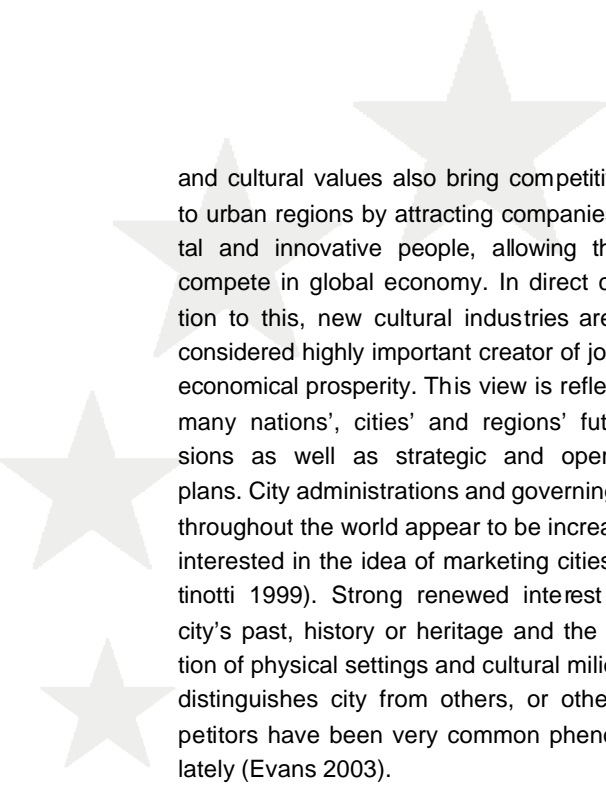
4. Culture, Urban Cultural Policies and Local Economies

At the same time with these developments European cities are emerging as new identity-forging powers, or depending on how one interprets these changes, regaining once more their true role. Culture, no matter how it is defined, is a major part of any city's identity and particularly when speaking of older European cities. The connection between cities and culture is strong and the identification between culture and cities has been constant throughout the history of mankind. In this sense it is not an exaggeration to say that in some sense culture and city is the same thing.

In historical perspective in many European countries the issue of culture and cultural policies became increasingly significant through the 1960s and 1970s, as consequence of general socio-economic developments and improvements in the quality of life, which most importantly brought more leisure time for a growing part of the population as well as an increase in the proportion of the disposable income to spent on leisure activities (Schwab 2002). It has also been argued that the 1968 students' protest movement and its critique of high-culture caused the cultural policy to be pushed more to the centre of the public agenda in Europe. In this context the domain of culture in a democratic western society, and particularly as a service or a set of services, provided by the all-encompassing welfare state in direct connection with increasing simultaneous commodification and popularization of art and culture and development of consumer society also eventually led to democratization of cultural policies on a certain level. Besides the open critique of and even revolt against what was considered to be elitist high culture before late 1960s, this caused a new and much wider demand for the governments to provide cultural services and to develop their cultural policies further. Providing subsidies for museums, classic performing arts institutions and schools, and other established cultural

organizations was not enough anymore as governments were expected to provide more and much more varied selection of cultural services and policies. Urban politics were at the same time going through more or less the same set changes when in many western European countries socialists and other politically left-leaning young officials were bringing along progressive, if often strongly contested, ideas and ideals. The emerging new pressure to develop cultural policy was also in this sense two-fold, as it was coming both from the outside and inside. As an example, Vivion and Le Galès (1998) argued in their French case-study, and on a general level in France as a whole, that the multiplication of cultural organizations and different socio-cultural programs and projects during the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s can be examined in the light of successive ideologies of cultural democratization and development. The growth of city governments', municipal administrations' and local governing organizations autonomy and authority as political, economic and social actors from the 1970s and through the 1980s, which brought along new forms of urban governance also included and was clearly reflected in cities cultural administrations. From the viewpoint of this paper, one particularly interesting part of this is the fact that role and importance of culture in the governance of cities increased strongly during this period and been growing ever since. Almost without an exception, city governments and administrations all over Europe have had a strong renewed interest in developing culture in its many forms to their benefit. In the eyes of many city governments and regimes, the vehicle for achieving at least some of these goals is often the cultural policy.

I am arguing that as a consequence of these developments today in Europe, more than ever before, cities' development strategies are often embedded in urban cultural policies as an integral element. The reasoning behind these visions can be found in the arguments by many authors (Scott 1997; Florida 2002; Markusen and King 2003) claiming that culture, art



and cultural values also bring competitiveness to urban regions by attracting companies, capital and innovative people, allowing them to compete in global economy. In direct connection to this, new cultural industries are often considered highly important creator of jobs and economical prosperity. This view is reflected in many nations', cities' and regions' future visions as well as strategic and operational plans. City administrations and governing elites throughout the world appear to be increasingly interested in the idea of marketing cities (Martinotti 1999). Strong renewed interest in the city's past, history or heritage and the cultivation of physical settings and cultural milieu that distinguishes city from others, or other competitors have been very common phenomena lately (Evans 2003).

5. Post-Fordist Economy as the Basis of New Cultural Economy

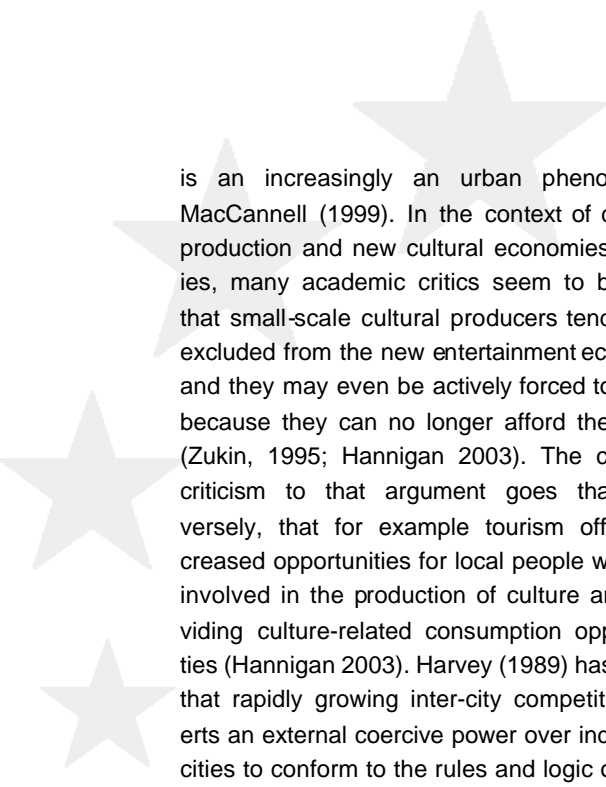
By the early 1990s, the city-branding campaigns devised by place marketers during the era emphasized the promise of a re-born city that had left behind a polluted and blue-collar past for a future in which it was becoming vibrant, stylish, confident, cosmopolitan and innovative

(Hannigan 2003)

In past twenty years, the relationship between cultural expression and the city has been turned on its head as cultural expression in thought of less as a socio-economic practice that follows in the wake of urban life, but it is regarded instead as the motor of the urban economy (Bianchini and Parkinson 1993). On the level of urban policy, politics and governance, the move of the focus from technology to culture in the economy of the cities also implicitly suggests a transformation cities' economic base from industrial production to services, or at least towards a much more service-oriented economy base. These developments match what has been suggested in the discussion about of the post-Fordist mode of production and post-Fordist society. As a result of the division between culture and economy be-

comes blurred with the necessity of dealing in both (Barnes 2003). Effects of the shift from Fordist to a post-Fordist society are reflected in the sector of economy linked with culture and cultural production, often altogether labeled as new cultural economy. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, the contemporary city has become a stage and a prime site for consumption-related activities related to tourism, sports, culture and entertainment (Hannigan 2003). Amin and Thrift (2002; Amin and Graham 1997; Thrift 2000) argue that in our times the urban economy increasingly operates as a discursive construction blending economy and culture. Effects of this shift are also reflected in the sector of economy linked with culture and cultural production, often roughly put together without much consideration on their actual contents and labeled as the new cultural economy. Scott (1997; 2000) sees the location of cultural industries within cities as vitally important to the competitiveness of urban economies on global scale. Whereas globalizing processes allow cultural products to gain access to wider ranges of markets, the cultural economy has been re-localized at nodes of global transaction flows (Zukin 1995; Castells 2000; Sassen 2001).

Scott (1997) sees the location of cultural industries within cities as vitally important to the competitiveness of urban economies on global scale. The idea of cultural city and the use of arts and entertainment as tools in urban regeneration can now be considered almost universal phenomenon, which has accelerated in the era of the 'city of renewal' (Evans 2003). The projected image of a particular contemporary city may very well play a greater role than the actual reality in shaping the views of visitors, investors, and, even residents. High-pressure marketing and sales techniques are frequently used to help troubled cities in their transition to post-industrial centers of tourism, culture and reinvestment. Tourism, which can also be seen as the cultural component of globalization, and especially cultural tourism in its various forms – heritage, arts, convention –



is an increasingly an urban phenomenon MacCannell (1999). In the context of cultural production and new cultural economies in cities, many academic critics seem to believe that small-scale cultural producers tend to be excluded from the new entertainment economy and they may even be actively forced to move because they can no longer afford the rents (Zukin, 1995; Hannigan 2003). The counter-criticism to that argument goes that conversely, that for example tourism offers increased opportunities for local people who are involved in the production of culture and providing culture-related consumption opportunities (Hannigan 2003). Harvey (1989) has noted that rapidly growing inter-city competition exerts an external coercive power over individual cities to conform to the rules and logic of capitalist economy and accumulation. And although the consequence of this can be a forced uniformity of cities, all in the provision of a good business climate, the orchestrated production of urban image for a city can also help to create a sense of social solidarity, civic pride and loyalty to place (Harvey 1989). However, Harvey has also argued that the concentration on spectacle and image rather than on the substance of economic and social problems can also prove to be harmful in the long run. Zukin (1995) has voiced her concern by noting that greater attention should be paid to the material inequalities that are at stake in cultural strategies of economic growth and community revitalization. Different generations of cities and especially different groups of city users as defined by Martinotti (1999) also have an important role to play. The question of 'who the city is for' and 'who is it (effectively) marketed to' by using culture and cultural aspects has its implications for cities. This brings about the central question of the consequences of these developments for the societies and particularly for the social sphere of societies. These developments contain linkages to many much debated urban issues and problems, some of these more obvious than the others. One such issue is gentrification, namely people with middle-class –backgrounds finding housing oppor-

tunities, investing in and moving in working- or lower-class neighborhoods for various reasons. Besides upgrading the physical environment of the neighborhood, this is often seen leading to displacement of original residents and the break-up of the local communities, which in turn is seen to leading eventually to growing social polarization and segregation of cities, the 'dual-city'-phenomena being one of these issues (Mollenkopf and Castells 1992).

6. Research Design

Based on the discussion and notions laid out above, my basic argument and hypothesis is that on the city level cultural policies are used more and more as marketing tools and as urban regeneration schemes and less as officially and explicitly intended in the policies where the emphasis tends to be on issues concerning arts, educational aspects and community cohesion. The problem associated with this is the assumption that when urban cultural policies are submitted to capitalist market logic according to the governance theories, these ideals are turned into mere marketing tools. Problematic consequences of this are already felt in many cities in the form of cultural administrations' troubles caused by cuts in financing and budgets. The neo-liberalist politics of many city governments are manifested as demands for the cultural sector to show financially profitable and above all measurable results of their actions.

In many cultural administrations it is felt that the new strategic visions based on the promises of culture and cultural sector as the provider of new economic growth are steering the cultural policy away from itself and towards something completely else than what is its traditional core focus areas.

In order to examine the hypothesis and to operationalize the plan into a concrete research work, research questions of the project have been formulated as follows:

- How do urban cultural policies reflect changes in local governance and the changing role of the contemporary European cities?
- What are the elements, functions, practices and goals of urban cultural policies in European cities' social, cultural, economic and political development strategies?
- If urban cultural policies are used more and more as marketing tools in the competition between cities to attract capital, investments, enterprises, highly educated professional workforce and tourism, what will be the implications for European societies?

The empirical part of the research work will consist of separate case studies of selected cities' governance systems, cultural administrations and cultural policies, which will then be analyzed by comparative methods. Different types of data will be used in the research. The data will consist of cumulative material that is already available and of data collected specially for this purpose. This will include research done previously on the subject, official policy documents, issued statements and reports. Different types statistical data collected and provided by different organizations as well as the cities in question will also be used as well as interviews conducted with key-people. Qualitative material will be collected from the case-study cities within the Eurocult21 project's framework. I will rely on inductive empirical theory in explaining and prescribing the cases, based on empirical observation and accumulation of evidence from testing the hypotheses set in the theoretical framework the research. By investigating, analyzing and explaining policy decisions and strategies produced by urban governments and administrations of the case study cities, I will look at these as functions of these organizations' decision-making structures and their mode of

governance. I have adopted the case study approach in my research even when I have acknowledged the problem of finding common measurability and comparability between different cities. The idea is to use this approach in order to be able both to investigate these cities cultural policies and governance strategies individually but also to analyze them comparatively despite the limitations of this approach.

7. Urban Cultural Policy Models

On very general level, cultural policies tend to cover and affect a wide ranging array of different activities including classic high-art and museum institutions, cultural heritage and tourism, regeneration of cities, public space and architecture, media and advertising. The definitions of culture used in cultural policies are often wide-ranging but they can also be very tightly defined to consist only of the so-called "high culture". Culture is often seen as a potential source of economic prosperity as well as an important contributor to social cohesion through development of common social values and recreational expectations.

During the course of my research work so far, I have constructed a preliminary typology based on very simple ideal types describing four different types of urban cultural policies and cultural administrations in the cities participating in Eurocult21-project. Models were built using empirical data gathered through the project and include only cities within the project. It must be stressed that at this point the models are still rather rudimentary, they do not allow for wider generalizations and important exceptions do exist.

- *Nordic Model:*
Culture and contents of cultural policy are defined broadly to include a wide variety of activities, from classic performing arts to integration of different ethnic and other minority groups and activation of long-

term unemployed. Besides classic high-art, community cohesion, and educational and civilizing aspects, main focus on special groups forms the central theme. Heritage or tourism does not have a strong role on policy level but is stressed more in cities strategies'.

➤ *Central European Model:*

Policy focus is on organizing cultural events with strong high-art preference but attracting cultural tourism is also often high on the agenda. Preservation of cultural heritage and increasing the youth involvement and participation in cultural activities as a means of improving social cohesion are also important aspects.

➤ *British Model:*

British cities have no specific cultural administrations, the main reason for this being the fact that British law does not require cities to have cultural services except for public libraries. Cultural services are usually under the control of The Department of Leisure and Culture/Community Services/Learning. They consist of individual cultural services such as Libraries, Sport and Recreation, Parks, Museums and Galleries, Arts, Events and Tourism. There are also often other public services, which could be considered non-cultural, included as for example Youth, Education, Jobs and Childcare Services. On the policy level there is strong emphasis is on community cohesion and integration, prevention of exclusion, educational and civilizing aspects of culture.

➤ *Southern European Model:*

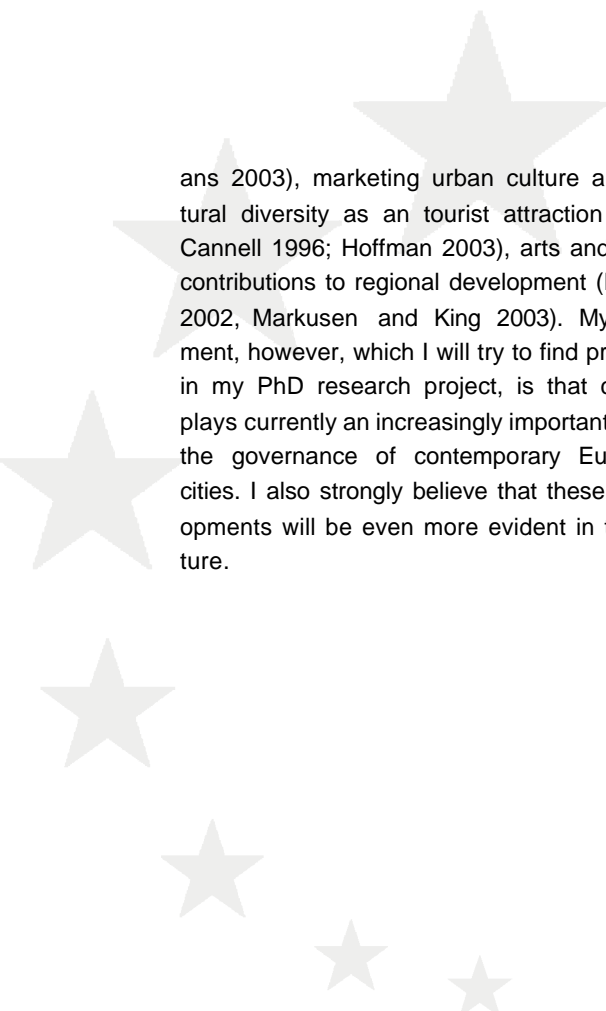
The cultural issues are an integral part of the municipal administration. The model stresses very strongly importance of tourism for the cities' economies. Cultural events and cultural heritage and their marketing for tourists are main themes in cultural policies and strategies. Of the cultural

activities organizing events and festivals are usually the most important. The central element of this model is the marketing of the cities, creating awareness of the cities cultural heritage and attracting visitors.

The typology above is also partially structured on national differences because cultural policies in most European countries are still strongly linked to national policies on state level as well as the cities' and municipalities' policies and strategic visions. The differences in cultural policies are also strongly linked with the differences between forms or organization models of cultural administrations of individual nations. In the other hand there are obvious general common features such as the fact that, at least on the outset, in all cases cultural policies and strategies are planned and decided by elected political city government officials and so on. Even through such superficial analysis as presented here, it becomes quite clear that national differences and traits still remain, even if there are also many obvious common themes. The pressure of globalization or European integration has not been able to transform all national differences, at least not yet. However, according to my view this does not contradict the idea of cities becoming more and more independent and active political actors. Quite the contrary, it will rather make these developments more complex, potentially more prone to tensions and most importantly, from the viewpoint of scientific research, more interesting.

8. Conclusion

The most important preliminary finding so far in my research has been that cultural policies, urban governance in connection with them and the context of competition between cities has not been very much researched before. However, some interesting research linked to the theme has been recently published on place-marketing (Philo and Kearns 1993; Ward 1998), different groups of city-users (Martinotti 1999), branding of cities (Ev-



ans 2003), marketing urban culture and cultural diversity as an tourist attraction (MacCannell 1996; Hoffman 2003), arts and artists contributions to regional development (Florida 2002, Markusen and King 2003). My argument, however, which I will try to find proof for in my PhD research project, is that culture plays currently an increasingly important role in the governance of contemporary European cities. I also strongly believe that these developments will be even more evident in the future.

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