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THE TRIPLE HELIX MODEL AND CULTURE-LED REGENERATION PROJECTS: THE CASE OF THE CULTUUR CAMPUS

Practical case

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Abstract text:

Marco Aperti, Italian, has been living and working in Rotterdam for more than three years. He is currently studying at the Erasmus University, Faculty of Erasmus School of History Culture and Communication, at the Pre-Master in Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship. The investigation has been the result of 6 months of research developed throughout the final Bachelor Thesis class. The title of the research is The triple helix model and culture-led regeneration projects: the case of the Cultuur Campus. The study within the framework of the conference "Triple Helix Summit 2020" investigates the impact of entrepreneurial universities aiming to boost underdeveloped urban areas. The research was designed as a practical case study due to high contextualisation of the Cultuur Campus and due to the explorative nature of the research. The case study was developed employing qualitative methods based on semi-structured interviews using non-probability sampling methods. The main subject is the Cultuur Campus. The Cultuur Campus is a joint partnership between the Dutch national government, the city of Rotterdam and other local educational institutions (Erasmus University, Codarts - University of the Arts, and the Central Library of Rotterdam). The Cultuur Campus is set to open in the South of Rotterdam. The South of Rotterdam is characterised by underdeveloped neighbourhoods, strong social cohesion, proximity to the city centre and the discrepancy of cultural presence between the northern and southern banks of the Maas River (Lavanga, 2006, Zebracki, 2012). The Cultuur Campus is characterised by its designed physical landmark infrastructure and its goal to stimulate economic growth through culture. The project features more than 50.000 square meters for an estimated cost of 300 million euros, setting to welcome more than half a million visitors per year (Cultuur Campus, 2020). Due to the significant investment, the Cultuur Campus is characterised by multi-stakeholders endeavour. This multitude of investors often produces negative consequences on the urban social tissue, having permanent repercussions on the local scale. Rotterdam's urban policies are often driven only by economic benefits leading to exclusionary social outcomes leaning towards a harsher attitude towards marginalised social groups (van Eijk, 2010). Culture-led regeneration projects tend to be favoured by municipalities due to their positive economic return on underdeveloped areas; nevertheless, local governments are often incapable of adequately comprehending the project (Paskat and Kährlik, 2016). The necessity of employing a holistic approach drives the researcher to apply, prototypically, the triple helix model to multi-stakeholder culture-led regeneration strategies. The analytical nature of the model ables to describe the variety of institutional arrangements. The model is based on the idea that innovation and economic growth take place in the interaction between multiple stakeholders, generating from three spheres (academia, government and business). Previous research employing the model has been used as examples to comprehend and facilitate policy multi-stakeholder strategies in the urban context (Almeida et al., 2016; Pique, Berbegal-Mirabent, Etkowitz, 2018). The model has been proven to be useful to understand a global explorative vision of the different

stakeholders involved. The research found that the Cultuur Campus, due to the presence of the influential educational stakeholders, can be set apart from the literature of the culture-led regeneration projects. The strong education characteristic of the case was linked to the new-spheres-configuration discovered using the triple helix model. The three spheres theorised in the original configuration were not present in the case study. The triple model of stakeholders configuration found in the Cultuur Campus included academia, government and civil society instead. The new configuration can be related to the influential educational stakeholders involved in the Cultuur Campus and possibly due to the strong social cohesion of the affected local area. The triple helix model not only guaranteed a more holistic approach compared to the orthodox culture-led regeneration's strategies, but it also made visible a new configuration beyond the traditional triple helix model as theorised by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1995; 2003). The dynamics between academia, government and business seem to disappear in favour of a new configuration based on academia, government and civil society. Despite being present into the initial consultancy process, civil society appears to be not at the same decision level as academia and government. The research has high validity but low reliability due to the difficulty of generalisation. In other words, it seems hard to compare these results to other cases. Such deficiency is rectified thanks to the use of a standard approach, as the triple helix model, that ideally should be tested across different cases. The conference presentation of this case study aims to reach a wider audience of academics and policymakers, outside Rotterdam and The Netherlands. The case of the Cultuur Campus seems to legitimise the necessity of discussing new triple helix configurations, mainly referred to culture-led regeneration projects.

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Marco Aperti was born in Italy, but he is been living and working in Rotterdam

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