

The role of the arts in event-led regeneration policies

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This research was conducted by **Beatriz García** at the **University of Glasgow**

Summary

This paper argues that event-led urban regeneration strategies do not necessarily lead to the development of sustainable arts programming. It recommends a more balanced and locally embedded approach towards city renewal through arts and culture. The paper features three case studies: Glasgow 1990 – European City of Culture; Sydney 2000 – Olympic Games; and Barcelona 2004 – Universal Forum for Cultures.

In all three case studies the arts were a large component of the bid to host the major event

The arts element was expected to improve collaborations and strengthen the city's image. However, during the execution of the plans it was the economic strategy that was often given importance over the development of an arts programme. As a result, local cultures felt overlooked. The three cases were often seen as rather successful examples of economic regeneration, but as failures in a cultural sense, specifically regarding the inclusion of local culture in their events.

Issues of representation and ownership are a sensitive part of the regeneration agenda

The paper claims that Glasgow, Sydney and Barcelona promised their communities more than they could deliver, as they were unable to fully produce the cultural programmes that were supposed to tackle social divides in their cities. It reveals a lack of understanding of the needs of the local people

and the unequal distribution of the event's benefits. A more balanced strategy is needed to make regeneration through major events more effective.

This summary is by **Stella Toonen** from the **Cultural Institute at King's**

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