URBAN CULTURES PAPER 1: the cultural context

"culture is one of the most complicated concepts in the English Language"

Raymond Williams (1976)

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Introduction: This Discussion Paper provides an exploration of how to interpret the concept of 'Culture' in an urban planning context. It also considers the sub-categories of Cultural Practices; Cultural Expression; Cultural Heritage; Cultural Identity; Cultural Diversity; and Cultural Capital.

The Concept

As a starting point in analysing the meaning of "Culture" it is worth noting that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) uses the Edward Tylor definition of culture, that: '*Culture 'is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society*' (Tylor, E.1958: 1). I would suggest that based on that definition it can be readily argued that 'Culture' as "that complex whole" is a critical factor in relation to the planning and design of the built environment from the perspective that 'Culture' influences not only the 'look and feel' of a place, but it also it addresses the social behaviours and ways of life of the local community, and from the perspective of how inherent cultural values influence the planning and designing of the built environment, public places and shared spaces.

But first we will explore more about how the word 'Culture' has been interpreted, analysed, and explained by a range of cultural theorists, and thinkers across a range of disciplines. Culture is a word that British academic, Raymond Williams has described as one of the most difficult words in the English language to define, and it is often used to cover every aspect of our lives, the arts and / or our working environment. In relation to the positive influences of the arts, Swedish academic, Erin Cory and her colleagues, writing in their article *Translocality and Translocal Subjectivities: A Research Overview Across the Fields of Migration,* remind us that:

> Williams (1981) emphasizes the close link between the idea of the avant-garde and urban development. Artistic avant-gardes are primarily metropolitan and shaped by immigrants shar[ing] no common language but that of the metropolis, and therefore prone to break with given sign-systems, instead through creative linkages contributing to the pluralism upon which the metropolis supposedly thrives. (Cory, E. et al. 2020:9)

While there are many examples of avant-garde artists impacting on the urban environment, especially as interpreters of our urban condition, I believe it is also important to keep in mind two critical issues, firstly that while 'Culture' can be seen as how a society or place expresses importance and meaning, and what collectively matters to a place and its people, it is greatly influenced by the context of its history, geographic location, and its topography. Secondly, it is important to remember that a city's 'Culture' is not static as it transforms over time in response to the changes in the demographics and the physical fabric of the city. As Cory also reminds us, *"Cultures unfold, proliferate, spread. They consist of relationships and are dependent on mediation, which adds a vital force or directionality, an energy that may be further cultivated.* And therefore *"any study of culture has to address and find ways to 'capture' also the tension between continuity and change, and between wider social patterns and specific forms of expression. (Cory, E. et al. 2020:9)* This adaption and adoption of the new and existing cultural context is the basis of the "fusion" concept, bringing together a diversity of cultural ways of seeing and experiencing the evolving urban environment.

A review of literature addressing the concept of 'Culture' in the urban context, provides a very wide range of different interpretations, including the notion of the 'Culture of Cities' vis a vis 'Cultural Cities'. The concept of 'Culture of Cities' is referring to a 'complex whole' as exemplified by and informing the work of UNESCO's *Human Centred Cities* program (2016). The notion of 'Cultural Cities', as highlighted by the annual '*European Capital of Culture*' initiative of the European Commission which encompasses cultural expression and cultural activities such as the arts and cultural assets both as tangible and intangible heritage. As Andrew Pratt notes in his 2010 article *Creative cities: Tensions within and between social, cultural and economic development. A critical reading of the UK experience,* the European Capital of Culture became a very popular way to showcase the cultural offering of European cities, so much so that the UK has now adopted the concept and initiated the UK City of Culture program.

This notion of 'Cultural Cities' can be seen in the context of Australian Local Government, my research into the ways that the term 'Culture' is used in metropolitan Council urban planning strategies found, the focus was on the interchangeable use of 'Culture' and 'Art', especially regarding 'Cultural' vis a vis 'Arts' facilities and infrastructure (Brecknock 2021).

Culture can also be associated with the notion of being 'Cultured'. Indeed, as Ken Robinson reminded us, in *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative (2001)*, that since the 18th century the notion of 'Culture' has become associated with the '*process of intellectual or social refinement. It's in this sense that a person might be described as being cultured'* (2001: 167).

When the focus is on 'Culture' as peoples' ways of life I would suggest that it is of importance to understand a community's 'cultural frames of reference', for example US Anthropologist John Ogbu, proposes that: '*Culture is a people's way of life. It has five components: (a) Customary ways of behaving; (b) Codes or assumptions; (c) Artefacts; (d) Institutions; and (e) Social structures.'* (1995: 192). The notion of a community's 'cultural frames of reference' is a useful approach when developing Cultural Literacy as each frame can inform a set of criteria to aid in the assessment of desired and / or delivered outcomes as part of the planning and design process.

In a similar vein to Ogbu, Professor Martyn Barrett in *Intercultural competence: A distinctive hallmark of interculturalism?* addresses the difficulty of defining 'Culture' by proposing three aspects of 'Culture', these being material, social and subjective cultural frames, which he describes as:

> '*Material culture consists of the physical artefacts which are used by the members of a human group (e.g., food, clothing, housing, goods, tools, artistic products, etc.); social culture consists of the shared*

institutions of the group (e.g., the language, religion, laws, rules of social conduct, family structure, labour patterns, folklore, cultural icons, etc.); and subjective culture consists of the shared knowledge, beliefs, collective memories, identities, attitudes, values and practices which group members use as a common frame of reference for thinking about, making sense of and relating to the world. (Barrett, M. 2013: 3)

Another interpretation comes from Joerg Knieling and Frank Othengrafen who propose that the levels of culture could be broken down into three groupings: Artifacts; Espoused Beliefs and Values; and Underlying Assumptions.

Barrett also reminds us that '*individuals may inhabit highly specific cultural positionings*' such as associated with family, organisations, peer groups, religious and sporting groups etc. These multiple cultural positions are infinitely variable and flexible depending on time, place, and circumstances all of which makes the concept of 'Culture' difficult to define in association with a community and or place and clearly makes the concept of Planning Culturally challenging. Ed Wensing suggests that in the Australian context: *The critical challenge facing contemporary planning processes and professional planners is to dismantle a practice that has allowed one culture to exert its dominance and authority over another, building in its place a relationship based on mutual respect, with the potential to enrich and strengthen Australia's national life* (2012: 270). Therefore, the challenge of building a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between mainstream planning and the planning perspective of First Nations People must be explored in order to Plan Culturally.

Further to these propositions, Simone Abram in *Culture? and Planning?* (2016) suggests that culture is not an 'innocent term' rather its usage provides insights into the users view of the world and the environment and society within which they live. She argues that the *key problem is the tendency to see culture as a thing, or a set of attributes, something concrete that can be measured, compared, and manipulated*. (2016: 654). This she suggests can lead to culture being used in contexts that do not always align with the rationalities of contemporary urban planning, whereas it should be seen as a reflective approach to understanding peoples' perspectives on the world around them so that we can plan accordingly.

To address some of the problems identified by Abram refers to above, I suggest that Culture might be perceived and applied in an urban planning context by considering such concepts such as Cultural Practices; Cultural Expression; and Cultural Heritage. And also, Cultural Identity; Cultural Diversity; and Cultural Capital.

Cultural Practices

Cultural practices relate to the individual and / or community beliefs, values and behaviours that define a person as part of a cultural group or groups.

Examples of Cultural Practices of relevance to urban planning and design include but are not limited to:

Values: Shared values and beliefs are the glue that binds a cultural group and provide communities with a common framework within which to confront daily life and the associated challenges. Values and beliefs are particularly important to be aware of when planners are undertaking community consultation to encode and decode relevant information in a culturally sensitive way. This is critically important when engaging with First Nations communities regarding planning matters. It is also important to acknowledge that not all values are the sole domain of a belief group, there are many widely held values that bridge and define contemporary societies. Likewise, diverse values in a community can also be, at times, conflicting and divisive especially when confronting proposed urban development plans. Which raise serious challenges for urban planners and designers and reinforces the need for culturally literate professionals.

Behaviours: Include a wide range of cultural facets that affect or daily lives, such as the body language and the concept of personal space which varies widely from culture to culture and is an important consideration when planning space and infrastructure.

Edward T. Hall explored these concepts in his book The Hidden Dimension (1990) in which he writes about 'Culture as Communication' and describes:

> *…how people from different cultures not only speak different languages but, what is possibly more important, inhabit different sensory worlds. Selective screening of sensory data admits some things while filtering out others, so that the experience as it is perceived through one set of culturally patterned sensory screens is quite different from the experience perceived through another.* (Hall 1990:2)

Ways of life: One only has to travel to different parts of the world to see how different cultures have evolved their ways of life through the influence of cultural values and response to the climate and environment. These lifestyle variations are reflected in the built environment through the way that people live their lives in public or private, for example in Morocco the buildings are inward facing with living areas in the centre of the building or on the rooftops. While in Spain people lead gregarious lives in public places, enjoying communal dining in the cool of the evening.

The built environment has been adapted by local communities to reflect their values and behaviours, but migrating people face the challenge of how to adapt their way of life to new and often vastly different public and private built form. In my Intercultural City research in the London Bourgh of Lewisham I saw first-hand how challenging adjusting to a London city environment was to migrant groups from the West Indies, Vietnam, and Somalia. The challenges related to both adjusting to behaviours in public space and how to adapt the residential building stock to meet their traditional ways of life.

Cultural Expression

Cultural expression is a key element in the look and feel of a place through society's use of art, architecture, design, and cultural symbols. In his *Writings on Cities* Henri Lefebvre reminds us that in addition to the critical role that architecture plays, we must also not forget:

> *… that gardens, parks, and landscapes were part of urban life as much as the fine arts, or that landscapes around cities were the works of art of those cities. for example, the Tuscan landscapes around Florence, inseparable from its architecture, plays an immense role in Renaissance arts. Leaving aside representation, ornamentation and decoration, art can become 'praxis' and 'poiesis' on a social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art. (Lefebvre 1996:173)*

By drawing the distinction between praxis and poiesis in art practices raises an important consideration in relation to cultural expression and urban development. Praxis typically highlights arts practice as an intrinsic activity of inherent personal artistic satisfaction. Sometimes referred to as Arts for Arts sake! Whereas creating art and design as a poiesis motivated artistic action because of extrinsic motivation such as placemaking through public art is highly relevant in contemporary urban development activity.

Examples of Cultural Expression of relevance to urban planning and design include but are not limited to:
Architectural styles/symbolism: This includes relevant architectural forms and detailing that are symbolic of local cultural traditions and behaviours. It may also take the form of urban design detailing such as street furniture and symbolic structures and elements as found in ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown or Little India.

The role of art in placemaking

In Australia here has been a strong movement supporting the integration of artworks into urban environments, either as part of the revitalisation of existing streetscapes or as a planned element of urban development projects. Much has been written about the benefits and commissioning processes for 'public art', however in this section I want to focus on terminology. Labels such as 'Public Art', 'Art in Public Places', 'Urban Art' and 'Street Art' have been used, often interchangeably, without providing any clarity regarding the context. For example, in the 1995 book *Places not Spaces – Placemaking in Australia* edited by Tamara Winikoff, under the heading 'Art in Public Places' states that:

> *Public art could be regarded as the social and aesthetic puts of a society, expressing its values, beliefs and dreams. Until relatively recent times, art and craft were integral to the structure and embellishment of public buildings and spaces, but post war austerity and international modernism reduced the role of art to one which has been described as "brooches on buildings". However, currently there is an international revival of art in public places both integrated into the design and structure or as discrete entities within a space. (1995:71)*

As can be seen from the quote above 'Art in Public Places' and 'Public Art' are used interchangeably and without clarification. Therefore, I provide my thoughts below on how I believe each of those terms should best be used.

Art in Public Places: The traditional placement of an art object such as an artwork on a building or large sculpture in a public space. Such artworks are likely the result to praxis focused art practice, may not be 'site specific' or commissioned specifically for that site. (perhaps justifying the derogatory terms such as a "brooch on the building" or a "Turd in the Plaza")

Public Art or Urban Art: Usually refers to an artwork commissioned specifically for a public place and the artwork will most likely be of a site-specific nature and the result of poiesis art practice. Public art has become standard practice within placemaking projects across Australia with artists working in collaboration with urban designers and local communities. There are many critics of 'Public Art' who believe it has become commercialised and little more than urban decoration, and storytelling elements. In my opinion the artistic merit of the artwork is entirely dictated by the vision and skills of each individual artist involved in interpreting the project brief.

Street Art: Refers to the art practice of large-scale paintings on city buildings or other civic/commercial infrastructure that has evolved beyond graffiti or tagging. Whereas graffiti, tagging and gorilla art were traditionally done illegally, the current street art movement are typically created with the permission of the building owner and local authorities. Indeed, many cities around the world have initiated Street Art Festivals and / or annual street art commissioning programs often with the goal of encouraging high volume of photos being taken and posted on social media a way of promoting the city.

Kyle Chakya in his 2004 book *Filterworld: How Algorithms Flattened Culture* observed that:
> *While street art was originally a gorilla activity, Instagram walls were spots designed for people to stop and take photos in front of, to post on Instagram. And as visitors posted those photos online and ideally tagged the business or location, the photos became a kind of decentralized online billboard, a form of free advertising and digital word of mouth. The Instagram walls perpetuate themselves.*

Cultural Heritage

UNESCO (2024) defines cultural heritage as including:

> *… artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments.*

As outlined above cultural heritage falls into three categories: 'Tangible', 'Intangible' and 'Natural Cultural Heritage'. Of the three, Tangible Cultural Heritage is the most likely category that urban planning projects would focus on when considering existing cultural heritage that needs to be addressed in planning and design considerations. Tangible cultural heritage is generally split into two groups; firstly, urban planning professionals would primarily consider the 'immovable' heritage which includes buildings, large industrial installations, residential projects or other historic places and some monuments. Secondly, some of the local 'moveable' heritage includes documents, moveable artworks, and other artifacts, would be worth considered during the site analysis phase.

Cultural heritage can be defined as the legacy of cultural property that a group or society have inherited from the past. Where the cultural heritage property is valued by groups and societies, they are where possible, maintained and preserved for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, making decisions as to which objects, monuments or natural environments are preserved involves ongoing research and about how a society reads its past and present. For example, the current debate in many western countries, especially those with colonial pasts, about the appropriateness of retaining some monuments and statuary relating to involvement in actions such as human slave trading.

Key to evaluating local cultural heritage is that its tangible and intangible objects are symbolic of the local community's identity and natural surroundings. They have valuable stories to tell about what the community values and what they wish to preserve as part of their sense of community. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that in our culturally diverse world, heritage is a highly contested concept, especially in countries such as Australia and Aotearoa - New Zealand. This is especially the case in terms of places of cultural significance, the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative (SNSI), defining sacred natural sites as *areas of rich and diverse nature having special spiritual significance to individuals and communities.*

In terms of urban planning, both intangible and tangible heritage can provide valuable local context to any urban development/redevelopment planning and design. Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach, in *Cultural Resources and the Idea of the Creative City,* reminds us that when considering a city's heritage as a cultural resource:

> *Questions emerge such as: How can cultural heritage be dealt with to increase a city's attractiveness for residents and tourists? How can cultural heritage contribute to the process of developing or strengthening a city's unique identity? What kind of space-related attractions are favoured by various groups of knowledge workers and artists (the creative class)? How should a city that needs diversity for its development, as the creative city theory posits, approach space? How to cater for diverse groups and diverse needs? How to engage those groups in heritage conservation or renewal? How to make people feel they are part of the "urban ecosystem," for which they are responsible?* (Wiktor-Mach, D. 2013:459)

Cultural Identity

"Cultural identity applies to all cultural references through which individuals or groups define or express themselves and by which they wish to be recognised: cultural identity embraces the liberties inherent to human dignity and brings together, in a permanent process, cultural diversity, the particular and the universal, memory and aspiration". UNESCO Declaration of Cultural Rights (1996)

The notion of 'Cultural Identity" and urban planning is not always a simple one, as exemplified by highly contested places and spaces in cities such as Berlin and Belfast where there have been, and indeed in Belfast's case continue to be, major political and social divides between the city's communities which find expression in the sense of place and cultural expression through protest street art and memorials (Brian Ladd, 1957 & William Neill, 2004). As Neill reminds us in his 2004 book *Urban Planning and Cultural Identity*, that culture is a key ingredient of "Identity", whether it is an individual identity or the identity of a people and their cities. Building on this concept Turkish-American philosopher, Seyla Benhabib in her 2000 article, *Democracy and Identity*, proposed that:

> *Culture in the context within which we need to situate the self, for it is only by virtue of the interpretations, orientations and values provided by culture that we can formulate our identities, say 'who we are' and 'where we are coming from'* (Benhabib, S. 2000: 18)

In his 2006 book *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, Robert Bevan explores this issue in considerable detail through examples from around the globe, such as the Hindu extremists destroying the Bari mosque in 1992 and the Buddhas of Bamiyan blown up by the Taliban in 2001. Bevan writes that invading forces, practice *the destruction of cultural artifacts of an enemy people or nation as a means of dominating, terrorizing, dividing or eradicating it altogether*. (Bevan, R. 2006:8)

UNESCO acknowledge this is a serious global challenge to Cultural Identity:

> *Armed conflicts have always had a devastating effect on culture including the intentional destruction of people's collective memories and the tarnishing of symbols representing their cultural identities. In recent decades, culture has been increasingly targeted as a means of erasing people's ties to their communities, cities, and nations. Similar targeted acts of destruction are undertaken to erase cultural diversity and pluralism and to deny victims their cultural rights and fundamental freedoms.* (UNESCO 2018:11)

Included in the notion of armed conflict are terrorist attacks, such as the destruction of the World Trade Centre twin towers, which to Americans, represented bold statements of their national identity as a modern capitalist democracy and world power. In his 2005 book "*The Edifice Complex: The Architecture of Power*" Deyan Sudjic explores the origins and symbolism and destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York and postulates that it was: *a literal acceptance of the iconic power of architecture, and an attempt to destabilize that power even more forcefully through erasure. (2005:14)*

The destruction of Cultural Identity during wars has been weaponised as a means of subjugating a people, as the current Russian invasion of Ukraine is demonstrating, with cultural heritage buildings becoming targets of missile attacks etc. UNESCO has estimated that by June 2022 152 cultural sites had been either totally destroyed or partially damaged. Likewise, the 2023 invasion of Gaza by Israel has resulted in massive destruction of Palestinian culture and heritage with the Omari mosque, Gaza's oldest mosque, destroyed by Israeli airstrikes. St Porphyrius church, the oldest church in Gaza, also dating back to the fifth century and

believed to be the third oldest church in the world, was damage along with more than 100 other heritage sites in Gaza, reported to have been damaged or levelled, including a 2,000-year-old Roman cemetery and the Rafah Museum, which was dedicated to the region's long and mixed religious and architectural heritage. Of course, it is not just the destruction of significant cultural heritage sites, there is also the massive 'domicide', that is the deliberate destruction of home, which is happening across Gaza. As Ammar Azzouz *from Oxford University reminds us:*

> *But, home here doesn't only mean the physical, tangible built environment of people's homes and properties, it also refers to people's sense of belonging and identity. We are seeing in many conflicts and wars across the world that alongside the destruction of architecture, people's sense of dignity and belonging is also being targeted. There is a link between genocide and domicide: genocide refers to the killing of people and domicide to the erasure of their presence and their material culture.* (2023)

In a 2024 Guardian news article titled *What does it mean to erase a people – a nation, culture, identity? In Gaza, we are beginning to find out,* columnist Nesrine Malik discussed the impacts of armed conflict and its destructive power on cultural identity and wrote that the Gaza conflict shows that:

> *This is what it would look like, to erase a people. In short, to void the architecture of belonging that we all take so much for granted so that, no matter how many Gazans survive, there is, over time, less and less to bind them together into a valid whole. This is what it would look like, when you deprive them of telling their story, of producing their art, of sharing in music, song and poetry, and of a foundational history that lives in their landmarks, mosques, churches, and even in their graves.*

To address the aftermath of world conflicts and the destruction of cultural urban fabric, UNESCO published a Position Paper in 2018 titled *Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery* (CURE) that provides a framework of operational guidance for policymakers and practitioners confronting the planning, financing, and implementation phases of post-crisis interventions for city reconstruction and recovery.

> *The CURE Framework and its seven guiding principles reflect the shared commitment of the World Bank and UNESCO to place culture at the forefront of the reconstruction and recovery of cities in post-conflict, post-disaster, and urban distress situations.*
>
> *The following key messages summarize this joint undertaking:*
> – *Culture plays a key role in post-crisis reconstruction and recovery processes.*
> – *Culture should be acknowledged as the foundation that integrates people-centred and place-based policies.*
> – *Effective city reconstruction and recovery programs require that culture be mainstreamed across the damage and needs assessment and scoping, setting policy and strategy, financing, and implementation phases.*
>
> *By integrating culture into sustainable urban development policies that address the impact of urban crises, the CURE Framework aims to help make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.* (UNESCO 2018:9)

The Position Paper acknowledges that the city is a "Cultural Construct", and that "Culture" is the foundation upon which to connect people and place in a reconstruction process.

In the Australian context, addressing the notion of identity of First Nations people and especially in relation to the questions 'who we are' and 'where we are from' leads to exploring the relationship to 'country'. As Daphne Habibis et al. remind us: *Indigenous identity and culture are not simply add-ons that can be adapted to and adjusted at will but are engrained in lifestyles, habits and social connections. Their significance extends beyond cultural preference to issues of wellbeing and economic survival through principles such as mutual reciprocity.* (Habibs, D. et al 2012:17) These issues of identity present a major challenge for contemporary urban planners and designers and continue to arise throughout the sections on Urban Place and Urban Practice.

Thinking about the complex cultural identity of the Australian population with its First Nations People, the decades of British colonisers and subsequent waves of migration from Europe and Asia, Australian poet, David Malouf reminds us that "*A land can bear any number of cultures laid one above another or set side by side*" (1998) in today's context we might acknowledge that these imported cultures are built upon a foundation of 60 thousand years of First Nations culture. In a similar vein, and highlighting the contribution of migrants, Blair Ruble. et al state that:

> *The city can be viewed as historical layers, some that have disappeared and others that are still shaping space and identity. New migrant populations continue to add to these layers, altering the historical and physical form of the city and transforming the city into a space of hybridity.* (2008: 9)

In the early 1900s renown British urban thinker Patrick Geddes suggested that:

> *"We must excavate the layers of our city downwards, into its earliest past...and thence we must read them upwards, visualising as we go." We need to be able to fold and integrate the complex, histories, textures and memories of our urban environments and their populations into the planning process. We need to do some cultural mapping – tracing people's memories and visions and values – before we start the planning."*

I have previously written about the concept of 'Cultural Layering' (Brecknock 2006:89) highlighting the challenges that cultural layering presents for urban planners and designers as it calls for a high level of cultural literacy and meaningful Intercultural dialogue, especially in a country such as Australia where we have multiple layers built on a foundation of thousands of years of First Nations 'Culture' and spiritual association to 'Country'. Indeed, Ed Wensing reminds us that: *The failure of colonial Australia to recognise Aboriginal people's connection to country, coupled with Aboriginal law and custom about who has authority to know about country, has produced a strong inclination among Aboriginal people to withhold information about significant sites from state agencies.* (Wensing, E. 2012: 263). While this reluctance to share information is very understandable, it does create a situation that can make it difficult for built environment professionals who are genuinely seeking to be informed and make culturally sensitive planning and design decisions.

Cultural Identity can be considered to encompass a wide range of cultural behaviours that define a group's social and spiritual everyday needs, their values, and beliefs. They represent shared pattern of behaviours in daily life that are mostly unconscious. It is, however, important to acknowledge that early patterns of colonisation and now globalisation have applied great pressure to many previously held cultural belief systems and group values. From an urban planning perspective this flattening of cultural differences can also be seen in the increasingly "International" style of architecture and urban infrastructure around the world, particularly in the growing economies of countries like China that are building new cities at an unprecedented rate, with little evidence of cultural identity.

Cultural Diversity

When considering Cultural Diversity, I believe that it is firstly important to recognise that, throughout history many communities and especially cities have always had diverse populations, although obviously some were more diverse than others. Classic examples of the notion of mercantile hubs where a wide diversity of cultures interacted to trade goods and skills, include the old-world cities, such as Venice and Aleppo, a city, which before being devastated in the current Syrian conflict, was considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and is reported to have been inhabited since the sixth millennium BC. Likewise, Peter Ackroyd reminds us in his (2000) work, '*London: The Biography*', that Roman Londinium was full of '*administrators, traders, soldiers and slaves from Gaul, Greece, Germany, Italy and North Africa*'. Ackroyd, further writes that by the 10th Century the city's population included Gauls, East Saxons, Mercians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Franks, Jutes and Angles, '*all mingled and mingling together to form a distinct tribe of "Londoners"*. Indeed, as stated by the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Principle 1.1. of the Agenda 21 for Culture:

> *Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations. Culture takes on different forms, responding to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories. Cultural diversity is "a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence" (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 3), and is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality.* (2004: 7)

In contemporary discourse the word 'Culture' appears in many different configurations, for example the term 'Multi-Cultural' is used as a descriptor of culturally diverse populations, whereas the term 'Intercultural' is used to describe the process of engagement or urban planning with and between culturally diverse communities. Jude Bloomfield and Franco Bianchini argue that to be Intercultural is an inclusive approach that encompasses all members of a Culturally diverse society as a '*single diverse public not multiple publics which are organisationally and socially separate*' (2004:39).

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a person or group can tap into to demonstrate one's cultural and social competence. It is comprised of the material and symbolic goods that a cultural group considers essential to their way of life. In his 1983 essay, "*The Forms of Capital*," French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu suggested that there are three types of cultural capital: embodied, objectified, and institutionalised capital.

Embodied Cultural Capital: Bourdieu stated that cultural capital exists firstly in an '*embodied state'*, that being the knowledge people acquire over time, through socialization and education. The more they obtain certain forms of embodied cultural capital, say knowledge of community norms, mores, and skills such as table manners, language, and gendered behaviour, the more they become accepted within their community. Bourdieu suggested that people often act out and display embodied cultural capital as they move through the world and interact with others.

Objectified Cultural Capital: Bourdieu also suggests that Cultural capital exists in an '*objectified state'*. This he refers to as the material objects individuals own that might relate to their educational pursuits (books and computers), jobs (tools and equipment), clothing and accessories, the durable goods in their homes (furniture,

appliances, decorative items), forms of expression (the visual, performing, and literal arts) and even the food they purchase and prepare. These objectified forms of cultural capital tend to signal one's economic class.

Institutionalised Cultural Capital: Bourdieu suggested that cultural capital exists in an '***institutionalized state***'. This he refers to as the ways in which cultural capital is measured, certified, and ranked. Academic qualifications and degrees are prime examples of this, as are job titles, political offices, and social roles like husband, wife, mother, and father.

A further discussion on the importance of Cultural Capital is found in the 2001 book *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability, Culture's essential role in public planning* by Australian Jon Hawkes, who proposed that "*Cultural Capital is the glue that holds a society together: social capital is the lubricant that allows it to operate smoothly*". *(Hawkes, J. 2001:18)*

> *Our public planning procedures need a standard method of assessing the cultural impact of all proposals. If it is accepted that cultural vitality is an essential to sustainable development and healthy society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability and that culture resides in all human endeavour then we need a way to ensure that all public activity is evaluated from a cultural perspective. (Hawkes, J. 2001:32)*

The suggestion from Hawkes that planners need a '*standard method of assessing cultural impacts'* will be further explored in theme 3 Cultural Practices. Where the idea of developing Cultural Impact Assessment models for urban planning is considered in the context of established internationally recognised models for environmental and social impact assessments.

Conclusions:

From the perspective of Planning Culturally this paper has a focus on understanding the breadth and depth of culture in relation to the built environment. We started this paper with the Tylor definition of culture, that: '*Culture 'is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society*'. It is worth coming back to the notion that 'Culture' as "that complex whole" that I would argue influences and should govern every aspect in the planning and design of our cities. the built environment from the perspective that 'Culture' influences not only the 'look and feel' of a place, but it also it addresses the social behaviours and ways of life of the local community, and from the perspective of how inherent cultural values influence the planning and designing of the built environment, public places, and shared spaces.

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