Mapping the Pig Tale Journey: A multidisciplinary design framework for cultural mapping in an old abattoir

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we set out to develop new ways to identify and document local cultural elements in sites that are undergoing transformation. By drawing on the insights of cultural studies, screenwriting, scenography and service design, we build a multidisciplinary design framework for mapping culture that pays attention to the ways in which intangible cultural resources of a place could be brought into interaction with its users. As our empirical case, we focus on the Abattoir, a set of derelict but attractive slaughterhouse buildings that are in the process of being converted into commercial and civic premises. All in all, the paper suggests that this kind of multidisciplinary design framework can be used to improve the audience reception and engagement of cultural mapping activities. From the perspective of service design, it is possible to analyse how the audience experiences the results of mapping, and whether this experience could be improved. Screenwriting and scenography, for their part, can be used to express the mapping results in an impressive narrative and site-specific form, supported by affective, visual and spatial elements.

1. Introduction

In today's cities all over the globe, more and more urban renewal and revitalization projects are undertaken in order to improve the economic and social performance of cities. The rise of knowledge and service economy, including tourism as one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, encourages decision-makers to create unique and vibrant urban spaces in order to keep cities competitive in the age of globalization (Grant, 2006; Sassen, 2006; Ward, 1998). They implement urban redevelopment and city marketing strategies with the aim of attracting tourist flows and encouraging investment and immigration in the area. In some countries, urban renewal and revitalization strategies are also hoped to break a cycle of inner city decay, which results from the flight of middle class to the suburbs (Giddens, 2001).

However, in many urban renewal and revitalization projects there is the danger that the sense of an original historical and cultural identity of the area is likely to disappear during the development process. For example, urban renewal often involves heavy rezoning of land, where industrial and traffic-related functions are redistributed from city centres to the suburbs, and former inner city factory areas, docklands, railways and wastelands are transformed into residential and recreational areas. These areas are filled with brand new apartment blocks, waterfront promenades and parks or they witness a conversion of abandoned warehouses and factories into residential lofts, commercial premises and civic spaces. Moreover, in older inner city neighbourhoods, urban renewal and revitalization often fuels gentrification processes, where residents with lower income are gradually displaced by more affluent newcomers, who can afford refurbished apartments and the offerings of new elegant shops and restaurants emerging in the area (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008).

This raises the question as to how to preserve at least some of the historical, cultural and social characteristics of sites and areas that are undergoing urban renewal and revitalization processes. In this paper, we look into this challenge as a question of cultural mapping, which is a mode of inquiry in urban planning and community development that 'makes visible the ways local stories, practices, relationships, memories, and rituals constitute places as meaningful locations' (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, & MacLennan,

2015). By focussing on the case of the Abattoir — a set of derelict but attractive slaughterhouse buildings that are in the process of being converted into commercial and civic premises — we set out to identify and develop new ways to recover and reinterpret meanings of the site and to foster a constructive sense of place identity and identification there. More specifically, by drawing on the insights of cultural studies, screenwriting, scenography and service design (e.g. Lawler, 2008; Maras, 2009; McKinney & Butterworth, 2009; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010), we build a multidisciplinary design framework for cultural mapping that pays particular attention to the ways in which intangible cultural resources of the place, such as traditions, stories, values and meanings, could be brought into interaction with locals and visitors. Through the development of this framework, we aim to contribute to the discussion on cultural mapping processes and methodologies (Duxbury et al., 2015; Evans & Foord, 2008; Roberts, 2012).

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we will identify and develop our multidisciplinary design framework for mapping culture. After that we will move on to present our case, the Abattoir, and the materials and methods used. This will be followed by the introduction of the stages and results of our research and design process. We present *Pig Tale Journey*, a thematic customer journey map of the Abattoir, which was realized through a site-specific intervention based on a screenplay and a scenographic production for the Abattoir. Finally, we conclude by discussing the nature and value of this kind of multidisciplinary design approach for cultural mapping in sites that are undergoing transformation.

2. Multidisciplinary design framework for mapping culture

Cultural mapping has served different purposes, scopes and users over the years and across different contexts (Duxbury et al., 2015; Evans & Foord, 2008; Stewart, 2007). Thereby also its definitions, targets of application, methods and outcomes have been varied. The mapping of cultural resources and practices apparently first emerged in the 1970s as a means to record and make visible the history, culture and traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples and groups (Stewart, 2007; UNESCO, 2009). The mapping technique was soon adopted by international organizations, such as UNESCO, for the protection and promotion cultural diversity and cultural heritage not only in indigenous communities but also in developing countries (Stewart, 2007; UNESCO, 2009). Over the past few decades, cultural mapping has been practiced both in the global South and North as a means to improve social and economic development of different localities and communities. It has increasingly been seen as the essential preceding stage in cultural planning, which involves the strategic use of local cultural resources for the development of cities and regions (Evans, 2001; Mercer, 2002). Despite the differences in uses and methods, many cultural mapping approaches have emphasized the aspect of community participation and engagement in their cultural cartographies. The actual maps — the typical end products of cultural mapping processes — have taken multiple forms, ranging from artists' handcrafted renditions to multi-media interactive online maps (Stewart, 2007). The increasing use of web-based maps towards the present day has been enabled by the development of new information and communication technologies, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software (Evans & Foord, 2008; Mercer, 2002; Stewart, 2007).

In this paper, we seek to develop a new approach to cultural mapping that pays particular attention to the ways in which the cultural assets of a place could be brought into interaction with local residents, visitors and customers in novel ways. For this purpose, we build a multidisciplinary design framework for mapping culture that not only documents the intangible resources of the place but also seeks to ground them in the affective and embodied experiences of locals and visitors. Our approach to cultural mapping thus focuses on a specific urban place rather than a particular community, and it is very much interwoven with actual cultural planning and place design activities.

Our paper is premised on the view that the identity of a place is narratively constructed by the meanings that people give to it on the basis of the actual physical and social place and its history, and that this identity can be strengthened by design activities (see Fig. 1). In line with the common definition, we understand place as a geographic location and a material space that people have made meaningful (Cresswell, 2004). In contrast to more abstract spaces, places are distinguished not only by boundaries of some kind, but also by 'the unique meanings that people associate with them' (Paulsen, 2010, p. 600). The identity of a place is therefore an outcome of human capacity to produce and consume meanings. We understand identities, including place identities, as being made through narratives (Eräranta & Moisander, 2011; Eräranta, Moisander, & Pesonen, 2009; Lawler, 2008). People engage in processes of producing identities through telling stories — through assembling various meanings, episodes, experiences, and understandings within narrative. The identity of the Abattoir can therefore be seen as being produced through a series of creative acts in which different people interpret and reinterpret their experiences, memories, understandings and interpretations about the place, articulated within narratives (see also Lynch, 1981). Such narratives are produced by ordinary people in their everyday interactions but they can be also created, reproduced and strengthened, for example, by the work of designers (Fleming, 2007).

In this project, we suggest that cultural mapping reaches its full potential only if its findings are made accessible to residents and potential visitors. Therefore, we adopt innovative insights and methods from the audience-oriented and customer-centred disciplines of screenwriting, scenography and service design to highlight local cultural elements of a place and make them more accessible for people. All these disciplines make use of and seek to create narratives in their own ways. While screenwriting crafts emotionally impacting narratives of the place, which, in turn, can be translated into expressive scenes by the work of scenography, service design reconstructs a potentially different story from the viewpoint of customer as she or he experiences the place.

The art of writing scripts, *screenwriting*, is most often done for film or television, but it can also be used in cultural mapping as a blueprint for design that crystallizes a unique story and the cultural identity of a place. The practice of screenwriting involves researching the story, developing characters, and delivering the screenplay (Field, 2007). Screenplay—the end result of the screenwriting process—is a written description of the storyline that records all the relevant images, thoughts and affects defining the place (Maras, 2009). The significance of screenplay for cultural mapping projects can be seen twofold. First, as the outcome of detailed research, screenplay summarizes and re-interprets the key meanings, experiences and emotions of the place. Second, screenplay can provide an effective story that is needed to arouse emotions in the audience and get them personally involved and attached to the place (Cresswell, 2004).

Scenography, for its part, refers to 'the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment' (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, chap. 1). It is a holistic artistic approach to the sensory, spatial and visual design that can be applied to the design of performance events, museum exhibits or any other productions within, or outside, of the standard theatre space. In place-centred cultural mapping, scenography can be used in a 'site-specific' manner (Kuksa & Childs, 2014; Kwon, 2004) to incorporate elements of the surrounding into the scenographic composition. This