Creative Edmonton:
Envisioning a Culturally Vital Community

City of Edmonton Cultural Inventory

Overview of the European Capitals of Culture and Cultural Capitals of Canada Programs

April, 2007

1.   Introduction

As a part of Phase One of the *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project, this paper will give a contextual overview of the European Union's Capitals of Culture (ECOC) initiative, before contextualizing the opportunities and challenges Edmonton faces as a CCOC. The ECOC and CCOC programs highlight the difficulties municipalities face in meeting the desires and demands of a complex and growing network of arts and cultural stakeholders. The 2004 Human Development Report *Cultural Liberty in Today's World* released by the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) provides, in this paper, a backdrop for understanding the historic paradigm shift continuing in cultural undertakings, in cities across Canada and Europe. This shift necessitates that municipal policies and projects be inclusive (democratic) and egalitarian or suffer a legitimacy deficit in the eyes of a city's citizens.

The overall intention of this paper is to arrive at a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities the Heritage Community Foundation faces in creating an inclusive cultural inventory in this increasingly dynamic and diverse city, as a part of Edmonton's year as a CCOC.

2.   A Contextual View: The European Capital of Culture (ECOC)

Following is a review that draws on Robert Palmer's *European Cities and Capitals of Culture* - a major report generated from a study commissioned by the European Union. The mandate of the study was to research and document an authoritative and comprehensive account of the ECOC programme between 1995 and 2004. There has been a great deal of international interest in the ECOC initiative, with many countries using it as an inspiration for their own programs – for example, Canada. Member States of the European Union are, on the most part, very enthusiastic about the program – in the United Kingdom 12 cities bid for the title in 2008 and 10 cities bid for the 2010 German title.[1] For the purposes of this paper, a review of the practical "nuts and bolts" of the program and the objectives and social perspectives conceived by the ECOC cities is undertaken to better understand the challenges changing municipalities face navigating the cultural web – with the ECOC spotlight on cultural matters.

2.1   The Beginnings of the European Capitals of Culture and European Cultural Policy

The ECOC is an initiative of the European Union (EU) and was implemented by the Council of Ministers in June 1985.[2] The initiative was conceived by Greek Culture Minister Melina Mercouri whose assertion that Europe has been a hub of "exceptionally rich and extremely varied artistic and cultural activities" and that cities need to be recognized as being central "in the creation and spread of Europe's cultures" set the stage for the realization of the ambitious ECOC program.[3] The intention of the program is to highlight and develop these assertions and further to deepen the feeling of "European" citizenry and community among the citizens of the Member States of the European Union. The EU's cultural policy, which has informed the creation of the ECOC, is focused on creating the conditions necessary for developing this sense of belonging to the same "European" community as a "European" citizen.[4] Therefore, in part, the ECOC program can be seen as an arm of the European integration process; however, this is far beyond the scope of this paper.

The following sections look at the current practical makings of an ECOC.

2.2   Selection Criteria

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[1] Palmer, Robert, *European Cities and Capitals of Culture Part I*, Palmer/Rae and Associates*;* p. 9

[3] *European Capital of Culture*, The Directorate General for Education and Culture*:*
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/brochures/capitals/page1_en.html
[4] '*European Capital of Culture*, The Directorate General for Education and Culture*:*
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/brochures/capitals/page1_en.html

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC), as it has been known since 2000, is a designation awarded to member states of the European Union. A decision of the European Parliament and of the Council in May of 1999 determined that the selection of the ECOC would be based on the recommendation of a panel comprised of "cultural leaders." The panel members are nominated as follows:

- two by the Council
- two by the European Parliament
- two by the European Commission and
- two by the Committee of the regions.

The recommendation of the panel is made to the European Commission who, in turns, advises the Council's final selection of the year's ECOC. Each EU member state, on an established 15 year rotation system, nominates one, a minimum of four years in advance, of its cities for ECOC designation.[5] *A city is not designated the ECOC title for what it already is but rather on the strength of its proposed programs for the given year.* The proposed programs are judged against two sets of selection criteria – one being the successful focus on the "European dimension" and the other on the "City and Citizens."[6] The later criterion specifies that the ECOC year should:

- advance the participation of citizens living in the city and increase their cultural interest and also
- be sustainable and an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of a city[7]

2.3   Funding and Governance Structures

The EU makes a financial contribution to the ECOC through its cultural framework program, which was, until 2006, "Culture 2000." The framework program from 2007 until 2013 is simply the "Culture Programme."[8] Up until 2009, the EU's financial support will take the form of a 1.5 million Euros subsidy that can subsidize only up to 60 percent of the total budget for the ECOC.[9] Cities can also apply for and receive funds under the "Community Structural Fund" – namely from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) - and funds are also generated from municipal budgets[10]. As such, the public sector contribution to the ECOC stands at around 77.5 percent and the private sector contribution at around 13.2 percent of the total funds contributed.[11] The total operating expenditure for each ECOC varied from 7.9 million Euros to 73.7 million Euros.[12]

The Palmer report finds the majority of cities holding the ECOC title selected an independent not-for-profit organization (with legal status as such) to oversee the governance of the ECOC year.[13] The report finds the governing structures for the ECOC year were hampered by the following:

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[5] Geppert/Nozar, Case Study on European Capitals of Culture (2003-2007)
[6] *Guide for Cities Applying for the Title of European Capitals of Culture:* http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/ecocs/pdf_word/guide_to_candidates_en.pdf; p.11
[7] *Guide for Cities Applying for the Title of European Capitals of Culture:* http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/ecocs/pdf_word/guide_to_candidates_en.pdf; p.13
[8] *Guide for Cities Applying for the Title of European Capitals of Culture:* http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/ecocs/pdf_word/guide_to_candidates_en.pdf; p.16
[9] *Guide for Cities Applying for the Title of European Capitals of Culture:* http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/ecocs/pdf_word/guide_to_candidates_en.pdf; p.16
[10] '*European Capital of Culture*, The Directorate General for Education and Culture*:*http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/brochures/capitals/page1_en.html
[11] Palmer, Robert; p. 93
[12] Palmer, Robert; p. 93
[13] Palmer, Robert; p. 19

- a domination of political interests
- difficulties in the relationships between members of the governing structure
- a lack of adequate representation for the city's varied cultural interests and
- the structure was too large and top – heavy.[14]

2.4   Definitions of Culture and the European Capitals of Culture

Most ECOC's, following a growing international precedent, use a broad anthropological definition that encompasses the UNESCO description of culture as "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs."*[15]* Culture defined as such is necessary to avoid the legitimacy deficit when culture is simply defined as the production and consumption of the high arts. Though necessary, the anthropological definition is challenging to realize and as such, successful ECOC cultural programs necessitate equilibrium between the diverse and often contradictory cultural variables such as "artistic vision and political interests, high profile events and local initiatives, and the involvement of established cultural institutions and independent groups and artists."[16]

2.5   Themes and the European Capitals of Culture

The vast majority of cities had a theme to guide the year, examples include:
- Luxembourg as a *City of all cultures*
- Genoa as *The Journey*
- Copenhagen had a theme built around the three dimensions of *The Arts, The Community* and *The City* and
- Porto's theme was *Bridges to the Futures.*

The anchor that these themes actually proved to be during the ECOC year varied greatly between cities.*[17]*

2.6   Intentions, Objectives and the European Capitals of Culture

The ECOC year was viewed by some cities as a procession of events or projects to be "produced and consumed" and, in other cities, noted as having more quantifiable successes with the ECOC year, it is viewed "as a processes of development through which creative ideas were formed and took shape, including the creation of new partnerships and alliances between different cultural groups and artists."[18]

The report finds that the stated objectives for seeking the designation range from enhancing the international profile of the city (i.e. increased tourism and investment) to developing cultural infrastructure and supporting the careers of local artists.[19] It should be noted that, often, these conflicting objectives are required to co-exist and often fail to speak to the inclusive definition of culture evoked in city's rhetoric. The most useful objectives developed by cities with the ECOC title were ones that were specific, similarly understood by partners and stakeholders involved, and that were measurable.[20] Cities, which avoided the debate and discussion necessary to deal with the thorny and uncomfortable mix of objectives attached to being a ECOC, set themselves

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[14] Palmer, Robert; p. 54

[15] Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, p. 5. The UNESCO definition of culture is drawn from *Rethinking Development: World Decade for Cultural Development 1988-97* (1994), Paris, UNESCO, p. 6.

[16] Palmer, Robert; p. 15

[17] Palmer, Robert; p. 62-63

[18] Palmer, Robert; p.71

[19] Palmer, Robert; p.45

[20] Palmer, Robert; p.15

up for disappointments and missed opportunities. The objectives for the ECOC year are most successful when they "weave…carefully with the existing cultural fabric of a city."[21]

2.7 The Case of Bradford

The Bradford bid for the 2008 ECOC title is telling of the conflicts that can even arise in the early stages of the ECOC bid process when the "existing cultural fabric of a city" is ignored. The BBC reported in an article on October 24th, 2002 that a community leader charges the bid process with "a fundamental, systematic failure of policy and practice," for ignoring the Asian community's contribution to culture in Bradford. The BBC goes on to quote Manwar Jan-Khan:

"everybody expresses a vision, but delivering on that vision is often rhetorical rather than practical. I think there's a real danger there. We can all speak about having a vision for the future, but if it doesn't involve communities on the ground living day-by-day, then I think there's a real danger that we won't achieve what we believe we are achieving."[22]

The article notes that Paul Brookes, Director of the Bradford 2008 bid, rejects the criticisms.[23] The case of Bradford highlights the intricacies of navigating the cultural web in cities made up of an ever widening diversity of actors all of who have, in the democratic cities of Canada and Europe, a right to inclusive and equal cultural representation and participation.

2.8 Social Perspective and Outcomes, Rotterdam 2001, and the European Capitals of Culture

The "social perspectives" taken by the ECOC were grouped into the following categories:
* *access development* - increasing the audience levels for cultural events
* *cultural inclusion* – creating cultural participation opportunities for people existing outside of the mainstream; and
* *cultural instrumentalism* – projects with strictly social rationales.[24]

The ECOC study reveals conceptions held on the "social perspectives" of culture vary from heralding these perspectives for "renewing arguments to secure legitimacy and public funds" to resenting these as "inappropriate intrusion into cultural matters…marginal to their main concern."[25] All cities targeted specific populations in some of their programmes – the most often being youth and just more than half of the cities "had projects for people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged and minority groups."[26] Surprisingly, it was found that the most widely perceived social outcomes were greater social and *cultural inclusion* and *access development*, these outcomes were realized regardless of the expectations and planning efforts put into them, in other words there seemed to be a good return on the "social perspectives."[27]

However, the report cautions that the complex nature of social change makes it difficult to give absolute statements regarding the social outcomes of the ECOC and that the "social perspectives" taken on by some cities often extend little past rhetoric.[28]

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[21] Palmer, Robert; p.60
[22] Culture bid 'ignoring' Asian communities, Tuesday 24th October 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bradford/news/2002/10/24/culture_criticism_bradford.shml
[23] Culture bid 'ignoring' Asian communities, Tuesday 24th October 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bradford/news/2002/10/24/culture_criticism_bradford.shml
[24] Palmer, Robert, *European Cities and Capitals of Culture Part I*, Palmer/Rae and Associates; p.132 - 135
[25] Palmer, Robert; p.132
[26] Palmer, Robert; p.67
[27] Palmer, Robert; p.132
[28] Palmer, Robert; p.137

a. *Rotterdam*

The report does acknowledge Rotterdam as a model of good practice when it comes to the "social perspective" being intertwined into the planning of the ECOC year. The objective rated as having the highest priority for Rotterdam's designation as an ECOC was *cultural inclusion*. Rotterdam, a city in the Netherlands, is a "working city" facing a "growing … [and] multicultural population."[29] The city has a history of socially-progressive cultural policies.[30]

The programming of Rotterdam ECOC 2001 attempted to widen the breadth of the cultural audience, incorporating all citizens into cultural considerations.[31] There is an uncomfortable balancing act between the development of arts and culture as an end in of itself and arts and culture being developed as means of "positive" social change. Rotterdam was able to balance these two and reported that the greatest legacies of Rotterdam's designation and subsequent focus on the "social perspective" include the new networks and increased linkages in the cultural sector, social cohesion, and an enhanced sense of pride amongst the city's residents.[32] The planners of Rotterdam ECOC 2001 saw this as essential as "one does not only improve urban quality for the better off, but for all residents. That is your public mandate, and it influences the legitimating of subsidizing culture."[33] This speaks to the important concept of "cultural liberty" introduced in section four.

2.9   The European Capitals of Culture program – as a whole

The ECOC designation has meant a variety of things to recipient cities and what is interesting is how it has highlighted the tensions, contradictions, and complications of the cultural system within today's fast changing cities. The ECOC initiative has many benefits for cities awarded the title and most generally it is the "unique chance to reflect the position of the city within the cultural field."[34] Regardless of the definition of culture, "social perspective" taken, or the intentions and objectives employed, it is noted that basically there is little coherence in the planning and delivery of the ECOC. The visionary thought as to how the program could be appreciated as "a whole" by all citizens of a city, in the long term was all but absent.[35]

Advice given from cities previously holding the title includes some of following:
- concentrate on the long- term perspective
- plan in advance
- be selective
- secure the budget
- use the opportunity and
- ensure ownership by the local population."[36]

The Palmer report concedes it impossible to determine "critical success factors" of the ECOC year unless they are measured against a given city's expressed objectives (e.g., Rotterdam 2001 was judged a success when measured against its stated objective of increasing *cultural*

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[29] Palmer, Robert, *European Cities and Capitals of Culture Part II*, Palmer/Rae and Associates; p.257
[30] Hitters, Erik, Rotterdam 2001 The social and political construction of a cultural capital, International conference on Cultural Policy Research, November 10th-12th, Bergen – Norway; p.74
[31] Hitters, Erik; p.85
[32] Palmer, *Robert, Part II*; p.279
[33] Weeda, Ka., *Rotterdam mirror of a new society and candidate* for *Cultural Capital of Europe in 2001, Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam* as quoted by Hitters, Erik in *Rotterdam 2001 The social and political construction of a cultural capital*, International conference on Cultural Policy Research, November 10th-12th, Bergen – Norway; p.85
[34]Geppert/Nozar, *Case Study on European Capitals of Culture* (2003-2007); p.15
[35] Palmer, Robert; p.62
[36] Palmer, Robert; p.154

inclusion). That noted, the important point is made, in the Palmer report, that "the city must develop a programme that is right for that city at that time. Each city is at a different phase of its historical, cultural, social and economic development, and this context must be taken into account."[37] The advice to heed the "context" of a city is explored as is relevant to Edmonton in section 4.3.

 Regardless, the ECOC year in planning and implementation requires a balance between often opposing and contradictory objectives and intentions (e.g., marketing the city as a tourist destination to including fragile cultural elements into a city's overall cultural makeup). This should not be viewed as a flaw of the ECOC initiative but rather it is indicative of the times and generally points to the increasing democratization of culture in cities.

The next section considers Edmonton and its designation as a CCOC.

3.   A Contextual View: Edmonton as a Cultural Capital of Canada (CCOC)

> *"Each city is at a different phase of its historical, cultural, social and economic development, and this context must be taken into account."[38]*

This section briefly introduces the CCOC initiative, followed by a look at Edmonton's designation and the context in which it sits.

3.1   The beginnings and selection criteria of the Cultural Capital of Canada

The creation of the national Cultural Capitals of Canada (CCOC), a program to acknowledge and support "Canadian municipalities for special activities that harness the many benefits of arts and culture in community life,"[39] was announced by the Government of Canada in 2002. The CCOC initiative, like its ECOC counterpart, recognizes the importance and primacy of municipalities in all matters cultural. Unlike the ECOC initiative, it places little emphasis on highlighting the "Canadian dimension" in celebrating the year as a CCOC, instead focussing on how the designation can help a municipality "integrate" arts and culture into "overall community planning."[40] The CCOC designation is awarded in the following three categories:
- *level 1* - total population of over 125,000
- *level 2* - total population of 50,000-125,000 and
- *level 3* - total population of under 50,000.

Edmonton was selected as a Cultural Capital of Canada for 2007 at *level 1*, by an independent advisory committee, and a favourable confluence of variables is definitely in the air for the culture sector and its impact on the city as a whole.

3.2   Edmonton's 2007 designation as a Cultural Capital of Canada: theme, objectives, and funding and governance structures

    a.   *Theme*

    Edmonton has chosen for its year as a CCOC year the guiding theme of *Building Connections.* Edmonton, as described in its bid for the 2007 Cultural Capital of Canada designation, "values the many diverse communities" and "takes as a priority the appreciation

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[37] Palmer, Robert; p.152

[38] Palmer, Robert; p.152

[39] , *Cultural Capitals of Canada,* Canadian Heritage Website*: http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ccc/index_e.cfm*

[40] *Cultural Capitals of Canada,* Canadian Heritage Website*: http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ccc/index_e.cfm*

within these communities, and among the general public, of their contribution to the municipal whole."[41] As Edmonton's population and diversity continue to grow there is real wisdom in centering Edmonton's year as a Cultural Capital of Canada on the theme of *Building Connections.*

b. Objective

The objective behind the *Building Connections* theme is to create new bonds between the artist and the audience resulting in improved artistic motion and a vital exchange of ideas surrounding the arts and culture in Edmonton and other Canadian cities. The overall objective of Edmonton's year as a CCOC is to position the city "to better coordinate planning and realize its ongoing commitment to be a city of arts and culture."[42]

c. Funding and governance structures

The Edmonton Arts Council is charged with the overall governance of Edmonton's year as a CCOC and has appointed an operational management team for the Edmonton Cultural Capital Project. The Government of Canada awarded Edmonton $2 million as a part of the city's designation as a CCOC.

3.3 'Creative Edmonton' – the Cultural Inventory Project

As a part of Edmonton's CCOC designation, six ambitious projects—all speaking to the theme of *Building Connections*—are planned for the year. Of consideration, here is the *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project, undertaken by the Heritage Community Foundation.

The Inventory is envisioned as a tool for capturing the gamut of cultural resources in Edmonton. The just-released *Cultural Planning Toolkit* notes this as a "critical early phase of any cultural planning process."[43] The *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project and the cultural planning activities required for the development of the city's Cultural Plan complement each other – an excellent synergy resulting in the efficient use of limited resources.

The Edmonton Arts Council is leading the Cultural Plan Steering Committee for the City of Edmonton and will release a Cultural Plan in December of 2007. This plan will benefit from Edmonton's year of *Building Connections* between the wide range of actors that invariably come together and interact in all things arts and culture. The fact that Adriana Davies, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Heritage Community Foundation and project lead has been serving on the Cultural Planning Committee before the CCOC designation means that the inventory project from the outset is linked to the cultural planning process. The Inventory will further inform the Cultural Plan Steering Committee as to what is culturally "on the ground" in Edmonton.

Identifying cultural resources is a crucial first step that supports a range of activities including:
- Policy development and planning for the municipality
- Internal municipal infrastructure relating to the arts, culture, heritage and other aspects of the life of the community
- Resource allocation including funding to institutions, organizations and individuals
- Marketing and promotion

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[41] *Building Connections*, Edmonton's bid for the designation of Cultural Capital of Canada 2007; p.15
[42] *Building Connections*; p.i
[43] Cultural Planning Toolkit 2007;
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/Images/Arts/2007/Toolkits/CreativeCity_CulturalPlanning_Toolkit.pdf: p.23

The inventory can allow inferences to be drawn about the links that exist between these resources and highlights potential deficits in cultural resources, areas of funding need, and also the possibility of new links that lead to greater inclusion and enhanced opportunities to "experience" culture for all. The insights that the inventory can provide should also relate to the changing demographic context of Edmonton. This prerequisite is indicative of the demand for today's cultural planning activities to be inclusive and democratic.

3.4   The Context – Challenges to "Building Connections"

This section considers Edmonton's changing demographic "context" in the midst of the so-called "economic boom." An increasingly diverse population that continues to grow along with the pressures of the "economic boom" need to be considered in construction of the *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project.

1. *Population Growth*

According to Statistic Canada's 2006 Census the highest population growth rate among G8 countries took place in Canada and most of this growth took place in urban areas. International migration accounted for two-thirds of this growth from 2001 to 2006.[44] Edmonton is one of Canada's fastest growing cities and according to the 2006 Census this is mainly due to people moving here for employment opportunities, many who are from other parts of Canada. For the first time, Edmonton was counted as a city with more than 1 million people.[45]

2. *Pressures of economic growth in Edmonton*

Population growth is a good thing and according to Mayor Stephen Mandel "[w]e're still a long way from where we need to be as far as population to deal with the rapid (economic) growth we're facing".[46] Mandel, drawing on the example of Austin, Texas – a notoriously "cool" city, said he would like to see Edmonton draw national attention not only for its lucrative economy but also for its "creativity." There are plans to recruit larger numbers of migrant workers to the city and thought must be given and planning undertaken to ensure that these people are able to enjoy a good quality of life and that Edmonton does not just come to be a place to work – but, rather, a place to live and a community to be a part of.

The economic boom has created untold wealth for some but is also creating very dangerous social pressures for low income and/or migrant populations, most notably "challenges related to safe, healthy, affordable, and appropriate housing at a proportionally more significant level than the overall population."[47] This needs to be recognized and anticipated in the cultural planning process. "If we do this" argues an author in *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society,* "we will find ways to make much stronger arguments for the importance of varieties of art forms, because they will offer a richer more meaningful array of aesthetic experiences."[48] If segments of the population are cut off from the possibility of a cultural life due to a lack of consideration given their circumstance, the whole process from the CCOC designation, to the *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project, to the ultimate Cultural Plan will suffer a legitimacy deficit.

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[44] *Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006: Highlights*
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/podwell/highlights.cfm
[45] *Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006: Highlights*
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/podwell/highlights.cfm
[46] *You're one in a million, Metro Edmonton population grows 10% in five years to top 1M mark, census show* http://www.canada.com/components/print.aspx
[47] *A new place to call home/ A submission to the Alberta Affordable Housing Task Force*, February 21, 2007, Edmonton Mennonite Center
[48] Jensen, J, *Expressive Logic: A New Premise in Arts Advocacy*, The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society, vol 33, no. 1; p.74

3.4   Culture - a resource for the whole

There are already a number of initiatives in Edmonton working to ensure culture is a "resource for an entire city,"[49] and these need to be captured and understood in context of cultural planning. A prime example is the Edmonton-based Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, with a truly impressive program of activities for their 14th Annual Campaign in 2007. It includes: *Stories Between Our Fingers* – an initiative to create a comic movie "regarding the trials and tribulations of immigrant youth arriving in Canada." The *Embracing Diversity* initiative, sponsored by NorQuest College, includes an art and writing contest exploring issues of racism. *Community through Photography – All different All Equal*, sponsored by the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, explores the importance of cultural diversity and will explore the cultural backgrounds of youth through artist expression.[50] The Trinity Manor in Edmonton offers housing and support services to "refugees who are survivors of pre-arrival trauma."[51] The support services are designed to "assist with making connections in the community to counteract the loneliness felt by newcomers."[52]

All the above are creative ingredients of the city's cultural fabric and may help to address the issue of participation exclusion and living mode exclusion and it is important that they be captured in the cultural inventory. One could view these as the use of arts and culture as instruments of social change, but transcending that is the "cultural liberty" concept that suggests instead these are efforts to ensure "culture" as a human right.

The next section of the paper will briefly explore the United Nations "cultural liberty" concept to complement the above contextualization of the ECOC and Edmonton's designation as a CCOC.

4.   Culture and Human Rights

The ECOC and CCOC initiatives have been considered in light of what it means for European municipalities and the City of Edmonton, respectively. It has been shown that there is a need to strike a balance between the growing numbers of cultural stakeholders (some with economic motivations, some with social motivations, some with both, and some with none except an inherent desire to consume or produce "culture") in their ever changing and complex cities. Though striking this balance is difficult, it is becoming, with the general democratic paradigm shift in cultural policy and planning, a necessity. The concept of "cultural liberty" helps conceive of "culture" in a way that transcends the all too common debate surrounding its use as an instrument of economic or social development – a debate that challenges the intrinsic worth of the arts and culture.

The 2004 Human Development Report *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), looks at the link between "cultural liberty" and ensuring inclusive and just societies. The concept transcends the instrumental debate - it conceives that being free and having the opportunity to explore or experience aspects of culture, in ways that are meaningful, is a human right and a "vital part of human development."[53] Culture here is seen as something beneficial to humanity to be experienced in of itself, not as an eventual means to, for example, reducing crime, vandalism, or increasing the tourist revenue for a given city. The report stresses the distinction of two types of cultural exclusion:

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[49] Palmer, Robert, *What is a Creative City*, Opening Keynote Address, November 7, 2002. Creative City Network; p.4

[50] Campaign 2007 Program of Activities /It is your Turn NAAR's 14th Annual Campaign

[51] *A new place to call home/ A submission to the Alberta Affordable Housing Task Force,* February 21, 2007, Edmonton Mennonite Center

[52] Edmonton Mennonite Center: http://www.emcn.ab.ca/services/Trinity-Mcnor.pdf

[53] *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World,* Human Development Report 2004, United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP); p.1

- participation exclusion where individuals or groups are denied access to culture and

- living mode exclusion which "denies recognition of a lifestyle that a group would choose to have."[54]

At the beginning of the 21st century, the arts and culture can no longer be viewed as the preserve of privileged elites or at the margins of society. They need to be seen as an integral part of the city *experienced* on all levels in all environments – a part of the everyday experience of all citizens. Making this assertion a reality would go a long way to addressing the issues of participation exclusion and living mode exclusion. Robert Palmer, in a speech about "cultural cities," makes the point:

> *. . . to get cities to work creatively, we should work holistically… [c]ultural policy and action must never be confined to a handful of arts events, however important these may be. Cultural policy must invade and interact with all forms of public policy.*[55]

The intent of this statement is an affirmation that the arts and culture are a part of the social fabric of a city.

"Once culture has been recognized as absolutely necessary in any society, how can this be translated into reality?"[56] This question, posed by a member of the European Parliament, highlights the importance of moving beyond rhetoric and having philosophical ideals of culture rooted in measurable practice. An inclusive cultural inventory could prove to be such a "measurable practice" for the City of Edmonton, as a part of the larger CCOC designation and further the eventual creation of Edmonton's Cultural Plan.

5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to draw out the challenges and opportunities European municipalities, generally, and Edmonton, specifically, face in the pursuit of conceiving, for the benefit of all, the ECOC and CCOC designation. The "cultural liberty" concept has been added to the range of objectives of such projects.

The examination of ECOC and CCOC designation and experiences has provided an opportunity for revisiting or even re - conceptualizing what culture means for a given city and the people that live within it. The central "lesson" to be drawn from this exploration of the ECOC initiative, for Edmonton and, specifically, the construction of the *Creative Edmonton* Cultural Inventory Project, is the importance of "context" and the experiences of other cities in implementing such projects. The Canadian and European designations underline that the cultural sector is coming to represent more and more to a growing number of diverse actors – often different and conflicting things – inevitably leading to challenges requiring creativity to resolve. Culturally unrepresented segments of society suffer - both the unrepresented individuals as human beings but also the segment in its entirety - leading to a marriage of negative conditions that weakens the society as a whole. Cultural inventorying, planning and mapping, creatively managed, can become vehicles for cultural enrichment, social cohesion and economic development.

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[54] *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, Human Development Report 2004, United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP); p.14

[55] Palmer, Robert, Speeches - *The City in Practice: International Models of Cultural Cities*, Oct, 2001

[56] Brault, Simon, *Comments on "Cultural Cities – Cities of the Future.",* Notes for a speech, October 21, 2004