The Impacts of Culture-led Flagship Projects on Local Communities in the Context of Post-socialist Tallinn

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Abstract: In post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, the effects of urban culture-led flagship projects on the quality of life of local neighbourhood communities have only received marginal attention, while the overriding focus has been on promoting economic growth and internationalisation. The aim of the article is to identify the community impacts of culture-led regeneration projects carried out in the inner city of Tallinn in the past decade. Qualitative analysis of three inner-city flagship projects—creative campus, museum, and cultural hub—revealed that culture-led regeneration projects, whether public or private initiatives, are regarded as standard business models. In terms of their influence on local communities, the projects vary depending on their focus, the degree of engagement of local groups in the planning phase and activities, and the extent of actual physical change. However, in cases where local groups have been engaged, the engagement has been selective and has primarily involved the creative class. Local residents nevertheless perceive that the projects have led to overall positive changes in physical neighbourhood characteristics.

Keywords: culture-led urban regeneration, flagship projects, local communities, creative class, post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe

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The implementation of culture-led regeneration projects involving the development of leisure and culture-based facilities and activities in urban areas has been a fast-growing type of urban intervention in post-industrial West European and North American cities since the 1980s [see Mommaas 2004; Evans 2009; Heidenreich and Plaza 2013; Trumbull 2014]. ‘The idea that culture can be employed as a driver for urban economic growth has become part of the new orthodoxy by which cities seek to enhance their competitive position.’ [Miles and Paddison 2005: 833] The underlying motive for such regeneration is thus to improve the economic status of cities. The main target groups and potential users of the newly-created spaces include cultural tourists and the creative class, whose members range from ‘creative professionals’ in a variety of occupations to the ‘supercreative core’ of artists and software designers [Florida 2004; Pratt 2008]. In this approach, the clustering of human capital is seen as the critical factor in regional economic growth and a key to the successful regeneration of cities [Florida 2004]. However, culture-based projects are also regarded by project initiators and politicians as improving the quality of life for local residents. The issue of how the initiatives work for diverse social groups in local neighbourhoods has come to rank increasingly higher in project objectives as well as political agendas [Jayne 2004; Evans 2005].

Culture-led urban regeneration projects are often called flagship projects. The latter has been defined as the development of a building or area with the purpose of giving an impetus for the revitalisation of its surroundings in physical, economic and social terms [see, e.g., Temelová 2007; Grodach 2010; Heidenreich and Plaza 2013; Lazzeretti and Capone 2013]. Flagship developments include high-end housing developments, luxury shopping centres, tourist attractions, museums, and other cultural amenities, which are usually the places where global and local influences are closely intertwined [Doucet, Van Kempen and Van Weseep 2011a]. Such culture-led flagship projects are often located in neglected former brownfield sites of inner cities, which lie within physically and socially deteriorating residential neighbourhoods but have high development potential, are easily accessible, and are often adjacent to waterfront [Kiss 2002]. Culture-led regeneration has had substantial impacts on neighbourhood social and physical conditions [Vicario and Martínez-Monje 2003; Evans 2005; Lazzeretti and Capone 2013].

In the post-socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe (hereinafter referred to as CEE), urban renewal and flagship projects have become part of urban governance only relatively recently, after fundamental housing and governance reforms had been implemented and new housing and urban regimes established [Kiss 2002; Temelová 2007; Radoslav, Branea and Stelian Găman 2013]. While there are many contextual differences between CEE countries depending on political orientations and urban development pathways, their urban regeneration practices predominantly stress economic outputs and impacts in improving the
economic base and increasing internationalisation (including tourism). Local place-making, i.e. the engagement of local communities in developing meaningful and usable spaces and seeking solutions for neighbourhood socio-economic problems, has received marginal attention at best [e.g. Sagan and Grabkowska 2012]. Not only have the social consequences of renewal projects been largely marginalised in political agendas and project objectives, but the topic itself has attracted only modest scholarly attention throughout the region, especially in CEE countries with a more liberal economic orientation such as the Baltic countries [e.g. Feldman 2000].

Based on this background, the goal of the paper is to examine and analyse the implications of culture-led flagship projects for the socio-economic conditions and communities in local neighbourhoods within the context of the inner-city neighbourhood of post-socialist Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The analysis is based on a qualitative study of the perceptions and evaluations of local residents and the main stakeholders. We analyse the impacts of three renewal projects—a creative campus, a museum project, and a cultural hub. First, we review the neighbourhood and community impacts of urban renewal projects as discussed in published research. Then we explain the research methods and the urban and neighbourhood context of the case study projects. Finally, we describe the flagship projects, and present and discuss the findings.

The objectives and impacts of culture-led flagship projects associated with local neighbourhoods and communities

The influence of culture-led flagship developments on socially problematic local neighbourhoods has become a more central concern of governments and other stakeholders in many Western countries over the last two decades. Cultural investment is perceived as capable of improving the life quality of local residents by targeting sustainability and distributive justice issues, ensuring greater community participation, addressing social exclusion, and contributing to local heritage and identity [Evans 2005]. Increased social cohesion and economic competitiveness are now seen as parallel and interrelated goals [Miles and Paddison 2005]. Sagan and Grabkowska [2012: 1136] emphasise the importance of ‘locale’: if urban regeneration does not consider the local conditions in physical, economic and social terms, the result may prove to be an alienation of local residents and misjudging of local potential. Community consultation is a tool that project developers and other stakeholders now employ more often [Miles and Paddison 2005].

Culture-led flagship regeneration has had a substantial effect on improving the physical quality of public spaces by creating arenas for social interaction and educational activities. Developed spaces can function as places for the production of social networks and social cohesion, for education and research, and for maintaining and representing values, identities, and authenticities of local
neighbourhoods and communities [Heidenreich and Plaza 2013; Lazzeretti and Capone 2013]. The positive outcomes include an improved sense of place and local morale among local residents [Turok 1992]. Flagship projects can accelerate local development through providing credibility for subsequent projects—as the neighbourhood’s image improves, the area tends to be perceived as a more secure location to invest in [Temelová 2007]. Community members might even not attend the venues or directly benefit themselves, but they can see the value for others and take pride in the development—this has been called the ‘public good’ [Evans 2005: 966].

Nevertheless, it has been questioned whether the impacts of flagship projects have been entirely positive. The policy change towards more effective involvement of local communities reflects the failure of earlier cultural interventions as regards impacts on local outcomes [Garcia 2004]. On the one hand, the earlier flagship projects successfully led to the development of creative industries and related businesses and boosted tourism (e.g. the ‘Bilbao effect’, named after the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain), so the planned outcomes were achieved [e.g. Heidenreich and Plaza 2013]. The local social benefits, on the other hand, were not realised. Especially when carried out in a neoliberal context, regeneration in fact affected property prices and increased rent levels, leading to residential and entrepreneurial gentrification, the deterioration of local communities, and the spread of luxurious services and class-based leisure facilities [Harvey 1989; Turok 1992; Vicario and Martínez-Monje 2003; Sagan and Grabkowska 2012; Kovács, Wiessner and Zischner 2012; Lazzeretti and Capone 2013; Trumbull 2014]. There is now evidence that cultural strategies developed by external ‘catalysts’ have actually reinforced spatial divides and social exclusion, particularly among cultural minorities and diverse social groups, while many flagship developments have met resistance from local communities [Plaza 2000; Rodriguez, Martinez and Guenga 2001; Evans 2005].

Project leaders and stakeholders have learned to better engage with local groups and manage potential conflicts more effectively, at least involving the middle class [Elander and Blanc 2001; Bassett, Griffiths and Smith 2002; Seo 2002]. ‘Whilst the process may be consensual, the physical end-product may be less so—evidence of local and community (however defined) influence on the shape and content of cultural facilities within regeneration schemes is rare ... objectives of social cohesion and sustainability are compromised’ [Evans 2005: 970]. To date, too little attention has been paid to the voices of diverse community groups whose living environment has been reshaped [Garcia 2004]. The attitudes and commitment of institutional stakeholders towards the local area and existing communities, as well as the level of engagement of local residents, along with a clear understanding of overall vision, skills, and resources available when planning and implementing projects, have an immense importance for local success [Temelová 2007; Doucet, Van Kempen and Van Weseep 2011a; Kovács, Wiessner and Zischner 2012].
Urban renewal projects in CEE countries

While in Western countries urban renewal has been on the political agenda for many decades, in CEE countries urban revitalisation projects have gained momentum since the 2000s [Feldman 2000; Ruoppila 2007; Sagan and Grabkowska 2012]. The development and implementation of urban renewal projects (mostly private-led but also public projects and public-private partnerships) have been driven largely by economic motives, especially in countries that have adopted a liberal welfare regime, such as the Baltic States. These projects have involved only a few stakeholders and have been primarily oriented towards physical aspects of the neighbourhood, overlooking the neighbourhood’s social conditions [Van Kempen, Vermeulen and Baan 2005; Temelová 2007; Keresztély and Scott 2012; Scott and Kühn 2012]. This is in contrast to the contemporary view of urban regeneration as a comprehensive set of integrated strategic developments aimed at meeting economic challenges and resolving urban social problems (with the active engagement of community groups). This has been the common approach in many Western European countries [Roberts and Sykes 2000; Ganser and Williams 2007; Couch, Sykes and Börstinghaus 2011; Tallon 2013].

Post-socialist urban policies have been criticised for dealing with short-term goals and for their focus on specific urban development projects that provide tangible results [Keresztély and Scott 2012]. Community organisations, especially those with stronger assets, have been slow to emerge in the urban scene [e.g. Raagmaa and Stead 2014]. Furthermore, the unquestioned belief in the neoliberal paradigm that still prevails in many post-socialist countries has marginalised the role of local governments and strengthened the faith in private developers, as urban revitalisation has widely come to be considered a process primarily driven by the private sector [Feldman 2000; Temelová 2007; Keresztély and Scott 2012]. In some CEE countries, the lack of governmental funds combined with a lower level of skills, a shortage of community-based urban governance practices and low empowerment in local communities are considered the main arguments that support the rationale for the domination of economic aspects and the top-down approach in urban politics [Keresztély and Scott 2012; Raagmaa and Stead 2014].

The context of the study area

The housing and planning framework

As a result of housing reforms that led to restitution and to housing and land privatisation, levels of private ownership are high in Estonia [Lux, Kährik and Sunega 2012; Hegedüs 2013]. In Tallinn, 97% of residential dwellings and about half of all land (of which only 17% is in residential use) is owned privately [Statistical Yearbook of Tallinn 2013; Tammaru et al. 2015]. Against this background,
incumbent upgrading played an important role in residential revitalisation and
the initiation of urban renewal projects was often complicated due to ownership
issues [Feldman 2000; Ruoppila 2007; cf. Keresztély and Scott 2012]. Until the
mid-2000s, the urban planning system in Estonia was highly liberal [Ruoppila
2007]. The indirect as well as direct intervention of the public sector in urban
revitalisation remained marginal; public stakeholders lacked the resources and
skills to intervene and local communities had very little say in the planning pro-
cess [Feldman 2000; Jauhiainen and Kährik 2005]. During the economic boom
from 2000 to 2008 developers rushed to take advantage of new construction sites,
while regeneration practices mainly consisted of private profit-oriented devel-

The subsequent period of slowdown and regression, on the other hand, saw private developers search for new investment targets outside the residential
sphere (for example, in the development of cultural and leisure facilities) and
higher levels of community-consciousness in order to achieve public legacy and
greater success for their projects [Pastak 2014]. Also, the city government took
a more proactive role to urban revitalisation, which led to a sharp increase in
public investments in urban projects compared to previous years. This trend has
received a further boost since 2005 after Estonia obtained access to European Un-
ion funds. Step by step, collaborative planning ideas were incorporated into the
planning process [Holvandus 2014; Raagmaa and Stead 2014], which reflects the
impact of EU policies (the adjustment of legislation to EU guidelines), as well as
overall developments in public governance practices; the slowdown of the con-
struction boom has probably also had an effect. Communities and civic organis-
ations have been consulting and engaging in planning and revitalisation activities
more than in previous years.

The municipality of Tallinn has engaged in regenerating public spaces, in
residential developments (municipal housing programmes; see Kährik and Kõre
[2013]), and in developing culture-led flagship projects with expected impacts at
city level [Pastak 2014]. Despite the municipality’s increasingly proactive role, the
urban policy approach in Tallinn has remained subordinate to the prevailing neo-
liberal climate. Economic competitiveness, internationalisation, and the promo-
tion of tourism remain the cornerstones of urban policies adopted in larger urban
municipalities in Estonia [Pastak 2014; Roose et al. 2013; Tammaru et al. 2014].
In terms of culture-led flagship projects, the stated goals tend to echo the rheto-
ic of the competitive city and urban growth in Tallinn, rather than focusing on
local community and neighbourhood development [ibid. 2014]. The culture-led
flagship projects that are implemented copy the ‘model’ projects implemented in
Western countries in previous decades, usually without paying attention to local
specífics and community needs [cf. Trumbull 2014]. The most remarkable urban
developments in Tallinn include the rediscovery of inner city and waterfront ar-
eas [Feldman 2000; Kährik et al. 2015; Tammaru et al. 2015].
The neighbourhood context

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, has approximately 400 000 inhabitants, which accounts for 30% of the Estonian population. Northern Tallinn, the city district where the case study neighbourhoods are located, lies on the Kopli peninsula and is the northernmost of Tallinn’s eight city districts (Figure 1).

The district has a long waterfront, which is mainly used for shipping, warehousing, and industrial purposes and is closed off to the public. Northern Tallinn contains a mixture of architecture: sub-neighbourhoods with Soviet-era panel apartment buildings, low-rise pre-Second World War wooden tenement houses, including numerous abandoned buildings, and new development infills of smaller-scale apartment houses from the last two decades. Many residential areas lie next to industrial or military sites, ports, or old railway infrastructure. The

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1 Tallinn is divided into eight administrative city districts. These are managed by district governments, subordinate to the city government. District governments have the freedom to decide about local issues, such as social services and maintainance of the district’s public areas.
neighbourhoods are socio-economically and culturally diverse – some of them are still socio-economically disadvantaged, while others have experienced rapid development, gentrification, residential and brownfield revitalisation, and the transformation of port areas into mixed-use functions [Holvandus et al. 2015]. The changes in the physical fabric of the residential and industrial areas reflect the socio-economic and prestige upgrade of many neighbourhoods and sites in inner cities elsewhere [Tammaru et al. 2015]. In terms of migration, the traditional inhabitants of these areas are being replaced by younger and better-educated people, most of whom are ethnic Estonians, mainly because property prices and the overall cost of living have risen [Kährik et al. 2015; Tammaru et al. 2015]. The incomers are more affluent people who enjoy the changing living environment and new entertainment and leisure activities. They also tend to be more proactive, organised, and vocal, and they contribute to discussions about urban issues by taking part in the collaborative planning process, mainly through neighbourhood associations.

Kalamaja and Pelgulinn neighbourhoods—where the projects are located—consist of mostly low-rise pre-Second World War housing, most of which has been either restituted or privatised. Gentrification has been the most visible process here. Neighbourhoods have been transformed into trendy areas mainly popular with younger, well-educated people and students, a large share of whom are creative entrepreneurs, managers and professionals [Tammaru et al. 2015]. And yet, the long-term residents with a lower social status, a considerable share of whom come from ethnic minorities (who arrived in Northern Tallinn during the Soviet era from all over the Soviet Union as an industrial labour force), still live side by side with the newcomers [ibid.].

Since Northern Tallinn has many former industrial buildings, brownfield revitalisation is a large-scale process that is transforming former industrial areas into creative campuses, museums, and offices. This kind of urban renewal is strongly associated with the development of the creative economy, which emerged out of an alternative and bohemian atmosphere and has developed into well-financed creative urban renewal projects initiated by public authorities and private companies.

Case-study flagship projects and research methods

Case selection and a description of case projects

We defined ‘flagship project’ as any kind of project that functions as a catalyst for upgrading an area through its pioneering role and creates a spin-off effect [cf. Temelová 2007; Grodach 2010]. The case studies analyse three flagship projects located in the neighbourhoods of Kalamaja and Pelgulinn: Telliskivi Creative City, a privately-led real estate project (also referred to as ‘the creative campus’ in this article); Seaplane Harbour, the national maritime museum (hereinafter ‘the
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All three of these projects are located on former industrial sites that have undergone a complete change in function (Figure 1 and 2). The cases were selected so as to reflect the diversity of culture-led flagship projects—in terms of functions and type of initiator—carried out in Tallinn from 2005 to 2015 (see also Table 1). The studied projects differ in terms of the type of principal initiator, the functions developed, public involvement, and outreach. The creative campus was funded privately, while the maritime museum and the cultural hub were developed with public investments, including EU funds. Since the initial goals of the projects changed substantially in each case during the course of its implementation (see below), the analyses focused on the altered goals and the actual implementation of the project. The theoretical assumption was that the projects initiated by the public sector, and especially the one initiated by the municipality, were more sensitive to local issues, and resulted in more spin-off effects on local neighbourhoods than the privately-led project.

Telliskivi Creative City was the first project of its kind to introduce the creative campus concept and culture-led brownfield regeneration ideas in the Northern Tallinn district. It is a privately-led brownfield regeneration project

Table 1. Outline of the case-study flagship projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Creative campus</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Cultural hub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main objectives</td>
<td>Inward looking</td>
<td>Outward looking</td>
<td>Outward looking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To provide rental</td>
<td>To promote culture and creative activities,</td>
<td>To promote culture, provide a concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>properties for creative</td>
<td>trainings</td>
<td>arena</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>entrepreneurs,</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public spaces (cafés,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restaurants, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiators</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Central government of Estonia</td>
<td>NGOs, soon taken over by the local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main target groups</td>
<td>Local ‘gentrifiers’:</td>
<td>Tourists and visitors, maritime specialists,</td>
<td>Creative groups (artists, entrepreneurs,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creative groups (artists,</td>
<td>enthusiasts and hobbyists, marine experts,</td>
<td>professionals), persons related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>entrepreneurs,</td>
<td>owners of small vessels and yachts</td>
<td>education and science, local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>professionals), members</td>
<td></td>
<td>government cultural institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of local neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. The functional change that took place in the case-study sites

Source: Photo mosaic by the authors.
Note: The photographs are drawn from the following sources (from left to right, top row to bottom row):
(http://telliskivimuuseum.weebly.com/telliskivi-lugu.html);
(2) Telliskivi Creative City homepage. Retrieved 16 May 2014
(http://telliskivi.eu/);
(3) Author Kalev Külase. Retrieved 17 November 2015
(https://www.flickr.com/photos/maailmaparim);
(4) Author unknown. Retrieved 17 November 2015
(http://www.osta.ee/tallinna-lennusadam-vesilennukid-ja-angaarid-44261322.html);
(http://register.muinas.ee/public.php?menuID=monument&action=view&id=3115);
(http://forte.delfi.ee/archive/lennusadam-saab-aastaseks-tule-peole?id=66043544);
(https://www.muurileht.ee/tallinn-tutvustab-kultuurikatla-planeeringut/);
(9) Author: Renee Altrov. Retrieved 17 November 2015
(still ongoing), initiated in 2008 and located in an old railway factory. The initial intention—to demolish the whole area and replace it with new office buildings—transformed into a creative campus concept as a result of the real estate market crisis that began in 2008. The abandoned buildings of the complex have been gradually converted into offices for creative industries and public spaces; rental properties have been developed for creative entrepreneurs (defined as entrepreneurs in a creative industry), non-profit organisations, restaurants, cafés, bars, and niche shops; the facilities include a yard area, a theatre, and childcare. Events such as flea markets are regularly organised on the campus. Local issues and engagement with active local groups have been central to the initiative’s strategic development.

The Seaplane Harbour is a museum that opened in 2012 in a military waterfront area previously closed to the public. It is operated by the Estonian Maritime Museum and located in former seaplane hangars that are of significant architectural value. The refurbishment began in 2007 and the project was mostly funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The waterfront museum project was initiated by the Ministry of Culture with the aim of creating a modern national museum. In the media coverage of the project it has been widely considered a success story with a strong concept—a permanent exhibition in an architectural gem. Local residents were not involved in the development process or in the subsequent museum activities as the project did not specifically aim to benefit the local audience or boost the local socio-economic climate. Instead the main goal of the museum was to present the cultural legacy of Estonian maritime history and attract large numbers of national and international visitors. This goal has been achieved and, in addition, the museum operates as a venue for cultural events, hosting international and local events, exhibitions, festivals, and forums, and contributes to national maritime science and history by promoting maritime education and training. The museum has created a local free-access public area around the museum at the waterfront, complete with an exhibition area, a port for small private sailboats, yachts, and vessels for sightseeing cruises, and a playground.

Tallinn Creative Hub is an event and activity centre aimed at developing interdisciplinary cooperation between cultural fields, creative industries, and the private sector. The hub is situated in an old power plant. The project was initiated by local artists, architects, and creative enthusiasts in 2006 as a grassroots initiative. However, in 2010, it was taken over by the municipality and its strategic development was synchronised with the aims of the European Capital of Culture project ‘Tallinn 2011’. The project was financed mainly by Tallinn City Government and partly by the European Regional Development Fund. The aims of the hub include hosting commercial and cultural events that promote grassroots creativity through workshops and other activities, providing labs for designing and making prototypes, and bridging bottom-up creative production and entrepreneurial activities. It has been a well-known site for cultural events from its outset, even though the refurbishment was not completed until the end of 2015. However, the launching process of this initiative was very slow, provoking a local
planning dispute over whether the focus of the initiative should be more on local-community interests or on the city as a whole. Within the frame of this dispute the local neighbourhood association accused the project’s initiators of making top-down decisions and paying insufficient attention to local interests.

Data and research methods

The empirical material of this article consists of forty-seven semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders related to the case-study projects: six interviews with private entrepreneurs (project leaders and real estate managers); three interviews with the professionals involved (local government officials, urban planners, and architects); four interviews with civic participants (key persons from neighbourhood associations and other NGOs); and thirty-four interviews with local residents. The interviews were carried out between early 2014 and mid-2015. The stakeholder and expert interviewees were selected on the basis of their professional and personal involvement in the studied projects using internet-based social networks and the snowballing method. Local residents were selected from the case-study neighbourhoods and surrounding areas. The selection was designed so as to be representative of the main ethnic categories (Estonians, Russian-speakers and others), age and gender groups, socio-economic categories, long-term residents (pre-2000) and newcomers (arrived in 2000 or later), as well as different housing types in the neighbourhoods. In order to find diverse entry points into local community and initiatives, the researchers attended community meetings and local events arranged by the project leaders.

The interview structures varied by type of interviewee. In the case of stakeholders, the interviews consisted of inquiries about facts related to the initiatives (e.g. goals and implementation), views, and perceptions. Local residents were asked about their perceptions and attitudes regarding the impacts of the flagship projects. The interviews lasted from 70 to 120 minutes. All interviews were transcribed and analysed with the NVivo 10 software package. Interview data were categorised and coded using the thematic analysis method [Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012]. The first stage of analysis was mainly descriptive, aimed at categorising the main types of impact on the neighbourhood and community. The second stage was explorative but also critical, aimed at finding the factors that explain the differences in outcomes between projects on the one hand, and the selectivity of target groups on the other.

Deductive as well as inductive categorisation techniques were applied to identify the main analytical categories of perceived impacts. Based on the predefined criteria, we began with five broad ‘theory-driven’ categories and subcategories of neighbourhood and community impacts: (1) physical qualities (in terms of the (semi-)public spaces created); (2) social qualities (in terms of community and place attachment, sense of place, neighbourhood image, and the social interaction between locals and between locals and visitors); (3) everyday
activities (in terms of leisure and job opportunities and the overall local use of spaces), (4) educational and cultural aspects (in terms of the flow of knowledge and social networks involved, maintaining and representing values, identities, and authenticities); and (5) the economic aspect (in terms of growth in credibility, bringing resources to the neighbourhood, increasing future investments in the neighbourhood, and increasing property value). Then the inductive method (bottom-up categorisation) was applied [see Gubrium and Holstein 2001] to alter and/or subcategorise the theory-driven categories, as well as to categorise the factors identified in the interviews that were perceived to have an impact on the outcomes. A node tree was created in NVivo [Gibbs 2002] to identify the categories and subcategories of neighbourhood impacts and to categorise the factors that influenced the perceptions of the respondents.

An overview of the impacts of flagship projects on local neighbourhoods and communities

An upgrade in the neighbourhood’s physical conditions

Redesigning the neglected (semi)public neighbourhood spaces and improving the quality of the physical environment was perceived as a positive impact on the local area in all three cases (Table 2). Industrial areas and ports have long dominated Northern Tallinn, so these areas were strictly guarded and inaccessible to the public until the 1990s. The open public space created by the Seaplane Harbour has improved the quality and milieu of a typically industrial neighbourhood, enriching it with a true waterfront experience. The physical change has also been evident in the case of the creative campus, which used to be a closed military-related factory up to the 1990s. The place had been out of bounds for everyday traffic for over a century:

Telliskivi Creative City has basically been a closed off territory for the past 145 years ...

This area between the two railways has almost been switched off from the locals’ sense of city space. Therefore, this—the domestication of the area and giving people a reason to come here—has been one of the substantive outcomes directly related to the local environment. (R5—creative entrepreneur)

Compared to the other initiatives, the aspect of physical redesigning was mentioned less frequently in the case of the cultural hub. Although the function of the building in the hub project changed completely, the building’s architectural value was preserved; the idea was to maintain the original appearance of the interior and the exterior as much as possible. The physical revitalisation resulting from the three projects was generally seen by the local residence as a rather positive change; none of the interviewees indicated that the physical changes have had undesired consequences.
Table 2. The perceived impacts (by residents and stakeholders) of case study flagship projects on local neighbourhoods and communities—part one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical qualities</th>
<th>Creative campus</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Cultural hub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional change</td>
<td>From industrial to recreational and cultural (semi)public area (+++)</td>
<td>From military to recreational and cultural (semi)public area (+++)</td>
<td>From industrial to cultural semipublic area (++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving physical</td>
<td>Moderate physical upgrade, partly sustaining the former design (+)</td>
<td>Complete redesign and physical upgrade (+++)</td>
<td>Modest physical upgrade, sustaining the former design (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualities/physical redesign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving access</td>
<td>Opening access to formerly closed areas (++)</td>
<td>Opening access to waterfront (+++)</td>
<td>Opening access to waterfront (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary groups</td>
<td>Local residents</td>
<td>Local residents</td>
<td>Local creative entrepreneurs, younger people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and place</td>
<td>Joint ‘place-making’, increased place attachment (+)</td>
<td>Increased place attachment (+)</td>
<td>Perceived as not part of neighbourhood, nor community-friendly (−)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood image</td>
<td>Improved (+)</td>
<td>Improved (+)</td>
<td>Not recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local participation in planning/empowerment</td>
<td>Local empowerment through participation in planning and implementation (+)</td>
<td>Limited involvement of local groups in implementation (+)</td>
<td>Non-engagement of local groups, alienating from local interests (−−)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interactions</td>
<td>Place of active interaction for local communities (+)</td>
<td>Modest enrichment of local social interaction (and locals with visitors) and community life (+)</td>
<td>Modest impact on social interaction (between local groups and locals with visitors) (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary groups</td>
<td>Regularly: younger gentrifiers (‘creative class’, Estonian-speaking, young agegroups)</td>
<td>Outside facilities: local residents Organised events: some professionals and hobbyists (maritime stakeholders’ network)</td>
<td>Some local creative entrepreneurs, younger people Engagement in planning: top-down network of organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2. The perceived impacts (by residents and stakeholders) of case study flagship projects on local neighbourhoods and communities—part two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday activities</th>
<th>Creative campus</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Cultural hub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time activities</td>
<td>Visiting restaurants, pubs, sport club</td>
<td>Walking, outside entertainment (++)</td>
<td>Not open regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
<td>Increased for local entrepreneurs (++)</td>
<td>Providing spaces for creative activities (+)</td>
<td>Not recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social infrastructure</td>
<td>Children daycare facilities (++)</td>
<td>Playground for children (++)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
<td>Planned events (+)</td>
<td>Thematicallly planned events (+)</td>
<td>Programme-based activities (++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary groups</td>
<td>Leisure: younger age groups, newer gentrifiers Job opportunities: tenants (creative entrepreneurs and professionals) of creative campus</td>
<td>Regular: creative entrepreneurs (inside), local people (outside) Organised events: some professionals and hobbyists (maritime stakeholders’ network)</td>
<td>Young agegroups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational and cultural aspects</th>
<th>Creative campus</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Cultural hub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flow of knowledge through social networking</td>
<td>Increased flows of knowledge, educational attainment (++)</td>
<td>Increased flows of knowledge among social networks involved, educational attainment (++)</td>
<td>Not recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining and representing values, identities and authenticities</td>
<td>Preservation of cultural assets and values (e.g. pop-up museum on memories of local residents) (++)</td>
<td>Thematicallly planned events, workshops and performances; the preservation and exhibiting of local cultural traditions (++)</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary groups</td>
<td>Identities: community groups Networking: newer gentrifiers</td>
<td>Events: some professionals and hobbyists (maritime stakeholders’ network)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. The perceived impacts (by residents and stakeholders) of case study flagship projects on local neighbourhoods and communities—part three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic aspects</th>
<th>Creative campus</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Cultural hub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing credibility, bringing resources to neighbourhood</td>
<td>Bringing resources, increasing chances for future investments (+++)</td>
<td>Bringing resources, increasing chances for future investments (+++)</td>
<td>Increasing chances for future investments (+++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige and image</td>
<td>Improving prestige and image, branding the area, indirect gains (+++)</td>
<td>Collecting prestige and credibility for project management and indirect gains in the future; branding the area (+++)</td>
<td>Collecting prestige and credibility for project management and indirect gains in the future (+++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic competitiveness</td>
<td>Economic efficiency and search for specific target groups, incl. visitors (+++)</td>
<td>Economic efficiency and search for specific target groups, incl. visitors (+++)</td>
<td>Economic efficiency and search for specific target groups, incl. visitors, tourists (+++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialisation</td>
<td>Signs of commercialisation (+)</td>
<td>Signs of commercialisation (+++)</td>
<td>Signs of commercialisation (+++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing property values</td>
<td>Modest influence on selling real estate in the area, local concern about rising price levels (--)</td>
<td>Modest influence on selling real estate in the area</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary groups</td>
<td>Local cultural entrepreneurs and professionals (+)</td>
<td>Local cultural entrepreneurs and professionals (+)</td>
<td>Local cultural entrepreneurs and professionals (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the direction of impacts: ‘+’ indicates a positive direction and ‘−’ indicates a negative direction; the intensity of the impacts: ‘+/-’ indicates low impact, ‘++/-’ indicates medium impact, and ‘+++/-’ indicates high impact.
New spaces for social interaction

Creating spaces for local social interaction and thereby enriching community life has been one of the most discussed aspects of culture-led renewal projects; however, the success of these attempts has often been disputed. Of all three initiatives, Telliskivi Creative City has been evaluated the highest as a place of interaction for local communities, both by the stakeholders and the residents interviewed. It has become a place for communication through organising different activities and a venue for local social recovery. Younger interviewees describe the restaurants, cafés, stage and rehearsal rooms, yard area, and outdoor cafés in this public and semi-public space as enhancing social interaction. According to the stakeholders, two aspects—the project’s focus on the local area and the active engagement of local civil society groups in the planning and implementation phase—have contributed to this positive outcome. Moreover, local participation in the initiative itself has constituted an important arena for social interaction, resulting in common ‘place-making’ and advancing place attachment.

Considering the level of success, and whether people embrace the city space, the case of Telliskivi Creative City could be set as an example. ... Even though I don’t think that Telliskivi is the best kind of bottom-up creative centre, I still believe that it embodies bottom-up values in certain ways. Telliskivi has always been open to locals and third sector organisations, as tenants hold a vote and are engaged even though the main decisions are made somewhere else. (R15—a tenant of TCC)

In the case of the Seaplane Harbour, the overall importance of the aspect of enriching social interaction and community life is perceived as modest, mainly due to the limited involvement of local residents, including local creative groups and maritime entrepreneurs, in organising or participating in events and exhibitions. The added value to local spaces in terms of social interaction is mainly revealed in the yard and the port area created by the initiative. The stakeholders of the project admit that the focus has been ‘outward-looking’: the aim has been to attract national public sector events, glamorous events, and international visitors, rather than involve local residents and businesses.

Contrasting and even negative opinions have been expressed in the case of the creative hub: its objective is perceived as creating a top-down network of selected creative organisations instead of promoting creative industries. The perceived image of not being local and community-friendly, which some interviewees even regard as alienating, has been expressed as follows:

The Creative Hub, yes, I attend different events, even concerts there if it interests me. But I don’t consider it part of my neighbourhood. Instead, it is something more city-wide. (R24—a resident of Sitsi neighbourhood)
Usability of spaces

The physical and social aspects often appeared to tally with the usability of those created spaces. According to the interviews, the open areas of the Seaplane Harbour are often used as recreation sites for walking and as places for children to play; this function was considered especially important by the representatives of ethnic minorities living in the neighbourhood. As one would expect, the open-air free access spaces of the museum were visited by local residents more frequently than the limited-access interior spaces—the local added value deriving from the recreational opportunities these open spaces provide has been crucial to integrating the places with everyday practices. Furthermore, participation in events—exhibitions, workshops, performances, etc.—and use of the appropriate spaces were considered important by the interviewees. While visiting restaurants, pubs, and bars operating in all three cases is more common amongst new residents, participation in local events and visiting theatre performances and exhibitions were often mentioned also by the other groups, such as long-term residents, Russian-speaking inhabitants, and residents of the local Soviet-era housing estates.

The high level of usability of the creative campus can be associated with the character of the created space, which is accessible in both physical and social terms: visitors can freely enter the area, and the diversity of activities offered increases the volume of daily visits and favours local social practices. The smaller scale and local orientation, combined with the availability of a cultural component (and in some cases, the involvement of local artists), have turned out to be important aspects that have increased the usability to locals of the created places.

For example, one of the events held in Telliskivi Creative City was a street food festival. It brought together a lot of people and gave us a reason to visit the place. I remember it still more clearly than my other visits there. (R20—a local resident)

Compared to the other two projects, the spaces of the creative hub have remained less accessible to the general public, as they offer less locally-oriented facilities and activities. This aspect was not considered a priority during the planning phase of the initiative—the project’s goals were ‘outward-looking’ rather than aimed at benefiting the local communities, and there has been no active engagement with civil society. The functioning of the campus has been ‘programme-based’, i.e. visitors and local residents can only visit the place during organised events.

I believe that the Creative Hub is necessary, but this necessity should be worth more to the locals living in the area. For the public to know more about the Creative Hub, events should be held here through which the locals begin to learn more about it. (R12—a local resident)
Educational and cultural impacts

While the public and semi-public spaces can act as arenas for social interaction, the initiatives also have an educational dimension and an impact on the preservation of cultural assets and values in the neighbourhood and among community members. These dimensions were mentioned frequently in the expert interviews in the case of the museum, as the museum has contributed to promoting maritime education and training, and the preservation and exhibiting of local cultural traditions, values, identities, and assets. The connection suggested by the interviewees is that Kalamaja neighbourhood has a long-standing tradition of machinery, maritime, and fishing industries and the maritime museum maintains and represents this maritime legacy. The educational and cultural aspect is also perceived in the case of the other two projects—through the flow of knowledge, the social networks involved, and the provision of spaces for creative activities. Examples of this include a pop-up museum established in Telliskivi Creative City that presents the history of the Telliskivi campus, and the presentation of memories of local residents about the cultural heritage of Telliskivi Street. The creative hub, in accordance with its initial goal to promote city-wide culture, is known amongst local people for its thematic events, workshops, and performances with educational output for specific urban-wide groups of young visitors, creative people, and broader audiences, which local residents can attend. However, local inhabitants considered the impact only marginal—for example, a programme targeting food culture was mentioned. In all three cases, the influence on promoting local cultural assets and values were mentioned mostly by ethnic Estonians living in gentrified neighbourhoods, the majority of whom are new residents.

Economic impacts

Regarding the impact the project was deemed to have had on the local economy, the opinions ranged from pessimistic to optimistic. Notably, all the three projects were seen as concentrating on cost-effective actions and specific target groups, aiming towards prestige and image. As revealed in the expert interviews with urban planners and local civic stakeholders, the creative city projects face the challenges of economic competition and, therefore, seek to attract external visitors. Professionals like urban planners, architects, and some members of the local neighbourhood association noticed signs of commercialisation. The aforesaid free access to local public and semi-public spaces was also seen as supporting consumption. A project leader responded to this criticism resolutely:

Unfortunately, there exist big risks when targeting the project at bottom-up creativity and local activism. We are responsible for the project and therefore we have to do Excel calculations as well! The model must work and not just for one or two years. (R8—a project leader)
The importance of economic efficiency and international recognition is also well manifested in the case of the cultural hub:

The aim of the Creative Hub is to develop different clusters. In a few years’ time, the organising of events and integration of activities should be functioning, and we can begin collecting results on a bigger scale; therefore, we can reach higher levels in combining culture with tourism. ... There are four keywords: economic dimension, cultural mission, interdisciplinarity, and internationality. … The Creative Hub is a place where creative freedom is valued and there is know-how and respect for smart money. (R1—project leader)

Because of the large number of visitors, the projects have brought economic resources to the local neighbourhoods, while also increasing future investments. The slow process of launching the creative hub project means it is too early to assess the economic outcomes of this project. All in all, it appears that the two public projects—and likewise the private project—have been carried out with one eye on economic efficiency. According to the project leaders, the perceived expectations for efficiency do not necessarily mean profit margin directly but may also refer to indirect gains generated by a project’s positive image, favourable media coverage, and the links to other initiatives and projects that are forged, resulting in an accumulation of resources, prestige, and credibility for project management in the future.

It is as yet too early to assess the impact of the projects on property prices and rents in local neighbourhoods, but, as the interviews noted, local real estate is often sold with reference to its proximity to the Seaplane Harbour or Telliskivi Creative City.

**Redesigning (semi-)public spaces for whom?**

As noted in the previous section, developers consider bottom-up creativity and local activism to be risky in business terms. With a focus on prestige and image-building, concentrating on cost-effective actions often entails a careful selection of target groups, as well as external orientation. The established milieu at the creative campus has created a bohemian and creative social atmosphere that is especially welcoming for the ‘creative class’. As such, it has become a meeting place for local gentrifiers—the creative class (artists, creative entrepreneurs, managers and professionals) and younger people, rather than the older, less wealthy and educated, and longer-term residents in the neighbourhood, many of whom come from ethnic minorities.

For me, Telliskivi Creative City is an active and interesting place to meet other people. Everything you need is there: restaurants for dinner, a gym for sports activities, and places for hobbies. If this place did not exist, many activities would take place
outside the neighbourhood. (R20—a younger resident of the Kalamaja neighbourhood)

In a critical perspective, the project has mainly enriched the community life of ethnic Estonians and recent incomers. The creative campus is perceived as a popular meeting place in particular by young, more recent gentrifiers, whereas earlier inmovers of the early 2000s tend to be more critical, expressing a certain concern about rising price levels, as well as questioning the social value of the meeting places. They do not consider themselves or their social networks to be active users of the created spaces anymore and instead tend to distance themselves from these increasingly gentrified places and communities of Telliskivi Creative City:

These new residents enjoy shabbier dwellings and a bohemian lifestyle. We are already past the stage of life that they are living through now. … The old generation is fading. I don’t know any new Kalamaja residents. We don’t interact. … Young people move here like a new wave; they have their friends and places they go and they get the sense of a community. In a couple of decades, they’ll grow older like me and probably decide as well that they don’t want to live here and leave. (R19—a local resident)

Analysis of the distribution of impacts of flagship projects such as the creative campus thus reveals the other side of the coin—the target groups usually consist of persons who are younger, more active, and more affluent and who belong to the mainstream ethnic group. The projects integrate the thematic groups related with creative activities.

The Seaplane Harbour has succeeded as an arena that brings together marine and maritime enthusiasts, building up a maritime stakeholder’s network of specialists, researchers, and hobbyists, and creating a tradition of arranging specialist events. Nevertheless, the marine and leisure activities organised aim to concentrate more on the cream of society, i.e. public sector employees, famous artists, and creative people, paying less attention to local marine industries, entrepreneurs, and residents. The Northern Tallinn district is the traditional location for the marine industry, but the project’s network does not include local marine operators and maritime businesses. Although the open-air free-access spaces in the Seaplane Harbour such as restaurants and cafés, yards and ports are visited actively by local residents, including ethnic minorities and long-term residents, the aim of providing these high-quality public spaces has been to receive public support and increase the amount of visitors to the main museum building.

The current urban renewal projects are managed in such a way that the public space has the task of attracting the audience for the venue to operate. Therefore, the understanding of public space is one-sided—public space should be conceptualised as more striking and more meaningful. (R2—member of a non-governmental grassroots organisation)
Tallinn Creative Hub similarly tries to specialise in creative fields and prestigious events. As a result, the selection criteria can be quite harsh, as the next interview excerpt demonstrates:

I work in a small local circus troupe. We asked for the opportunity to organise an event in Tallinn Creative Hub and they said that they would provide the rooms for free, and we would only have to pay for heating and power costs. I thought it was a cool opportunity and asked how much these costs were. They said 2500 euros. … We wanted the room for one night and it would have cost 2500 euros?! Wow, that’s not for free anymore! Maybe I just don’t have access to the right people to do things there? I know that there are still many important events arranged for the local community. (R37—a local resident and creative entrepreneur)

In making top-down decisions about the development of the campus, the creative hub works with artists, creative entrepreneurs, and local creative organisations while being in a conflictual relationship with local residents. Such conflicts complicate cooperation with local entrepreneurs and inhabitants.

All in all, in spite of the overall positive result on social activity spaces, social interaction and community attachment, educational and training achievements, the results also indicate that the projects tend to ‘bond’ rather than ‘bridge’ [Putnam 2000], i.e. the (local) project-specific target groups tend to interact with each other and do not extend their networks to the wider, diverse population groups living in the area.

**Conclusion**

This article focused on the impacts of three culture-led regeneration projects from the perspective of stakeholders and local communities in post-socialist Tallinn. The renewal projects with a (semi-)public cultural function were implemented in brownfield sites of historical inner-city residential areas—neighbourhoods that have witnessed gentrification, the diversification of residential groups, and an upgrading of the housing stock over the last two decades. The Kalamaja and Pelgulinn neighbourhoods in Northern Tallinn, where the case-study projects were located, have become trademarks for small communities of creative groups living in high-valued wooden housing. Former industrial buildings have undergone a thorough change in functions, appearance, and image, although the buildings have retained authentic elements from their past.

Each of the flagship projects studied—a cultural campus, a museum, and a cultural hub—was perceived to have substantial effects on neighbourhood development. Whether the projects were deemed a success for local neighbourhood development was found to depend on the overall goals of the project (e.g. whether the project’s focus was inward or outward looking), the consideration given to the
‘locale’ during the course of the projects, and the degree of engagement with civil society stakeholders [cf. Temelová 2007; Grodach 2010; Sagan and Grabkowska 2012]. In projects where the local focus was recognised at the level of goals, local issues were not ignored during the project’s implementation. The commitment of the project’s leaders to resolving local issues, as well as their ability to collaborate, make compromises, and create partnerships with local groups and entrepreneurs became essential in ensuring the community-friendly outcomes of the projects.

Contrary to our expectations, the outcomes on local neighbourhoods were not related to the type of initiators (whether municipal, state, or private-led projects)—all flagship projects were regarded as cost-effective, focused on prestige and image promotion, and as seeking investments and external (including international) recognition. This finding is in line with the debates on neoliberal urban governance [Smith 2002; Lees and Ley 2008; Doucet, Van Kempen and Van Weseep 2011b; Doucet 2014] and urban entrepreneurialism [Harvey 1989; see also Miles and Paddison 2005].

The physical upgrade of neighbourhood spaces was very apparent in all the cases; however, the extent of upgrade depended on the desired goals of the projects and the degree of actual physical change. A quality upgrade was most visible in the case of the open-access spaces of the museum, as the project opened the waterfront area up to public use. This also resulted in more active daily use of spaces by residents. By contrast, the creative hub project had failed to fulfil its potential: it is cut off from the neighbourhood, its physical transformation has remained limited, and its waterside potential is underused. The high level of social use of the space in the case of the creative campus was achieved as a result of the project’s inward focus and the active engagement of local communities in the planning phase. However, the selection mechanisms and target groups of the projects were carefully planned during the projects, leading to ‘bonding-type’ networks in the area. Therefore, the benefits to local communities were not unselective: initiatives attracted younger, more affluent, and more vocal individuals, the ethnic mainstream, entrepreneurs, and professionals, rather than long-term residents, less affluent and older people, and ethnic minorities. This is in line with the gentrification process that has been taking place in the surrounding neighbourhoods over the last 15 years [Tammaru et al. 2015].

The projects characterised by an ‘outward’ orientation and a lack of engagement with local communities resulted in a local social impact that was low or even in rising conflicts between local groups and the projects. Some residents and representatives of local civic organisations expressed disappointment and feelings of alienation as regards the project outputs [see also Plaza 2000; Rodriguez, Martinez and Guenga 2001; Evans 2005].

The educational and cultural role of flagship initiatives was considered high for all the projects. These aspects are well in line with the goals of the projects and seem to have benefited the neighbourhoods [cf. Heidenreich and Plaza 2013; Lazzeretti and Capone 2013]. Again, the benefits are clearer in projects with
a focus on neighbourhood (e.g. Telliskivi Creative City). All the flagship projects studied were clearly driven by economic motives, regardless of whether the initiator was public or private—the neoliberal context has definitely put a stamp on the imprint of flagship projects on neighbourhoods, employing urban regeneration as a mediating tool. The neoliberal climate that favours economic competitiveness and prestige has shaped the goals and the desired outcomes of the regeneration projects. Project target groups have been carefully selected; all the flagship projects are characterised by a focus on building prestige and attracting large visitor numbers in order to guarantee the cost-effectiveness of the projects; commercialisation has become a means to achieve the overall economic goals. Gains were considered not always in terms of a direct financial return but in the form of an expected rise in profitability in the long run—through the development of a creative economy or growth in real estate prices in the area.

The projects developed under the guise of artistic and cultural activities were essentially handled like standard business projects. Following the creative city concept and using Western theories based on successful models of culture-led urban regeneration have led to a situation where local creativity is used like a business model to create surplus value. As part of the business model, the social benefits to communities are generally welcomed by project leaders up to the point where they meet the economic targets of the projects; likewise, local community groups and civic organisations perceive the positive outcomes of the projects and wish to participate so long as the projects represent their values, lifestyle, and shared goals, and only if they are invited on board.

The objectives of the projects are not usually targeted at improving local social and economic development per se, but this expected to be a side effect of the projects [for similar observations, see also Feldman 2000; Temelová 2007; Kereszttély and Scott 2012; Kovács, Wiessner and Zischner 2012; Sagan and Grabkowska 2012]. Ultimately, the neighbourhoods are changing towards new patterns of community divisions, perceptions of place attachment, inclusions and (s)exclusions—leading gradually towards new, silent gentrification battlefields and increased divisions of urban social spaces [see also Kovács, Wiessner and Zischner 2012; Sagan and Grabkowska 2012]. Paradoxically, in the neoliberal context, the community reaction to the kind of renewal projects seems to be two-directional: either towards alienation from the initiatives, or towards increasing enthusiasm and activism that gives further impetus to the gentrification processes already under way in high-potential neighbourhoods.

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