Operationalising Culture in the Sustainable Development of Cities: Developing Global Narratives and Policy Proposals

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The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments argues that a people-centred society needs to promote heritage, creativity, diversity and the transmission of knowledge, and sustainable urban development needs to explicitly acknowledge the role of culture. From a policy perspective, there is a duality to the policy approaches that need to be developed for culture. On one hand, the importance of working in harmony with local culture and values is widely acknowledged, leading to an array of local experimentation to include culture in integrated planning and policy approaches and explicitly recognize it as one of the key dimensions of development. On the other hand, culture must also be addressed as a domain in its own right, countering the risk that "mainstreaming" culture may lead to its "invisibilization." Policy should enable the creation of innovative mechanisms of practices foregrounding culture as a specific object of policy and catalyst for urban change and development. This presentation reports on a policy paper developed for the United Cities and Local Governments that addresses narratives that "block" consideration of culture in sustainable urban development, and proposes ways to integrate and operationalize culture in the sustainable development of cities.

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