

# Why Cities Need to be Eventful

*In recent years, culture has taken on a more instrumental meaning in cities. It now represents the ideas and practices, sites and symbols, of what has been called the 'symbolic economy', i.e., the process through which wealth is created from cultural activities, including art, music, dance, crafts, museums, exhibitions, sports and creative design in various fields. This new concept of culture increasingly shapes city strategies in the face of both global competition and local tensions.*

(Zukin, 2004:3)

*Festivals influence people's idea of a city. They provide many points of identification and contribute to the birth of non-mainstream urban identities. They consolidate subcultures and create togetherness among amateurs of a common field. At their best festivals culminate in a 'festival moment', creating a momentum born of dramaturgical excellence and high quality content, a powerful experience bringing together audience and festival performers and organisers.*

(Silvanto & Hellman, 2005:6)

## THE DESIRE FOR EVENTFULNESS

Cities of today face two choices. Either they develop to meet the challenges created by the pace of global change, or they resist the impulse for transformation and stagnate. At a time when economic systems are no longer predictable, in order to remain competitive, cities are turning to strategies that focus on their own innate resources – their histories, spaces, creative energy and talents. Pressures of globalization and problems caused by economic restructuring, as well as the need to establish new civic identities have prompted cities to utilize ‘cultural’ assets and resources in an attempt to become distinctive, to regenerate the urban fabric and to create economic, social and cultural prosperity. The creation and promotion of events such as festivals, shows, exhibitions, fairs and championships have become a critical component of urban development strategy across the globe. No city believes it is too small or too complex to enter the market of planning and producing events.

Entire cities have transformed themselves into major stages for a continual stream of events, which can lead eventually to a ‘festivalization’ of the city. With the growth of the ‘symbolic economy’ (Lash & Urry, 1994; Zukin, 1995) and the ‘experience economy’ (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), culture has become an increasingly important means of consuming the city (Ritzer, 1999). The growing prominence of events has led some cities to promote themselves as ‘eventful cities’. Melbourne labels itself as ‘the world’s event city’ (2008), while Seoul claims to be ‘one of the most eventful cities of the world’ (2006), while at the same time the Hong Kong Government (2006) has also been ‘working to make Hong Kong one of the most eventful cities in the world’. Other cities make slightly less global claims, but focus on their competitive place in an increasingly crowded market for national events, such as Nevada’s Reno-Tahoe Territory (2006) that profiles itself as the ‘Most Eventful City in America’. Durban claims it is ‘Africa’s premier sporting and events destination’ (Mlaba, 2009). Cities that have not yet become eventful are also making efforts to enter or reinforce their place in the urban events market, with initiatives such

as the 'Singapore Roars! Roadshow' organized by the Singapore Tourist Board in 2003, which had a role in 'reinforcing the image of Singapore as a vibrant, sophisticated and eventful city that has something to offer to all Malaysians.' (Asia Travel Tips, 2006). Coventry (UK) has an 'Eventful City' programme which 'entertains visitors throughout the year in a way that reflects the enthusiasm of its community and the city's willingness to give a warm welcome to people from far and near' (City of Coventry, 2006). Other cities already calling themselves 'eventful', often through their promotion as 'festival cities', include Adelaide, Auckland, Bremen, Cardiff, Dubai, Edinburgh, Maastricht, Manchester, Muskogee, New Orleans, Puerto Vallarta, Regensburg, Reykjavik, Wellington and York.

The slogan 'festival city' or 'city of festivals' has become a popular choice as part of a city's brand image. Edmonton refers to itself as 'Canada's Festivals City', setting itself in competition with Montreal and Quebec City that define themselves in similar terms. Milwaukee and Sacramento are two American cities, along with some 30 others, where being 'cities of festivals' has become a prime element of their destination marketing throughout the year. Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city, similarly tries to gain national and international standing by communicating itself as a festival centre. The world status of Edinburgh is claimed on the official website of the Edinburgh Festivals: 'With the stunning Hogmanay celebrations heralding a brand new year and the start of Homecoming Scotland 2009, the World's Leading Festival City is gearing up for spring, and more of its exciting Festivals'.

Cultural events have become central to processes of urban development and revitalization, as cultural production becomes a major element of the urban economy, and cultural consumption can dominate both the image of places and urban life in general. As Strom (2005:9) notes, today 'one would be hard-pressed to find an American city in which some sort of major cultural project was not the centrepiece of a downtown revitalization effort'. Claiming distinction is no longer just a question of hiring signature architects and constructing grand museums; it must also involve the

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creation of a lively atmosphere and a sense of place. Events are making cities fashionable and 'cool' places to be.

*In a recent article in Newsweek International, Barcelona was dubbed 'the coolest city in Europe'. It is not hard to see why, as ever since its government pursued and won the right to host the summer Olympic Games in 1992, it has attracted attention as a place with vibrant cultural, architectural and planning attributes.*

(Kirby, 2004:183)

What is an eventful city? What are the benefits of being eventful? How does an eventful city develop? Why do some cities seem more eventful than others? What is the relationship between city development and cultural events? How do cities create, shape, manage and market events, and how can those events in turn shape the city, its spaces and its image? This book attempts to address such questions. It argues that cities which successfully harness cultural events as an integral part of a broader development strategy will reap the benefits of generating wider cultural, social and economic benefits. Eventfulness should not be an aim in itself, but a means of improving the city and making it more attractive and liveable.

The book focuses on how to develop and manage an eventful city. The central issues are not event management and place marketing but the strategies that need to be developed by cities to ensure that events reinforce and celebrate the identity or culture of the places in which they happen and have the greatest impact on a city's economic and social prosperity.

### CITIES AND EVENTS

As cities have developed physically through the centuries, the conceptions of what cities are and how they function have also changed. These ideas, or models of the city, are not just tools for describing and analysing, but they also affect the way in which we think and feel about the city.

*How cities are envisioned has effects. Urban designers and planners have ideas about how cities should look, function and be lived and these are translated into plans and built environments. ... Ideas about cities are not simply formed at a conscious level; they are also a product of unconscious desires and imaginaries.*

(Bridge & Watson, 2001:350)

The different representations of the city have spawned and been shaped by public events. Successive city rulers have sought to use events to cohere urban society around their own vision of civic life. In the pre-industrial city, the important role of ritual in everyday life meant that cities were designed around event spaces, such as the Greek agora or the Roman forum.

As cities developed further, public celebrations and events continued to have an important role in everyday life. The medieval city revolved around a festive calendar with a rich spectrum of feasts and saint's days, as well as major celebrations such as carnivals, which could last for weeks. Festivals were important in distracting people from the harsh reality of everyday life, and occasionally in upsetting the established social order. Rituals and cultural events became part of the weaponry deployed by religious leaders and royalty to support their own positions of power, placing themselves at the centre of an event.

Therborn (2002:29) illustrates this phenomenon in the context of European capital cities.

*There was a ritual rhythm playing an important part in the life of royal capitals, of royal births, birthdays, marriages, coronations and funerals, with public ceremonies, and popular festivities, as well as court protocol and temporary monuments of arches and tribunes at coronations and marriages. There could also be military parades, and some cities, e.g. Berlin, Potsdam and St Petersburg, had centrally located parade grounds.*

With the development of the industrial city, the festivals and fairs of the medieval city were located in more formalized spaces in the urban fabric – the market, the playhouse (Evans,

2001). Recreation increasingly became 'rationalized' and controlled. The industrial revolution transformed the medieval festival into a break from work – a period of rest and relaxation.

Industrial capitalism brought new uses of the city that created more spaces for events, and events for spaces. The development of large cities brought a layout of (a) major street(s), mainly for elegant commerce and promenading, and traffic, but occasionally also for parades [and] a national capital had to have a set of institutions of national high culture, and their architectural materializations were considered major tasks of capital city building. The function was national identity through a shared national heritage (Therborn, 2002:35).

The growing civic culture of the industrial city not only gave birth to new cultural landmarks such as museums, opera houses and concert halls, but also new forms of cultural events themselves. The recognition of the growing working classes as a potential market caused wealthy manufacturers to sponsor culture in the form of museums, opera houses and elements of public festivities. Festivals became a showcase for goods and services, eventually reaching an international stage with the creation of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the UK, the forerunner of subsequent World Fairs and Expos. Popular celebrations such as La Mercè in Barcelona were used as publicity vehicles, in an early extension of commodification into public space (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007). Meanwhile, some influential citizens persuaded embryonic public administrations to relieve them of some of the burden of financing metropolitan culture (Hitters, 2000).

As the industrial city moved away from rural traditions, new traditions were invented to give meaning to urban life. Civic culture gradually replaced the church and royalty as the main creator of cultural events. Cities in particular began to create events that celebrated their own history and culture. For example, Nas and Roymans (1998) describe how the Third of October festivities developed in Leiden in The Netherlands, in commemoration of the lifting of the Spanish siege of the city in 1574. Every year since this momentous event, its citizens, and increasing number of visitors have

celebrated *Leiden's Ontzet*, with foods connected to the lifting of the siege, such as herring and white bread and *hutspot*.

Many other popular celebrations were created in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the United States, the first St. Patrick's Day Parade was held in New York in 1762. Gotham (2005) describes how Mardi Gras emerged in New Orleans during the second half of the nineteenth century, and the first Labor Day Parade was held in 1882 in New York City.

As the popularity of civic rituals began to threaten the privileged position of religious and royal events, so the church and the monarchy also began to develop new events to communicate more effectively with the populace. In the Netherlands, for example, the first Princess's Day was held to celebrate Princess Wilhelmina's birthday on 31 August 1885. This was a deliberate attempt to shore up the waning popularity of the Dutch Royal Family. But it was so successful that it became an institution, later turning into Queen's Day and then moving to 30 April when Queen Juliana ascended the throne in 1948. When Queen Beatrix was crowned in 1980, she kept the April date, arguably in honour of her mother, but perhaps out of practical considerations – her birthday is in the middle of winter, a time less suited to public celebration.

As the cultural institutions of expanding cities began to mature, they too began to create their own cultural events, many aimed to counteract the impact of popular culture events. For example, the first Promenade Concerts (The Proms) took place in August 1895 at the newly built Queen's Hall in London. The aim was to reach a wider audience by offering more popular programmes, adopting a less formal setting, and keeping ticket prices low. Robert Newman, the founder of the Queens Hall allegedly said 'I am going to run nightly concerts to train the public in easy stages. Popular at first, gradually raising the standard until I have created a public for classical and modern music' (Hewett, 2007). Both popular and high culture were brought into the open air by the use of public spaces such as parks and civic squares in an attempt to win new audiences, with the building of band stands, stages and amphitheatres. The Naumberg Orchestral

concerts were started in New York's Central Park in 1905, and have been running ever since.

By providing a mass audience for culture, and generating a critical mass of cultural institutions and performers, cities began to create the conditions for the rapid growth of cultural events, in most cases ad hoc events, initiated by individual cultural intermediaries. As cities began to develop structures of public administration, so centralized support and management by public authorities for cultural events grew.

### **The managed city**

The increasing public administration of cities necessitated by industrialization had created a new vision of cities as systems, which needed to be managed. In the modernist vision of cities, which emerged in the nineteenth century, the city and its inhabitants could be managed rationally by an enlightened administration, which would plan for the economic, social and cultural needs of all. In this context, the public management of cultural festivals and events, especially in Europe, became an extension of the other cultural facilities provided by the public sector, such as museums, libraries and concert halls.

In the period immediately following the Second World War, the desire for international understanding and the growth of leisure time created a new impetus for the development of cultural festivals. Edinburgh is often seen as the prime example of the post-Second World War festival boom in the UK, but similar events were created in other cities across Europe, such as Avignon and Amsterdam. Established to fill the cultural vacuum partly caused by years of war, such festivals also became a means to cement international relations, a forerunner of what is now known as 'cultural diplomacy'. The growing number of arts festivals around the world also created alternative and less centrally managed spaces to present work that would challenge traditional programmes. 'Fringe' events were developed in reaction to the staid nature of many of the official programmes.

As the number and scale of festivals and cultural events grew, they also took on an increasing number of roles. City centres themselves became stages for events appealing to

residents and visitors. In the 1960s, civic administrations in Europe and the United States began to take an interest in redeveloping their centres of cities around the wider notion of 'cultural capital', which encouraged historic preservation and offered opportunities for artists to present performances and exhibitions (Zukin, 2004). For example, the City of San Francisco began to fund its film festival in 1960, and in 1966 the Mayor of Buffalo made the first formal recognition of what would become the Allentown Art Festival. Festivals and events subsequently became part of the wider capital accumulation system of the modern city. Gerhard Schulze (1992) emphasizes in his analysis of the *Erlebnisgesellschaft* (the experience society) that the economic motive for the development of culture is based on 'public experience production' and the creation of 'public experience amenities'.

The role of events has expanded significantly since the 1960s, to the point where they have come to be considered as solutions to a wide range of urban problems. As the *Cape Town Major Events Marketing Strategy* (City of Cape Town, 2001:2) states:

*Events play a significant role in the context of destination planning, enhancing and linking tourism and commerce. Some aspects of this role include: events as image makers, economic impact generators, tourist attractions, overcoming seasonality, contributing to the development of local communities and businesses and supporting key industrial sectors.*

This multifaceted role for events became all the more necessary as cities in many parts of the world were restructured after the oil shocks and economic turbulence of the 1970s.

## **The postmodern city**

The economic environment for many cities worsened through the 1970s and 1980s, unemployment grew in many developed economies, and culture began to assume roles linked to economic investment in the 'postmodern' or post-industrial city. Culture, tourism and leisure became vehicles for economic development and image enhancement. Miles

(2000) argued that 'cultural quarters' are one of the distinguishing signs of the post-industrial city. Events were created to develop competitive advantage relative to other cities. As 'time-based resources', events added dynamism to previously stagnant cities to help polish up jaded images in cities like Glasgow, Rotterdam, Turin and Dublin. The increasing importance of image, ephemera and spectacle have given a new impetus to events, and particularly cultural events, as creators and carriers of meaning and wealth in cities. The new centrality of events became marked by the creation of new administrative structures for creating or bidding for events and managing the festive calendar.

In the postmodern city, especially through the 1980s, economic restructuring often placed the cultural industries at the vanguard of the economy. Zukin (2004:7) demonstrates the close links between urban and cultural development:

*When central Governments became more involved in regional redevelopment during the economic crisis of the 1980s, they took to linking economic and cultural strategies. Indeed, the more socially devastated a region appeared, and the less likely to experience new industrial growth, the more public authorities turned to marketing cities as centres of culture, in order to create a new business climate. This seemed ever more important with the growth of computer software, media and consumer product industries, which gave priority to design innovation and access to the latest cultural trends.*

The new centrality of culture in urban policy was linked to a series of externalities, such as the need to stimulate economic growth, the need to bolster social inclusion and the need to develop new identities appropriate to a rapidly changing urban landscape. In this situation, cultural events were no longer just a cultural matter, and events policy became part of a wider urban task of revitalization. By moving creativity to the centre of the urban agenda, a new role was given to cultural events as the creators (rather than preservers) of meaning. This new vision also matches emerging models of the organization of the postmodern or

post-industrial city: the entrepreneurial city, the creative city and more recently, the intercultural city.

### **The entrepreneurial city**

According to Harvey (1989), cities have tried to adjust themselves to complex new economic and social circumstances by shifting their policies from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism. In North America this was prompted by the 'post federal' reduction of economic aid to major cities (Andranovich et al., 2001), in Western Europe by the collapse of the post-war social democratic consensus (Henry, 1996), in Central and Eastern Europe by the collapse of the Soviet regime, in Asia by the financial crisis of the 1990 and in Africa and Latin America by the demands of foreign debt and economic instability.

The new entrepreneurial approach clearly had an impact on the cultural sector. Cultural funding became more directly linked to the 'products' or 'outputs' of cultural institutions, now 'measured' by using a variety of 'performance indicators'. Although North American cultural institutions have always had significant private support, the new climate in Europe encouraged the cultural sector to seek private funding and increase earned income to supplement state subsidies. Major events became increasingly managed by specially created public-private partnerships, or by private companies contracted by cities. One major example of this phenomenon is the ways in which the large event strategies have been managed by cities that have been designated as European Capitals of Culture (ECOC), a programme of the European Union that began in 1985. The earlier designated cities such as Athens (1985) and Florence (1986) were managed directly by state and local authorities. Most of the later cities, however, such as Antwerp (1993), Copenhagen (1997), Helsinki (2000), Lille (2004), Luxembourg (2007), Stavanger (2008), Liverpool (2008) and Linz (2009), set up separate organizations charged with bidding for the event, and later created similar organizations to manage the event. Although the public bodies (city, region, state) usually remained the key stakeholders for the new organizations, they often included

strong representation from the private sector and academic institutions.

The partnership between the public and private sectors has also become a main management model in developing city centres as consumption spaces, which include events to help make them attractive to consumers. Hannigan's (1998) 'fantasy city', Judd's (1999) study of 'tourist bubbles' and the emergence of the 'entertainment economy' have underlined the increasing focus on city centres for recreational and entertainment uses rather than residential (Andranovich et al., 2001). However, concurrent processes of gentrification are also bringing in new groups of residents who are attracted to the city centre by the proximity of such leisure and cultural services (Verhoef, 1994).

Many cities now have specific organizations responsible for the management of city centres or important leisure zones, and in cities such as Rotterdam the functions of city centre management and leisure and cultural consumption and production have been united in departments responsible for the 'leisure economy'. As more cities adopt such leisure and culture based strategies, so competition grows and effectiveness must be increased. Verwijnen (2005:14–15) emphasizes that the external pressures on cities need to be matched by internal changes:

*The increased competition between European cities has led to a new paradox: the more competition the cities confront from the outside, the smoother they must operate on the inside. Cities can no longer afford a freewheeling situation, but need to harness their internal resources. Urban policies become both the instrument itself and act as the showcase of this effort. A dynamic urban policy becomes part of the image of a city and acts as a catalyst for its symbolic economy.*

Events are part of this process of transforming cities into smoother running cultural operations. Events may be considered ephemeral, and yet they generate that most precious of modern commodities – symbolic capital. The entrepreneurial city is not just considered entrepreneurial in terms of its development of strategies for image creation and

event bidding, but increasingly in terms of its continuing renegotiation of relationships with its citizens and in its approach to cultural planning.

## The creative city

The creative city idea emerged as a development of a concept that focused on the importance of design, cultural industries and cultural amenities as key resources for liveable cities. In the 1970s the Council of Europe introduced such notions linked to cultural rights, and organizations such as Partners for Livable Communities ([www.livable.com](http://www.livable.com)) were created to apply concepts to urban planning strategies in the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s, conceptions of cultural planning linked to creativity were introduced (Bianchini, 1990, Mercer, 1992). Following a first study on *Glasgow: the Creative City and its Cultural Economy* (1994), which emerged from the city's new strategies that had been developed in response to its designation as ECOC in 1990, and in work by Landry and Bianchini (1995), the creative city was subsequently publicized more widely in Landry's (2000) book entitled *The Creative City: A toolkit for urban innovators*. The creative city relates to a key strategy of urban development that emphasises the importance of the 'creative industries' (Smith, 1998), and more recently the attraction of the 'creative class' (Florida, 2002). Florida argues that economic development is driven in large measure by lifestyle factors, such as tolerance and diversity, urban infrastructure and entertainment, which can attract creative talent. In contrast to the entrepreneurial city, which treats culture as one element of the symbolic economy, the creative city model places culture and creativity at the forefront of inter-urban competition.

The advent of the twenty-first century has been 'a very marked convergence between the spheres of cultural and economic development', which is also 'one of the distinguishing characteristics of contemporary urbanization processes in general' (Scott, 2000:2). Urban economies are increasingly concerned with the production of cultural goods, which by their very nature have intensely local

characteristics. This close interrelationship between culture, economy and place has also been marked by a growing tension between place-bound culture and 'culture as a pattern of non-place globalized events and experiences' (Scott, 2002:3). Previous analyses of the cultural economy of cities were concerned largely with the commercialization of heritage. Large-scale public sector-led urban renovation projects have now been overtaken by an expanding view of the intertwined nature of production, culture and place. As Scott (2002:4) shows, one of the results of this relationship is the tendency for cultural production to become concentrated in 'privileged localized clusters of firms and workers'. While Scott explains this from an economic perspective in terms of industrial agglomeration and clustering of producers, Florida and others have emphasized the clustering of individual members of the 'creative class' in particular cities. Although the logic of this process is in some respects circular (creative people are attracted to creative places, which are creative because they house creative people), there is a general acceptance that certain locations are more attractive than others in the cultural and creative landscape.

The growing importance of the intangible qualities of cities has encouraged policy makers to think not just in terms of developing manufacturing and what are sometimes referred to 'real jobs' from a traditional Fordist perspective, but also jobs in the 'creative industries sector' and those that are linked to the 'symbolic economy'. In the past, cities competed to attract companies by offering ideal conditions of production: cheap land, cheap labour, cheap energy and good communications. Now cities compete to develop cultural and creative resources to attract the creative class on the basis of cultural production that helps supply the images and symbols that are vital to competitive success in the new economy.

*Developing creativity implies not only that a city can place new products on global markets, but also that it can quickly respond to changing competition and demand. A creative city is one that has learnt how to use its cultural capital to attract innovative businesses and services as well as members of the mobile 'creative class'. The flow of people and money that*

*pass through global cities continually replenish the supply of potential creators. But to nurture creativity, a city must have a generous and inclusive culture – it must have what we may term ‘an attitude’. It must have a nerve, it must value racial diversity, and it must have an impatient desire for new things, while valuing the old.*

(Zukin, 2004:13)

Lee (2004) shows how Singapore’s efforts to position itself as a global ‘Renaissance city’ have led to privilege of creativity over culture. Following Florida’s arguments, Singapore has developed creative clusters, although it has problems in accepting the more ‘bohemian’ aspects of the recipe, such as encouraging an active gay scene, which is part of the formula that was identified by Florida (Ooi, 2007).

The drive to make places creative does not always emanate from the leadership of a city (and perhaps should not). There are also many examples of grassroots creativity movements, such as the ‘Keep Austin weird’ campaign in Austin, Texas. Red Wassenich, a librarian at the Austin Community College, created the first blue-and-white ‘Keep Austin Weird’ bumper stickers in 2000, and since then the idea has mushroomed, embracing T-shirts, hats and sports events such as the ‘Keep Austin Weird 5K’ race. The weirdness of the city, which arguably derives from a combination of hippie and redneck culture, is now maintained as an essential raw material for the ‘creative city’, and the creative city strategy adopted by Austin. According to the campaign’s website ([www.keeppaustinweird.com](http://www.keeppaustinweird.com)), this is the fruit of a ‘collaborative fission of coordinated individualism’.

Creativity and innovation are both social phenomena that emerge from specific geographic and productive circumstances. Scott (2002) shows that in the creative industries, agglomeration and clustering are important determinants of economic success for cities. The idea that certain locations gain competitive advantage by virtue of agglomeration and clustering of the cultural and creative industries is illustrated by Lai (2004) in the case of ‘blockbuster’ exhibitions. Increasingly, major museums lend one another works of art to enable them to stage major exhibitions, in return for other

works of art, which will enable others to stage their own blockbuster events. This basic notion of reciprocity places major museums in large cities at a distinct advantage to smaller institutions elsewhere, since they have large collections which can be offered to stimulate exchange of significant works, and the international networks to initiate such exchanges. Lai (2004) demonstrates that the Metropolitan Museum in New York was not able to participate in such exchanges until it had obtained abundant financial and cultural capacities in the 1970s. These exchanges are therefore also dependent on the local resources that can be tapped by each museum to secure works and to finance exhibitions, which will depend to a large extent on the agglomeration of the cultural industries themselves. This is one feature that helps to characterize and promote the creative city.

### **The intercultural city**

The diversity of urban populations is a factor increasingly emphasized as a creative resource for cultural, social and economic development. The growing mobility of people, both long-term and short-term, is transforming the cultural landscape of most cities. As Zukin (2004) remarks

*Immigration is reducing the cultural boundaries between places, as the same cultural events are performed the world over. Immigrant communities are importing, adapting and developing their traditions.*

Some commentators have pointed to the emerging challenges and opportunities presented by the 'intercultural city', or as Soja (2000:155) has termed it the 'Fractal City', which is:

*Fragmented and polarised but also the scene of the creation of new hybridities and cultural politics aimed not just at reducing inequalities but also preserving differences and fostering flexible 'transversal' identities.*

Intercultural cities need to harness the vast reservoir of cultural and creative resources represented by the different

cultural groups that inhabit them, and to use these resources and skills to develop a more cohesive and sustainable city. Lambooy (2005:54) argues that cities can use their internal cultural resources to adapt to new circumstances and to extend their 'competence base' beyond creativity and into the intercultural arena.

Cities are the settings for a growing number of intercultural events, which deliberately set out to cross and blur cultural boundaries as a means of promoting communication between cultures and increased appreciation for what may be termed 'diversity advantage' in cities. The intercultural approach moves beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences ('multiculturalism'), to the use of dialogue and exchange between people of different cultural backgrounds to facilitate the transformation of public space, civic culture and institutions. Different cultures engage proactively, with the conflict that may emerge seen as creative and growth promoting. All city policies, services and programmes need to be reviewed through the lens of interculturalism, which spans citizen participation in decision making, education and health care services, the management of public space and the practices of cultural institutions. The Council of Europe (Strasbourg) has developed a programme of 'Intercultural Cities' that is testing intercultural strategies and their practical implementation and delivery mechanisms. Eleven pilot cities have been selected, with the intention of extending the programme to other cities. (Council of Europe, 2009).

Cultural events can provide focal points for intercultural engagement, one example being the practice of carnivals and parades that promote the mixing and celebration of different cultures:

*Carnivals in Britain have become perhaps the most visible intercultural events of all, for example through the introduction of sound systems and floats on big lorries, which are specific British Jamaican innovations on the Trinidadian tradition that originally formed carnival in Britain. To this are now added Brazilian and other Latin American themes, plus new forms of music, such as garage and drum and bass,*

*which are unique British hybrids. However, the intercultural character of British carnival is not perceived or communicated as such. On the contrary, the marketing of it often emphasises its 'ethnically exotic' character, thus freezing it in time and taking it back to its country of origin.*

(Wood, Landry, & Bloomfield, 2006:36)

Interculturality includes issues of the openness of public space and 'the extent to which people feel they have the "freedom of the city", or whether there are spaces or whole neighbourhoods that feel closed or even hostile to one or more groups within the city'. Wood, Landry, and Bloomfield (2006:61) argue that this could be measured by:

*Evaluating the range of diverse cultural events/festivals in the city's artistic programme and whether they reflect the plurality of cultures in the city.*

And by asking local people:

- Do you take part in and enjoy cultural festivals and street markets?
- How important are cultural festivals, etc. in providing your culture with recognition and respect from the broader community?
- Do the existing public squares and streets adequately meet the needs of local events?

The intercultural city provides new challenges for the management of culture and cultural events that have the potential to promote intercultural dialogue and exchange.

## **WHY EVENTS ARE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT**

The 'entrepreneurial city', the 'creative city' and the 'intercultural city' encompass many different forms of cultural practice that offer sources of inspiration and engagement. Cultural events have become one of the major avenues for harnessing this creativity.

The events strategy for Edinburgh (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001:4) argues that 'cities, governments and the private sector have all invested in creating, sustaining and developing a wide range of festivals in order to reap a number of benefits'. These include:

- improvements to the quality of life in the city;
- creative activity;
- the growth of audiences;
- the creation of partnerships;
- recreational and educational opportunities;
- economic and social benefits;
- national and international profile raising; and
- meeting civic objectives.

The widespread benefits of events have now come to challenge the previous dominance of the importance of built heritage in the cultural and economic development strategies of cities, often based on assumptions such as:

- Events are more flexible than certain types of fixed physical infrastructure.
- Events can help to differentiate physical environments threatened by 'serial reproduction'.
- Events have greater ability to offer 'spectacle' and 'atmosphere'.
- Events generally meet the need for co-presence and the feeling of 'being there'.
- Events can cost less and achieve greater impact in the short-term.

Each of these assumptions can be challenged, and their accuracy is wholly dependent on the type of event being staged. There are many cases where poorly conceived and managed events do not offer spectacle or atmosphere, and may cost as much if not more than certain types of cultural physical infrastructure. The well publicized failure of the

'River of Fire' display in London as part of the Millennium celebrations is but one example of this.

However, the soaring cost of permanent high-quality physical landmarks in cities, often with significant future operational costs, coupled with a frequently lengthy development process, have pushed events to the forefront of inter-urban competition (Paddison, 1993). Events complement capital infrastructure by providing the means of adding flexibility to fixed structures, and offering a source of spectacle that can extend the image value of a landmark. As Ritzer (1999:38) argues, the new 'cathedrals of consumption' are 'designed artistically and scientifically to lure people into consumption'. A part of their attraction is the presence of large numbers of other people, which gives 'atmosphere' to the setting. The new means of consumption create spectacles not as ends in themselves but in order to attract large numbers of people to buy more goods and services. 'A mall, a casino, or a theme park that is half empty ... does not generate the same excitement as a full house' (ibid:107).

Events are sometimes used as a platform for creating physical landmarks, as in the case of the Festival of Britain in 1951, the 1998 Expo in Lisbon or the 2007 Forum in Monterrey, or as a means for cities to position themselves as distinct, urban places in contrast to their rural surroundings, as Prentice and Andersen (2003) have suggested in the case of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Cities are centres of 'cultural globalization', which offer 'an acceleration in the exchange of cultural symbols among people around the world, to such an extent that it leads to changes in local popular cultures and identities' (Nijman 1991:148). The exchange of symbols is supported by consumption, and accelerated by mass communication. Consumption involves not just material commodities, but also ideas, values and information, in other words, culture. Events have become part of the cultural globalization process in cities, as vehicles for the exchange of certain models of cultural, spatial and economic organization. Because of their mobility and timeliness, cultural events, in particular, have the potential to serve as mediators of processes of cultural globalization and localization.

Localization processes are important because smaller cities are aided in their competitive struggle with larger cities by the new-found importance of the local. Growing feelings of regionalism and attachment to locality have strengthened the efforts of smaller cities to create a distinct role for themselves. Events have also been utilized as an important tool in the growth of the 'city state'. For example, Barcelona used the Olympic Games in 1992 as a way of expressing its independence from the Spanish central government in Madrid (Hargreaves, 2000). The new city states need their regions and vice versa. Many are caught up in the resurgence of regional identities that has characterized post-fordist reconstruction and postmodern identity flux. Cities have become the flag carriers for their regions in the same way as capital cities were for nation states in the nineteenth century. Current ECOC projects make this clear, as Marseilles positions itself as the centre of Provence in France (2013) and Essen carries the flag for the entire surrounding Ruhr region of Germany (2010). The regions gain wider recognition as a result of harbouring dynamic cities, and the cities utilize the hinterland of the region as a market and inspiration for its events. Cultural and sports events become the symbols of distinct identities, such as the Eisteddfod in Wales, the Highland Games in Scotland or *castellers* performances in Catalunya.

At the base of certain urban event strategies, there is an underlying belief that events can be a new source of identity and help build social cohesion as they begin to redefine the way in which we look at cities and their communities.

## EVENTS AS EXPERIENCES

Events add an intangible component to the physical culture of the city. One of the key features of the modern economy is the importance of 'experiences'. In their analysis of the 'experience economy', Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that consumers are increasingly looking for experiences in addition to services. Services are characterized by easy

reproducibility, whereas experiences are by definition unique. Experiences require an interaction of the consumer and the producer, in a process of 'prosumption' or 'co-creation'. However, taking Pine and Gilmore's argument one step further, events are excellent vehicles for experience production, because they are limited in time and imply co-presence, not just between producers and consumers, but also the co-presence of fellow consumers. The shared experience of cultural events is often what makes them special – one important reason why people attend concerts rather than merely watch them on television. The practice of watching a film in a cinema enhances the experience and the impact of the film more than simply watching a downloaded version at home. Events in the modern 'fantasy city' create the sense of community and meet both an individual and societal need for kinship, which many people believe the modern city has lost.

Such feelings of togetherness may contribute to events becoming destinations in their own right, as Prentice and Andersen (2003:12) argue:

*The recurrent importance of gregariousness may imply that the festival itself becomes a destination, rather than simply an attraction of place-based destinations. The experience of gregariousness may ultimately be independent of any specific place, and what makes festivals special has been found to centre on uniqueness and quality, as well as atmosphere.*

In looking for new forms of community, postmodern travellers seek 'intermittent moments of physical proximity to particular peoples, places or events and ...In significant ways this proximity is felt to be obligatory, appropriate or desirable' (Urry, 2001:5–6). Urry discusses the need for 'thick co-presence', or physical proximity which enables people to establish eye contact, and therefore intimacy and trust. People come together in 'tight social worlds to use each other and their shared understanding of "what's happening"' (ibid:9). Being there oneself is critical to the maintenance of such social networks. In spite of the growing availability of social networking sites, virtual travel, video conferencing and

webcams, people continue to desire to engage in embodied, physical co-presence. The Glastonbury Festival becomes not just a location, but also a time and a shared experience, such as the 'year of the mud' (1997). This helps to create peculiarity in a world in which spatial distinction is becoming more problematic. 'Being there' emphasizes the fact that the combination of space, time and people is what matters – and it is this combination that events are able to deliver.

Events provide a scenario in which human contacts are possible, however superficial, and there is the promise of *communitas* through the shared experience of 'being there'. In this sense, events have taken on a new meaning in post-modern societies, in which they become not only an essential experience in themselves, but also an important underpinning of individual and group identity.

### **The North Sea Jazz Festival – Shared Intimacy for 70,000**

'If you haven't been to the World's largest indoor Jazz festival you don't know what you've been missing. Chances are, after this year's 30th anniversary edition of North Sea Jazz you'll also be missing out on what made it such an unsurpassed event; intimacy on a scale of 70,000 people, sitting at a riffs' distance from past and future jazz legends, breathing in pure creativity and the smell of pancakes that a press photographer brought in, pressed for time to cover as many artists and not to miss out on the highlight of the festival. It's an elusive element if you hunt for it, but the highlight is where you make it, sharing the music you love with any of the other friendly faces who managed to make it to that show, at that stage, at that moment. Even if it's the full-to-the-brim Statenhal where Jamie Cullum has caused a temporary lockdown with his energetic jazz/pop gig, there's always something to give you that "I was there" feeling.'

(Riley, 2005)

## **CELEBRATING TIME AND SPACE**

The production of events requires space in which people can come together in order to experience co-presence. Once spaces have been created, they often need to be animated. In

some cases, this happens organically, as different groups colonize and use public space for their own ends. Public parks have historically been inhabited in this way, as different publics lay claim to their use at different times for football matches, picnics, skateboarding or music jamming and drumming. Increasingly, public space is being managed by municipalities, and animated in order to attract people and to ensure their safety. Otherwise, visitors and residents alike withdraw from public space to the safety of more secure or better-managed locations, avoiding contact with others in a process that Goffman (1971) called 'defensive destimulation' – producing the opposite of a lively, eventful space.

The challenge is to create 'trusting spaces' (Richards and Delgado, 2003) in which, as Sennett suggests, 'human displacement is incorporated into everyday life as a positive force on human interaction. In this way, our sense of place is not that of a peaceful, untroubled sanctuary, but is also a scene in which people come alive, where they expose, acknowledge and address the discordant parts of themselves and one another' (Sennett 1994:354).

The interaction of people, events and spaces in cities produces a flow of activities, which gives life and rhythm to the city. Amin and Thrift (2002:17), borrowing from the work of Lefebvre, argue that the rhythms of the city 'are the coordinates through which inhabitants and visitors frame and order the urban experience,' and that rhythm, in the sense of 'localized time' and 'temporalized place,' registers the daily tempo of the city. It is also clear that events are registers of larger cycles of time. In the case of many traditional societies, events were used to mark the passing of the seasons, and echoes of this rhythm are still heard in modern cities today, for example, with cycles in many western cities that move from Christmas markets, through springtime parades and running marathons, summer outdoor performances, and street parties, to the beginning of opera and orchestral seasons in September. With the development of 'special events', a new rhythm is established – not cyclical, but marking specific moments in the history of a city, and also marking the transition to modern and later postmodern rhythms of the city. By marking out a new beat within the

urban rhythm, events have also established new ways of 'localizing time' and 'temporalizing space'.

The cultural life and rhythm of the city are also intimately affected by human displacement through processes of globalization and localization. 'World cities' such as New York, London and Tokyo not only have large populations drawn from across the globe, but also attract a growing number of tourists, filmmakers and businesses keen to experience the atmosphere of these places. Smaller cities are becoming 'wannabe cities' (Short, 1999) that want to achieve a similar level of cultural vitality, economic activity and familiarity as their bigger cousins. Very often this leads to a process of event creation and competition for international events, which helps to stimulate visitation and focus media attention on the host city. Attracting and retaining mobile publics require that the eventful city enlivens and animates public space through the stimulation and production of events.

## THE NEED FOR ANIMATION

Animation or 'vibrancy' is important to cities for a variety of reasons, including economic ones. A lively atmosphere makes people feel good about living in a place, and makes the city attractive to visit, which in turn drives inward investment. The relationship between atmosphere and attractiveness means that cities need to think carefully about the use of space. As Pep Subirós (undated) argues, space is more than a place where experiences occur: it also shapes and gives sense to that experience. Space adds value to experiences by facilitating the act of coming together, dialogue, exchange, tolerance, responsibility, and sense of community, identity and collective memory.

The animation of space can be spontaneous, but it also often needs to be managed. A space without a flow of events may feel empty and unattractive. On the other hand, if the flow of events becomes too fast, those who inhabit a space may experience stress. Scitovsky (1976) argues that individuals seek an optimal level of stimulation for a given situation.

Too little stimulation produces boredom and a search of a higher level of stimulation; too much stimulation produces stress and a search for reduced stimulation. An optimal level of stimulation may be comfortable, but it may not produce feelings of excitement or joy. Scitovsky argues that it is the change from one state of stimulation to another that produces excitement – we are exhilarated by the acceleration of a fast car, rather than a steady high speed.

A stimulating cultural place incorporates a flow of different stimuli, such as the visual display of a cosmopolitan crowd, which act as regular and irregular markers of time. Lefebvre observes that a space is also a time, whose passage is marked by the flow of everyday events. The flow of events becomes difference that can be consumed, an experience of 'atmosphere', produced in specific places at specific times.

In his study of the Joensuu Festival in Finland, van Elderen (1997) points out that the festival had an important role in turning the town into a 'town of the arts' in the 1980s. This was primarily achieved through the staging of processions that transformed the spatial relations of everyday life and imbued spaces with new meanings. The festival also transformed physical space in a permanent sense because a special venue was created for the musical performances held at the end of the procession. The participative nature of the procession created a dialogue between spectators and participants, underpinning a *festival communitas*.

The attraction, staging, management and marketing of events have become an important part of the urban planning process. Events imply an investment of resources, use of public space and commitment of political support. Cities increasingly have events strategies, which are designed to attract events to the city and ensure the maximum benefits accrue to the city itself. The cities of Auckland, Birmingham, Dubai, Edinburgh, Sydney and Toronto are only a few notable examples where strategies also include consideration of how the spaces in the city are used for events.

As the focus of cultural provision shifts from a preoccupation with a limited range of cultural facilities such as concert halls, theatres and museums, the notion of cultural planning has been significantly enlarged to encompass a very

wide range of spaces and programmes. The practice of cultural programming in a city has expanded to include spaces and places that do not conform to the traditional or classical understanding of culture, such as waterfronts, civic squares, shopping precincts, gardens, sports stadia, train stations, stone quarries and public and private buildings. Instead of cultural organizations running programmes across a limited range of traditional venues during distinct cultural 'seasons' (usually in the autumn, winter and spring), a very large number of organizations, promoters, voluntary associations and businesses have become involved in staging events in many different spaces across the city, indoors and outdoors. The entire city becomes a stage across which a succession of events is paraded: a situation, which creates the sense of 'festivalization' of the city.

## FESTIVALIZATION

There is a widespread feeling among certain policy makers that it is important to make cities eventful all year round, and that gaps in the festive calendar need to be filled. This view was in evidence, for example in the rationale for the ECOC in Avignon in 2000 (Palmer-Rae, 2004: Part II:89).

*There was a strong desire to increase cultural tourism and reinforce the reputation of Avignon, secured by the famous theatre Festival of Avignon, as an important cultural city. With their catchphrase 'Avignon – a permanent show' it was hoped that the cultural year would bring visitors all year round.*

### Edinburgh as a Stage

Edinburgh is a prime example of the development of a city as stage. Edinburgh has the largest and longest running festival in the UK, but it has also used the Festival as a springboard to develop other events and attractions. The popularity of the Festival stems from the wide range of events held and the historic city centre, which forms a backdrop to the

*Continued*

Festival activities. In recent years, however, the previous 'high culture' image of the city as the cultural capital of Scotland has begun to change as more elements of popular culture have become associated with the image of Edinburgh. One example is the film *Trainspotting*, which has generated a 'Trainspotting Tour' featured in the UNESCO-sponsored 'City of Literature' initiative. In addition some of the 'villages' in the city, such as Leith and Portobello are being developed in terms of what Howie (2000) has called 'grey area' tourism, centred on the everyday life of the neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. The centre of the city has also been literally developed as a stage for the annual Hogmanay festival on New Year's Eve. The increasing popularity of the event saw the centre of the city being closed off, with ticket holders only being admitted. Although tickets for the event were distributed free to local residents, there was dissatisfaction among those unable to get tickets to celebrate the festival in their own city centre.

The city has become a vast stage on which festivals and events are organized for the benefit of residents and visitors. The logical outcome of this process of event development is the city as a continuous festival, which some have described as the 'festivalization' of the city (Hitters, 2007).

According to Van Elderen (1997:126) festivalization involves

*The (temporary) transformation of the town into a specific symbolic space in which the utilization of the public domain...is under the spell of a particular cultural consumption pattern.*

In this situation, events and event spaces come to dominate the public life of the city. Frank and Roth (2000) link this transformation with urban boosterism, usually based on a coalition of business leaders and civic authorities with a consensus on stimulating investment and economic growth while limiting the redistributive function of the state. In German urban sociology, boosterism is referred to as 'festivalization' or 'politics through big events' (Häußermann & Siebel, 1993).

Hitters (2007) also links festivalization to a crisis in the legitimation of the cultural policy model developed under the

welfare state. He argued that rather than producing the intended democratization of culture, consumption of 'high culture' remained largely the preserve of the higher socio-economic classes, and increased middle class consumption was driven not by public policy (such as subsidized cultural products) but through the type of status rivalry and distinction processes outlined by Bourdieu (1984).

*Cultural policy then, was forced to shift its focus away from 'high art', towards a much more inclusive definition of (popular) culture. The policy arena thus widened its scope to pop-music, film, web-design, ethnic culture, entertainment, etc. And it searched for new means of distribution that were more accessible than the traditional theatres and museums.*

*Consequently, festivals appeared to be the panacea*  
(Hitters, 2007:283)

Lee (2004) broadens this argument by illustrating how cultural policy is moving away from a narrow focus on high culture towards more 'inclusive' concepts of culture as a whole way of life, which not only involves more of the population, but also widens the scope for intervention. He argues that this is an attempt to theme cities into commodifiable urban experiences to generate economic value. Lee points out that such developments are not new, but what is new is their general pervasiveness and the generalization of knowledge about how spaces entertain people. This is essentially the body of knowledge that is bound up in the eventful city. However, eventful cities take theming to the next stage, where the themes themselves almost become irrelevant. What is important is the role of events as carriers of meaning: the event *is* the theme.

As festivalization progresses, 'Consumption and entertainment becoming increasingly indistinguishable', so that 'spaces compete with each other by promoting their performativity across a set of activities formerly set apart, such as shopping, dining, recreation and even education "hands-on" museums' (Amin and Thrift, 2002:124).

Festivalization goes beyond the staging of formal festivals to embrace new forms of animation, including 'edu-tainment'

and 'shop-a-tainment.' Cities such as Mumbai and Singapore have created 'shopping festivals,' which are prime examples of the 'shop-a-tainment' phenomenon. The need for performative spaces has also led to the development of new spaces in the city which are interactive, theatrical, omni sensory and adaptive to audience reaction. In such spaces, imagination and fantasy become an important part of the business model. This is effectively Pine and Gilmore's (1999) experience economy: 'a set of living, embodied geographies which provide a new source of value through their performative push' (Amin & Thrift, 2002:125).

These developments have resonance with the concept of the 'city as stage,' which was evident in the 1970s urban literature. However, the difference seems to be that rather than simply functioning as a backdrop for an increasingly wide array of events, cities now actively seek to develop, manage and market events as a key part of their cultural life, social fabric and economic dynamism. Festivalization has become used as a means of countering a wide range of cultural, social and economic problems. In turn, the justification for developing cultural festivals or sports events has increasingly little to do with culture or sport (see Chapter 2); it is increasingly about developing economic or social potential and enabling the city to compete more effectively in the global arena.

Festivalization reflects much more than an increase in the number of events being held in cities; it echoes a qualitative change intimately linked to the spatial and economic restructuring of cities. Cities need events to support the experience economy. Events have ceased to be a peripheral diversion from the everyday business of the city and become one of its prime concerns.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that the search for greater added value and increasing competition has driven a progression of economic changes from the extractive industries to manufacturing, services and now the production of experiences. A similar progression might be seen in the functionality of cities, from centres of production to service centres to backdrops for experiences.

As Amin and Thrift (2002:124) argue,

*There is now a concerted attempt to re-engineer the experience of cities, one which is on a par with the construction of Haussmann's boulevards – but happening in many cities around the world – and one which is just as ambitious, but perhaps less known because it is the result of many different plans rather than one single master plan. (emphasis in the original)*

This progressive transformation of urban space from productive functions to consumption and performative uses may be taken to the point where the city models itself on an event or series of events. At a physical level, the tendency for cities to model their spaces around events has already been analysed by Sabate i Bel *et al.* (2004). As noted above, many cities around the world have taken this a step further, and now identify themselves as 'eventful cities' or 'festival cities'. In some cities the events have become so important that they begin to define the city itself. In this sense, events have become a major tool in the process of 'placemaking'.

## PLACEMAKING

Eventfulness is intimately linked to the process of placemaking. For the last three decades there has been a convergence between the realms of cultural and economic development. In the resulting 'cultural economy', ideas and artistic qualities contribute towards a new development paradigm. A wide range of activities are now concerned with the production and marketing of goods and services that are infused with symbolic cultural content. This phenomenon has shifted development approaches from a Fordist economic regime based on manufacturing to one that places high value on human creativity. In terms of the built environment, this paradigm shift to a creative economy has in turn influenced the formulation of a new approach to the policy and practice of urban development, which includes urban design and destination marketing that focus on aesthetic value and the potential to reinforce the cultural importance of a place so that it attracts attention and invites participation.

Cities have long tried to promote themselves as attractive places to live, work, visit and invest. According to Skot-Hansen (1998), the provincial town of Holstebro in west Jutland ‘invented’ the use of culture for reimagining and development purposes as early as the 1960s (Bayliss, 2004). But the new climate of global intra-urban competition is transforming the art of place making into an industry. Every city seems to be creating images to market themselves to residents and visitors.

Ashworth and Voogd (1990) argue that the primary aim of place marketing is to construct an image of a place in order to make it attractive to current and potential residents, investors and visitors. Such activities require the coordination of a large number of different functions within the public and private sectors. Ashworth and Voogd draw attention to the extent to which these functions are coordinated by the local authority and are part of its development strategy. As discussed further in Chapter 4, the role of local authority leadership in a city-wide events strategy is crucial to the success of the eventful city. The public sector needs to engineer consensus amongst the residents of their localities (Philo & Kearns, 1993), for example through the creation of ‘event-communities’ (Frank & Roth, 1998), and in combining the overlapping but also divergent interests of public and private sectors.

### **Culture and Place Making in London**

The Mayor of London’s *London Plan* prioritizes 20% of the city’s wards for regeneration, and designates a further 42 locations for growth of housing and employment space. The plan argues that if the regeneration and growth of these areas is to result in successful places, they must incorporate culture.

- Cultural practitioners can engage residents and help identify what makes areas distinctive and should be protected in the regeneration process. There are many examples of artists collaborating with architects and developers to produce more creative and successful development schemes.
- Cultural facilities such as libraries and sport centres can be provided within larger development schemes. By doing so

development schemes can benefit from the improved profile and increased property value associated with cultural facilities.

- New public spaces can be designed to support local festivals, art installations and sport. Development schemes can also build the creative workspace that is often in short supply. The regeneration and growth of London represents a major opportunity to deliver the full complement of local and sub-regional cultural infrastructure, which the city needs – particularly the less well-resourced parts of Outer London.

This work contributes to the national Living Places programme that aims to facilitate the planning of culture into all major areas of regeneration and growth in the UK.

(Mayor of London, 2008)

Cultural events have emerged as a means of improving the image of cities, adding life to city streets and giving citizens renewed pride in their city. This enhancement of community pride and destination image following an event has been referred to as the ‘halo effect’ (Hall, 1992), the ‘showcase effect’ (Fredline & Faulkner, 1998) and the ‘feelgood effect’ (Allen, O’Toole, & McDonnell, 2005). Zukin argues that ‘culture is a euphemism for the city’s new representation as a creative force in the emerging service economy...’ and that ‘... culture is the sum of a city’s amenities that enable it to compete for investment and jobs, its “comparative advantage” (1995:268). Zukin’s view of ‘culture’ as covering all the amenities of a city reflects the fact that the very notion of culture has expanded to take in not just ‘traditional’, ‘high’ culture attractions such as museums, theatres and concert halls, but also increasingly includes elements of ‘popular’ culture, such as pop music, fashion, ‘ethnoscapes’ (Appadurai, 1990) and sport. Both high culture and popular culture have become important sources for the images that are used to underpin the ‘brand image’ of cities (Kearns & Philo, 1993). Event images are now so important that they ‘are starting to dominate the natural or physical features in the identification of cities’ (Burns, Hatch, & Mules, 1986:5).

Increasing competition between cities in a crowded field of images is one of the major factors stimulating cities to

adopt branding strategies (Evans, 2003; Meurs & Verheijen, 2003) that seek to transform fixed cultural capital into competitive advantage through the staging of cultural events or the construction of cultural landmarks. City branding used to be associated with the flight from an industrial past (Holcomb, 1993; Bramwell & Rawding, 1996), but is now linked to enhancing the urban landscape with globally branded arts and entertainment destinations, encapsulated in the 'fantasy city' (Hannigan, 1998). As Hannigan (2003) suggests, a successful brand should be instantly recognizable, play on the desire for comfort and certainty and provide a point of identification for consumers in a crowded marketplace (see Chapter 7).

### **Competing to be a Cultural Capital**

In many countries, there is fierce rivalry between the capital and another major city for cultural supremacy. The 'second city' syndrome drives cities such as Glasgow, Rotterdam, Melbourne and Shanghai to develop cultural facilities to match or better those of the capital or largest city.

In China, the rivalry between Beijing and Shanghai increased as a result of Beijing's status as Olympic City in 2008. Beijing planned to add at least 32 new museums by 2008, together with a €150 million expansion of the National Museum of China, the new National Grand Theatre, a €220 million performing arts complex with a 2400-seat opera hall, a 2000-seat concert hall and theatre. Establishing the theatre was a personal priority of President Jiang Zemin, who wished to see Beijing's deteriorating theatres replaced with new cultural landmarks before the 2008 Olympics.

Shanghai has plans to open more than 100 new museums by 2010, a new €68 million Shanghai Art Museum, a new museum of antiquities, a €140 million science museum, the €100 million Shanghai Grand Theatre, and renovations and expansions to practically every existing concert hall, theatre and arts centre in the city. As a cultural repost to the Beijing Olympics, Shanghai will host the 2010 World Expo. The city already has a considerable programme of cultural events (including an extensive 'tourist festival'), which attracts five million visitors a year. Major international events include the Shanghai International TV Festival, the Shanghai International Art Fair and the Shanghai International Festival of Arts.

Visitor numbers are set to increase in the run up to the city hosting World Expo 2010. This global forum is expected to attract over 70 million visitors. To cope with this increased demand, the government is already making plans to upgrade metro lines, buses and road links. Also as World Expo 2010 will be located on opposite banks of the Huang Pu River, a ferry service will also be provided to transport visitors between the two venues.

One of the major differences between the two cities is that 'most events in Beijing are organized by individuals, whereas in Shanghai the government has taken the lead' (Casale, 2004).

There is increasing competition to host major cultural and sporting 'brand' events such as the Olympic Games, a World Expo or the European Capital of Culture. Cities are investing large sums of money just to bid for such events. In the race to win the nomination for the European Cultural Capital in 2008, several of the 10 UK candidate cities were estimated to have spent more than 1 million (€1.5 million) each preparing their bids (Palmer-Rae, 2004). The very large investment on events has become a common pattern, as much in economically poor cities as wealthy ones, as cities seek to secure the maximum economic and image benefits from their event (see Chapter 9).

A combination of factors is pushing cities to develop more events, and in many cases to create bigger and better events than their competitors. All of these factors have collectively led to a growth in the level and scale of event activity worldwide.

## THE GROWTH OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Fairs, festivals and other cultural events have been part of the urban scene as long as there have been cities. What has arguably changed in the modern city is the level of professionalization of the event organization process, and the instrumental use of events to achieve wider policy ends.

Prentice and Andersen (2003:8) state that

*The explosion in festival numbers is multifaceted in cause, ranging from supply factors (such as cultural*

*planning, tourism development and civic repositioning), through to demand factors (such as serious leisure, lifestyle sampling, socialization needs and the desire for creative and 'authentic' experiences by some market segments).*

This qualitative change also seems to have made festivals and events a major growth market. Not only have the number of mega-events mushroomed as cities try and exploit them for economic ends, but local events have flourished too. Quinn (2005:927) argues that 'the past 15 years or so have seen a remarkable rise in the number of arts festivals in cities throughout Europe and elsewhere. Their growth has been such that it is now difficult to determine accurately the number of festivals in existence'.

One of the reasons it is difficult to count the number of festivals and cultural events is the problem of defining the terms (see Chapter 2). However, even if robust definitions were available, the sheer number and range of events make enumeration a complex exercise. When evaluating events, there is a lack of longitudinal data on the development of events over time, and so the absence of accurate quantifiable data on the growth of events necessitates the analysis of evidence that is often circumstantial. (See Chapter 9)

There is evidence of increased importance and number of local events in different countries. Referring to Spain, Pérez-Díaz (2003:467–468) comments:

*The importance of local fiestas has increased extraordinarily: the number of participants, the variety and range of activities, the amounts of money spent on them....In the last two decades have seen a proliferation of carnivals and fiestas ... that have been widely disseminated from their original locations.*

In Singapore, National Arts Council (2008) statistics indicate that the number of arts activities reached nearly 27,000 in 2007, or four times as many as in 1997. Attendance at ticketed performances doubled from 754,100 patrons in 1997 to close to 1.5 million in 2007. Since 1997, the number of exhibition days has also multiplied five times

to exceed 19,000 days in 2007, while performances tripled to a record high of 7450 in 2007. Much of the growth in activities and performances is accounted for by the many festivals and cultural events organized in the city-state.

Another measure of cultural event 'proliferation' is provided by the growth of events dedicated to a particular art form. In the case of film festivals, for example, the European Coordination of Film Festivals had to be created to remedy 'the disparity of practises and some dangerous excesses and trends' of the continent's proliferating fests... (this body) listed 76 festivals when it began in 1995, a number that had more than doubled to 154 in 20 countries by 2000' (Turan, 2002). By 2009 membership of this group was up to over 180 festivals.

## CONCLUSION

Cities around the world increasingly develop and utilize cultural events to achieve a range of objectives: economic, social, political as well as cultural. Cities have long been shaped by cultural events, and the relationship between the city and its event programme has changed significantly over the centuries. The contemporary city is likely to have a large and varied event programme with a mixed economy of events run by the city itself as well as a large range of other stakeholders.

As events have become increasingly integrated into the daily life of cities, so the planning of events and their integration with civic goals has become even closer. The contemporary city is likely to see eventfulness as one more source of creativity that can be developed to stimulate the creative industries, enhance the attractiveness of the city and promote social cohesion. The growing diversity of cities also provides new opportunities for cities to harness the creative power of their citizens to develop events and to benefit even more from their effects.

The following chapters look in more detail at how eventfulness can be created and programmed, how event programmes and event stakeholders can be managed, how eventfulness can be marketed, and how to monitor and enhance the impact of event programmes for the city.

