Culture-led regeneration and the contestation of local discourses and meanings: the case of European maritime port cities

Enrico Tommarchi & Andrew E. G. Jonas

Published online: 16 Aug 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ⬈

View related articles ⬈

View Crossmark data ⬈

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Culture-led regeneration and the contestation of local discourses and meanings: the case of European maritime port cities

Enrico Tommarchi ●[a] and Andrew E. G. Jonas ●[b]

[a]Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), University of Dundee, Dundee, United Kingdom; [b]School of Environmental Sciences, University of Hull, Hull, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Culture-led regeneration, understood as a range of policies using cultural activity as a catalyst for urban regeneration, has been widely implemented by many European cities. The interest of local businesses and politicians in these processes seems undiminished despite the various systemic crises hitting European cities. In the meantime, the ways in which culture-led regeneration and its promoters interact with, shape and manipulate local discourses and meanings have become critical for its successful implementation. Drawing upon the literature on the politics of urban development, this paper looks at how culture-led regeneration promulgates, negotiates and manipulates local discourses and meanings. It takes the example of European maritime port cities, where these processes have often served as a means to address the challenges associated with shifting meanings and practices surrounding port-city relationships. We argue that culture-led regeneration schemes operating in port cities in the twenty-first century strive to engage directly with local discourses and meanings associated with past economic activities but, in doing so, renegotiate them, producing hybridized models of regeneration that mirror and align with the agenda of culture-led urban growth coalitions.

Introduction

Across Europe, culture-led regeneration – understood as urban and socio-economic regeneration where "cultural activity is seen as the catalyst and engine of regeneration" (Evans & Shaw, 2004, p. 5) – has prominently featured in urban policy agendas since the 1980s, when cultural policy became widely perceived as an alternative way of tackling the socio-spatial consequences of deindustrialization and urban restructuring (Bianchini, 1993; García, 2004; Miles, 2005). Today, the interest of urban policy makers and planners in these processes seems undiminished despite the various systemic crises hitting

CONTACT Enrico Tommarchi ✉ etommar001@dundee.ac.uk ▣ Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), University of Dundee, Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4HN, United Kingdom

European cities including the 2008 economic and financial crisis, austerity, the rise of right-wing populism, and more recently COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. Working in partnership with private firms and members of the creative class (e.g. designers, artists, etc., see Florida, 2002), urban managers, regeneration practitioners and planners are, it seems, finding ever more innovative ways of using cultural projects and associated products, services and technologies to redevelop urban spaces, extracting value from the built environment in ways that profit some (e.g. private developers) but marginalize, exclude and displace others (e.g. existing residents of affected districts, see Mould, 2017; Pratt, 2011). Nonetheless, the context in which culture-led regeneration schemes now operate and produce their effects is different from that of economic restructuring and urban growth under an emerging neo-liberal regime of capital accumulation which characterized the late twentieth century. Indeed, in the last decade cracks have started to appear in the rhetoric and institutions of culture-led regeneration (McLean, 2014), inviting new ways of interpreting and challenging the local discursive practices and meanings of cultural policy and projects currently being unveiled across different cities.

If touting the economic benefits of culture-led regeneration remains important, cultural initiatives in many cities are increasingly being questioned in relation to their long-term social sustainability and uneven distributional impacts in terms of gentrification, touristification, and legacy (De Frantz, 2013; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Tommarchi, 2022). At the same time, urban austerity and the cost-of-living crisis threaten to undermine the social and cultural fabric of urban spaces which these initiatives seek to regenerate, posing a new set of challenges for the promoters of culture-led regeneration.

In this paper, we consider how efforts to transform European maritime port cities[1] through culture-led regeneration create opportunities for growth promoters to colonize and/or renegotiate local discourses and meanings as they strive to engage publics in the process of urban transformation. In such cities, these include local maritime heritage and histories, meanings attributed to past and current maritime practices, and port-city labor practices, community values and "mindsets" as understood by Hein et al. (2021). We argue that culture-led regeneration schemes and their legacy strategies in twenty-first century port cities strive to engage directly with local discourses and meanings associated with past maritime port-related economic activities but, in doing so, renegotiate them, producing hybridized models of urban regeneration that mirror and align with the agenda of the new generation of urban growth coalitions coalescing around various culture-led redevelopment projects and associated place marketing and rebranding strategies.

The findings reported here are based on case studies of three European maritime port cities where cultural initiatives have occurred in tandem with efforts to transform the local economies of these cities, namely, Hull (United Kingdom [UK]), Genoa (Italy), and Valencia (Spain). The research is part of a wider project conducted between 2016 and 2020, which was funded by the University of Hull as part of the UK City of Culture 2017 program. The project examined the mutual relationships between culture-led regeneration processes and the cultural, political and socio-spatial ties between ports and cities across Europe (Tommarchi, 2022).

In the following sections, firstly, we examine the literature on the politics of urban development, highlighting the power of local growth discourses, ideologies and meanings in shaping how the promoters of urban development engage with the local publics in order to implement redevelopment projects within cities. We connect this with the evolution of culture-led regeneration schemes in Europe. Secondly, examples from the three case studies of Hull, Genoa and Valencia are brought into the discussion. Here the paper focuses on the mutual connection between, and contested interplay of, wider culture-led regeneration processes and the symbolic meanings and significance of port-city links and how, in turn, local growth proponents mobilize and manipulate local discourses and meanings associated with the port and the sea. Thirdly, we discuss the changing nature and relevance of local meanings and ideologies in these processes, looking at the aforementioned examples.

Culture-led regeneration as a politics of urban development

One of the key concepts that has been deployed to explore the role of ideology, discourse and meanings in contemporary processes and politics of urban development is that of the "urban growth machine" (Cox, 2017; Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1976). This concept refers to the material and ideological conditions surrounding the formation of "growth coalitions" which local developers, businesses and municipal governments enter into in order to attract mobile investment in the form of manufacturing branch plants, corporate headquarters and – especially in recent years – cultural projects and programs. In doing so, urban growth coalitions not only actively construct local ideologies and discourses compatible with new forms of urban redevelopment but also contrive to manipulate and refashion existing local meanings as they strive to enroll diverse urban publics in what have become increasingly controversial and locally contested culture-led urban regeneration processes. In this section, we examine the emergence of culture-led regeneration as a particular manifestation of the politics of urban growth.

Culture-led regeneration as local politics of urban growth

Since at least the early 1990s, culture-led regeneration has played an increasingly instrumental role in the neo-liberal turn in urban redevelopment (García, 2004; Harvey, 1989; Miles, 2020; Pratt, 2011), which for many has marked an intensification of efforts on the part of urban growth coalitions in different cities to compete for inward investment and activate new forms of consumption within a context of enhanced capital mobility and urban austerity (Cox, 1993; Peck, 2012). Over time, the political and institutional landscape of urban entrepreneurialism has become more variegated as urban managers have struggled to adapt to changing political and economic circumstances (Phelps & Miao, 2020). A case in point is the recent activities of growth coalitions operating in maritime port cities, which have turned to various culture-led regeneration schemes in order to trigger the redevelopment of redundant port areas and waterfronts (Bailey et al., 2004; Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Jones, 2020).

Cultural initiatives in port cities are often championed by businesses and municipal authorities, which depend upon locally-generated revenue from port-related activities

and surrounding land uses (Cox & Mair, 1988; Miles, 2005; Rice, 2009). For local businesses operating in cultural industries, culture-led urban redevelopment helps to grow the local market for their products and services, and realize gains on capital invested in cultural facilities (Culture, Place and Policy Institute, 2018; García et al., 2010; Markusen, 2006). For municipal governments, key considerations include the need to generate new income from port or related land uses along with the expansion of the local tax base.

Residents and workers in port cities likewise confront various problems of local dependence, which culture-led regeneration schemes may help to remedy or, conversely, threaten (Cox & Mair, 1988; Miles, 2020). For workers in cultural industries, livelihoods depend upon sustained investment in local cultural facilities and services. For residents, cultural activities and investments that support the expansion of local services and entertainment may be welcomed; but for those residents of working-class districts facing loss of traditional livelihoods, local resources might be better invested in basic services. Studies suggest that indifference or opposition to culture-led regeneration schemes intensifies when residents feel excluded from, or threatened by, such schemes (Bailey et al., 2004; Boland, 2010; NION, 2010).

In cities where local business interests fail to galvanize the local growth coalition, counter-coalitions might be forged around social and environmental issues (Jonas & Wilson, 1999) or anti-growth movements (Delaney & Eckstein, 2003). In recent years, activism against culture-led regeneration schemes has tended to focus on the accompanying the gentrification of inner-city neighborhoods taken over by the creative classes (McLean, 2014). However, the promoters of urban development strive to divide local publics who seek to resist in the urban spaces undergoing redevelopment by resorting to language that seeks to sanitize such spaces and their resident communities (Kallin & Slater, 2014; Tarazona Vento, 2017; Wilson & Grammenos, 2005). Although there exist possibilities for residents to deploy alternative local cultural meanings and discourses to contest redevelopment and gentrification, Wilson and Grammenos (2005) argue that such resistance strategies are ineffective insofar as they fail to confront directly those discourses promulgated by growth proponents.

Local discourses and meanings in culture-led urban regeneration

How the challenges faced by different cities experiencing culture-led regeneration schemes are imagined, discursively represented and consumed is key to the successes (and failures) of this contemporary manifestation of urban growth politics. As noted by McCann (2002, p. 387), culturally-mediated meaning-making processes have become profoundly interconnected with urban land use change and place-making efforts designed to trigger local economic development. Consequently, "culture" – along with its associated local discourses, meanings and symbols – has been drawn into the contested terrain of urban politics. In this fraught urban political conjuncture, who controls and manages how such discourses and symbols are consumed and understood by various publics and communities across a city undergoing culture-led regeneration are open to strategic manipulation and reinterpretation (Wilson, 2004; 2007). In the process, and often working in tandem with the equally problematic construct of "community", growth-related discourses and meanings of "culture" serve as instruments

of power and persuasion (Collins, 2016), "offering symbolic universes to produce realities for public consumption" (Jonas et al., 2018, p. 4). Understanding the role of culture-led regeneration in restructuring different cities therefore requires knowledge of how growth coalition interests articulate a best-case scenario for different publics to understand and consume it.

Pro-growth discourses are asserted often with the sole aim of convincing local communities of how important economic growth is to their own wellbeing through a language filled with politicized meanings and values aimed at imposing one single vision (Jonas & Wilson, 1999, pp. 8–9; MacLeod, 2011). Once "culture" became an instrument of urban boosterism in the twentieth century, it quickly became more a tool for post-political tactics of providing a positive and civilizing portrayal of the city and its local residents (Boland, 2010; Short, 1999) and streamlining consensus around regeneration (Gray, 2018), with a view to attracting investors and consumers predisposed to those "high-class" cultural and civic ventures likely to garner national attention and thereby put a city "on the map" (Evans, 2011; Rius-Ulldemolins & Gisbert, 2019). Conversely, such attempts also meant controlling and downplaying the other, namely, the more "uncivilized" and "shadowy" elements of public urban life especially those associated with poor and working-class inner-city districts (Boland, 2010; Short, 1999). Negative perceptions of a city can be refashioned through what Boyle (1999) calls urban propaganda projects (UPPs) consisting of buildings and architecture designed to change wider public perceptions of a city and its spaces. Such schemes aim to socialize local people into accepting culture-led redevelopment goals (Boyle, 1999; Paton, 2018). An example is the City of Barcelona's decision in the late 1980s to locate the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona in El Raval, a former "red light" district of dubious – bordering on sinister and amoral – mythical local reputation in this historic port city (Ealham, 2005).

Ideologies of local community can also play an important part in how growth coalitions enroll public support for culture-led urban redevelopment schemes. Such ideologies are designed to generate a "community 'we' feeling" or "spirit of civic jingoism" (Molotch, 1976, pp. 314–315) or civic pride (e.g. Degen & García, 2012) amongst the local populace around the kinds of projects that growth coalitions seek to promote and realize within a given locality. Cox and Mair (1988) suggest, however, that community ideologies founded in everyday lived urban experiences and the more tangible social relations underpinning community (e.g. those of family, ethnicity, class, etc.) are being constantly eroded by pervasive forces of commodification, deskilling and urban restructuring. Meaning-making processes as part of pro-growth agendas therefore involve the search for a renewed ontological security (Cox & Mair, 1988, p. 317; Grenville, 2017), where existential threats, such as the loss of traditional livelihoods and the erosion of living standards, can be addressed.

In place of traditional local community meanings and identities, the growth coalition tries to construct alternative future-orientated ideologies and meanings (Cox & Mair, 1988) based around an appeal to a kind of "pseudo-community" which is based on "a particular interpretation of what it means to be modern and progressive" (Cox, 1999, p. 31). This is always a contested process insofar as the growth coalition may well struggle to touch the right buttons and so faces the potential threat of a public backlash and rejection. Nevertheless, culture-led regeneration schemes designed to repackage local

histories, meanings and discourses can become powerful tools, paving the way for the growth coalition selectively to introduce modern progressive cultural meanings and symbols that are more likely to resonate with their efforts to transform urban spaces. Here, maritime port cities, with their abandoned docklands and historic working-class waterfront districts, offer all sorts of opportunities for developers to reconstruct these spaces into "pseudo-communities" comprised of essentially kitsch cultural artefacts and other symbolic vestiges of former maritime livelihoods and spaces (Atkinson, 2007).

Culture-led regeneration in three maritime port cities: Hull, Genoa and Valencia

Maritime port cities notably feature among those cities where culture-led regeneration schemes have been implemented. Port city policy makers are interested in culture-led regeneration as a potential policy response to the changing relationships between ports and cities witnessed since the latter decades of the twentieth century (Evans, 2011; Hoyle, 2000), which contributed to the loss of traditional maritime functions, such as maritime trade, fishing, heavy industry, and port-related activities, and impacted in particular those cities that were vulnerable to other related "structural disadvantages", such as geographical peripherality and negative external images and reputations (Jonas et al., 2017).

In this section, we examine culture-led regeneration schemes, including large-scale cultural and sporting events, and local regeneration discourses and meanings circulating in three maritime port cities, namely Hull, Genoa and Valencia. Comparative cases studies were conducted using a mixed-method approach, consisting of a review of policy documents and press articles, semi-structured interviews[2] and non-participant observations in each city. The analysis of policy documents focused on strategic plans, mega-event programs, and urban regeneration schemes. The review of press articles examined a selection of online media items published on the websites of local, national and international newspapers. More than thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted across the three localities between December 2017 and June 2018 with policy makers and top civil servants (from city councils, regional councils, and local cultural institutions), city planners, event promoters and experts. Similarly, non-participant observations were undertaken in regenerated port/waterfront areas to explore symbolic features in the port-city landscape (e.g. public artworks, architecture, etc.) and how residents and visitors make sense of these spaces.

We start by exploring how culture-led regeneration has shaped the recent trajectory of urban development in each city before exploring how local discourses and meanings were renegotiated and manipulated as urban growth proponents confronted a new dynamic in port-city relations and its constituent urban publics and spaces.

Hull: UK City of Culture 2017

Kingston upon Hull is a port city in Northern England boasting a 700-year maritime tradition (Starkey et al., 2017). Since the 1970s, Hull's fishing industry, which despite not necessarily being the city's core maritime function used to employ a relatively large number of local people, has declined due to a range of factors (Byrne, 2015) including deindustrialization and fishing disputes with Iceland, which resulted in long-term

structural decline, and a tendency of policy makers in office in the 1980s and 1990s not to emphasize fishing narratives in urban and cultural policy (Atkinson et al., 2002). Since the 2010s a local business-led growth coalition has been involved in driving forward the City's renewable energy sector around a flagship project involving the redevelopment of Hull's abandoned Alexandra Dock into a facility – Green Port Hull – designed to attract a new generation of renewable energy industries. This coalition includes the City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Associated British Ports (ABP), Siemens Gamesa and the University of Hull. The renewable energy growth coalition developed an agreement that made it possible for Siemens Gamesa to locate a wind turbine manufacturing facility at Hull, thereby revitalizing the local maritime cluster and the local economy more generally.

Around the same time, a culture-led growth coalition comprised of quite different yet also overlapping interests was forged around the city's successful bid in 2013 for the status of UK City of Culture 2017. The City Council led a locally unprecedented network of actors, including public institutions such as the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS), the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership, the University of Hull and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), major companies such as ABP, Siemens Gamesa and Wykeland (a major local developer), and cultural organizations.

The 2017 UK City of Culture program extensively (re)engaged with Hull's maritime history and heritage. Local stories were mobilized to connect with the local community. For example, the successful opening event *Made in Hull*, consisting of light shows and

Figure 1. *Blade* (artist: Nayan Kulkarni) at Queen Victoria Square in Hull. Photo: Andy Jonas.

projections on iconic buildings, narrated the history of Hull as a port and – in contrast with past strategies – its fishing tradition. *Made in Hull* allowed event promoters to connect with Hull's fishing community, and to get local people engaged (Culture, Place and Policy Institute, 2018; Tommarchi, 2022). Similarly, The *Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca* (dir. Sarah Frankcom), a theater play about activism by local women against the working conditions of Hull-based trawlermen in the 1970s, arguably contributed to restoring fishing to mainstream narratives of Hull's port city culture. The program became a powerful device to counteract territorial stigmatization by circulating positive narratives about the city and challenging negative perceptions linked with Hull's status as a port city in irreversible economic decline (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2022).

Port redevelopment and the growing role of renewable energy at the Green Port Hull were spectacularized. A centerpiece of this was a cultural-*cum*-political gesture to an imagined alternative progressive future for Hull in the form of a temporary artwork called *Blade* (artist: Nayan Kulkarni) – a massive wind turbine blade manufactured in the nearby Siemens Gamesa blade production facility – which was secretly set up overnight in the central square and remained *in situ* for the first month of the City of Culture program (see Figure 1). Growth promoters of Hull's renewable energy sector were eager to use the "UK City of Culture" brand to fuel their own aspirations to transform Hull into the "UK Energy Capital", deploying this future-orientated interpretation of Hull's maritime port city culture. Following on from the City of Culture event, the £27.4 million heritage-led regeneration project *Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City* seeks to create a structured cultural offer by mobilizing a range of local maritime heritage assets, including the Maritime Museum.

Genoa: a port and cultural city

Since the late 1970s, Genoa, one of Italy's busiest ports, experienced a profound socio-economic decline, as the result of port restructuring and the decline of employment in state-owned heavy industry. From the 1990s to the mid-2000s, large-scale cultural events were used as catalysts to trigger and sustain the redevelopment of Porto Antico (the old harbor) and the regeneration of the city center. A number of actions – including smaller-scale regeneration schemes – contributed to implementing a long-term vision of urban regeneration (Gastaldi, 2012), which was the result of political consensus across different tiers of government. The core strategy was to reclaim Genoa's connection with the sea, and to brand the city as a cultural pole alongside its role as a maritime gateway, levering on the city's rich history and heritage. Initially opposed by part of the local Left-wing political establishment[3] and the port-dependent working class, such a strategy was later welcomed by diverse local groups and communities in anticipation of broader economic benefits for the city at large.

The culture-led redevelopment of Porto Antico – initiated with an institutional agreement in the mid-1980s among the city, provincial and regional councils, and the Port Authority – was boosted by the 1992 Columbus Expo celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of the Americas. The late 1980s and early 1990s, in line with other schemes of the time, witnessed the reconversion of a vast portion of the harbor into a leisure waterfront, which since then has been managed by the company Porto Antico Spa. Subsequent cultural and political events, namely the much-opposed 2001 G8 summit and the European Capital

Figure 2. Bigo in Genoa's old harbor. Photo: Enrico Tommarchi.

of Culture 2004, led to additional regeneration actions. These efforts focused on the restoration of heritage buildings in the city center (Jones, 2020) and on creating a stronger connection between the city center and the old harbor.

The experience of Genoa shows the power of public sector-led growth coalitions operating behind mega events in terms of attracting public resources, as local institutional actors were "very good at lobbying" to get extra money from central government after the end of the era of broad involvement of the state in the local economy (expert 2, interview, June 2018, authors' translation). Such publicly-led regeneration effort attempted to restore the traditional, "symbiotic" socio-spatial and cultural relationship between the city and its seafront, which had been lost with the development of the modern port and its subsequent decline. Cultural facilities built for the 1992 Columbus Expo and the European Capital of Culture 2004 connected with Genoa's port city culture, such as the crane-inspired structure known as Bigo (Figure 2) and the Galata Maritime Museum.

In terms of cultural offer, Porto Antico initially displayed some of the recurrent features visible in similar schemes across port cities, such as the Aquarium (Jauhiainen, 1995), which did not substantially engage with Genoa's port city culture. However, since 2004, the Maritime Museum complex has provided a high-profile cultural offer by engaging more extensively with the city's maritime history and heritage (including the Museum of Migration and the Open Air Museum).

Valencia: designing a new port city culture

Culture-led urban regeneration policies began to be implemented in the 1980s in Valencia, the third-largest city in Spain,[4] by the then Socialist local and regional governments, with the gradual transformation of the dry bed of the River Túria into a linear park including cultural facilities such as the iconic City of Arts and Sciences. Under

subsequent Conservative local and regional governments, local policy makers shifted the focus of cultural urban policies towards city branding, to project Valencia as a global tourist destination. High-profile, international sporting events were a key component of this strategy. A united growth coalition emerged around the two tiers of local government, at the time led by the Conservative People's Party, the Port Authority, and private event promoters Société Nautique de Genève and Formula One Group. The formation of this coalition led to the city securing the America's Cup sailing contest in 2007 and 2010, and the Formula One European Grand Prix between 2008 and 2012.

The coalition behind the America's Cup made it possible to build political consensus around the event and to allocate 444 million Euros (Marrades, 2018, p. 192) in order to transform parts of the historic harbor ahead of 2007, including major interventions such as a new exit channel to separate the leisure harbor from the commercial port (Figure 3).

New facilities such as a superyacht marina contributed to creating an image of the city at odds with its port city culture, and were designed to actively reframe the city's marine and maritime image. The Formula One European Grand Prix made use of a temporary track that was purposefully built along the redeveloped harbor, and in part within the port estate. The event costed an overall 183 million Euros (see Rius-Ulldemolins & Gisbert, 2019, p. 387). Both regeneration schemes exemplify how growth elites have sought to maximize profits generated through the real estate sector (Sorribes i Monrabal, 2015):

> In the Spanish case, and Valencia is an extreme example, culture has become an empty shell, an excuse for and a way to legitimize urban transformation linked with real estate interests and corruption [*sic.*]. Ports are very appealing sites to the elites, to tourism interests, to interest of economic growth, to many things but to functions and amenities for residents. (Expert 2, interview, May 2018, authors' translation)

In 2015, a local financial crisis sparked in part by the aforementioned events was one of the factors contributing to the first electoral defeat of the People's Party since 1991,

Figure 3. New exit channel in Valencia's port, and Veles e Vents building. Photo: Enrico Tommarchi.

which led to the demise of the growth coalition behind the whole process. Culture-led urban regeneration in Valencia after 2015 appears to be following a different approach. An example is the proposed multi-venue Museu de la Mar, which entails the restoration of maritime heritage assets such as the historic shipyards, and will be celebrating the city's maritime history and identity. In addition, La Marina de València (the former Consorcio 2007, originally established as the delivery company for the America's Cup and now responsible for managing the marina) directly delivers small-scale cultural activities and events in the leisure harbor. These policies appear to be pursuing an "emotional and physical reconciliation with the city" (event team member, interview, June 2018), attempting to compensate for the negative impacts of the urban regeneration policies implemented between the 1990s and early 2010s.

Refashioning local discourses and meanings through culture-led regeneration in maritime port cities

The three examples provide a glimpse of how local growth coalitions are increasingly keen on engaging with, and reframing, urban regeneration policies to maximize the impacts of culture-led regeneration schemes. In the next sections we look at the evolving discourses of culture-led regeneration in these cities, the resulting struggles around meanings, and the new discourses that are emerging on the basis of the negotiation and internalization of these schemes within growth-motivated regeneration discourses.

Discourses of culture-led regeneration in port cities

It is clear in all three examples that certain aspects of local port city cultures and maritime heritage are being mobilized by local growth coalitions within culture-led regeneration schemes with the aim of reframing or constructing the image of port and waterfront areas in a way that it becomes more easily saleable (Dovey, 2005; Kowalewski, 2021). twenty-first century cultural policies and culture-led regeneration schemes in port towns and cities attempt to engage more closely with local stories to generate new place narratives, subtly framing new discourses and meanings which serve economic growth (see for example Avni, 2017; Johnsen, 2009). In other words, these schemes and accompanying narratives can be interpreted as being more "hybridized" in relation to local settings than their 1980s equivalents were.

Hull is a good example of the growing relevance of the selective incorporation of maritime heritage in regeneration discourse and city branding. As suggested by a local planner:

> I wouldn't necessarily say that some of the early projects that we did used the maritime focus in achieving [regeneration]. It was more a case of "there's a problem here, we need to tackle it, we'll do this", whereas some of the late projects now are very much maritime focused. I think it has more to do with place branding and Hull's little niche as the only maritime city within Yorkshire. (City planner, interview, February 2018)

Event promoters attempted to design the UK City of Culture 2017 program explicitly seeking to engage with residents, rather than implementing a program of generalist cultural activity and fine arts (which characterized many similar cultural festivals in the past, such as the first rounds of the European City of Culture):

Because art and culture on one level can be conceived as very highbrow – so it's classical music, it's ballet, it's things that lots of people enjoy – but actually in more working-class cities like Hull it's not the natural environment for people to attend [*sic.*]. We had some of that, because you want to mix, but actually [the UK City of Culture 2017] was about engaging communities. (Policy maker, interview, February 2018)

The event's volunteer program – a recurrent feature of City of Culture events – sought to enroll citizens in a wider vision of culture-led urban change:

There was a volunteer from every street in the city. And that was very calculated. Because actually we wanted, and the City of Culture company wanted a champion for City of Culture and what we offer in every street. (Policy maker, interview, February 2018)

As a result, fishing narratives that had been swept "under the carpet" as a shadowy aspect of the city's maritime heritage became "prominent" in 2017 (expert, interview, February 2018), levering on the appetite for local stories and heritage, even though fishing was no longer such central an aspect of the local economy and the city's maritime heritage. Only after 2017 did maritime heritage become a key feature of regeneration strategies, as in the case of the *Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City* project.

The experience of Genoa provides an example of how redeveloped port areas are often understood as indissolubly linked to leisure. The (English) term "waterfront" has increasingly been used by senior officers from the City Council and the Port Authority, as well as by local planners, to refer to the redeveloped sections of Porto Antico, and their cultural and leisure amenities (local council officer, interview, June 2018; port authority officer 1, 2 and 3, interview, June 2018). Nonetheless, the extensive transformation of the old harbor did attempt to retain as much as possible of the local port cityscape and culture, not least because its distinctiveness could serve economic growth:

I think these transformations focus on maritime culture, on Genoa's history as a maritime city and so on, because they are the most distinctive and thus commodifiable [aspects]. [*sic.*] They do so in the logic, let's say, [of] "we are going to sell this better". (Expert 3, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

This was particularly the case of the transformation of the old harbor between the late 1980s and 1992. However, culture-led regeneration associated with the European Capital of Culture 2004 displayed a different fundamental discourse around the reconnection of existing cultural assets (see also Jones, 2020) to mobilize the potential of the area:

2004 was different because the idea [*sic.*] was not to implement new interventions and infrastructure, but rather to reconnect a number of [existing] things together. (Policy maker, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

In Valencia, the focus of regeneration was instead on exploiting the maritime feel of certain seafront districts, such as Grau[5], to boost economic growth. This approach appears to be an example of Phelps and Miao's (2020) idea of urban speculation as a mode of governance, where growth coalitions and local governments themselves strive to maximize revenues from real estate assets. The effort to attract international sporting events to Valencia precisely served this purpose. Indeed, in Valencia the growth coalition behind the Formula One Grand Prix made use of a range of discursive tactics to stifle opposition against the event. As suggested by a local expert, "they used these mega events in order to generate a social and cultural hegemony [and] deactivated all the

antibodies [*sic.*] that could have existed" (expert 2, interview, May 2018, authors' translation). Tarazona Vento (2017, p. 79) noted that the local and regional governments claimed that the event would be "good for the Valencian people as a whole", and therefore that those opposing the event were "un-Valencians".

Struggles around local meanings

Little research has been undertaken to investigate how the promoters of culture-led regeneration act on the local "port city culture" (as understood by Hein et al., 2021) here understood to be the assemblage of local values, meanings and mindsets linked to the maritime history of these places. Regeneration processes often alter the symbolic relationships between ports and cities, the way in which port cities are represented, and their living and working conditions (Kokot, 2008, p. 7), as well as port cityscapes (as defined by Hein, 2011).

The case of Hull provides examples of different forms of cultural remaritimization, i.e. a regained relevance of meaningful aspects of local port city culture or maritime heritage, or the crafting of new, artificial ones (Tommarchi, 2021). The *Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City* project for instance aims at restoring a number of maritime heritage assets and putting the local port city culture at the center of the city's cultural offer, and arguably at "rebalancing" local maritime narratives after they overly focused on fishing in 2017 (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2020). *Blade* is another example, as the event boldly introduced the local community to wind turbine manufacturing as part of the local port city culture (port company officer, interview, December 2017), in the process refashioning Hull's port image to incorporate renewable energy and symbolically aligning culture-led regeneration with a new urban growth agenda.

In the case of Genoa, culture-led regeneration became a means for a "positive" cultural remaritimization of a port city that had seemingly lost contact with both its maritime nature and proximity to the sea:

> [19]92 demonstrated that this transformation was possible. [*sic.*] Genoa that got back its view of the port … Genoa that restarted from those aspects of its identity. [*sic.*] A city linked to the sea that had nonetheless lost its view of the sea. This is the paradox. [*sic.*] the rediscovery of port cityscapes is really important, a really powerful thing. (Expert 2, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

Such a process of rediscovery also involved maritime heritage assets, celebrating the city's past and its identity as a maritime port city:

> We have rediscovered a dimension – a materiality indeed – of [port] assets that was not visible before. They had become unknown, really. From this point of view, this process of acknowledgment of the past was positive. (Expert 1, interview, May 2018, authors' translation)

> The former Magazzini del Cotone [cotton warehouses], these cranes, the restoration of these buildings, which is very much about identity, and works a lot on this theme of remembering the work taking place in the port, a hard kind of work … This is very much there [in the redeveloped old harbor]. (Expert 2, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

However, this process entailed to some extent the commodification and standardization of urban space that is visible in many "global" urban waterfronts and shaped by

both their local dependence and their appeal to global capital (e.g. Avni & Teschner, 2019; Chang & Huang, 2011; Desfor & Laidley, 2011; Muñoz, 2015):

> There is a McDonald's even in the old harbor … Yes, it got even there. But there is a very strong resistance [against globalizing forces]. (Expert 1, interview, May 2018, authors' translation)

Commodification and standardization of the old harbor were also fueled by the local manifestation of structural processes of touristification:

> Yes, some of this commercial homogenization, some of this homogenization of consumption, some of these tourists who do [in the old harbor] what they do anywhere else, some of this touristification which we were not accustomed to [is visible]. (Expert 2, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

> This touristification has produced even [in the old harbor] some extent of homogenization. [Some say] that the old harbor resembles more and more a shopping center. And [sic.] Porto Antico Spa works like an operator that, for budget reasons, lets these spaces following very much commercial logics. (Expert 2, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

The case of Valencia shows how cultural remaritimization can override existing local meanings. The city's branding strategy in the 1990s and 2000s did not build on local history and heritage, as an extreme version of established models of culture-led regeneration. It was a top-down attempt to "create" an image of the city associated with its proximity to the sea, "a will […] to impose to the Valencia that was facing the sea a certain manner to be by the sea" (event team member, interview, June 2018).

> In the case of Valencia, I think it was clear in the redevelopment of the old harbor in the area of the marina [sic.] [that this area] was disfigured, I think. If not permanently, [its redevelopment] disfigured its historic heritage, that of a mercantile, a fishing port. It shifted towards an area oriented to external projection, branding, business. (Expert 2, interview, May 2018, authors' translation)

Discussion: the implications of newly emergent discourses and meaning for the future of culture-led urban regeneration

The last two decades have witnessed new discourses and meanings emerging around culture-led urban regeneration, which are manifested to a greater or lesser degree across the three localities examined here. Recent studies point out that the attention of policy makers in smaller European cities was refocused on the regenerative potential of smaller-scale cultural regeneration schemes such as City/Capital of Culture programs (Di Vita & Wilson, 2020; Jones, 2020; Jones & Ponzini, 2018).[6] A similar downscaling in terms of ambitions can be observed in culture-led regeneration processes, where the large-scale schemes implemented since the 1980s gradually gave way to smaller-scale projects, which increasingly leverage investment not only around project-by-project program activities and public-private partnerships, but also through symbolic aspects and "softer" regeneration schemes.

In Hull, the UK City of Culture 2017 arguably paved the way for the *Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City* project in a number of ways, including stronger relationships with

national funders (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2020). Nonetheless, one could argue that, due to the way in which the event engaged with and increased awareness of local maritime heritage, there are greater expectations for socially sustainable regeneration strategies to engage, respectfully, with the city's maritime history and its undervalued heritage assets. In Genoa, a "retreat" from cultural mega events as catalysts for local development is visible. The Left-wing local government entering office in 2007 as a result of political reshuffle promoted the idea of "discontinuity" of cultural urban policies and departed from the model of culture and regeneration pursued in the previous years (Gastaldi, 2012; expert 2, interview, June 2018; port actor 2, interview, June 2018; port actor 3, interview, June 2018). A similar detachment from 1990s and early 2000s policies is visible in the policy of the local government in office since 2017 (a coalition including members of the populist Northern League and independent parties). Mega events are considered as a thing "of the past" by policy makers (expert 1, interview, June 2018, authors' translation), who are now more interested in smaller-scale events that they perceived as more "suitable" considering the city's profile. This different view, nonetheless, has meant a return to standalone regeneration schemes not necessarily streamlined around a strategic vision (Jones, 2022). However, what is also emerging from Genoa's experience is an evolving meaning attributed to the port. Viewpoints such as those at Magazzini del Cotone now make it possible for residents and visitors to catch a glimpse of the commercial port from afar. These viewpoints are becoming increasingly popular, suggesting that visual and aesthetic elements of modern working ports are being internalized as an aspect of the local port city culture and port cityscape:

> If one walks along the green space in Prà [*sic.*] at some point they will see this barrier, this mountain that hides the port. And the idea is "the more we hide that bad and ugly thing, the better we feel". This doesn't happen anymore. Those who go to Magazzini del Cotone at night can see the lights of port activities in the terminal, as something that is part of the beauty of the city. The cultural change is that. (Expert 3, interview, June 2018, authors' translation)

In Valencia, the anti-establishment local government in office since 2015 has departed markedly from the model of regeneration focused on aggressive city branding and international visibility that had been pursued in particular in the previous decade. Perhaps levering on a sense of "rejection" of mega events that has developed across the local population (city planner, interview, May 2018, authors' translation), current policies display a certain refusal of the previous approach (city planner, interview, May 2018; expert 1, interview, May 2018), visible for example in the rejection of plans to build a permanent Ferris wheel in the harbor (Levante, 2020), and the attempt to (re)connect with the city's history and heritage whilst addressing social and cultural needs, as in the case of the aforementioned Museu de la Mar.

Conclusions

The context in which culture-led urban regeneration now operates, and consequently, the strategies behind these processes, are arguably changing in the twenty-first century. As noted by Miles (2020, p. 217), "the role of culture in regeneration has effectively moved on to a new generation, and one which in some senses is even more symbolic, and thus arguably divisive, than its predecessor". It would be too simplistic to interpret these processes merely within a framework of neo-liberal economic

restructuring as has frequently happened since their emergence in the 1980s. As Pratt (2011, p. 129) has argued, " … creativity is relative and situational, not universal or independent. Moreover, the relationship with liberalism is far more complex and nuanced that it is commonly characterised".

With these considerations in mind, this paper has examined emerging discourses and meanings mobilized within culture-led regeneration processes, with a focus on European maritime port cities. Using the conceptual lens of urban growth politics, ideologies and discourses, it has shown how – as a result of changing socio-economic and political settings – these undertakings are more and more a matter of how growth coalitions engage with, and manipulate, local discourses and meanings, thereby striving to create consensus around culture-led regeneration projects and initiatives.

The three maritime port city examples explored in this paper show how assumptions prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s that culture-led regeneration was based on the assumed regenerative potential of the provision of generalist cultural and leisure facilities and activities have lately given way to new hybrid regeneration models. These models encompass attempts to mobilize established meanings (e.g. narratives associated with a former fishing industry) or generate new ones (e.g. around maritime heritage and renewable energy). The example of Hull shows how growth coalitions mobilized a major cultural event, shaping their strategies and discourses to connect with local working-class communities across the city, thereby communicating new economic and policy discourses such as that of the renewable energy port city. The experience of Genoa shows how the symbolic reconnection between the city and its historic harbor became a meaning-restoring goal that made it possible to streamline the efforts of local actors. Valencia is an example of how growth coalitions may pursue the creation – and possibly imposition – of new meanings aligned with their own political and economic agenda, but also of how such projects often fail because of a lack of connection to locally circulating existing discourses and meanings. As such, the process of culture-led urban regeneration should be problematized not so much as a specific case of urban policy failure but as a nuanced and contested process that often plays on existing spatial differences and inequalities yet also opens up possibilities for envisioning alternative urban futures (cf. Temenos & Lauermann, 2020).

At the same time, growth-related ideologies and practices are in turn molded and modified, drawing upon a kind of "pseudo-community" (Cox, 1999) in which cultural activities serve to fill a void in local meaning arising from the loss of traditional jobs and livelihoods associated with maritime port cities. In such cities, at issue is the very substance of port-city relations whose cultural roots and values are deeply embedded in the local populace and urban spaces. It takes craft and skill for growth proponents to touch the right buttons as regards the receptiveness of local publics to cultural regeneration schemes that may profoundly disrupt the uses and meanings of urban space.

Today, however, the context for culture-led regeneration and its legacy exposes greater uncertainties. Future research is needed to explore the impacts of the recent "crises", including the legacy of COVID-19 and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, as well as to provide new frameworks to analyze these processes and their local resonance in much more uncertain times (Tommarchi, 2022). Cultural consumption and leisure remain the pillars sustaining the regenerative effects of these schemes, despite being activities that potentially fewer urban residents are likely to engage with or being able to afford.

This may push local growth coalitions to deploy cultural regeneration schemes in more spatially selective ways and reframe their associated discursive and meaning-making strategies even further in order to increase their chances of success.

Notes

1. Maritime port cities are understood as port cities where seaborne trade, along with maritime-related industries, are crucial to the local economy, as opposed for instance to cities where naval ports are located.
2. The research involving human participants was approved by the Faculty Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts, Cultures and Education of the University of Hull.
3. In the 1980s, a local politician dismissed this emerging consumption-oriented regeneration strategy as aimed at transforming Genoa into a "city of waitpersons", and therefore "betraying" maritime workers (Tommarchi, 2022).
4. Source: Eurostat, 2022.
5. Valencia has historically been perceived as a port city "giving its back to the sea" (city planner, interview, May 2018; port actor, interview, May 2018; expert 1, interview, May 2018; event team member, interview, June 2018; policy maker, interview, May 2018).
6. For example, August 2021 heralded a record number of bidders for the UK City of Culture 2025 title (BBC, 2021), which was eventually awarded to Bradford. Port towns and cities such as Dundee, Newport and Southampton featured among the bidders.

Data availability statement

No data is available, as participants did not give consent for information to be publicly available.

Research ethics and consent

Participants in this study have given their written informed consent to be interviewed. Procedures for data collection and management, ensuring anonymity, withdrawal and use of data were explained ahead of the interviews. Consent was given to record interviews, produce electronic transcripts, and publish the findings, provided that anonymity was ensured at all times.

ORCID

Enrico Tommarchi http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4681-4141
Andrew E. G. Jonas http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2402-4130

References

Atkinson, D. (2007). Kitsch geographies and the everyday spaces of social memory. *Environment and Planning A*, *39*(3), 521–540. https://doi.org/10.1068/a3866

Atkinson, D., Cooke, D., & Spooner, D. (2002). Tales from the Riverbank: Place-marketing and Maritime Heritages. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *8*(1), 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250220119910

Avni, N. (2017). So long, and thanks for all the fish?' Examining the built and cultural heritage of the Jaffa port redevelopment. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *23*(8), 679–694. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1317647

Avni, N., & Teschner, N. (2019). Urban waterfronts: Contemporary streams of planning conflicts. *Journal of Planning Literature*, *34*(4), 408–420. https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412219850891

Bailey, C., Miles, S., & Stark, P. (2004). Culture-led urban regeneration and the revitalisation of identities in Newcastle, Gateshead and the North East of England. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *10*(1), 47–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/1028663042000212328

BBC. (2021, August 20). Record number of bids for UK City of Culture 2025. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-58272630.

Bianchini, F. (1993). Culture, conflict and cities: Issues and prospects for the 1990s. In F. Bianchini, & M. Parkinson (Eds.), *Cultural policy and urban regeneration: The west European experience* (pp. 199–213). Manchester Press.

Bianchini, F., & Parkinson, M. (1993). *Cultural policy and urban regeneration: The west European experience*. Manchester Press.

Boland, P. (2010). Capital of Culture – You must be having a laugh! Challenging the official rhetoric of Liverpool as the 2008 European cultural capital. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *11*(7), 627–645. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2010.508562

Boyle, M. (1999). Growth machines and propaganda projects: A review of readings of the role of civic boosterism in the politics of local economic development. In A. E. G. Jonas, & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The urban growth machine. Critical perspectives two decades later* (pp. 55–70). State University of New York Press.

Byrne, J. (2015). After the trawl: Memory and afterlife in the wake of Hull's distant-water fishing industry. *The International Journal of Maritime History*, *27*(4), 816–822. https://doi.org/10.1177/0843871415610281

Chang, T. C., & Huang, S. (2011). Reclaiming the City: Waterfront development in Singapore. *Urban Studies*, *48*(10), 2085–2100. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010382677

Collins, T. (2016). Urban civic pride and the new localism. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *41*, 175–186. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12113

Cox, K. R. (1993). The local and the global in the new urban politics: A critical view. *Environment and Planning D*, *11*, 433–448. https://doi.org/10.1068/d110433

Cox, K. R. (1999). Ideology and the growth coalition. In A. E. G. Jonas, & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The urban growth machine. Critical perspectives two decades later* (pp. 21–36). State University of New York Press.

Cox, K. R. (2017). Revisiting 'the city as a growth machine'. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, *10*, 391–405. https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsx011

Cox, K. R., & Mair, A. (1988). Locality and community in the politics of local economic development. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *78*(2), 307–325. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1988.tb00209.x

Culture, Place and Policy Institute. (2018). *Cultural transformations: The impacts of Hull UK City of Culture 2017. Preliminary outcomes evaluation*. University of Hull.

De Frantz, M. (2013). Culture-led urban regeneration: The discursive politics of institutional change. In M. E. Leary, & J. McCarthy (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to urban regeneration* (pp. 526–535). Routledge.

Degen, M., & García, M. (2012). The transformation of the 'Barcelona Model': An analysis of culture, urban regeneration and governance. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *36*(5), 1022–1038. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01152.x

Delaney, K. J., & Eckstein, R. (2003). *Public dollars, private stadiums: The battle over building sports stadiums*. Rutgers University Press.

Desfor, G., & Laidley, J. (2011). Introduction: Fixity and flow of urban waterfront change. In G. Desfor, J. Laidley, Q. Stevens, & D. Schubert (Eds.), *transforming urban waterfronts. Fixity and flow* (pp. 1–13). Routledge.

Di Vita, S., & Wilson, M. (Eds.). (2020). *Planning and managing smaller events: Downsizing the urban spectacle*. Routledge.

Dovey, K. (2005). *Fluid city. Transforming Melbourne's urban waterfront*. University of New South Wales Press.

Ealham, C. (2005). An imagined geography: Ideology, urban space, and protest in the creation of Barcelona's Chinatown, c.1835–1936. *International Review of Social History*, *50*, 373–397. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859005002154

Evans, G. L. (2011). Cities of culture and the regeneration game. *London Journal of Tourism, Sport and Creative Industries*, *6*, 5–18.

Evans, G., & Shaw, P. (2004). The contribution of culture to regeneration in the UK: A review of evidence. *LondonMet*.

García, B. (2004). Cultural policy and urban regeneration in western European cities: Lessons from experience, prospects for the future. *Local Economy*, *19*(4), 312–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/0269094042000286828

García, B., Melville, R., & Cox, T. (2010). *Creating an impact: Liverpool's experience as European Capital of Culture. Impact 08*. University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University.

Gastaldi, F. (2012). Grandi eventi e rigenerazione urbana negli anni della grande trasformazione di Genova: 1992–2004. *Territorio Della Ricerca Su Insediamenti e Ambiente*, *9*, 23–35. https://doi.org/10.6092/2281-4574/1254

Gray, N. (2018). Neither Shoreditch nor Manhattan: Post-politics, "soft austerity urbanism" and real abstraction in Glasgow North. *Area*, *50*(1), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12299

Grenville, J. (2017). Ontological security in a post-crash world – A tale of two Yorkshire cities. *Heritage and Society*, *8*(1), 43–59. https://doi.org/10.1179/2159032X15Z.00000000037

Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler*, *70*(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.1989.11879583

Hein, C. (2011). Port cityscapes. A networked analysis of the built environment. In C. Hein (Ed.), *Port cities. Dynamic landscapes and global networks* (pp. 1–23). Routledge.

Hein, C., Luning, S., & van de Laar, P. (2021). Port city cultures, values, and maritime mindsets: Defining what makes port cities special. *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes*, *4*, 7–20. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/13378

Hoyle, B. (2000). Global and local change on the port–city waterfront. *The Geographical Review*, *90*(3), 395–417. https://doi.org/10.2307/3250860

Jauhiainen, J. S. (1995). Waterfront redevelopment and urban policy: The case of Barcelona, Cardiff and Genoa. *European Planning Studies*, *3*(1), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654319508720287

Johnsen, B. E. (2009). What a maritime history! The uses of maritime history in summer festivals in southern Norway. *Journal of Tourism History*, *1*(2), 113–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/17551820902823259

Jonas, A. E. G., Miller, B., Ward, K., & Wilson, D. (2018). Spaces of urban politics: An introduction. In K. Ward, A. E. G. Jonas, B. Miller, & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook on spaces of urban politics* (pp. 1–10). Routledge.

Jonas, A. E. G., & Wilson, D. (1999). The city as a growth machine: Critical reflections two decades later. In A. E. G. Jonas, & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The urban growth machine. Critical perspectives two decades later* (pp. 3–18). State University of New York Press.

Jonas, A. E. G., Wurzel, R. K. W., Monaghan, E., & Osthorst, W. (2017). Climate change, the green economy and reimagining the city: The case of structurally disadvantaged European maritime port cities. *Die Erde*, *148*, 197–2011. https://doi.org/10.12854/ERDE-148-49

Jones, Z. M. (2020). *Cultural mega-events: Opportunities and risks for heritage cities*. Routledge.

Jones, Z. M. (2022). Short-term gains and long-term challenges to learning from mega-event planning in the city of Genoa. *European Planning Studies*, *30*(3), 437–456. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1959720

Jones, Z. M., & Ponzini, D. (2018). Mega-events and the preservation of urban heritage: Literature gaps, potential overlaps, and a call for further research. *Journal of Planning Literature*, *33*(4), 433–450. https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412218779603

Kallin, H., & Slater, T. (2014). Activating territorial stigma: Gentrifying marginality on Edinburgh's periphery. *Environment and Planning A*, *46*, 1351–1368. https://doi.org/10.1068/a45634

Kokot, W. (2008). Port cities as areas of transition – Comparative ethnographic research. In W. Kokot, K. Wildner, & A. Wonneberger (Eds.), *Port cities as areas of transition: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 7–24). Transcript Verlag.

Kowalewski, M. (2021). Images and spaces of port cities in transition. *Space and Culture*, *24*(1), 53–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331218783940

Levante. (2020, February 17). Ribó rechaza la noria gigante por su deseo de que la Marina sea para las personas. *Levante*. https://www.levante-emv.com/valencia/2020/02/17/ribo-rechaza-noria-gigante-deseo/1979104.html.

Logan, J. R., & Molotch, H. (1987). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. University of California Press.

MacLeod, G. (2011). Urban politics reconsidered: Growth machine to post-democratic city? *Urban Studies*, *48*(12), 2629–2660. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098011415715

Markusen, A. (2006). Urban development and the politics of a creative class: Evidence from the study of artists. *Environment and Planning A*, *38*(10), 1921–1940. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38179

Marrades, R. (2018). La Marina de València: La apropiación ciudadana y la activación productiva del frente marítimo de la ciudad. In N. Baron, & J. Romero (Eds.), *Cultura territorial e innovación social. ¿Hacia un nuevo modelo metropolitano en Europa del sur?* (pp. 193–204). Universitat de València.

McCann, E. (2002). The cultural politics of local economic development: Meaning-making, place-making, and the urban policy process. *Geoforum*, *33*, 385–398. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(02)00007-6

McLean, H. E. (2014). Cracks in the creative city: The contradictions of community arts practice. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *38*(6), 2156–2173. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12168

Miles, M. (2005). Interruptions: Testing the rhetoric of culturally led urban development. *Urban Studies*, *42*(5–6), 889–911. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107375

Miles, S. (2020). Consuming culture-led regeneration: The rise and fall of the democratic urban experience. *Space and Polity*, *24*(2), 210–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2020.1775573

Miles, S., & Paddison, R. (2005). Introduction: The rise and rise of culture-led urban regeneration. *Urban Studies*, *42*(5-6), 833–839. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107508

Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Towards a political economy of place. *American Journal of Sociology*, *82*(2), 309–332. https://doi.org/10.1086/226311

Mould, O. (2017). *Urban subversion and the creative city*. Routledge.

Muñoz, F. (2015). Olympic urbanism and Olympic villages: Planning strategies in Olympic host cities, London 1908 to London 2012. *The Sociological Review*, *54*, 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2006.00660.x

NION, Brand Hamburg (Initiative Not in Our Name, Marke Hamburg). (2010). Not in our name! Jamming the gentrification machine: A manifesto. *City*, *14*(3), 323–325. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2010.482344

Paton, K. (2018). Beyond legacy: Backstage stigmatisation and 'trickle-up' politics of urban regeneration. *The Sociological Review Monographs*, *66*(4), 919–934. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118777449

Peck, J. (2012). Austerity urbanism American cities under extreme economy. *City*, *16*(6), 626–655. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.734071

Phelps, N. A., & Miao, J. T. (2020). Varieties of urban entrepreneurialism. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, *10*(3), 304–321. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820619890438

Pratt, A. C. (2011). The cultural contradictions of the creative city. *City, Culture and Society*, *2*(3), 123–130. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2011.08.002

Rice, G. (2009). Actually existing neoliberalism in Glasgow: The case of Buchanan Galleries. *Urban Research & Practice*, *2*(2), 189–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535060902979089

Rius-Ulldemolins, J., & Gisbert, V. (2019). The costs of putting Valencia on the map: The hidden side of regional entrepreneurialism, 'creative city' and strategic projects. *European Planning Studies*, *27*(2), 377–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2018.1547367

Short, J. R. (1999). Urban imagineers: Boosterism and the representation of cities. In A. E. G. Jonas, & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The urban growth machine: Critical perspectives two decades later* (pp. 37–54). State University of New York Press.

Sorribes i Monrabal, J. (2015). *Valencia 1940–2014: Construcción y destrucción de la ciudad*. Universitat de València.

Starkey, D. J., Atkinson, D., McDonagh, B., McKeon, S., & Salter, E. (2017). *Hull, culture, history, place*. Liverpool University Press.

Tarazona Vento, A. (2017). Mega-project meltdown: Post-politics, neoliberal urban regeneration and Valencia's fiscal crisis. *Urban Studies*, *54*(1), 68–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015625025

Temenos, C., & Lauermann, J. (2020). The urban politics of policy failure. *Urban Geography*, *41*(9), 1109–1118. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1827194

Tommarchi, E. (2021). (Re-)generating symbolic port-city links: Urban regeneration and the cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation of European port cities. *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes*, *4*, 59–75. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/12089

Tommarchi, E. (2022). *European port cities and urban regeneration. Exploring cultural and sporting mega events at the water's edge*. Routledge.

Tommarchi, E., & Bianchini, F. (2020). Hull UK City of Culture 2017. In D. Ponzini, F. Bianchini, J.-N. Georgi-Tzortzi, & J. Sanetra-Szeliga (Eds.), *Mega-events and heritage: The experience of five European cities* (pp. 184–254). International Cultural Centre.

Tommarchi, E., & Bianchini, F. (2022). A heritage-inspired cultural mega event in a stigmatised city: Hull UK City of Culture 2017. *European Planning Studies*, *30*(3), 478–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1959722

Wilson, D. (2004). Toward a contingent urban neoliberalism. *Urban Geography*, *25*(8), 771–783. https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.25.8.771

Wilson, D. (2007). *Cities and race: America's New Black Ghetto*. Routledge.

Wilson, D., & Grammenos, D. (2005). Gentrification, discourse, and the body: Chicago's Humboldt Park. *Environment and Planning D*, *23*, 295–312. https://doi.org/10.1068/d0203