‘Culture for Whom?’ Residents’ reflections upon the use of public art and culture in Folkestone. Are aims for enhancing place image and engaging with local place identity being met?

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Abstract

Amongst the increasing prevalence of the use of public art, and more broadly culture, within regeneration projects have been calls by Markusen and Gadwa (2010: 380) for cultural planners to 'test the outcomes of regeneration projects in related to stated aims and goals'. One reason for this is that, while official policy aims cultural regeneration may suggest that social and economic issues will be prioritised simultaneously, in many cases, aims for place image are developed without consideration as to how proposals will engage with local place identity (McCarthy, 2006). In acknowledgement of this, the project considers whether the stated aims for a cultural planning project in the seaside town of Folkestone are being met. Following a focus group with a local residents group, alongside supplementary data from secondary data sources, it is claimed that while there is much rhetoric in policy for efforts to enhance Folkestone's image as being developed alongside efforts to engage with local place identity, there is little evidence of this occurring in practice. While the result of the project broadly leads to similar conclusion drawn by others, it is suggested that the real value of the project is in its approach taken, which in considering aims against stated aims exposes results that commonly used economic evaluations may have failed to expose. It is claimed that if the planning discipline is serious in its claims to ensure cultural projects engage with place identity, it is important that studies into the impact of cultural planning adopt methods that hold claims to engage with place identity to account, to ensure they do not simply become a redundant rhetoric in policy.

Key Words: Cultural Planning, Place Identity, Public Art, Seaside
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Introduction

(1.1) Introducing the Research Context

Cultural planning has been described as ‘the strategic use of cultural resources for the integrated development of cities, regions and countries’ (Evans, 2001: 7). In recent decades cultural planning can be considered to have gained increased recognition in planning literature under what has broadly been termed the ‘cultural turn’ (Evans, 2005). As part of the turn towards culture cultural assets, including public art, museums, archives and theatres, have become viewed as not simply accessories to urban development, but also as possessing the ability to fulfil much broader social and economic objectives within their own right (Hall and Robertson, 2001). Further adding to the appeal of culture in regeneration have been case studies such as NewcastleGateshead and, most prominently, the Guggenheim, Bilbao, which have been cited as examples of the positive contribution that culture can have (Doucet, 2007). Such has been the perceived success for cultural planning in re-branding the post industrial landscape, that Gibson and Stevenson (2004: 1) commented that policy makers have become consumed with a philosophy of ‘just add culture and stir’.

Thus from once occupying a peripheral role in urban policy literature for many years, in publications such as Our Towns and Cities – The Future: Delivering and Urban Renaissance (DETR, 2000), there is strong evidence for the role of culture being recast to occupy a more centralised position (Evans, 2005). Occurring almost simultaneously has been a renewed role for public art, which in the last two decades has been considered to undergo something of a renaissance (McCarthy, 2006: 244). While a consciousness for the role that public art can play in urban design has long been prevalent, the recognition of public art in an economic capacity has been a much more recent transition (Hall and Robertson, 2001). Moreover, with advocates claiming that public art can also deliver many social benefits (Hall and Robertson, 2001), it is perhaps unsurprising that culture and public art have become viewed as a panacea for urban policy makers (Doucet, 2007).

However, the use of art and culture within regeneration and the development process is not unproblematic (Sharp et al., 2005). According to McCarthy (2006), at issue is a balancing act between using art to promote the external image of a place (place image), while demonstrating awareness for local place identity. While there is evidence that through adequate engagement aims for place image enhancement can be achieved while
respecting local place identity (McCarthy, 2006), it is also suggested that in many instances aims for place image enhancement are prioritised over efforts to engage with local place identity (Kluzman, 2004). As a consequence, public art and cultural developments have often been installed with limited acknowledgment for the memories, history and attachments embodied in places and at worst have left existing residents isolated and excluded from the regeneration process (Miles, 2005).

But what is the role of planning and planners in this process? Planners occupy a central role in this process and have been viewed as the ‘conduit’ (Hague and Jenkins, 2005: 8) through which competing place identities are promoted. Thus for planners, while it is important that they create an identity for places that can help sell the image of a place, it is equally important that they can foster developments that acknowledges local place identity. Such discussions can be considered especially timely at present. With recent changes introduced under the Localism Act (2011) there is an increasing awareness to engage at the ‘local level’. In exemplifying this point the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA: 2011: 2) comment,

> The places created by this new process [localism] will be dependent on their ability to appropriately engage with local people and local issues, right from the beginning, designing ‘with’ rather than ‘for’ communities.

(Royal Institute of British Architects, 2011: 2)

Finally, in reflecting upon the development ‘temples’ it is hoped that, in contextualising the project around aims for place image and place identity, the project can explore some interesting ideas surrounding economic development and place.

(1.2) **Introduction to the Case Study: Folkestone**

While the use of culture has been seen prominently within the context of post-industrial European cities, it has also been well utilised in many coastal locations in England. However, while this has drawn much attention within the British Media (Can Art Put New Heart into Our Seaside Towns, The Guardian – August 2009; The Rise of the Seaside Art Gallery, The Guardian - March 2012; Can We Love to Be By the Seaside Again, The Telegraph – March 2010; Galleries and Festivals are Reinvigorating the Coastline, The Independent – July 2010) there has been limited coverage within academic circles (for notable exceptions see Smith, 2004; Kennell, 2011). Arguably such an omission is
surprising given the wealth of published academic literature upon cultural regeneration. Given this current deficit within the literature, one contention of this research project is to help, at least in part, broaden awareness of the use of culture and public art in a coastal context.

Folkestone, located on England’s South East Coast (Fig. 1.1), represents one of many examples of resort restructuring being led with public art initiatives (Smith, 2004). Having once been synonymous with the upper classes of the Victorian Era, in recent decades competition from overseas holiday destinations and successive years of underinvestment has led the area into a spiral of decline (Smith, 2004). The plight experienced in Folkestone is well summarised in a leaflet (Fig. 1.2) produced by a local residents group who asked ‘Is Folkestone Dying?’

Fig. 1.1 – Map of Folkestone’s Location

Fig.1.2 – ‘Is Folkestone Dying’ Leaflet (2001)
Depicting Residents Concerns
Source: Adventures in Regeneration (2010)

In an attempt to reverse Folkestone’s fortunes the Creative Foundation regeneration partnership was established in 2000. The Creative Foundation is a public/private partnership led by local philanthropist Roger de Hann, with other involvement from Kent County Council and Shepway District Council. As part of its mantra culture, creativity and the arts in regeneration are viewed as serving a vital role in Folkestone’s regeneration (Ewbank, 2010). While there have been many components to the regeneration, the focus of this project is with the flagship Triennial Festival for the Contemporary Arts which has been held in 2008 and 2011. The festival, one of the largest in the Europe, sees artists display their works publically around the town. Significantly, within the context of this project, following the event many of public artworks become installed as permanent features of the Folkestone landscape (see Fig 1.3).
The project has received much acclaim nationally. In acknowledging the success of the project Kate Quill of *The Times* (Cited in *ThisIsKentOnline*, 2011) wrote ‘The Triennial turns this charming but faded seaside resort into one big art gallery claiming it to be a roaring success’. Yet despite a lot of attention from national media, to date, there has been limited research conducted into whether the stated aims and benefits of the project are being realised by inhabitants of Folkestone. The lack of research considering the opinions of local residents experiencing cultural regeneration is not unique to Folkestone and, as will be discussed later, can be considered as a deficit in cultural planning studies more broadly (García, 2005; Doucet, 2007).

![Fig. 1.3 – Images from the Triennial - Source: Adventures in Regeneration Folkestone (2010)](image)

(1.3) **Project Aims and Research Questions**

Given earlier contentions about the problematic use of art and culture within the development process, the aim of this project is to consider whether the use of public art within Folkestone's Creative Quarter Regeneration Project is engaging with local place identity. In approaching this topic the project makes no excuses for its focus upon gauging the views of inhabitants, which have been considered as under represented in cultural planning literature (García, 2005; Doucet, 2007). Rather than simply reflect on the views of residents, the project makes such reflections in relation to stated aims emanating from local and regional policy discourse. While this will help to better contextualise the responses, it is also in light of comments by Markusen and Gadwa...
(2010:8) who in proposing a new research agenda for cultural planning state, for cultural planners there exists a need to assess the ‘outcomes of cultural planning strategies against stated planning norms and goals.’

In developing the project the following research questions have been posed to help inform and direct the research.

- Within policy documents informing the Creative Quarter Regeneration, what aims/ role is public art in Folkestone playing with respect to place image and local place identity?
- How, if at all, have planners engaged with residents to attempt to better reflect/ understand aspects of the local place identity?
- Are the aims for place identity, identified through the first research question, also being realised as outcomes of the regeneration?


Literature Review

(2.1) Cultural Planning and the Rise of Art and Culture in Regeneration

Cultural Planning has been described as ‘the strategic use of cultural resources for the integrated development of cities, regions and countries’ (DCM, 1995 cited in Evans, 2005: 7). In recent decades such an approach can be considered to have gained increased recognition in planning literature under what has broadly been termed the ‘cultural turn’ (Evans, 2005). As depicted through the interconnectedness of the diagram below, cultural planning advocates the potential for cultural policy and the arts to act as a catalyst in revitalising urban areas. Through such an approach, cultural assets, which according to Evans and Shaw (2004:1) includes ‘the arts, libraries, archives, architecture, museums, heritage and cultural tourism’, are utilised as a vehicle upon which broader social and economic development initiatives can be pursued (McCarthy, 2006).

Fig 2.1 Cultural Planning (Montgomery, 1990)

Generating further interest to the move towards culture has been a number of high-profile regeneration initiatives in European cities such as Barcelona, Bilbao and Liverpool. Such examples have been widely publicised as demonstrating the potential for culture and the arts to act as an antidote in the regeneration of the post-industrial landscape (Middleton and Freestone, 2008).

As mentioned above, cultural assets include an array of different cultural activities, but within this project the primary focus will be given to the impact of public art. Having identified the projects focus on public art, it is important that a working definition of public art is adopted to move away from simple, arguably reductionist, conceptions of it merely constituting art that it is in the public domain. In providing a holistic definition for public art Sharp et al (2005: 1003) claim that,
Public art is art which has as its goal a desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces – whether material, virtual or imagined – within which people can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public spaces or on our behaviours within them.

While there has long been a consciousness for the role that public art in the aesthetication of space dating as far back as the renaissance, the recognition of public art in an economic capacity has been a recent transition (McCarthy, 2006). Representing somewhat of a turning point in thinking towards the role of public art in policy discourse, many academics have cited the publication of The Economic Importance of the Arts (Myerscough, 1988) as a seminal text in the development of the arts (Hall and Robertson 2001; Sharp et al, 2005). Following its publication Hall and Robertson (2001: 5) state, ‘public art became increasingly justified not just in aesthetic terms but rather on the basis of its supposed contribution to what may broadly termed urban regeneration.’

Subsequent publications including, Micheal Porter's City Competitiveness (1995) and Charles Landry's The Creative City (2000), are cited as further publications that galvanised the role of the arts in regeneration (Evans, 2005: 960). While The Economic Importance of the Art emphasised the employment opportunities and diversification that public art could provide, Porter (1995) and Landry (2000) situated their debates within the emerging globalisation literature, arguably further adding to its appeal to policy makers looking to capture global opportunities. In contextualising the relationship between art, culture and globalisation Keating and De Frantz (2004: 190) state that,

In a crowded international market, it [culture] can mark the city as distinct, giving it a brand image. This can indirectly promote its economic competitiveness by increasing its position in the quality-life indexes of international investment rankings.

Many consider such a perspective as emanating from Harvey's (1989) works on urban entrepreneurialism. This approach views cities and regions in much the same way as companies, competing for business in a competitive market place. Marketing, or its urban counterpart ‘city boosterism’, have thus emerged as important features of a place's ability to capture investment (see Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Within this framework, public art is seen to play a prominent role, providing the ‘cover shot’ images.

Further adding to the appeal of the use of public art within regeneration has been its perceived social benefits. In reflecting upon the social claims that have been made for the use of public art in regeneration Hall and Robertson (2001: 10) identify seven benefits, namely;

- Developing a Sense of Community,
- Developing a Sense of Place,
- Developing Civic Identity,
- Addressing Community Needs,
- Tackling Social Exclusion,
- Creating Educational Value, and
- Promoting Social Change.

According to Swales (1992: 71) public art can be seen to articulate what has been referred to as the four values fundamental to developing strong communities: shared history, identity, needs and aspirations. Thus while being viewed as a way to create local distinctiveness and a sense of place, or as Hall and Robertson (2001: 19) term the ‘humanization’ of the built environment, in other examples communities maybe actively engaged in the creation, conception and installation of the artwork(s) (Newman et al., 2003). In this respect public art may establish networks within communities, develop civic responsibility and promote a sense of empowerment which can provide fertile conditions for the fostering of social capital (Newman et al., 2003).

(2.2) Conflict, Place Identity and the ‘Commodification’ of Public Art

While the rhetoric for the use of art in addressing social economic issues maybe positive, there are claims that in some cases such strategies have been socially divisive (Evans, 2005). In succinctly encapsulating the potential issues that the use of public art within a local regeneration context plays Sharp et al (2005: 1002) states, ‘cultural planning immediately raises the question of culture for whom?’ Furthermore, Mitchell (2000) adopts the term ‘culture wars’ to reflect how public art may be seen to identify with certain aspects of a community at the expense of others. Providing further fuel to metaphoric ‘culture wars’ are claims that the prominence of some public art installations within the public realm can be considered as representing an
'inescapability' (Sharp et al, 2005: 1001). Considered at the centre of this conflict is competing versions of place identity (McCarthy, 2006) and it is towards this issue that we now turn.

According Proshansky (1978: 147) place identity is defined as,

...those dimension of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of the complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideals, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural tendencies relevant to a specific environment.

In this respect place identity is firmly established within the *Genius loci* view of planning, and 'reflects the notion that places may have some special characteristics or combination of factors that produce specialness' (Parker and Doak, 2012: 158). Thus a fundamental appreciation in the understanding of place identity is that places represent more than just a location or a grid reference but are, as Rose states, 'infused with meaning and feeling' (Rose, 1995: 88).

As the date of the quote by Proshansky (1978: 147) above would suggest, the acknowledgment that spaces may be imbued with feelings and attachments that extends beyond their physical form is not new. However, more recently the issue of place identity has been observed to feature prominently in planning literature under what has been termed planning's postmodern approach (Allmendinger, 2005). What is distinctly 'post' about this approach is its intent to move away from the type of formulaic, top down development initiatives criticised from planning's modernist past. One aspect of a post-modern approach to planning is thus to embrace ideas of place identity, to acknowledge what is of value to people locally and to ensure that planners plan alongside communities as opposed to imposing ideas upon them (Allmendinger, 2005).

Such a shift in the role between planners and communities is not confined to academic circles. Arguably through schemes such as the community right to buy and neighbourhood planning introduced through the Localism Act (2011), there exists evidence of this need for the planning system to understand what is of value locally (RIBA, 2011). Moreover, the Royal Town Planning Institutes (RTPI's) publication of *Place Identity, Participation and Planning* as part of its 'RTPI Library Series', there is
arguably further evidence of the value that the profession has in ensuring planners engage with issues of place identity.

At this point, and significantly within the context of this project, it should be emphasised that place identity is not a singular concept but may instead constitute many identities (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). In fact, Hague and Jenkins (2005: 8) state identity is about ‘us and them, or more neutrally about us and others.’ It is the plurality of these identities that has given rise to Mitchell’s ‘culture wars’ metaphor, exemplifying how competing, potentially conflicting, identities may exist between interest groups. In such circumstances cultural planners become responsible for negotiating competing interests. As Hague and Jenkins (2005:8) write,

> Planners are likely to be used as a conduit through which politicians and economic interests promote their versions of place identity. At the same time planners have to be able to engage with local residents and other members of civil society, for who places may have very different meanings and identities.

According to McCarthy (2006: 245), competing versions of place identity is intertwined with the use of public art in regeneration. Before continuing to consider this point it is necessary to clarify a distinction between place image and place identity. As McCarthy (2006: 245) writes, ‘while image relates to the summation of the impression that people have of a city, identity relates to a city’s history and circumstances, which imbue it with a degree of distinctiveness.’

While the official aims of public art in policy documents have often claimed public art to enhance image and identity for local people as being achieved simultaneously, other academics have suggested a more critical stance with place image being prioritised. As (Klunzman, 2004: 2) succinctly writes, ‘each story of regeneration begins with poetry and ends with real estate’. Through such claims Kluzman (2004) illustrates how the rhetoric of policy to deliver benefits and involvement for local people, often fail to materialise as the development processes ensues. Under such conditions the rhetoric of policy as engaging with local place identity may become redundant, with artwork failing to engage with local audiences (Miles, 2005) and, in more extreme cases, may leave existing residents feeling isolated (Sharp et al., 2005).
In illustrating the point made above, many academics have questioned the ‘imposed nature’ of the public art used in Glasgow’s *European Capital of Culture (1990)* project (Laurier, 1993; MaCleaod, 2002; Jenkins; 2005; Sharp et al., 2005). In repositioning itself as a place for the creative industries and creative class, Glasgow invested heavily in public art to transform the image of the city (Laurier, 1993). The new images that were being marketed for Glasgow appeared to ignore its long and established shipbuilding history, but instead sold an image of cosmopolitan living with art galleries, festivals and riverside eating (Jenkins, 2005). Sharp et al (2005: 1001) in a follow up study with residents found that many had been disengaged with the process, with many of the artworks being constantly vandalised as a symbol of such frustrations. Such frustrations have also been witnessed within a seaside context. The opening of a new seaside gallery in Hastings (Jerwood Gallery) was met with fierce opposition, with ‘residents fashioning a model which was cast into the flames as they vented their anger at the plans’ (BBC News Online, March 2012). Similarly, in one of the few academic journals published considering public artwork, identity and the seaside, Peel and Lloyd (2007: 276) found that many residents felt that the artwork installed at Crosby ‘had no connection with Crosby or its beach’.

While in the example presented above there exits further claims to the idea of culture wars (Mitchell, 2000), it should not be consider that public art cannot be used to enhance a place's image while respecting local place identity (McCarthy, 2006). For example, McCarthy (2006) in considering cases from Manchester and Belfast, acknowledged how using public art for community benefits while pursuing place branding objectives can be successfully achieved simultaneously. Cited as being the prerequisite for such a condition to manifest is the role played by planning and specifically how it seeks to engage with local people. As Miles (2005: 913) states, ‘the success of investment in cultural projects depends above all upon peoples sense of belonging in a place and the degree to which culture led regeneration can engage with that sense of belonging.’ Moreover, Ronald Lee-Flemming in *The Art of Placemaking* (2010: 289) identifies the facilitation of communication amongst competing interests as key to the successful installation of public art. Planners thus have an important role to play in engaging with the community, ensuring that policy maintains a balance between reflecting local identities and branding and area for investment (Lee-Flemming, 2010).
(2.3) The Lack of Methodological Evaluations of the Arts

Despite the often problematic nature of public art in regeneration schemes depicted above, there still remains a perception of the arts as being an ‘inherently good thing’ (Hall and Robertson, 2001: 18). Evans (2005) suggests that such an uncritical acceptance for the use of public art and culture in regeneration has been able to manifest due to the lack of robust evaluations. One reason presented for the lack of robust research is the subjective nature of evaluations and the time and cost involved in collecting data (Evans, 2005). This has made it difficult to quantify socio-cultural factors and has tended to lead to an overt focus upon economic evaluations (Evans, 2005). Furthermore, Hall (1992: 315) states that studies looking at social or cultural impacts experienced by inhabitants are underrepresented in academic literature as they may expose ‘results that are less politically palatable.’

A consequence of this is that, while there exists ‘a plethora of research into issues around culture-led regeneration little research exists into the way in which inhabitants of places experimenting with such programmes have been affected by these changes.’ (Doucet, 2007 cited in Middleton and Freestone, 2008: 1). In considering the perspective of residents, as this project does, it is hoped that the project can shed light on what is a commonly neglected viewpoint.

The deficit that exists within the public arts literature is expressed in the following quote by Hall and Robertson (2001: 19),

> While our understanding of the growth, production and intended meanings of public art is good, our understanding of its impacts and the substance of advocates claims is much less content.

As stated in the quote above, while the stated meanings for public art may suggest certain aims, how these evolve in practice remains much less considered. Writing in the last few years Markusen and Gadwa (2010: 380) comment that for researcher’s in the field of cultural planning there remains a need to ‘unpack, critique and evaluate cultural planning outcomes according to implicit and explicit norms and goals.’ In acknowledging these comments, as this project does, it is hoped that a more critical focus can develop to inform later discussion.
The image of the traditional English Seaside Resort has long been established as an iconic landscape in the representations of British culture (Walton, 2005). However, in recent decades competition from overseas holiday destinations, in conjunction with successive years of underinvestment in seaside resorts (Smith, 2004; Agarwal and Brunt, 2006), has led to many of these iconic landscapes to display 'characteristics more closely associated with the inner city' (ODPM, 2006). While in the cases of Bournemouth, Brighton and St. Ives there exists examples of successful resort restructuring initiatives (Smith, 2004), the picture nationally would suggest a more mixed situation. As the map (Fig. 3) below illustrates, much of the worst deprivation experience in the England can be observed in coastal locations.

For a long time the issues facing coastal towns has remained a peripheral issue in urban policy, leading writers such as Powell and Gray (2009:8) to claim that for ‘too long their have been a stubborn reluctance to view coastal towns as an urban type with common
characteristics.' However, something of a turning point was reached following the Select Commons Inquiry into the Issues Facing Seaside Towns (2005). As part of their suggestions it was proposed that a dedicated funding stream for seaside towns should be established. Through the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment’s (CABE) Sea Change Project (2008 – 2011), and more recently through the Coalitions Coastal Communities Fund (2011 - Present), there now exists specific funding streams aimed at addressing the issues affecting coastal towns. A key emphasis of the Sea Change Project has been the promotion of culture as a catalyst for resort restructuring. As they suggest, ‘investment in cultural projects can radically enhance the regeneration of seaside resorts’ (CABE Online, 2011). Given contentions by Meethan (1996 cited in Smith, 2004) that seaside resorts have typically been associated with ‘low’ or ‘vulgar’ cultural activities, it is unsurprising that many have now turned to ‘higher’ cultural activities in a bid to alter their external image.

As mentioned within the introduction, while there has been much written in the British media about the use of culture in regeneration the issue has received less coverage in academic literature (for notable exceptions see Smith, 2004; Kennel and Chaperon, 2010). Arguably such an omission is surprising given the wealth of published academic literature upon cultural regeneration. Given this current deficit within the literature, a central contention of this research project is to help, at least in part, broaden awareness of the use of culture and public art in a coastal context. Providing further justification for considering culture in a seaside context are comments from Markusen and Gadwa (2010: 380) who state, ‘amid the buzz on the creative city and cultural economy, knowledge about what works at various urban and regional scales is sorely lacking.’
Methodology

(3.1) Research Method

A central concern of this project is to move away from measuring the economic impact of public art in regeneration, and instead consider reflections from the perspective of residents. In acknowledgement of this it is important that the research method adopted can help in highlighting the perspectives of local residents. It is with this in mind that a more qualitative research approach is employed at the expense of a more quantitative focused approach, which Matarasso (1996: 24) claims as being ‘unhelpful in the evaluations of social programmes and especially arts projects.’

Rather than simply conduct research into residents reflections upon the regeneration scheme, it is important that responses are considered against stated aims in policy documents. In doing so the document attempts to respond to the calls outlined by Markusen and Gadwa (2010: 380) to 'evaluate outcomes against stated norms and goals'. In an attempt to explore some of the aims, with respect to place identity and place image, a discourse analysis will be undertaken on local and regional planning policy that is informing the regeneration. In addition, the discourse analysis draws upon a recently published book by The UK Arts Council whose author, Nick Ewbank, has been heavily involved in overseeing Folkestone’s Regeneration. The three documents are;

- Adventures in Regeneration Ewbank (2010)
- Shepway District Council Core Strategy (Proposed Submission Stage, 2011)

Fig. 4.1 Documents for Discourse Analysis
Discourse analysis has been identified as a useful method for revealing the underlying aims within urban policy documents. In a publication Jacob's (2006: 48) commended the use of discourse analysis for considering urban policy issues. However, crucially, he commented that ‘for the methodology to have real purchase it is essential for researchers...to recognise its limitations’. One noted limitation of the approach is that there often becomes an overt reliance upon one document, leading authors to make unsubstantiated claims as to the documents intended meanings (Jacobs, 2006: 47). Within this project it is hoped that by selecting more than one document a more holistic perspective can be achieved, alleviating an over reliance from just one document.

Having established the aims of the project the second focus is to consider its impact upon local residents. Following a brief literature review of studies that have sought to uncover issues such as place identity semi-structured interviews and focus groups have emerged as prominent Evans (2005). Of the two, focus groups are often favoured in studies considering place identity due to their suitability for exploring experiences and concerns (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999). Furthermore, the adoption of numerous studies using focus groups to consider place identity and cultural planning provides a solid justification for its usage here (see Mason and Beaumont-Kerridge, 2004; Miles, 2005; Garcia 2005; Pattison, 2006; Hamilton et al., 2007; Middleton and Freestone, 2008).

Within the project a focus group has been organised with a local resident’s group. Upon the request of the group, throughout the project exact details of the group have been kept anonymous. For contextual purposes it should be noted that the group are well established and play an active role in many of the planning issues in Folkestone. With a noted criticism of focus group being the difficulties in ensuring participant attendance (Bryman, 2008), holding a focus group amongst an established local resident group presents a way of minimising such an issue. As a perhaps slight limitation of selecting an established residents group, as opposed to residents more broadly, is that the group, in being formed by volunteers, may represent individuals with a heightened interest in the regeneration. As a result of this, caution should be applied when drawing conclusions from this project so as not to make unsubstantiated generalisations. Moreover, as a general criticism of focus groups more broadly, in group situations there is always the potential for certain individuals to dominate, creating conformity and not allowing true experiences to be felt (Bryman, 2008).
While a conscious attempt will be made to avoid this, it is important that this bias can be moderated. In adopting a further two supplementary research methods a triangulation approach is utilised to strengthen the overall research design Krueger (1994). Firstly, local newspaper articles will be considered as they are often considered as a good proxy for gaining expressions of community identity (Shah et al., 2001: 471). Further support for drawing upon local newspaper archives are claims that in impact studies of cultural events they have been ‘under utilised’ Garcia (2005). As a final supplementary piece of research, secondary data from an independent research conducted by Dr Richard Ings on behalf of the Creative Foundation (see appendix) is drawn upon. It is hoped in doing so some of the results presented within the focus group can be considered against a wider context.
Data Analysis and Discussion

(4.1) Public Art and Culture in Folkestone’s Regeneration: Identified Themes Relating to Place Image and Place Identity

Selling Folkestone as Cultural Destination
Across all three documents there exists a consistent rhetoric for the use of public art and culture to reposition the town as an area noted for its creativity. Within the text this is relayed through expressions of "putting Folkestone on the map" or, as one document claims, there is a need to 'raise the profile of Folkestone as a place where diverse and exciting cultural activity happens' (Ewbank, 2010: 85). Moreover, within the Core Strategy it is stated, 'Folkestone will be a recognised as a popular 'events town', with cultural and artistic festivals.' (Core Strategy, Policy 3.10) emphasising the clear role that culture and public art has in Folkestone in terms of raising its profile for cultural tourism.

Further evidence for the use of public art and culture in Folkestone to appeal to audiences beyond the immediate locality, can be identified through some of the claims made. Within the Core Strategy and Kent Cultural Strategy there are numerous mentions for the potential of attracting visitors from London and also Continental Europe, further reinforcing the use of public art to act in a place branding capacity. Further claims within the document to ‘capitalise’ on connections to continental Europe and London, can be considered as being closely aligned to the language of Keating and Frantz (2004) earlier who comment upon the need to seize opportunities created in a more globally connected world.

Engaging Local People with Public Art and Culture
Equally considered are claims that public art and culture can be seen as a force for good to the local people of Folkestone. The use of terminology such as pride, vibrancy and character are used frequently to suggest the way in which the use of public art can somehow help replace something that has been lost during the years of decline. While as stated in the previous section this can be identified as being to appeal to tourists, claims are also made for its value locally. As claimed within the Core Strategy (p.78),
Local culture can play a role in emphasising local identity through building social networks and providing a sense of vibrancy that picks up distinctive aspects of life in Shepway communities.

In addition to acknowledging the potential benefits that culture can play across all documents, there is a consensus for this to be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the local context. Claims within the Core Strategy to ‘recognise what is of value locally’ provide an indication of a consciousness that the regeneration does not alienate local residents, ensuring that future cultural developments are sensitive to local place identity. Furthermore, it is suggested that ‘each work would be newly commissioned for Folkestone, and would respond in some way to the town, its stories, its situation and its people’ (Ewbank, 2010: 94).

Given this stated aim to reflect local history, there is an expressed need to ensure genuine engagement across all three documents. As one document states it is important to ‘empower people so that they feel a part of the process rather than having change imposed on them’ (Kent Cultural Strategy, p. 21). This type of acknowledgement can be considered as broadly supportive of the claims by Miles (2005), with an understanding being demonstrated that for the use of culture and art to be effective it needs to respond to local people.

**Achieving Simultaneous Aims of Place Image and Place Identity**

Arguably one of the most prevalent narratives expressed across all three documents is that culture and public art can be used to promote place image, while remaining sensitive to local place identity. In rebranding the area it is stated (Ewbank, 2010: 25),

> We set out to turn the town’s negative image, both internal and external, into a new, positive sense of identity – a source of genuine pride for local people and an attractor for visitors and inward investors.

The claims to enhance both internal and external image can be aligned to the claims of enhancing place image (external) alongside claims to engage local place identity (internal). Evidence for this is also seen in the overall cultural plan for Kent which is informing developments in Folkestone. Arguably phrases such as ‘protect the past while planning for the future’ (Kent Cultural Strategy, p. 22) underscores attempts to use culture and art in a manner that is complimentary to local identity, especially through its
depiction as a ‘responsibility’. Moreover, in claims made in the diagram (Fig. 5.1) below to ‘ensure participation is possible for all’ there is arguably a consciousness for the need for cultural developments to engage with both visitors and residents.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig 5.1 – A Cultural Strategy for Kent Aims**

Arguably we should not be surprised by attempts in policy to display aims as mutually benefiting to all those concerned. As Jacob (2006) claims, policy aims are typically carefully crafted so as to avoid conflict. Moving forward to consider the views of residents it will be interesting to note if these aims have materialised, or as Kluzman (2004: 2) conveys, ultimately aims to promote economic development will be prioritised.

**4.2 Public Art in Folkestone’s Regeneration: The Residents’ Perspective**

The general feeling echoed by group members was one that was overwhelmingly positive, with it being suggested that the public art festival has helped to put Folkestone on the map and attracted visitors. Of the positive comments that were mentioned, an obvious focus was tailored to what may be termed economic factors, with aspects such as employment and tourism benefits being acknowledged.
“It has provided as great boost for the local cafes and things like that because of the knock on effects, people may come to see the art but inevitably they end up buying coffee and eating in the area.”

Male (30 – 45)

“I doubt before that many people would have even know where Folkestone was, with the festival we have been put back on the map and that has to be a good thing.”

Female (45 – 60)

The suggestions that the arts festival had a positive impact is also reflected within the local newspaper, with claims that the festival has brought a ‘buzz to the air’ attracting visitors.

Perhaps of significance early on during the discussion was that when asked about the benefits that had originated, economic factors featured a lot more over what may be observed as being a personal benefit. In the opening exchanges within the group nobody commented upon the public art being enjoyable in its own right or something that they looked forward to. Much more of the focus was upon its role in fostering Folkestone’s development and external image. Such claims can be extended outside the confines of the discussion of the residents groups, and are well supported in some secondary research. Confirming this, 76% of resident’s responses claimed the use of art to regenerate the town was a very good for Folkestone. When then asked what specifically was good about it, 78% said that it either raised the towns profile or created revenue and jobs for the town. Interestingly just 7% claimed it was positive as an attraction for locals in its own right.

While enhancing Folkestone’s attractiveness was identified as a significant aim, another was claims that ‘each art work will in someway respond to the history of the town and its stories.’ Respondents views were mixed in this area and while some acknowledged attempts to appeal locally others did not.

“I think that is true for some of the art work as people like Tracey Emin are local but I’m not sure about the rest.”

Male (30 – 45)
"I think that the sea lady [referring to artist Cornelia Parker's Folkestone Lady] is of a local artist but that was the only one that I was aware of."

Female (30 – 45)

Such views characterised much of the conversation, with an apparent lack of appreciation that amongst the original claims were claims for the art to 'respond in some way to the town, its stories, its situation and its people'. The unawareness of the group for the art to respond locally is arguably surprising given the 'pro-active' nature of the group. One could deduce that if this is the situation amongst those with a perceived heightened interest, then a similar situation could hold true for other residents in the area, although further research would need to be conducted to validate such claims. Given this contention it could be suggested that in some way there is a lack of engagement, or at least communication, beyond those that are outlined in the policy aims surrounding this development.

Following this revelation it was important to establish exactly how, if at all, residents had been engaged in the process. While the aims outlined within regional cultural policy and the local core strategy prioritised the importance of participation and engagement in the process, notably through claims to 'empower', the response from residents was mixed with respect to the degree to which they had been engaged in the process.

"I think it is a shame that we never really got to meet the artists involved in producing the artwork. It just sort of arrived."

Male (30 – 45)

"I mean we have been aware of the artwork, it has been mentioned a lot in the local news. Other than the photograph project [referring to Strange Cargo's Other People's Photographs Community Arts Programme] I'm not sure about how many of the projects have directly involved local people."

Female (30 – 45)

Such an issue is picked up in the secondary data analysis with 30% of residents surveyed suggesting that a lot more needed to be done to engage locals in the process. Thus while many of the aims premise the installation of the artwork as being something that local residents would be heavily engaged in, results from respondents suggested
that more could have been done. Further to this point, ‘just arrived here’ arguably has more of a resonance with a top, down approach as opposed to the type of rhetoric for ‘respecting what is of value locally’ premised in Shepway’s Core Strategy. One positive aspects of engagement mentioned was a local arts based group called Strange Cargo who initiated a project called Other People’s Photographs. While only representing one part of the regenerations scheme, this was deemed a success by all and can be considered as one of the few times during the discussion that the use of art met the broader social aims such as ‘community cohesion’ identified by Hall and Robertson (2001). While only one element of the project, there was a feeling that this did deliver some of the intended aims for place identity and respecting local culture.

“it’s great what they’ve done [strange cargo] it helps show what Folkestone use to be like with the different families and histories of places.”

Male (30 – 45)

"there has been a buzz about the town with the other people’s photograph project. It's been really great in remembering the old memories."

Male (50-65)

As stated, this was arguably one of the few time in which residents acknowledged a public art exhibition to reflect local place identity. Arguably such findings have parallels to the comments mentioned earlier by Miles who states, ‘the success of investment in cultural projects depends above all upon peoples sense of belonging in a place and the degree to which culture led regeneration can engage with that sense of belonging.’
While acknowledging that more could be done with respect to engaging local people in the process, it would be misleading to suggest that within the group this was viewed as being a particularly problematic thing. Arguably such views can be attributed to the collective identity of the group, which from observation and subsequent reading of their ‘constitution’, is very much premised on wanting Folkestone to flourish as an area. Within the local press there are perhaps a few more examples to illustrate the way in which some of the public art has failed to engage with the local audiences. Many of the public artworks have been repeatedly vandalised, and while it can be suggested that this is mindless vandalism, parallels may be drawn to findings of Sharp et al (2005) and also the experiences of Hastings, where graffiti has been used to symbolic of discontent in the area. Moreover, in another cited example local uproar was created when a commissioned piece of art questioned the intention of war (Folkestone Herald: Feb 20th 2012).

The case highlights points previously mentioned by Hixston (1998) who suggested that in many instances artwork is often commissioned by individuals who have limited knowledge of the local area. Arguably the local uproar created underscores the lack of knowledge by the artist for local place identity, and reaffirms claims by others as to the imposed nature that artwork can sometimes have. Significantly, in the sense of understanding the aims and objectives for the use of art, the leading local arts charity has championed it to remain despite local concerns. The debate provides an interesting insight into the extent artwork is engaging with residents.

What has been apparent following discussions within the focus group is that while members of the residents group clearly acknowledged the role that the public art festival was having in ‘putting Folkestone back on the map’ (place image), there was a
much more mixed picture when identifying the extent to which this process has involved engagement with local place identity. As stated, the results may be considered as being potentially revealing with those with a heightened interest unsure as to the arts intended relationship with local place it would suggest that residents at large help a similar picture, although further research would be needed to confirm this. Thus despite claims within the rhetoric of policy shaping the decision making process at the Triennial to ‘respect what is value locally’ and to ‘ensure that artwork responds to people locally’, with the exception of the Other People’s Photograph’s project discussed there seemed little evidence of this. Such findings can be paralleled to the thoughts of Kluzman (2004: 2), with it being suggested that in claims to ‘ensure that artwork responds to people locally’ representing the ‘poetry’ of policy which, ultimately remains undelivered, or poorly communicated when compared against the aims to deliver economic development/ place branding priorities.

While the immediate findings of the project can be considered as reflective of the conclusions drawn by academics considering other cases (notably - Sharp et al 2005; Miles 2005; Middleton and Freestone, 2008), it is suggested that the real purchase created by the project has been to highlight the value of cultural planners adopting more critical approaches to evaluating the outcomes of cultural planning. If, as is commonly the case in studies of the impact of cultural planning this project had considered the impact of Folkestone’s Triennial through a purely economic approach, it would have been easy to draw very different conclusions. As highlighted from the findings, there clearly is evidence amongst the focus group and in secondary data sources for success in Folkestone’s efforts for place branding and delivering economic development. However, this can be considered as representing just one aspect of the development. As identified, there were also claims in the project to, ‘respect what is of value locally’ and ‘ensure that each development responds to the stories of Folkestone’, yet these remain unrealised. In adopting an approach that considers the outcomes against stated aims, this project has exposed apparent discrepancies between the policy rhetoric of planning for place identity and how this manifests in practice. It may be considered that through commonly employed economic evaluations of the impact of cultural planning, such discrepancies may not have emerged.

In drawing relevance to earlier discussions it is suggested that, if the cultural planning discipline is to move beyond what Hall and Robertson (2001: 18) refer to as the misguided perceptions of the arts as ‘an inherently good thing’, a more critical approach
is taken to evaluating impacts. While the need for a more critical approach to the use of art and culture is nothing new (notably advocated by Hall and Robertson, 2001; Evans, 2005; Markusen and Gadwa, 2010), it is suggested that this project can be viewed as a practical illustration of the need to move beyond narrow economic evaluations when considering the impact of the arts. A key component of this is the project’s focus upon the view of residents, which has enabled greater insight to emerge. In furthering the claims of Doucet (2007), it is thus suggested that the views of residents need to feature more prominently in studies of cultural planning impacts if we are to fully engage with the issue of place identity.

In moving the discussion out of its immediate context, and in reflecting upon the ‘pillars’ of economic development and place, it is claimed that the project raises interesting questions. What has been apparent is considering the issue of place identity is that, while there is much talk of the need for planners to engage with place identity, the extent to which these claims are truly delivered in practice can be questioned. If we are serious about the need to ensure developments involving culture and public art connect with local identity, it is important that impact studies employ research methods that seek to expose whether place identity aims are being realised. Arguably in exposing differences between policy rhetoric and outcomes, there at least exist the potential to make stated aims to engage with place identity more ‘accountable’. In speculating upon this point further, it may be considered that in the absence of such approaches the type of comments made by Kluzman (2004) could prevail, and claims to engage with place identity will remain the ‘poetry’ of policy, which ultimately becomes redundant in the pursuit of economic development.
Conclusion

The use of public art, and more broadly, culture has been seen to increase rapidly in the last decade and has been viewed to represent something of a panacea amongst urban policy makers (Doucet, 2007). However, while there remains much support for the use of culture and public art in regeneration, it is frequently cited that there remains a lack of methodological evaluations into the impact of culture in regeneration (Evans, 2005; Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). In acknowledging such concerns, a central component throughout this project has been to respond to the calls of Markusen and Gadwa (2010: 380) who state, that amongst cultural planners there is a need to ‘unpack, critique and evaluate cultural planning outcomes according to implicit and explicit norms and goals’.

In considering relevant policy documents, as well as an account from one of the key players of the regeneration, while there is much rhetoric for the use of public art being seen to promote place image while respecting local place identity, the extent to which this is achieved in practice is questioned. Thus while answers from the residents group were quick to acknowledge the positive contribution that the arts festival had created in raising the profile of the area, there was a more mixed response when the group was asked about their involvement and knowledge of the artworks themselves. Further supplementary evidence used would suggest similar results, with place image aims being realised above aims to reflect or respond to local place identity. Significantly, it should be noted that through The Other People’s Photographs project there is evidence of at least one art project in the area that local people felt engaged with.

In considering the experience of the focus group alongside the aims stated in the discourse analysis, it is considered that results can be paralleled to the thoughts of Kluzman (2004: 2). In marking such comparisons it is suggested that in claims to ‘ensure that artwork responds to people locally’ representing the ‘poetry’ of policy which, ultimately remains undelivered, or poorly communicated when compared against the aims to deliver economic development/place branding priorities.

Outside of its immediate context and alongside other projects discussed throughout, it is considered that the project highlights the value of critically considering outcomes of cultural planning against stated aims. Moreover, the project highlights the insight to be gained from considering the views of residents experiencing these changes. Arguably, if such a methodology had not been pursued it would have been easy for this project to
draw conclusions that present the use of public art and culture in regeneration as being an overwhelming success, further reinforcing what Hall and Robertson (2001: 18) claim as the perception of the arts as being an ‘inherently good thing’. While the need for a more critical approach to the use of art and culture is nothing new, it is suggested that this project can be viewed as a practical illustration of why Markusen and Gadwa’s (2010) calls for cultural planning studies should be assessed against stated norms, values and goals as opposed to adopting a narrow economic focus, should be pursued.

Finally, it has been stated that if planning is serious about the need to ensure developments involving culture and public art connect with local identity, it is important that studies considering the impacts of cultural planning employ research methods that seek to expose whether place identity aims are being realised. Arguably exposing differences between the policy rhetoric and what occurs in reality, there at least exists the potential to make stated aims to engage with place identity more ‘accountable’. In speculating upon this point further, it may be considered that in the absence of such approaches the type of comments made by Kluzman (2004) could prevail. In turn, claims to engage with place identity will remain the ‘poetry’ of policy, which ultimately according to Kluzman (2004) becomes redundant in the pursuit of economic development. Thus while beyond the scope of this project to suggest exactly how developments can be made to ensure they follow through on their aims to engage with place identity, it is suggested that employing the types of methods advocated by Markusen and Gadwa (2010) may at least help in exposing cases in which such aims have not been met.
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