



Intergenerational transmission of values and cultural sustainability: the cultural participation of local, small town communities in Poland

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ABSTRACT

This article aligns the correlated dimensions of cultural policy and development, and looks at issues all too often taken for granted in the debates on the nature and demands of sustainability. The article further reflects on recent research undertaken on small urban communities in Poland, particularly given its consideration of the value of cross-generational interaction through culture. The aim of this study is to recall, re-define and discuss a spectrum of issues related to these two essential components -- of culture and development -- and to provoke a debate on the often concealed content of mainstream discourses that form our understanding of sustainability; for example, environmental ecology. This article is part of a broader study committed to rethinking culture and development through sustainability, where these two elements, the article argues, are also suppressed in the broader global discourse of creative economy.

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1. Introduction.

This article will begin with an exploration of the concept of sustainability. It will then move onto a series of critical reflections on a research project that investigated cultural participation in small urban communities in Poland, with a particular concern for the way it identified an unexpected dimension of significance -- the intergenerational transmission of cultural values and skills. In doing this, I wish to underline the significance of intergenerational transmission for our concept of sustainability, and by implication argue that sustainability is beneficially implemented through culture.

The inspiration for this article emerged through the authors' participation in an international, interdisciplinary conference 'Culture in Sustainable Futures', held in Helsinki in May 2014, and organized by University of Jyväskylä. The experience of hearing about the widest possible spectrum of topics on culture and sustainability, with over fifty topic-based papers each sharing observations on cultural sectors and sustainable futures, and from the broadest range of international, professional, academic, multi-disciplinary perspectives, was indeed invigorating. And yet my two topics above were rather absent.

This observation raises several questions: are we not too selective (or even unsure) in our understanding of the "environmental" framing of arts and culture, or more generally unsure on how we understand the interrelation of arts and culture within environment ecology? It may be, that our theoretical efforts are worthless if, with all our work on understanding sustainability in culture, we only attend to broad conceptual frameworks and global growth issues, but not attend to the individual, the local, the existential, grass-roots, and the community dimensions of the ecology of culture -- in other words, the integrated reality of human, social and environmental ecology. And moreover, how is this intimately bound up with the fact of generational difference and the socio-demographic diversity of subsequent trans- and cross-generational transmission of cultural values, cultural content, skills and competencies? While cultural policy often uses categories pertaining to

age -- all too often derived from marketing segmentation (children, youth, the elderly, for example). The productive cultural dynamics of *generational* differences themselves (and the implication of this for memory, cultural education and literacy, knowledge, skills and participation) is so often ignored in cultural policy on all levels.

I argue that we therefore require a granular attention to the pragmatic and specific place-based issues where the dynamics of culture emerge and impact on social life, and consequently are bound up with our theoretical discourse of sustainability or sustainable growth and cultural development. One of the related purposes of this paper is to highlight and exemplify a crucial aspect of the intergenerational transmission of cultural values within culture and development issues, and this aspect is related to the *Creative Economy Report 2013 Special Edition* (UNDPD/UNESCO 2013). I attempt to carry this through the empirical substrate of this article, and through my reflections on an investigation conducted by four different research projects completed in Poland (by a group of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan scholars under supervision of the author: Poprawski and Mękowski 2013, Poprawski and Firych 2014). With reference to the *Creative Economy Report*, our attention was directed by the significance of place-based cultural participation, cultural education, cultural developmental policies, and so drawn in our empirical research to culturally-active senior citizens, and senior leadership in cultural sector organizations -- all contextualised by these small social communities, each having experienced post-communist transformation.

The structure of this article is a logical sequence of items. It opens with a description of essential conceptual components of our broad subject -- culture and sustainable development -- then by way of discussion on the limitations of the dominant understanding of these concepts and notions, I will generate a background framework for my reflections on the cited research projects. An account of the projects will be brief, but will serve to emphasise the significance of our subject, for Poland as a country in the process of multidimensional transition, and across Eastern Europe. This is indeed prefaced by a short explanation of the methods used to collect the

data, and the way I formulated notions on the most convincing future scenarios that will provide the conditions for any policy thinking on culture and sustainability, particularly in relation to small communities and intergenerational dialogue. I will only be setting out the broad conclusions by way of discussing the research, after which I conclude by way of a set of recommendations for local communities and decision makers in engaging with cultural sector, urban cultural development and social policies dealing with intergenerational transmission of cultural values and skills. I end with a dilemma: who is the change agent, or development agent, within local cultural policies for sustainable development?

2. Culture and sustainability relation in terms and concepts.

The complexity of the issues embedded in the relation between culture and sustainability or culture and sustainable development, is epitomised by the title of a recent report: "Culture *in, for* and *as* Sustainable Development" (Dessein, Soini, et al. 2015). This publication is an output of an interdisciplinary, international research cooperation, and the result of a four year journey through a vast repertoire of academic papers, policy scripts and strategies. This network of scholars identified three essential dimensions for an investigation of our pair of terms: particularly in their iteration in successive policy documents. The first dimension, (i) denotes the role of culture when situated in a sustainable development framework: 'culture *in* sustainable development'. Culture can provide supportive and self-promoting tools for a range of sustainability issues and programs, and can add a notional 'fourth pillar' to the existing, conventional, three pillar structure of the UN sustainable development discourse: social, economic and environmental. In this role, culture is said to possess key intrinsic values -- creativity, a diversity of (cultural) expressions, and artistic activities as mechanisms of growth within human development. The second dimension, (ii) is 'culture *for* sustainable development', in which the role of culture is to frame, contextualize and mediate, and so balance all three existing economic, social and ecological pillars, guiding sustainability actions through its terrain of challenges and pressures. The

third dimension, (iii) is 'culture *as* sustainable development', where culture possesses an essential function: it provides the structure and set of aims for sustainable development as a project. It integrates and coordinates all actions within the concept and practices it generates; as mentioned in the report: 'by recognising that culture is at the root of all human decisions and actions and an overarching concern (even a new paradigm) in sustainable development thinking, culture and sustainability become mutually intertwined, and the distinctions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability begin to fade' (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, p. 29).

This basic tripartite scheme can serve to position the approaches to culture and sustainability, taking into account a vast range of policy documents and over 108,000 peer-reviewed papers published on, or related to, this subject. The report's analysis in turn reveals at least eight overlapping fields or competencies where culture and sustainability are internally related: "the negotiation of memories, identities and heritage; the relevance of place, landscape and territory; the complexities of social life, commons and participation; the centrality of creative practices and activities; culturally sensitive policies for economic development; nature conservation; the importance of increasing awareness and knowledge of sustainability; and finally, policies aiming at transformations" (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, p. 8). But even all these, as the authors indicate, do not mitigate against the fact that: "the prevailing current of conventional sustainability discourses [are] rooted in environmental and economic perspectives" (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, p. 8). Mainstream research does not extend much further than the 'environment-economic' nexus, even where involved in cultural sector organisations and their activities: in this paper I wish to push the boundary through considering the cross-generational transmission of values and intergenerational cultural equity in small towns and their cultural communities, and so outside this nexus.

A central purpose of the Jyväskylä study is to make sense of the relation between culture and sustainability so to provide the conceptual means for integrating culture in core of policy-making areas: "education, tourism, research, cultural

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diplomacy, social policies, city and regional planning (...) for the economic, the social and the environmental, and for the global and the local" (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, p. 9). The presence of culture within sustainability has now also become a routine issue strongly advocated by a number of transnational and international organizations, the most obvious being perhaps UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Yet, the specific requirements pertaining to small communities – paradoxically, I suggest – are routinely ignored, and yet were indeed present in the milestone Brundtland (1987) sustainability report, 'Our Common Future'. Svetlana Hristova (2015) points out that this, one of the most cited reports on the subject, proposed resetting the direction of urbanisation, by "taking the pressure off the largest urban centres and building up smaller towns and cities, more closely integrating them with their rural hinterlands" (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, p. 23). Also present in this Brundtland report is the second issue animating my paper: the intergenerational transmission of values. For sustainable development is famously defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland 1987, p. 41). Quite obvious is also the fact that sustainable development is conditioned by culture in a way that 'sustainability' does not mean the same in different languages and indeed differing cultural practices around the world. The current policy consensus on its meaning also remains exposed to constant change. For the paradigm and conceptual meanings activating in the 1990's are quite different from the ones we will use in the 2020's. Policy's central terms are dynamic and subject to discursive change, which is more than political-institutional change; it involves the various adaptations of conceptual meaning in relation to culture itself. And the various concerns or requirements of sustainability are often not discussed using (or under the heading of) the term sustainability.

In testing the cultural limits of sustainability, why do we not have a look for alternative terms, substitutes or serious supplements for sustainability? This may be necessary when talking about complex relations between culture and the future of humanity, globally. Extending our

vocabulary is certainly necessary in the case of the twin concerns embodied in our topic of 'small towns and intergenerational transmission'. These have been neglected (perhaps marginalised in favour of what at the time is regarded as more pressing or urgent) in current sustainability deliberations and debates. However, we may be encouraged by the critical perspective of Slawomir Magala (2012), who has introduced a significant proposal, whereby we are to test the cultural limits of sustainability, by defining and interpreting the cultural dimension of sustainability's emergent values. For sustainability discourse has migrated into the centre of the management of organizations, among other areas. The values generated by sustainability discourse are beginning to dominate over other values, and this is changing general management practice in unpredictable ways. Management academics and industry or market think tanks can now be found defining the future of business schools in terms of sustainability, that is, oriented to providing a "fair redistribution of creatively multiplied wealth (sociocultural responsibility) and ecologically sound and socially robust maintenance and management of livable environments (responsible management of material environments)" (Magala 2012, p. 904). Yet, however admirable these sound, they are all build upon a set of "unquestioned assumptions about the nature of social reality, meaning of history and desired direction of change" (Magala 2012, p. 904). Cultural change, when mentioned, is usually only a matter of communication, behaviour or substance of organizational change. According to Magala (2012), the ideals and philosophical basis of sustainability, were preceded in history by two others: personal salvation and the classless society. Sustainability is a new synthesis, a new value kit, and strangely reminiscent of past doctrinal frameworks of religious institutions. It is far more than simplified principles based on the empirical evidence for global warming, the depletion of fossil fuel deposits or increased emissions of carbon dioxide.

The cultural limits of sustainability define *social imaginaries*, structured not only with respect to the ecology of air, animals and plants, but also to social institutions like taxes, banks, the stock exchange, political parties, top-down governance structures, television and other mainstream media

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communication channels. Global warming (as a term now largely supplanted in political discourse by 'climate change') is perhaps obsessively foreshadowing other, more essential, threats to humankind observed by Magala (2012), such as environmental degradation as an outcome of the erosion of soil, along with fast urbanization upon former agricultural lands, and the growing communication infrastructure invading nature (across uninhabited land or sky). Another is the so called "unmanageable consequences of social injustice" (Magala 2012, p. 904), or the inability to manage the inequalities generated by economic and political unevenness. These phenomenon alone are pushing the meaning of sustainability into levels that are essentially ungraspable. Every time a new crisis appears in these areas, "what we feel and desire can matter more than what we calculate and rationalize" (Magala 2012, p. 906). Following this logic, and in the spirit of Brendan McSweeney (2012), we are now experiencing the power of cultures as "fusions, remixes and recombinants (...) made and remade through exchange, imitation, intersection, incorporation, reshuffling, through travel, trade, subordination" (McSweeney 2012, p. 164). The limits of sustainability are then cultural, artificial, negotiable by nature, based on thinking that is unpredictable, flow, process and dialogue-like.

Approaching the essence of sustainability. Is sustainability, then, not dependent on the existence of realities previously grasped with other terms: continuity and consistency, harmony and coherence? When approaching the 'sense' of sustainable development, are we not facing, first, other key issues, those of communality and literacy, locality and human ecology? Is sustainability not essentially about learning from history, or a kind of, craftsmanship of the meaningfulness of life, and of slowing down its pace? Without doubt, we will never understand sustainability and the meaning of 'the good life' without understanding the fundamental continuity of aesthetics and ethics (Berger 2000) or the importance of maintaining meaningful interaction generated by intergenerational encounters, such as mentoring, and so the ever-presence of 'masters' – or student-master relations in professional practices everywhere. It is a poor way of discussing sustainability if we only accept for granted past

dominant approaches to the social, material and natural environment, which have provoked pervasive pessimism and optimism, which then become incorporated into institutions and whole communities (Bennett 2001, 2015). Not taking into account the cultural genealogy of the concept of sustainability makes the discourse itself dangerously exposed to collective emotion and political manipulation.

There are two other critical terms significant for the concept of sustainable development, and they are again derived from the cultural domain. They are: *change* and *choice*. The invocation of change can become overwhelming, particularly when extending the scale of organizations: "change provides a kind of meta-narrative, an overarching rationale or assumption which than acts as an explicit or implicit justification for specific change programmes (...) change is like a totem before which we must prostrate ourselves and in the face of which we are powerless..." (Grey 2009, p. 90). And paired to 'change' is this other challenging, and constantly present, notion -- choice: a "...huge array of choices we in the West have to face is overloading and leads to dissatisfaction and unhappiness (...) being socially connected takes time but the combined pressure of speeded-up work, consumption and choice do not allow time for such connections to be made" (Schwartz 2004, p. 110, after: Grey 2009, p. 120).

In relation to cultural ecosystems, in reflecting on sustainability in a diversified world should we not look first at the smaller scale of ethical and aesthetic diversity that comes from the settled, meaningful work within an actual social community? Here we find ourselves in the realm of cultural policies, and finally arrive at what has been called the 'ecology of culture' or the cultural ecosystem (Holden 2015). These are helpful terms when it comes to explaining the essence of cultural sustainability. 'Cultural ecosystem' can be useful if one wants to identify and comprehend the circulation of thoughts, theories, policies, and cultural organizations' practices in the interconnected organisational fields that are governed through the discourses and practices of cultural policy and even cultural activism.

There are (at least) five significance meanings that pertain to the concept of ecosystem: (i) culture is a complex and dynamic reality, far from

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the logical processes as indicated in statistics, numbers and trends forecasted by economists (and then politicians); culture is more organism than mechanism; (ii) the ecology of culture could be an active and dynamic frame for the description and explanation of complex correlations that are shaping public needs in relation to art creation processes and the cultural market; (iii) the cultural ecosystem can be effectively defined as the reality inhabited by the interrelated organisms of (a) subsidised cultural institutions; (b) commercial enterprises and projects; and (c) co-creative individuals, private amateur art and culture actors, volunteers an art organizations and those who create cultural artefacts in their homes. This co-related trio is now a basic triangle of interchanges that is not regulated by monetary exchange or simple transactions in the economic sense; (iv) the metaphor of the organism is far more explanatory and insightful in the descriptive dimension of strategic facilitation of social relations in the cultural realm – we can use terms like regeneration, symbiosis, growth and life cycle, which are cyclic and intrinsically holistic and useful in defining the processes that make the activities of cultural policy and cultural management, teaching, research and training; (v) local cultural ecosystems are particularly important, as a crucial place where cultural activity is rooted and exposed to different conditions for growth or 'death'.

The ecology of culture therefore is a field of constant positive and negative interactions, and it is preferable to the older conservative conception of 'organic' (hence homogenous) culture. The ecosystem thrives on diversity and difference – and so the fundament principles of sustainable development in the cultural sector must be based on an attentiveness to such local ecosystem activities and so will acknowledgem the central role of intergenerational dialogue and transmission of values within this. Intergenerational justice is ultimately constructed out of genuine cultural relations between the elderly and the young, their interactions and mutual interests in the context of the exchange of cultural values and skills. Above all, for economists and politicians, the intergenerational equity dilemma is a classic inter-temporal allocation problem -- that is, a choice between present and future consumption (Throsby 1995, 2002).

3. Cultural sustainability of small urban communities in Poland.

Local cultural ecosystems are integrated, condensed and tend to be more able to facilitate the intergenerational transmission of values. At least, it was within this framework hypothesis that the potential for agency in culture and development was researched -- on the level of small towns in Poland, conducted by a research team of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. The object of research were selected small town communities and their cultural policies and practices in 16 regions of Poland; research was undertaken in 2012 and 2013 (Poprawski and Mękarski 2013). Another 30 towns and small local communities (in the region of Greater Poland, central west part of the country) were then researched by the same team in 2012 and 2014 (Poprawski and Firyck 2014). The precise research topic at the time was defined in terms of an object of analysis being the "quality of local cultural public spheres and the impact of senior citizens on them". These locations, after a 25 year period of intense political, economic and social change (initiated by the fall of the communist regime) are surprisingly, very multi-dimensional. They were not homogenous, or hopelessly oppressed places; they were experimental in their cultural policy, but quite different in their approach to standards in Northern and Western Europe, particularly to metropolitan regions. The key issue tested and discussed was 'agency' – agency as a factor for citizens and 'bottom-up' community leaders, as well as town halls officers and officials.

The cultural economy is a playground of activities and involve an active dynamic of generations and in the legacies passed down (and up) in the form of competencies, skills and heritage in the form of material and non-material artifacts. The research surveys conducted, generated important insights into the essential aspects of cultural relations between elderly and young, their interaction and mutual interest in the exchange of cultural values and skills, impacting directly cultural production and free cultural expression. These processes cannot be neglected in any investigation or discussion on sustainability, and should not be marginalized as optional components of cultural economies in times of socio-economic change. The

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methods used to collect the data were of both quantitative and qualitative: questionnaires were distributed to the towns' inhabitants, and to culturally active participants and cultural organizations and activists; in-depth interviews with institutions and opinion leaders as well as focus groups with a selection of active town opinion leaders, such as artists, teachers, entrepreneurs, journalists, local politicians and activists, and town hall public officers.

The substance of the conclusions generated by this research can be digested as set of eleven points: (i) local leaders not only possessed a form of agency, but worked with passion and commitment, both of which were values that seemed to be intrinsic to the small town communities as social-spatial entities; (ii) the people in the small communities possessed a recognition of cultural organizations, which in turn allowed the organisations to develop a strong identity and right to space and location, both physical and in the imaginary map of the community; (iii) communication was direct and access to data was expected, as with, for example, teachers in schools who expect to know the family, cultural and neighbourhood background of each pupil; (iv) active community participation was a norm, where 'bottom-up' organization may be evident in 'circles of housewives' or elderly people clubs; (v) with this broad-based participation, gender equality or at least a strong female participation (in community leadership, including village, or town districts heads, school headmasters, cultural institution directors, city council chairs, and so on), are often occupied by women. This, as observed by the researchers, has expanded the range of social and interpersonal skills – including an increase in empathic, social, dialogic, mediative, and a culturally sensitive approach to citizens needs; this is particularly significant with regard to the intergenerational economy in the community cultural life; (vi) the distribution and re-distribution of public funding is more efficient and directed in a small town community context; (vii) the traditions and historical memory of community people is transmitted more effectively, and anonymity is low; community legends, cultural myths, and local heroes make their way into education and are sustained by specific material resources; (viii) small town communities exhibited

an 'ethos' or collectively acknowledged set of values, which includes respect for entrepreneurship and private property, 'good, solid work', thriftiness, efficiency, and other traditional values common to rural farmers and the small scale trade based around local economy; (ix) small town citizens were observed to be ambitious in educational and self-development terms, albeit more motivated when they moved to the metropolitan city; (x) small towns inhabitants were eager to engage in performative arts, like dance, music, theatre, which was identified as a legacy of folk culture traditions; (xi) cultural activities with an intergenerational dimension were numerous, examples include music education projects for pregnant mothers, and cross-generational brass bands. Co-creative activities facilitate shared experience between generations, which in turn cultivates collective memory, of places, people, facts, processes, include storytelling. Retired citizens can offer time that a generation of employed citizens cannot provide. This opens up a space of exchange, of sharing passions and perceptions, and which can be extended using crafts or new media or digital skills.

Another research project, featuring a nationwide survey of culture and elderly people in small town communities, found the data to demonstrate a general quality of 'silver power' (Poprawski and Mękowski, 2013): 73 percent of surveyed senior citizens express a definite curiosity for new cultural trends, as well as media content; 59 percent saw themselves as creators of culture; 26 percent testified to regularly undertaking art and cultural activities in organized groups; and 68 percent of senior citizens expressed concern that they are personally involved in transmitting cultural values and content to the next generation. Even the modest research sample articulated outcomes that pertain to our conception of cultural sustainability, and where elderly citizens – a growing demographic across Europe -- provide a critical perspective, challenging our prejudices and assumptions on the correlation between age and passivity, or age and conservative politics. This confronts local authorities, city halls and local administration, with some constructive possibilities in the face of perceived demographic problems but also the generational divide and conflict between age groups. This is a call for a political, social and

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economic framework for essential material and texture of future social development of local communities. Mutual share of values in cultural sphere and a provision of tools for mutual understanding of elderly and youth is a key factor to obtain cultural balance in local cultural policies.

Taking as a comparison the larger cities of Poland, we find that the intergenerational dimension has virtually disappeared, along with an expression of a balanced working life (Sójka et al. 2009; Poprawski 2015). The role of the 'mentor' in cultural activism is misperceived in Central Europe. The paradox is that the cultural sector needs bi-functional charismatic elders who are fluent and experienced in both cultural, intellectual, aesthetic on one side, and pragmatic, ethical practice of leading organisations on the other. Or are no sides as such? The absence of mentors and 'masters' who have both inspiration and teaching skills is actually a major issue for sustainability. The careful formation of the young managerial or cultural activist 'mind' in practical dialogue with an individual 'master' is a systemic tool that is often not employed. Few in Central European circles care for the facility of knowledge and skills formation that come with systemic succession in cultural organizational leadership. The elite (the most experienced or executive managers in flagship cultural organizations) are themselves formed by the professional education system in terms of egoism and individualist 'fighters', trained in conditions provided by political and bureaucratic tensions, with their endemic cynicism, and without any kind of focus on their 'public' terms of contract or public recognition. Their model of development often compels them to think of their talents, connections and professional experience, as non-transferable and not replaceable.

The dominant professional career profile is less present in the smaller urban communities, where the dynamics and conditions of socio-cultural production, management and decision-making are more transparent and open to community scrutiny. Moreover, within them we find a significant number of unused and under-employed mentors, who in career or self-interested terms, are disinterested. They often possess hybrid artistic and managerial backgrounds and skills sets: often bi-functional as 'writer and cultural activist', or 'musician and manager'. It is my conviction, that

only such social personalities can convince a younger generation of cultural managers and cultural activists to engage in the kinds of processes that construct place-based cultural ecosystems. In Central Europe one, for sure, meets such people in small numbers in often tiny urban enclaves, where they are cultural change and development agents. However, a critical mass of such are needed for the most demanding dimension of cultural change management in countries that have recently made the transition from totalitarian to democratic social systems (as indicated by Lord Ralph Dahrendorf (1990) in his metaphor of 'three clocks of change': we usually need six months to reform political systems, six years to change economic systems, and sixty years to effect a revolution in the people's hearts and minds). The later of these changes opens onto the reality of cultural development -- commitment and participation; culture is demanding. Cultural change leaders, therefore, located in public, civil and private sectors, must understand the urgent approaches required to become the organizational actors of social and cultural transformation, where talent, creative processes, and aesthetic choices will be key.

4. Conclusion.

My argument is that only cultural policies that can be calibrated for engagement -- with a community and communicative conditions for intergenerational dialogue -- will facilitate the development of small local communities sustainably. And research strongly suggests that cultural policies built upon practices of cross-generational justice become social laboratories for what is attainable in urban metropolitan regions. Traditional cultural institutions, like the library, the museum, or theatre, can effectively be re-organized around the social dynamics of mentoring and intergenerational communication, the transmission of knowledge and supporting of intergenerational social relations, where values, experience and meaning is shared. From these small towns communities emerge the playground of a future consensual, multisensoric, multidimensional development, and worth situating within the orbit the semantics of sustainability. The significance of intergenerational

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exchange became more and more visible to the research group, and in many ways has resonated in recent years with the wider European public imaginary, as depicted in the French documentary *Être et avoir* (To be and to have) by Nicholas Philibert, or feature films like *The Chorus* by Christophe Barratier, *Whiplash* by Damien Chazelle, *Le Havre* by Aki Kaurismäki or *St. Vincent* by Theodore Melfi. But the public imaginary, and even policy trends, are no substitute for sustainable cultural policies defined and mediated through the deliberations of local authorities and cultural professionals.

There is substantially less agency in cultural sustainability without intergenerational dialogue and the transmission of skills through the transfer of cultural values -- from old to young and vice-versa, and between levels of professional rank or discipline. Recent trends in Poland, as the research outcomes of the number of projects discussed above prove, could enrich the new approaches that characterise the *Creative Economy Report 2013 Special Edition* (UNDPD/UNESCO 2013), where 'local cultural ecosystems' appears as the essential resource of the energy for genuine, multidimensional, sustainable development actions. The report's recommendations include a re-investment in the creative agency of local people and their immediate communities -- a policy objective particularly prescient in a Central and Eastern European context, a territory that has recently undergone a huge social and cultural transition. Culture -- creative skills, the conventions of performance, artistic traditions, styles of life and cultural expressions -- provide a conduit for inherited values, which can be transmitted from generation to generation, and contribute hugely to the conditions of sustainable development. The facilitation of this transmission and generational creative interpretation and inheritance is potentially a serious resource and surely one of the essential duties of policy makers and administrators for culture.

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