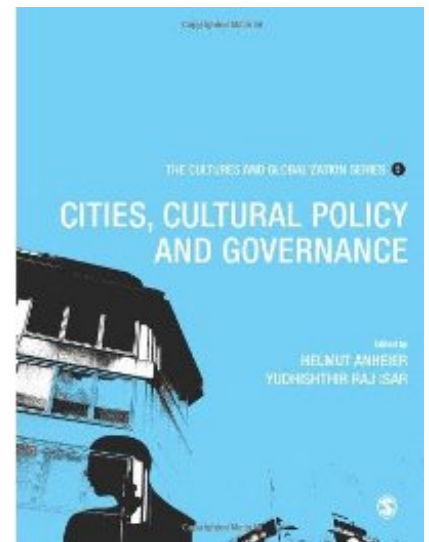# How will cultural policy makers brand London after the Games and glory have gone?

The preparation for the Olympic Games in London and its legacy have brought into question the efficacy of top-down marketing strategies and private ownership. **Rebecca Litchfield** *finds the essays in* **Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance** *a salient reflection on issues common to London and other cities the world over experiencing a new "glocal" culture, which has come to dominate cultural policy decisions. However, she holds that many of the writings fail to invite deeper investigation making the book an excellent excellent introduction, but one that may isolate readers looking for deeper analysis.*

Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance Edited by Helmut Anheier, Yudhishthir Raj Isar. Sage. March 2012.

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The fifth volume in the "Cultures and Globalization" series, *Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance,* edited by Helmut Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar, continues to address the various facets that result from the intersection of culture and globalisation. Following on from titles that explore issues such as memory and identity (volume four), and conflicts and tensions (volume one), this volume provides an insightful, if cursory, look at the junction of policy making and culture, with a specific focus on urban development. This newest work continues to explore the idea that "whether the observer or practitioner know it or not, culture is an inevitable part of all endeavours", and as a result should be examined with a broad scope across varying fields of study.

The collection demonstrates this through its selection of contributors from disciplines as varied as urban planning and anthropology, through to literary criticism and sociology, all of which are looking at the city as a strategic site for understanding the new trends of social order. A series of essays explore different elements of cultural governance across cities, followed by a collection of chapters dedicated to both old world cities such as London and New York, and emerging cities such as Sao Paulo and L'Viv, and outline key issues faced by the city and its policy makers. A series of graphs show how the city is perceived culturally by residents and visitors alike, including a statistical calculation of the "global buzz" that surrounds the city.

This work comes in a year that sees the Olympics return to London, with huge cultural and political impact. Several chapters are extremely relevant to the hot debates around identity, legacy and private ownership. For example, Lily Kong's piece on city branding focuses on how cultural policy makers attempt to employ marketing strategies to produce a particular image of cities, building a "brand" that can be easily recognised globally. Kong suggests that models which involve the residents of the city are most successful, but top-down approaches are more likely to fail, resulting in what she refers to as an "image-reality gap". Although Kong's chapter does not offer much critique of the techniques used to produce these "brands", or question the notion as a whole, it does set up some of the emerging trends in relation to a movement towards a "glocal" culture and the influence of cities on national policy. Kong's piece is perfectly timed, and will stir memories of the branding process that London went through

during and following the Olympic bid. How will cultural policy makers in London brand the capital after the Games and glory have gone?

Similarly, Kate Oakley's work speaks directly to issues of cultural policy, access and identity in the capital. Oakley's piece highlights the way that cultural policy has become entwined with the creative industries. She explores the connections between the arts and economic policy, and the way that governments have attempted to make the creative industries more akin to models of business finance, with larger firms increasingly becoming vehicles for public policy. Oakley speaks specifically about the London Olympics, an event that has "single-handedly determined the direction of cultural policies, and more importantly, funding, for the next seven years". She closes however by arguing that the greatest impact on the creative and cultural industries (and therefore London's role as a significant global player) will be the changes to higher education, where lack of funding is leading to the "wholesale dismantling of the creative economy". This, combined with the way that the Olympic Games are "cannibalising investments [...] faster than creating new ones", is fragmenting London's politics as well as it's cultural policies.

Throughout the book it is clear that the editors have taken great pains to demonstrate the speed with which the new "glocal" culture has come to dominate cultural policy decisions and the direction of governance, ensuring that debates and information are as up to date as possible. When we come to the city case studies the same is true, with the key issues faced by London referencing the 2011 riots, and the impact of the growing global financial crisis.

One of the advantages of this collection is indeed that it has managed to address contemporary issues, with new information. This makes it an incredibly useful tool for students of both urban planning, and cultural studies, and even has potential application for those looking at policies studies. Although this review has focused specifically on the writings that address the Olympics, the range in the volume is significant, with its chapters on the rise of "newer" cities such as Sao Paolo, being particularly interesting. The variety of disciplines covered also makes for interesting reading, with the volume including photo essays and other approaches to writing about culture.

However, the small size of the volume, and concise nature of the writings within mean that much critical material is missing. Many of the writings address the issues at hand, without inviting a deeper investigation. As a result this makes the book an excellent introduction, but may leave the reader looking elsewhere for a more detailed exploration. Similarly some of the themes addressed may benefit from the context given from reading the pervious volumes in the series. The case studies, although offering a good statistical snapshot of the cities, cannot truly be used to compare the different places; not only does the information provided vary (presumably according to what was available), but also includes such things as the "global buzz" of a city, which arguably cannot be truly measured and therefore should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Overall, a great introduction to an interesting collection of ideas, which should give the reader the impetus they need to explore further.

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Dr Rebecca Litchfield began her academic career in American Literature at Warwick Univerisity, before moving towards urban and architectural theory at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. Her thesis combined her passion for both subjects and explored the notion of "psychotopography" in the works of American writer Steve Erickson. In 2011 she took a step back from academia to start her own artisan preserves company. She now juggles days in the kitchen with freelance food writing, whilst continuing her academic passions through research, editing and review work. Read more reviews by Rebecca.

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