

Cultural Planning in the Eastern Pori Suburbs: Applicability of the Approach?

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Abstract: This paper describes an attempt to apply cultural planning in a group of high-rise suburbs with an aging population in the mid-size city of Pori, on the West Coast of Finland. First, the background of the project and the motive for adopting a cultural planning approach is explained. A preceding pilot study on cultural planning in Finland is described, providing background information about the recent spread of the approach into the country and the current state of cultural planning processes. Second, the starting points and conceptual framework of the cultural planning project are briefly discussed in the light of research literature. After that, the objectives of the cultural mapping phase and the baseline studies linked with it are elaborated. Cultural resources of the Eastern Pori suburbs, as identified in the mapping, are analyzed. Prescriptions for cultural development follow, based on collaborative planning and focusing on public spaces and community art in the Eastern suburbs. Finally, the further applicability of cultural planning in the Finnish context is assessed, judging from the Pori experience.

Keywords: cultural planning, cultural mapping, co-creation, suburbs, Finland

Résumé : Cet article met en relief l'expérience de la mise en œuvre d'un projet de planification culturelle à Pori (en Finlande), une banlieue de taille moyenne, à la population vieillissante et caractérisée par ses nombreux gratte-ciels. Après avoir discuté du contexte entourant ce projet, cet article aborde les tentatives de planification culturelle antérieures à ce projet tout en situant ce projet en rapport à d'autres expériences de planification culturelle réalisées en Finlande. Après avoir mis en évidence les grandes orientations théoriques appuyant le propos de cet article, le cas de la partie est de la ville de Pori est analysé et les données de la cartographie culturelle sont mises en évidence. Cet article apporte de nombreux constats qui participent à alimenter le débat et à enrichir la pratique de la planification culturelle en Finlande.

Mots clé : planification culturelle, cartographie culturelle, co-création, la banlieue, Finlande

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Introduction

In 2013, Landscape Studies of the University of Turku launched a research project, funded by the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ARA, which had the eastern high-rise suburbs of Pori as its main target area. The City of Pori started a parallel development project in the same area, coordinated with the research project. In the recent master plan, the area had been estimated to have development potential due to its location along a main traffic corridor next to the neighbouring town of Ulvila. No major research or development projects had previously taken place in this particular suburban complex. Cultural planning was chosen as the main approach for the research project, and aimed to support the strategic planning and development of the area, to empower local residents and other stakeholders, and to build partnerships. During the course of the project, the applicability of the cultural planning approach in the Finnish context was studied.

Cultural planning is an umbrella term covering a variety of approaches that aim at mainstreaming culture in local and regional governance. The concept has been used in its present sense at least from the 1970s and 1980s, originating in Australia and the United States (Ghilardi 2001). Its core idea is the use of culture as an integral part of strategic planning and development, which entails cross-sectoral action. Culture is understood in broad anthropological terms rather than narrowly as institutionalized artistic activity and canonized cultural objects (Young 2013; Stevenson 2013; Vahlo 2014).

Already in the 1960s, UNESCO had identified cultural policies as a crucial means to promote socioeconomic development and welfare. In the United Nations post-2015 sustainable development agenda, adopted in September 2015, culture was deemed as an indispensable part of sustainability. In urban development, culture – often understood as cultural/creative industries – has become a central tool of the local and regional governments in their attempts to promote economic growth and resilience as well as in rebranding places and attracting the creative class (Florida 2002; O'Connor 2013).

There were several reasons for us to choose a cultural planning approach. Landscape Studies is a multidisciplinary subject based on the notion of landscape as a collective and dynamic notion of place, anchored in the everyday life of local communities and collectively framing them. Cultural planning appeared to be very compatible with this overall approach, offering a holistic and interactive perspective on urban areas that was not sufficiently present in urban planning. We also felt at home with the methodological pluralism of cultural mapping, based on the humanities, widely understood as interpretation of cultural meanings, and more specifically on resident participation and GIS-based cartography. Still another reason to try out cultural planning was the fact that despite the wealth of international experience and research on the topic, it remains relatively novel and untested in Finland. The widespread use of cultural planning in Sweden suggested its applicability also in Finland, given similarities in culture and urban development as well as governance structures.

The integration of cultural planning into the project was preceded by a pilot study carried out by Landscape Studies and funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2013. It set out to map the use of cultural planning in Finland and Sweden by means of a literature review, as well as to establish a small network of interested Finnish municipalities. There were few domestic examples to begin with: the cultural planning process of the Sipoo Municipality, described elsewhere in this

issue, was the case where the approach had been most consistently followed on the basis of the Swedish model. In addition to it, the cities of Turku and Jyväskylä had embarked on similar processes, although these were defined only afterwards in terms of cultural planning.

The municipality of Sipoo had proceeded farthest, having started cultural planning in 2012, and it provided our project with insights about mapping methods, collaborative planning interaction, and co-operation between governance sectors. The main difference was that the process in Sipoo was initiated and implemented within the governance structure and was from the outset tied to local residential area development plans, making the institutional framework totally different and putting an emphasis on cultural planning rather than mapping. The 'welfare programme' of the city of Turku, connected with the Cultural Capital Year of 2011, resembled cultural planning in many respects. The main difference between the process in Turku and our case was the lack of a long-term cultural and strategic approach that was present in Turku, linked as it was with a private foundation and the short-term period of cultural capital status. The contribution of the Turku process to our case chiefly came from its theoretical considerations, published afterwards by Jukka Vahlo (2014).

Starting points and conceptual framing of cultural planning in Pori

The case of Pori is the first suburban adaptation of cultural planning in Finland, whereas in Sweden such processes have previously taken place, for instance, in the Norrby suburb of Borås (Lindqvist 2013). Our research project participates in the national development programme for residential areas, specifically targeting the high-rise suburbs of Finland. These areas are now facing a range of problems from local poverty and social deprivation, to dilapidated housing, to flight of services. The explicit aim of the ongoing programme is to mitigate marginalization concerning these areas, which has been reinforced since the 1990s recession.

Our project had two initial aims: to obtain by cultural mapping a holistic picture of the eastern suburbs of Pori, their resident communities, resources, and needs, and to produce a strategic cultural plan by means of collaborative planning. No prior large-scale research had been done on the eastern suburbs but various reports and datasets existed, mostly produced sporadically by Pori city planning, by other governance sectors, or by Statistics Finland. Residents were poorly organized and turnout at mandatory public consultations for planning purposes was low. The challenges here were in combining bits and pieces of information with one another and in achieving a participatory and cross-sectoral view on the suburbs and their population. The second goal required a preconceived idea of the cultural planning process and an assessment of its applicability and adaptability in the suburban context of Pori.

We were financed as an independent research project, yet coordinated with the parallel development project of the city of Pori. More concretely, our role was to support city planning and development of public spaces in the area by organizing public participation jointly with the development project. This was compatible with our project goals pertaining to cultural mapping and planning. The eastern suburbs offered us an opportunity to test and develop the cultural planning approach, promoting at the same time a culturally sensitive, bottom-up, and cross-sectoral urban development of the area. In planning our research, we needed to pay close attention to local

developing needs and agendas and had to strive for realistic and robust solutions that would be applicable in the Finnish municipal context.

Cultural planning is usually presented as a tool for democratizing societies, strengthening cultural diversity and facilitating strategic policymaking. On the other hand, it may also contribute to building up culture-based local economies, mainstreaming culture into all governance sectors, establishing public-private partnerships, and reshaping public spaces – as well as polishing local images. The suggested range of positive influences is often exaggerated (Stevenson 2013; Vahlo 2014). Discussing local cultural development in general, Simo Häyrynen (2010) has pointed out the need for caution in making hasty assumptions about local cultures, stressing the importance of internal power structures and their linkage with those outside the community. Cultural planning takes place within a power geometry (Massey 2005) and itself exerts power by making definitions, generalizations, and prescriptions, which call for both self-reflection and negotiation of the interpretations and suggested actions with the target groups.

The cultural mapping phase formed the first part of our project and built on existing models in the cultural planning literature, especially the ones outlined by Christina Hjorth (2014) in Sweden and the Creative City Network of Canada (Stewart 2007). Based on them, as well as on the texts of Lia Ghilardi (2001), Franco Bianchini (2013), and Colin Mercer and David Grogan (1995), we defined *culture* in broad terms, as a way of life in the vein of Raymond Williams (1958). Our focus was to identify local cultural resources, not excluding but also not limited to institutionally defined culture. We were aware of the risk of inserting our own values into the choices of cultural traits for analysis as well as of the fact that these may be contested and, even if agreed upon in general, subject to local power struggles. As a consequence, we strived for emic definitions of cultural resources and tried to keep an open mind regarding their contestation.

We were also conscious about our double role as researchers and agents of cultural policy at the local level. Our project shared with the national development programme for residential areas the task of mitigating urban marginalization, which we intended to tackle in Pori by means of supporting public participation, strengthening local identities, enhancing the media image of the suburbs, and, ultimately, by promoting well-being in our target areas. Such goals are typical for cultural planning processes, usually combined with the promotion of culture-based economic development, which in our case played a lesser part. In the case of the eastern suburbs of Pori we did not see a market-oriented ‘creative city’ approach, as described by Richard Florida (2002) or Charles Landry (1995), as the principal development strategy considering the volume and spatial distribution of cultural activity in the whole of Pori as well as the character of the target area and its population.

Cultural mapping of Pori Eastern suburbs: Objectives

Cultural planning is closely attached to the concept of cultural mapping, a sweeping study of all aspects of local culture in a given place. Cultural mapping contributes to social justice by acknowledging the whole range of cultural self-expression within a local community and by conveying an interpretation of local culture with grassroots anchoring to strategic decision-making. The cultural planning approach in general aims at reducing the hierarchy of governance by putting an emphasis on horizontal and network-based co-operation (Stewart 2007; Vahlo 2014).

Our project began with the cultural mapping of the Eastern Pori suburbs, carried out in co-operation with the city and the residents' associations in 2014. We understood cultural mapping as a freestanding component of the cultural planning process (Mercer & Grogan 1995) aiming at providing a broad picture of the target population and its cultural resources, both from an etic and an emic angle (see Bianchini 2013). Such a mapping would necessarily involve a wide range of methods and a strong participatory approach. We felt this to be needed for four main reasons: the lack of pre-existing research concerning the area and its population, the sectoral and fragmented nature of any information available on it, the hitherto weak public participation in local planning processes, and the negative media image of the eastern suburbs.

The initiative for cultural mapping in Pori came from our research project. The city planning authority, responsible for the planning of the area and for the development project financed from the same source as our research project, supported our main objectives and co-operated at the project level in carrying out the mapping. Other government sectors remained neutral or co-operated at the level of individual actors. No strong connection was made between cultural mapping and the City's planning of the Eastern suburbs and the City made no clear political commitment to either cultural mapping or the cultural planning process in its entirety.

The City of Pori had no pre-existing strong strategic vision specifically concerning the eastern suburbs but shared the general goal of mitigating marginalization with the research project. Different sectors had their own strategic views. That of city planning was above all manifested in a recent general plan of central Pori and in its goals for the cultural sector in its service strategy. The general plan stressed traffic and other physical planning issues, while the cultural service plan fostered accessibility, enhancement of community feeling, and cross-sectorality. The City's development project singled out one of the suburbs as a target for developing services and public space, entailing public participation and collaborative planning in a more extensive scale than the legally required minimum would demand.

Outcomes from baseline studies:

Aging suburbs, poor but content residents

To achieve a multiple framing of the area, our cultural mapping process was roughly divided into three parts: first, baseline studies on the demographics, history, environment, and planning situation of the area as well as its mediated image; second, a mapping of cultural resources; and third, studies focusing on particular suburbs and social groups. National and local statistics as well as previous studies, literature, media, and Internet materials were used in the baseline studies (Häyrynen 2015a).

The area under study consisted of a group of high-rise suburbs in Pori, a regional centre of 84,000 inhabitants with an industrial past on the west coast of Finland. Unlike in the major growth centres, Pori has not been growing substantially for decades although some neighbouring municipalities have merged with it. The contraction of industry has slowed, but has left the high-rise suburbs built for its workforce as containers for an aging and retiring population. Especially in the area under study in eastern Pori, the proportion of elderly is high and continues to grow, with younger families tending to move away from the area to detached house areas and low-income pensioners from elsewhere replacing them. Immigration to Pori has generally been insignificant, and immigrants are not a substantial group in any residential areas. While many other high-rise

suburbs of Pori have been targets for different development, revitalization, and investigation projects, the eastern ones have largely been ignored. The eastern suburbs also suffer from a bad reputation, mostly dating from rowdier times in the 1970s and 1980s but still maintained by the local press and Internet discussion groups (e.g., Wallin 2015b; Aro 2015).

Our baseline study showed how new high-rise suburbs were erected in the 1960s and 1970s on cheap land outside the built-up city boundaries to relieve a severe housing shortage caused by industrial growth. These consisted of multi-storey prefabricated concrete slabs, placed in geometrical patterns to ensure maximally effective use of space. Traffic, parking, and courtyard areas were confined in the planning to specific zones. Such planning methodology was common in Finland at the time, bearing here, as elsewhere, the name of “compact city” (Hankonen 1994; Saarikangas 2002; Kemppi-Vienola & Wallin 2015; Jacobs 1961).

The three eastern high-rise suburbs were built one after another in the middle of open fields with little preceding settlement. At the beginning, development of the new housing areas was met with enthusiasm and the new inhabitants, coming either from poorly equipped wooden houses in the city centre or from rural parts of Finland, were mostly happy with their modern dwellings. However, another kind of image soon started to creep into the media. The roads and public traffic connections remained bad for a long time and there were no local services at first. The surroundings remained bare and windswept, and social problems soon started to emerge, reflected in crime statistics and in headlines about drunken brawls and domestic violence (Rosendahl 2015; Kemppi-Vienola & Wallin 2015).

Even though many inhabitants remained content with the suburbs, the areas became stigmatized through the media, housing prices remained low, and ‘pockets of deprivation’ formed, especially around the council housing blocks where low-income and otherwise disadvantaged residents were concentrated. Detached housing areas for the more affluent started to spring up in the open land around the high-rise suburbs, creating a socially divided landscape. Further problems came to the suburbs as a result of factory closures and the 1990s recession, which led to high unemployment nationally. The ensuing recovery raised employment figures in other parts of Pori but failed to do so in its eastern suburbs (Kemppi-Vienola & Wallin 2015; Rosendahl 2015; Hannuksela 2015).

The most marked change recently has been the aging of the residents, combined with the departure of the young and families with children. The original residents, mostly consisting of baby-boomers, are now reaching retirement age and are already close to one-half of the population in one of the suburbs. Low-income pensioners are also moving in from elsewhere, the main reason being affordable and accessible housing with fair connections to the centre and with locally available basic services. The young families prefer detached houses, often in the areas surrounding the high-rise suburbs. Earlier problems with safety and violence have mostly given way to relative tranquillity, although the pockets of deprivation remain. With unemployment still soaring, those in the workforce now form a minority in the eastern suburbs. On the whole, the residential areas of Pori have become sharply differentiated along income and age lines, the high-rise suburbs in the east and other parts of the city forming together the low end of the scale (Wallin 2015b).



Figure 1. Map of City of Pori, percentage of retired residents

The map shows postal code areas coloured according to the proportion of retirees of each area's population. In the east of the map, Sampola (shaded in black) is distinguished by a high proportion of retirees. The other black area in the south is the location of the county hospital and large nursing home institutions. In the black-shaded areas, over 40% of the population's main occupational status is retired. In the grey-shaded areas 25-40% of the population is retired. In white-coloured areas, less than 20% of the population is retired. The map has been constructed with ArcMap by merging statistical information with a geographical map layer. © City of Pori, Land Survey 2014, permit number 431. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred 7.9.2015]. Accessed from: www.tilastokeskus.fi/tup/paavo/index.html. Source: Wallin (2015b)

The City of Pori has participated in several national and more recently also EU-funded programmes (e.g., URBACT II) for the development of residential areas. These have, however, largely circumvented the eastern suburbs, where key obstacles have been the low level of organized resident activity, leaving the city without suitable development partners in the area, and its lack of political representation in the elected city council. The persistently low voter turnout in the eastern suburbs may partly explain the lukewarm interest of the decision-makers, at least as long as no major changes in land use or real estate prices are in sight.

Cultural resources of the Pori eastern suburbs:

Scant public investment, grassroots activity, and hidden heritage

The actual mapping of cultural resources in the Eastern suburbs was based both on the residents' views of their area and its cultural supply and on institutionally defined culture. The residents' insights were mapped by interviews and their views on their surroundings and development needs by means of participatory GIS. In addition, different groups and key actors were approached by means of a survey (families with children), interviews (elderly residents), walking interviews (younger residents), and hearings and workshops (elderly residents and children) (Häyrynen 2015a).

To avoid path-dependent definitions of local cultural resources we interacted with as many resident groups as possible through a variety of channels and methods. Hearings and workshops with local residents were set up, usually ending up with much the same elderly audience. A survey

was sent to families with children by post. A participatory GIS inquiry was launched via Internet and also made available on paper and in Russian. Local key actors were mapped out and interviewed, as were representatives of specific groups. We also gathered information through placing postal boxes in local shopping centres, by social media, and by participant observation. The resulting coverage was uneven and left a number of gaps but undoubtedly provided a wider and deeper picture of the target area than mandatory participation or city government sources would have done. The mapping was conducted by a workforce of three full-time project researchers, assisted by students, over a few months of time.

The combined results of baseline studies and the views of different resident groups convey a picture about an area mostly appreciated by its predominantly working-class inhabitants but underrated by the rest of the city. The spatial distinction between the eastern suburbs and the centre was sharply made despite their spatial closeness. Of the social divisions, the one between age groups appeared the most salient. For instance, an actor network mapping showed that local networks and public-private contacts were clearly divided along two different age groups, leaving only the central governance actors with connections to both groups. There were also tensions among the elderly, manifested in various local disputes that took place within the residents' associations, in social media, and sometimes in the press (Wallin 2015a; Wallin 2015c).

Some residents saw the cultural mapping process as a means of voicing various concerns to the city, although care was taken not to make any promises concerning the direct effects of the mapping on local conditions. The researchers received numerous complaints about unsafe thoroughfare traffic, unruly parking, potholes, inadequate lighting, infrequent bus services, and general untidiness, especially from the elderly. Other complaints revealed friction points between the resident groups, resenting the rowdy behaviour of the young in precinct centres and unsightly drunks in public places. The informants of the Internet-based participatory GIS inquiry tended to be younger than those participating in hearings, workshops, and interviews. Their feelings of 'greyness' and stagnation in the area differed from the opinions of the elderly, although many other views were shared by both groups (Siro 2015b; Wallin & Siro 2015; Siro 2015c).

All resident groups saw the eastern suburbs as relatively peaceful, with lots of space, natural areas, and opportunities for sports and leisure activities, in contrast to the busier and more tightly built areas of the city. Precinct centres had a double meaning both as trouble spots and as activity centres and meeting places for different age groups. However, several residents also regularly visited the city centre for contacts and activities, relying on the relatively short distance and relatively good public traffic connections. With regard to future expectations, the dilapidation of the 1970s buildings that had not yet undergone a major overhaul caused concern among the residents. In contrast, infill development was generally not seen as a threat to the area or its positive traits (Siro 2015b, see Figure 2).

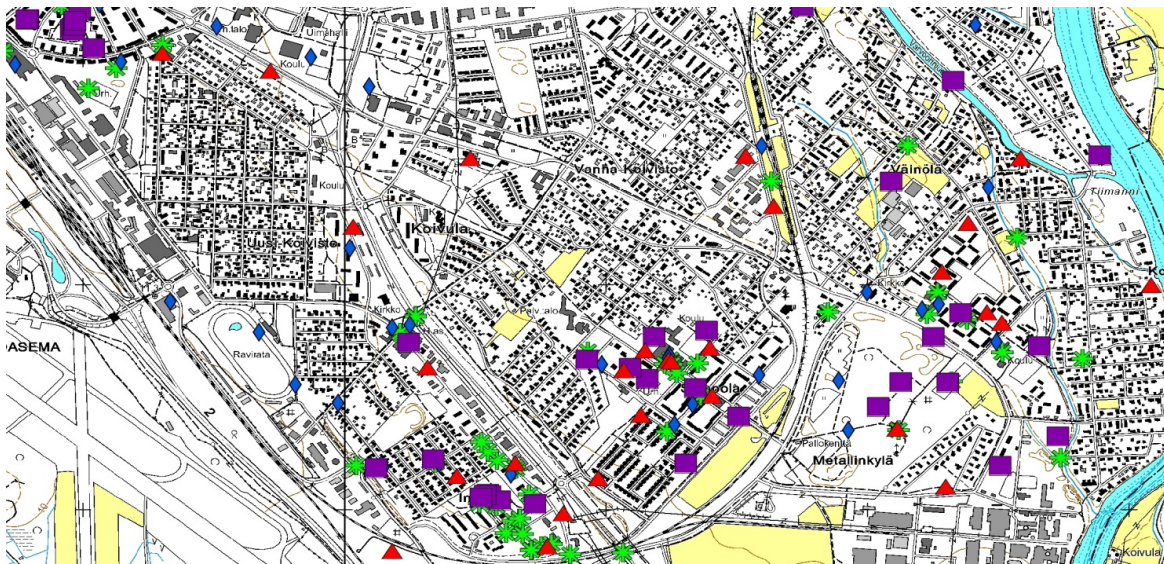


Figure 2. Participatory GIS findings (map produced using eHarava software)

Red triangles mark feared spots, green stars indicate places needing redevelopment, purple squares are meeting points, and blue lozenges mark favourite spots. Feared and favoured spots coincide with meeting points around local shopping centres, while places needing redevelopment are more dispersed. Traffic causes some fear. Source: Siro (2015b)

In terms of cultural resources, the eastern suburbs of Pori did not at all strike one as a “cultural desert” (Ashworth 2013). Public cultural investment in the area was, however, low in comparison with the more central parts of Pori, mostly consisting of a couple of public artworks from the 1970s and 1980s, some more recent community artworks, and small and sporadic subsidies for local groups and projects. Despite the scant support, a variety of local cultural activities took place, ranging from crafts and choir singing to video courses, tuning of vintage cars, and band rehearsals (Hovi-Assad 2015). By way of public cultural institutions, there was an actively used local branch of the city library. This was valued by all residents and was a particularly important meeting point for the young (Siro 2015a).

In the area and its vicinity, officially canonized Modernist architectural heritage was found. Nationally known buildings were a kindergarten (1984) and a rest home (1988) by the renowned architects Raili and Reima Pietilä and a Functionalist DX radio station by Hugo Harmia, the latter originally built for the intended 1940 Helsinki Olympics that due to the Second World War only took place in 1952 (Kemppi-Vienola 2015). These buildings and their stories were barely known to the residents and could thus be identified as “hidden heritage” (Evans 2013) that, if recognized by the community, could contribute to the local identity as cultural resources.



Figure 3. Old disused DX station from 1940, now working space for artist group T.E.H.D.A.S. Photo: Pia Hovi-Assad, 2015

The only professional artists to be found in the area were the T.E.H.D.A.S. ('Factory') group, founded near Pori in Kankaanpää in 2002 and active in the target area since 2011. In a short time, this markedly original and productive group had gained visibility by organizing events, art projects, and artist visits. Their presence in the area was visibly manifested in a 'sculpture park' that a group member had carved out from trunks of felled park trees around the DX station the group uses as its home base (Hovi-Assad 2015). The residents were aware of and expressed curiosity about the artist group, mostly in positive terms. Their presence at the DX station and their attempts to repair it and clear its surroundings were welcomed, as the building had been long abandoned and the park area around it had become overgrown.

All in all, the cultural mapping of the Eastern Pori suburbs portrayed a socially and culturally vivid and homogenous area, having largely retained the working-class character formed during the early years. Most residents had a worklife history in the former or existing factories, some having lived in the area from its inception. Many still maintained contacts with their earlier fellow workers and had strong social networks in the suburb area. However, the earlier basis of working-class culture is eroding, partly due to aging and partly due to industrial closures, and no distinct alternative identities have emerged.



Figure 4. *Maiden*, wood sculpture by Sandis Kondrats in the sculpture park near the DX station. Photo by Pia Hovi-Assad 2015

From cultural mapping to cultural planning: Reshaping of public spaces and community art

The mapping results were discussed with residents, artists, and representatives of the city government, resulting in an action plan. Four main lines of action were suggested: the strategic adoption of a cross-sectoral approach by the City for the development of the suburbs, the establishment of permanent public-private partnerships with delegated power and responsibilities, the development of public spaces by means of community art, and the support of artistic and cultural activities in the area. Culture-based interaction was seen as a means to bridge the gap between the age groups, which now have little contact. The suggested foci of activity were the precinct centres, the library branch, and the old DX station with the surrounding sports park (Häyrynen 2015b).

The foremost opportunity emerging from the cultural mapping process in the eastern suburbs appeared to be a successful combination of resident activity, on one hand, and the emerging cultural hub around the T.E.H.D.A.S. artist group, on the other. We saw two kinds of possibilities for making full use of this potential and for gaining leverage from it: first, transformation of public spaces by means of collaborative development involving residents, artists, and city government,

and, second, development of artist-led activities at the DX station that would also interface with the local community. Despite the general unresponsiveness of the City of Pori, these two objectives could be furthered in co-operation with the respective governance sectors, the City park department (with regard to public spaces), and the cultural sector (with regard to the artist group).

Currently planning for the management of the park area surrounding the DX station is underway, entailing collaborative design workshops with artists and residents. Elements envisaged for the management plan, to be carried out in phases, consist of necessary repairs to the DX station, enlarging of the sculpture park and outdoor exhibition and event area, refurbishment of trails and sports areas, urban farming, signage, and lighting. Development of activities in the DX station has begun with the launching of a new Triennale for Community Art, to be organized for the first time in 2016, together with an artist residence programme, both led by the T.E.H.D.A.S. artist group. The Triennale and the residence are intended to continue the collaborative planning and design of the neighbouring suburb areas in the form of community art projects.

Taking stock of the Pori process: Applicability of the approach in Finland

Compared with the models on which the cultural planning process of the eastern Pori suburbs was based (Lundberg & Hjorth 2011; Häyrynen 2015a), we only partially reached our goals. Our approach would undoubtedly have benefitted from a more profound background study on the theoretical aspects of cultural planning and from a more reflective conceptual framework. However, it did manage to serve the purposes of multiply framing the suburbs and laying out both the broadly understood cultural resources and the power geometry within the community.

Participation could not reach every group in the community equally. Only a small section of residents participated actively in the process, mostly consisting of elderly inhabitants but not even fully representative of them. The survey response rate and attendance at the workshops and hearings remained low, much in the same way it does in mandatory consultations. Social media proved unsatisfactory in accessing the parts of community not otherwise engaged in the process. The process thus produced no significant change in the activity of residents. The mapping results and the prescriptions were, however, openly discussed with the residents.

Deborah Stevenson (2010) points out that in real life cultural planning often remains an attempt of the 'weak' sectors to gain in importance, resulting in cultural planning largely understood as an extension of local cultural policy programmes and focusing on institutionalized forms of art as well as art and heritage objects. The case in Pori may be seen in this light, with the small cultural, museum, and park departments acting in favour of the cultural planning process; the bigger city planning department having an ambiguous position; and the participation of the strong basic protection, leisure, and education sectors remaining unrealized.

The cultural planning process in Pori was largely carried out as a collaboration between the research and development projects, the cultural and planning sectors, the park service, the Pori Art Museum, and the regional Satakunta Museum (the latter two run by the City). On the whole, the emphasis was on cultural mapping; the initial goals of collaborative planning contributing to strategic-level decision-making and its cross-sectoral implementation remained unrealized.

Cultural planning entails negotiating between opposites, such as narrow institutionalized or commercialized versus wide anthropologically defined culture, or deliberative democracy versus

centralized planning and strategic leadership. Both Greg Young (2013) and Deborah Stevenson (2013) see cultural planning as culturally sensitive, ‘culturized’ planning striving to mainstream culture instead of reducing it to a ‘creative city’ agenda, and to achieving social justice by inclusion and enrichment. According to Stevenson (2010), however, the process ought to adopt a cohesive and rigorous understanding of culture and have a limited focus, rather than try to address everything at once.

In our case the goals of social inclusion, justice, and enrichment dominated the process from the outset, the ‘creative city’ agenda playing no significant part in the suburban context. These goals were furthered by initiating a dialogue between the residents of the eastern suburbs, local artists, and actors within the city government. Although the interaction did not reach all local communities – for instance, the few immigrants in the area could not be effectively accessed and the young only sporadically – this was the first attempt in the area towards deliberation beyond mandatory planning consultation and was a new experience to many participants. The most concrete outcome for everyday life in the suburbs was the initiation of collaborative planning of public spaces. On the other hand, the aim of mainstreaming culture inside city government was met only halfway.

The focus of the project probably could have been defined more narrowly. Our motives for maintaining a broad focus in the mapping, as explained in the beginning of this article, were the need to keep an open mind about the forms and dimensions of local culture and the inherent power structures and tensions, addressing them by an attempt at multidisciplinary ‘thick description’. In addition to this, our wish was to explore the possibilities of the cultural planning approach for future use. One negative effect of the broad focus was the difficulty of managing the range of methodologies which, coupled with the limited time span, led to fragmentation of knowledge. This was partly due to the experimental character of some tools, such as the participatory GIS application, which was still under development. A more limited mapping focus would, however, have risked leaving important aspects of suburban communities, environments, and cultural resources uncovered. Most cultural mapping initiatives seem to be compromises of one kind or another between a sweeping all-inclusive focus and a chosen goal-oriented emphasis. In our case, the scope was unnecessarily wide, stressing the need for better planning and more reflection on choice of methods.

The implementation of cultural planning in the context of a research project and without a political mandate proved problematic. In Sweden, lack of political commitment has been a major reason behind unsuccessful cultural planning processes (Hjorth 2014). The span of a research project meets the needs of gathering and analyzing information but not those of seeing through planning processes to which participatory interaction is linked. We as researchers cannot answer for political decisions or administrative actions and will leave the scene once the project is ended – possibly to re-enter it with another project. Yet the participatory project inevitably will have raised expectations in the local community about the future development of the area. If participation has no concrete effect, a disillusionment concerning participation and collaborative planning may follow among the residents, undermining rather than serving the goal of active citizenship and ultimately failing to mitigate marginalization. The responsibility is not entirely ours but is worth noting when setting up new processes. It may be that a cultural planning process would have a better chance of success within the governance structure with prescribed top-down political

backing, rather than as a research project, which is better suited to catalyzing, facilitating, and producing knowledge and critical perspective.

The cultural planning approach is likely to gain more ground in Finland in the near future. The ongoing economic and spatial restructuring – industry relocations, municipal mergers, internal migration, and immigration – will leave an increasing number of localities at the crossroads, while the austerity programme being launched by the current government will leave gaps in public service networks and resize and redirect cultural investments. These factors, added to the present-day unprecedented influx of refugees into Finnish municipalities, will likely redirect interest into resilient strategies of change, building on participation, trust, and a shared understanding of culture and place.

Experience from the first cultural planning processes in Pori, Sipoo, and Turku will prove useful in anchoring cultural planning in the Finnish context and in forming national networks and linking to international collaborations on the sustainable cultural development of cities (Duxbury & Jeannotte 2013). Cultural planning processes should be based on clear definitions of culture. Their scope and disciplinary range ought to be wide enough to grasp culture as a locally anchored way of life, while maintaining a limited focus that depends on local contexts and priorities. The processes should pay attention to local power structures and hierarchies and reflect the position of their makers. They should have a strong enough political mandate to overcome the eventual resistance from within the governance sectors and should ideally be carried out by the government, informed and facilitated by researchers and the consultant community. Finally, in the processes the local communities must have an opportunity to regulate their mode and extent of participation and to have a say on the interpretations and prescriptions concerning them. The results of collaborative planning should also reach strategic decision-making, grounding their decisions in local realities and increasing the legitimacy of policies.

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