

The legacy of Stavanger as Capital of Culture in Europe 2008: Innovation, reproduction or exhaustion?

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Introduction

The emphasis on culture as an important economic factor in regional development is increasing (EU 2006). Large scale cultural events are often seen as a catalyst for the development of the cultural economy in a city or region. The literature on the impact of mega events generally and of European Capital of Culture (ECC) specifically has expanded lately.¹ The dominant themes have been the economical benefits (or the overestimation of economical benefits) of the event; the event's impact on the cultural identity of the residence in the city or region; the event's impact on a city's competitive advantage in relation to the attention of important stakeholders; and the event's impact on regional development and urban regeneration.

¹ In several academic anthologies like *Cultural policy and urban regeneration* from 1993 (Bianchini and Parkinson 1993) and *Creative Regions* from 2007 (Cooke and Schwartz 2007), and in reports on ECC like Palmer and Richards (2007 and 2009), these elements are discussed. See also the website of *LabforCulture: European Capitals of Culture* for an overview: <http://www.labforculture.org/en/Resources-for-Research/Contents/Research-in-focus/European-Capitals-of-Culture>.

In this paper it is the latter theme that is highlighted, that is the event's impact on regional development, or, more specific, the development of the cultural field of a region. In 2008 Stavanger was European Capital of Culture (S2008²). This paper presents an analysis of the impact of this year for the cultural sector in the Stavanger region.³ Culture impacts can both be seen as a desired effect in its own term, and as a part of a policy preparing the Stavanger region for the future, making it less dependent on the petroleum industry and more based on the cultural economy (from Norway's 'oil capital' to a 'capital of culture').

The paper is based on a study on how the cultural producers and artists in the region of Stavanger evaluate the impact of Stavanger2008. Organisations in question range from private enterprises to public financed organisations, and they vary both in size and historical record.⁴ Major cultural events like Stavanger2008 are expected to have great impact on the cultural life of the Stavanger region. The impact can be identified at different phases: When the cultural producers planned and prepared for a project, the actual year when Stavanger was European Cultural Capital, and in the following years, when the after-effect is revealed. In this paper, we focus on the latter, the after-effect. Thus the question is if, the degree to which, and how mega events like Stavanger2008 changes and refurbishes the field of cultural production. Our research question in the paper is:

What is the after-effect of Stavanger2008 for the cultural sector in the Stavanger region?

Regarding the after-effect of Stavanger2008 we have formulated four scenarios: a) It has lifted the cultural life of the region to a higher level, both quantitatively and qualitatively; b) It has exhausted the cultural life of the region, both the cultural producers, the audience and the sponsors; c) It has not affected the cultural life of the region at all, and it is 'business as usual' in the year afterwards; d) It has refurbished the cultural life of the region, creating a more innovative basis for cultural production.

These scenarios cause some reflections. A 'refurnished cultural life' describes a situation where *there have been produced new relations and arenas*: What kind of arenas and meeting points have been established that involve new networks, new coupling between artists, new resources, and changed structures of power? The scenario of 'business as usual' describes a situation where the *structure at the cultural field is reproduced*: What type of cultural producers and institutions were involved in Stavanger2008, and who were/felt slighted? Was it the traditional arts performers, the high-brow cultural actors, and the international oriented cultural productions that

2 When we refer to the year of the ECC itself, we use the term 'Stavanger2008'. 'S2008' refers to the Stavanger 2008 *organisation*.

3 Stavanger region is here not seen as a clearly defined area, but in large part one can say that it consist of Stavanger and its three neighbouring municipalities, Randaberg, Sola and Sandnes (also named "Nord-Jæren").

4 From the largest and most institutionalised actors like the theatre, the symphony orchestra, the centre for visual art and artware, to more ad-hoc and individually based projects.

became a part of Stavanger2008? A possible outcome of a refurbished cultural sector is a 'higher level' for the cultural life in the region, both quantitative and qualitatively. However, when *the usual trot* is coming, while the same *structures of power* dominate the field of cultural production, maybe 'exhaustion' is a more likely outcome?

Despite the idiographic approach in this paper, we have some general aspiration. One such general objective is to increase the knowledge on if and how cultural mega events imply lasting effect on local cultural life. In addition, a possible policy implication of the findings in the paper is to identify whether the cultural and creative sector can be a supporting beam for future industrial development in city-regions.

Background

The increased significance of the cultural and creative sector

The service industry, which includes the creative industries, is becoming ever more important in the economy both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view (OECD, 2005). Services are characterised by the central role played by knowledge, information, affect and communication (Hardt & Negri, 2001). As a consequence, the labour involved in this production is defined as immaterial, which means that labour produces an immaterial good such as in services, a cultural product, knowledge or communication. The new global economic paradigm (particularly in developed countries) is dominated by services and information. This has also been termed a process of postmodernisation or informatisation.

One postmodern trait is that immaterial production is replacing material production as the driving force of the economy. Performativity, communication and cooperation are thus characteristics of the new paradigm. Thus the cultural and creative sector is becoming more important. There are several terms that describe this sector, like cultural economy, creative industries, experience industry and cultural & creative sector (Stortingsmelding no. 22, 2004–2005; EU 2006; Løyland et al. 2007; Jøsendal et al. 2004; Throsby 2004). The terminology seems to have its origin in an idea of a creative core based on practices of the creative individual, the performing artist and/or the core arts-institutions, and that this core influences on the other sectors like circles in a pond. It varies what is included in the circles that surround this core, but closest to the core is the circle that includes (other) institutional arenas for cultural production and/or the cultural industries, and at the outer reaches are the circle that is closest to the commercial market.

The projects empirical focus

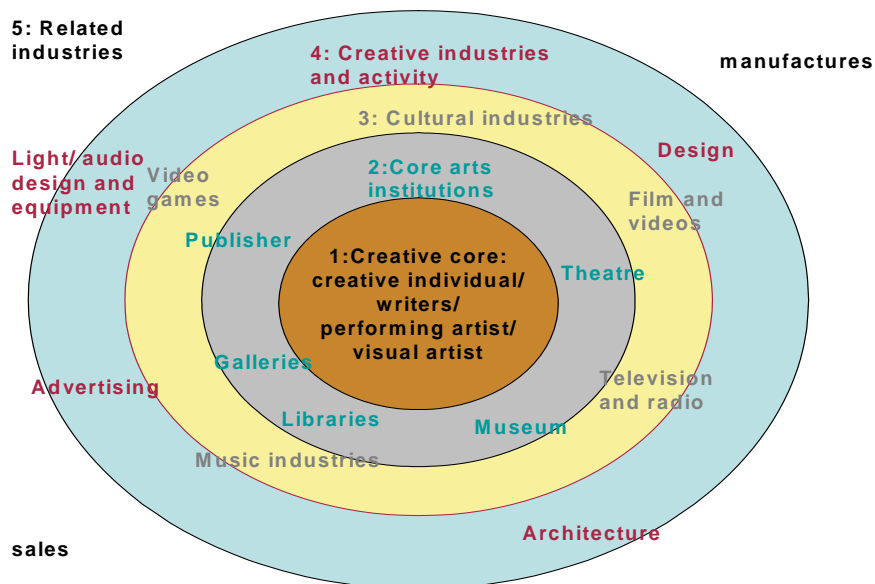


Figure 1: *The project's empirical focus*. (A combination of the models in Løyland et.al. (2007: 11) and EU (2006:3)).

An EU report defines the inner circles as the ‘*cultural sector*’, and the outer circles as the ‘*creative sector*’. In the latter sector, culture is a creative input in the production of non-cultural goods (EU 2006: 53). Cooke and Schwartz draw a similar distinction between cultural economy and creative industries, stating that ‘[t]he latter may relate to the former and perhaps overlap on occasions, but they [creative industries] are a broader, more diffuse and often profitable market oriented platform of related activities whereas the ‘*cultural economy*’ is often not.’ (2007:7) Our project focuses on the cultural institutions and thereby the inner circles of the figure, the cultural sector (cultural economy), albeit also expanding the empirical scope by studying the cultural institutions relations’ to firms in the creative sector and in traditional industry.

Mega events and cultural regeneration in cities

The political emphasis on culture as an important economic factor in regional development is increasing (EU 2006; Stortingsmelding no. 22, 2004–2005 and no. 7, 2009-2009). Large scale cultural events are often seen as a catalyst for the development of the cultural economy in a city or region. The literature on the impact of mega events generally and of European Capitals of Culture (ECC) specifically has become more voluminous lately. The dominant themes have been the economical benefits (or the overestimation of economical benefits) of the event; the event’s impact on the cultural identity of the residents in the city or region; the event’s impact on a city’s competitive

advantage in relation to the attention of important stakeholders; and the event's impact on regional development and urban regeneration.

Mega events' impact on regional development and urban regeneration is often emphasised both in the planning for an event and in the literature on mega events. This is maybe the most substantial and well documented effect, especially in relation to the often overestimated economical benefits from such events. The more 'soft' culture-led regeneration is not in the same way highlighted in the literature. According to Garcia '[a]ssessment of cultural impacts is seldom undertaken [...] in comparison with the hard evidence offered by established economic and physical evaluations' (2005:841). This is where we hope to make a contribution.

Our main concern is if, the degree to which and how such events restructure and refurbish the local cultural sector, that is change both the formal and especially the informal institutions at the cultural field in the Stavanger region. Several studies address this topic (Bianchini 1993; Garcia 2004, 2005; Deffner and Labriandidis 2005). The way we read these studies, the space of outcome following mega events is constituted through the following different axes or dimensions. These refer to the relationships between

- the short (in the actual year) and long term effects,
- flagships and more locally based project,
- attracting media and external visitors (spectacle), and the event being a vehicle for local representation and empowerment,
- seeing culture as economic development and the 'alternative' (not-commercial) culture in the city, and
- the established institutions and the freelancers.

The concept of European Capital of Culture

The emphasis on cultural policies and strategies for urban regeneration for European cities since the 1980s, must be seen in light of the economic restructuring in the 1970s and its social traumatic consequences, according to Bianchini (1993). Two radical changes coincided: one was the increased globalisation of corporate profitability strategies and the other the downfall of traditional Fordistic mass production due to technological changes. These changes hit the European urban areas that relied on heavy industry and on mass consumer industry using mature technology, substantially. Culture-led regeneration has been one strategy widely embraced by cities around the world to enhance a cosmopolitan image as centres of creativity and innovation externally and internally. Another important element has been the focus on enhancing economic growth by enlarging the cultural economic sector and, more indirectly, seeing the cultural and creative sector as a driving force for innovation in other sectors.

In 1985 EU launched the European Capital of Culture Programme. Since then, 43 cities have been designated European Capital of Culture. According to Palmer and Richards

(2007: 5), the ECC programme is ‘arguably one of the most successful projects ever launched by the European Union’. In a report from 2009, the authors (Palmer and Richards 2009: 5) were slightly more modest on behalf of the programme, stating that it is ‘arguably one of the most successful EU *cultural programmes* [our italics], attracting increasing interest from policy makers, academics and the media every year’. The success of the programme relied partly on a) the high degree of leverage exerted from both the cities and the European Commission, b) the financial collaboration between local, regional and national authorities and the EU, which increased the cultural funding substantially, and c) the possibility to embrace a range of policy aims, from cultural ones to urban regeneration, social cohesion and image change. There has been a shift from simple festival programmes towards wider and more multifaceted cultural, social, and economical goals tied to the programme of the ECC (Palmer and Richards 2009). Over the last years, however, there seems to be a reduction in the extent of the programmes.

In regards to the number of projects, Stavanger is one of the smallest of the ECCs, although the operating budget is on the average. If we employ the Palmer and Richards (2009) typology, the focus of the Stavanger2008 programme is on ‘regional cultural development’. However, not as a type of classic urban regeneration, as Stavanger is a prosperous city with less need of regeneration than a lot of European cities that have emphasised cultural policies and strategies, but more as a part of a policy promoting culture as an important area for future restructuring of the economical basis. The Stavanger2008 vision ‘Open Port’ defines the Stavanger region as an open and transparent cultural arena, and innovation is one of the core values, while contributing to further development of industry and commerce is one of the objectives (see www.stavanger2008.no). Five of the six objectives that were set for Stavanger2008, are of special relevance here: – Ensure a broad and enduring cultural lift, especially for children and the young. – Promote quality, innovation and diversity in the arts. – Contribute to the establishment of enduring networks in the fields of arts and culture. – Contribute to further development of industry and commerce. – Contribute to the construction of cultural and physical infra-structure. And at page 10 in the second part of Stavanger’s application to the EU, it is stated that the ECC process will culminate in a ‘cultural infrastructure that will create new opportunities for our region’. The following points (amongst others) are highlighted as the long-term effects: Stavanger2008 will

- demonstrate the importance of the new diversification in stimulating future development,
- propel our region towards new businesses and creative industries,
- create an environment that attracts and rewards creativity and initiative, and
- create an environment with emphasis on the will and ability to develop large-scale initiatives incorporating innovative and bold ideas.

Theoretical approaches

Do mega events influence local cultural life in the long term? If so, what is this influence? What are the lasting effects, and how are they ensured? The structure, content and implication of the mega event on the one hand, and the structure of the local cultural field at the other hand, are of importance here. As discussed above a) the external-internal dimension in the programming of a mega event affects the involvement, empowerment and engagement among local cultural producers. Timing is important here: Is the horizon of planning just the actual year or is it the years to come? And b) dimensions inside the field of art between well-established institutions and freelancers and traditional and embraced cultural expressions and innovative art forms plays a significant role. Increased collaboration and networking among the local actors in the field and between local and international actors seem to be the key words for overcoming these potential contradictions. Let us discuss how we can understand these processes theoretically.

In a study of three major cultural events, Garcia (2004: 114) points out that they all ‘emphasised the most spectacular side of their art programme, often at the expenses of more innovative and locally represented work’. The emphasis on the spectacular, the drive for media attention, the goal of attracting tourist may result in a superficial make-over of the local cultural life without radical changes and with nearly no lasting effects. At first sight, Stavanger2008 seems to have taken into consideration these problematic elements, by focusing on the collaboration between local and international artist (for instance with the concept of ‘artist in residency’) and downplaying the flagship factor.

Entrepreneurship in a city or a region can also be related to such mega events. The rise of a creative network of cultural entrepreneurs, to paraphrase Florida (2002, 2008), can be a decisive basis for new initiatives and innovation. A limited focus on new or strengthened partnerships oriented towards structural competitiveness, for instance public-private ones, could imply less dynamic competitive advantages for the city (Jessop 1997). The basis for future cultural activity would be weakened. And this again could affect the broader process of urban change (Hall and Hubbard 1998).

The term ‘bourgeois playground’ (see Hall 1997) has been used to refer to the process where the regeneration of the inner cities implies that the upper and middle classes are taking over these areas at the expense of the working classes who used to live and work there. This is the process of socio-spatial differentiation often referred to as gentrification. The concept of the ‘bourgeois playground’ is applicable to the analysis of mega events like Stavanger2008. In a transformed way, relating not such much to social class or spatial differentiation, it can be applied to differentiations within the cultural field. One relevant question is then if the ECCs are celebrations of the legitimate, conventional culture tied to the well-established cultural institutions, that is the cultural taste of the bourgeoisie according to Bourdieu (1984), while the more alternative and innovative art of the freelancers is neglected, ‘forced out’ in a process of ‘cultural gentrification’.

But what is the actual effect on the field of culture in Stavanger? The questions of who is involved and at what arenas will be studied by seeing the cultural sector in Stavanger

as a social field as outlined by Bourdieu (1984, 1993). Both *cultural capital*, *economic capital* and *social capital* are resources at play in this field. One can ask whether some institutions and actors representing the legitimate culture saw themselves and were being perceived as a natural part of the Stavanger2008, while others were not. In addition, did participation in established and new networks involve an increase in social capital for some actors, while others were left outside? And has this reproduced the old structures of dominating and dominated in the cultural field of Stavanger or has the field been restructured and refurbished?

Especially *social capital* is a concept that captures important aspects of the processes under scrutiny here. The concept is however loose, and it has been debated along several dimensions. For instance the importance of power, the relationship between trust and resources to gain influence, and the different types of social capital, from the strong to weak ties, or from 'bonding', via 'bridging' to 'linking' aspects of social capital, has been highlighted (Field 2003). A somewhat simplistic interpretation is that Bourdieu (1986) emphasise power in relatively strong dominant networks, and the capacity these networks gives an agent to enhance his/hers other forms of capital (cultural and/or economic). On the other end of the scale, we find Granovetter's classical study emphasising the 'strength of the weak ties'. While Putnam (2000) emphasise trust that derives from participation in a variety of networks, both bonding social capital in exclusive groups and bridging social capital that links people to more distant acquaintances in other circles than their own, and can thus be located in between these two positions. Our approach is more in line with Bourdieu, seeing social capital both as a resource that advance trust and solidarity, and creates a capability to act, the latter especially related to exclusiveness of and the dominating position to a network.

Methods

To answer our research question we have conducted a total of 42 qualitative interviews, and undertaken strategic document analyses. The interviews are distributed along the following sub-samples.

We did 24 qualitative interviews (26 informants) with people from 23 cultural institutions in the Stavanger region that all had funding from the S2008 organisation, ranging from the largest (with up to 100 employees) to the smaller organisations/freelancers. The interviews covers a range of topics, where new relations, new networks, new arenas for collaboration on the one side, and new ways of organizing/new methods of producing art and culture on the other side, where two of the main themes. In addition, documents from the selected cultural institutions that contain accounting data, figures of projects, audience, employees and so on, like annual reports, have been collected and analysed.

An important part of Stavanger2008 has been four Artists in residency. The idea of bringing these four groups to Stavanger, was that they work with several of the regional artists and share their skills through workshops, master classes and collaboration. We have carried out an in-depth study of two of these four, doing short qualitative

interviews with some of the participants at the courses and workshops, and with the responsible advisors at the S2008 organisation, going through documents and analysed the media coverage of these two artist in residency. 9 interviews were conducted with people involved with the Artists in residency.

In addition, we interviewed 9 cultural producers (freelancers, smaller firms, some major cultural institutions) in the Stavanger region who applied for funding from S2008, but did not get any, but still delivered a cultural production during 2008.

Furthermore, we conducted a web-based survey directed to the cultural institutions and actors (project owners) that had a project financed by S2008. More than seven out of ten (62) of the project owners that got the questionnaire (88), responded. Five of these did not complete the whole questionnaire. We have however included the latter's response on the questions answered.

In addition we introduce data from a survey directed towards the creative industries in Rogaland County (where the Stavanger region constitute a major part) conducted in late autumn 2008 (see Jøsendal et. al. 2009). This survey included more than 3800 companies, and the net response rate was 22 %.

We have thus conducted a triangulation of our research field, combining both documents/media, surveys and qualitative interviews, although with most emphasis on the latter. Looking at the ECC in Stavanger from different angles gives both various information, and, most importantly, gives us the possibility to verify our findings. For example the information given in the qualitative interviews was to some degree affected by the amount of funding the informant got from S2008. These evaluations can then be seen in relation to results in the web-survey who covers a wider range of the project owners.

The surveys and interviews are undertaken in second half of 2008 and spring 2009. The time frame indicates that our results mirror short time effects of the activities in 2008. Such impacts should preferably be studied over a longer period of time than what is the case here; the empirical data is collected during the last six months of 2008 and during the first six months of 2009.⁵ Furthermore, contextual factors – for instance the contemporary global credit crunch – are of importance. It is thus not easy to establish a solid and clear-cut causal relationship between the mega-event and the after-effect for the cultural institutions, producers and actors. However, given the data's nearness in time to the mega event, our study opens for an in-depth exploration of the impacts as they occur, *in situ*. Given these strengths and limitations, we will in the following chapter present results from the data collection.

5 The long-term legacies and sustainability beyond the first five years is often perceived as the key measure for success within urban regeneration (Garcia 2005).

Preliminary findings

The tentative effect of Stavanger2008 on the cultural and creative sector

In a survey directed to the creative industries in Rogaland County in the late autumn of 2008, around one fifth responded that they were responsible for, or took part in, a project under the Stavanger2008 umbrella (Jøsendal et. al. 2009). Also one fifth participated in gatherings arranged by S2008. However on average just one out of ten reports that Stavanger's status as Capital of Culture has to a fairly or large degree resulted in effects like 'new costumers', 'new collaborating partners', 'new international contacts', 'better economical situation', 'possibilities to realise new ideas', and 'to give the company a boost'. In sum approximately 13 percent reported fairly or large effects of the year as ECC on one or several of these six parameters. On the other hand, two out of three reported no effect at all.

The question is if one should expect a higher effect of the year as ECC. The net-population of all firms and organisations in the creative industries in Rogaland that were included in the survey, is approximately 2900, and 2/3 (1900) was located in the Stavanger region. Just below 400 (13 %) had experienced some kind of significant effect of Stavanger2008, and nearly nine out of ten of these (ca 330) were located in the Stavanger area. Thus the effect of Stavanger2008 for the organisations located in the Stavanger region is slightly higher than for the rest of the county.

30 per cent of the cultural and creative sector in Rogaland can be categorised as creative and performing art companies. While four out of ten of respondents that experienced fairly or large effects of Stavanger2008, can be labelled the same. Thus a few more in the core of the cultural and creative sector experienced a noticeable effect of Stavanger2008 than did organisations in the outer reaches.

That merely 150 of the nearly 900 art companies in Rogaland (approximately 600 in the Stavanger region) experienced a significant effect of Stavanger2008 seems at first hand a low figure. And the hypothesis that the creative core affects the other sectors like circles in a pond is not underpinned; only 330 of the 1900 organisations and firms in the cultural and creative sector in Stavanger reports a significant effect. Even if we are complementing with the respondents that evaluated the effect of Stavanger2008 as 'fairly small', not more than one third of the cultural organisations and creative firms in the Stavanger region is included.

The fact that the data is collected at the end of 2008 and the low response rate indicates that we should interpret the figures with caution. However, it is a reasonable question whether these results is a reflection of *limited* circles in the cultural and creative sector

being created by the 150 projects (with around 600 arrangements) carried out under the Stavanger2008 umbrella.⁶

Collaboration and networking

According to the statistics from the company S2008, approximately 160 mill. NOK (ca. 17, 7 mill. €) were spent on projects in 2008, herein 43 mill. to projects managed by the S008 themselves. 117 mill. NOK were then given to other project owners, with an average of 1,36 mill. and a median of 250.000. This tells us that some large projects received a substantial part of the funding. On average, slightly more than half of the total income for the projects came from the organisation S2008.

In the figure below we see the project owners' evaluation of new network/collaboration in relation to the project.

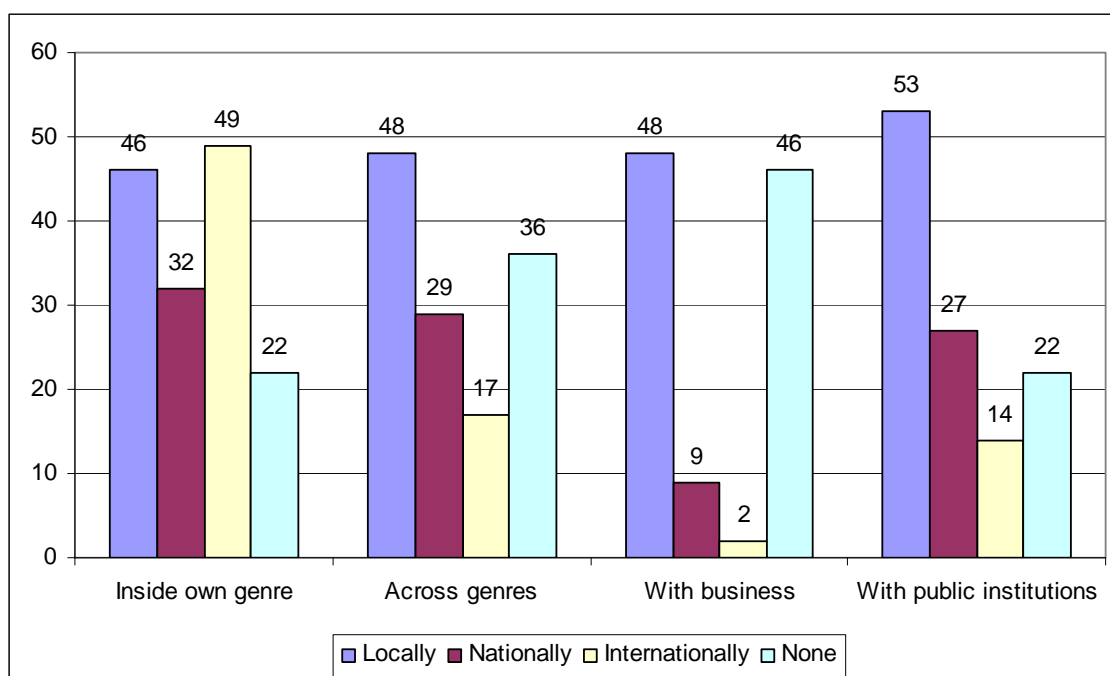


Figure 2: Establishment of new network/collaborations as a consequence of the project carried out as a part of Stavanger 2008. Percent answering yes (N=59)

We see that a lot of the project owners report on new networks/collaborations, especially locally, but also nationally and internationally. New networks/collaborations have been established especially inside own genre and across genres, and also somewhat with public institutions, but less with business. A mere one out of five reports that there have not been established any new relations inside own genre, while only one

⁶ S2008 was responsible for 1/3 of the project, while the remaining 2/3 was carried out by approximately 90 project owners.

out of ten reports that there has not been established any new relations at all due to the project carried out as a part of Stavanger2008.

The difference between relations nationally and internationally are not substantial, however a few more reports on new relations internationally inside own genre, and a few more report new relations to national public institutions, which to a large extent probably are funding institutions.

Approximately 2/3 reported that there have to some or to a large extent been established new arenas for collaboration for the cultural life in the region due to Stavanger2008. These institutions are also quite positive of the effect of the arenas: more than nine out of ten says that these arenas to some, or to a large extent, imply new knowledge to their organisation, and eight out of ten that they imply new channels for production and promotion of culture and art.

There are no obvious patterns when it comes to size and new networks/collaborations: Large institutions seems to have established collaboration more inside own genre, while smaller institutions a little more across genres; large institutions has to a small extent established networks with national partners, smaller institutions a little more with local partners.

In general, the informants in the qualitative interviews (funded cultural producers) report that the participation in Stavanger2008 has resulted in new (or strengthening of established) relations between collaborators in the cultural and creative sectors. Nearly all of the institutions and companies report such an effect, especially locally – in the Stavanger region – and partly nationally and internationally. The following statements capture some of this impression: Stavanger2008 has created ‘lasting effect, established points of contact between milieus in Stavanger and abroad’. ‘It has created a culture to collaborate, and it has increased, seeing the value of connecting projects together’. ‘2008 did bring people together; it made us aware of commonalities and shared interests in arts’.

Also collaboration with other parties like the public authorities, funding partners and firms are highlighted in the interviews. Some informants are focusing on the collaboration with business life, emphasising for example the valuable input on cost control for the project. Others include central public sources for funding like Fritt Ord, Kulturrådet, Fond for lyd og bilde and so on in their list of collaborators.

Even if increased collaboration seems to be an effect across organisational size, it is clear that the more institutionalised actors with larger funding have both the opportunity and potential to get a lasting effect from these new relations. However, also larger institutions are to some extent depending on extra funding to carry out nearly as large project with the same numbers of collaborates as in 2008. In addition the ‘rhythm’ of the cultural field, where freelancers are tied up to new projects and institutions have produced their program for the years to come before 2008, is important in this respect.

Size and degree of institutionalisation matter. This is one axis of differentiation within our data. Another such axis is funding – not funding. What then about the institutions and cultural producers who did *not* receive any funding? Here, answers about whether

the ECC generated collaboration are, on a whole, more negative. This is to be expected, as people who do not benefit from something are more likely to be negative about it than people who do. An often-raised critique within this sample of informants is that Stavanger2008 failed to involve the regional cultural scene, and the ‘free scene’ in particular – non-institutionalised, often young, artists. A freelancing artist said the following about possible new meeting-points and arenas for collaboration in the cultural sector: ‘I can’t say I know of any, where has that been? Those things are just empty phrases [from S2008].’ Some of these non-funded informants, who still delivered big cultural productions during the year in question do report on new and improved collaborations as a result of their own project, but do not relate this to Stavanger2008. Others reflect on Stavanger2008 as an opportunity lost for networking: ‘For a free artist to build a network, that’s a long process! Collaborative projects between regional artists, that should have been the way to go about’, said a freelancing artist, concluding that this did not happen with Stavanger2008. One informant also mentioned *loosing* collaborating partners in 2008 (venue for a planned project), because the partner in question opted to cooperate with S2008 funded institutions instead.

This somewhat displeasure on behalf of non-funded cultural producers and institutions points in the direction of new differentiations between different actors within the cultural sector following a mega event like Stavanger2008. This is another indication of the *limited* circles in the cultural and creative sector, as the survey in the creative and cultural industries (cf. above) suggested, and new dividing lines in regards to amount of social capital.

Among the funded institutions and cultural producers, however, there seems to have been established relations between local and national/international artist and cultural workers that will last. Still, extensive future collaboration is more dubious and to a large extent depended on contextual factors. The lasting effects of increased collaborations are probably most noticeable in the Stavanger region. An interpretation of the information given in the interviews is further that this lasting effect by and large is to be more bilateral (or inside one genre).

Specific effects of the projects

Let us at this point turn to the specific effects of the S2008 funded projects for the institutions and persons involved. To what extent did the project result in new methods and ideas for production of art and culture? According to the web-survey directed to project owners, the effect is significant. Especially regarding new ideas and new/other types of activities/arrangement, but also in respect to increased artistic competence, the use of new/untraditional venues and improved organisation for the production of art and culture.

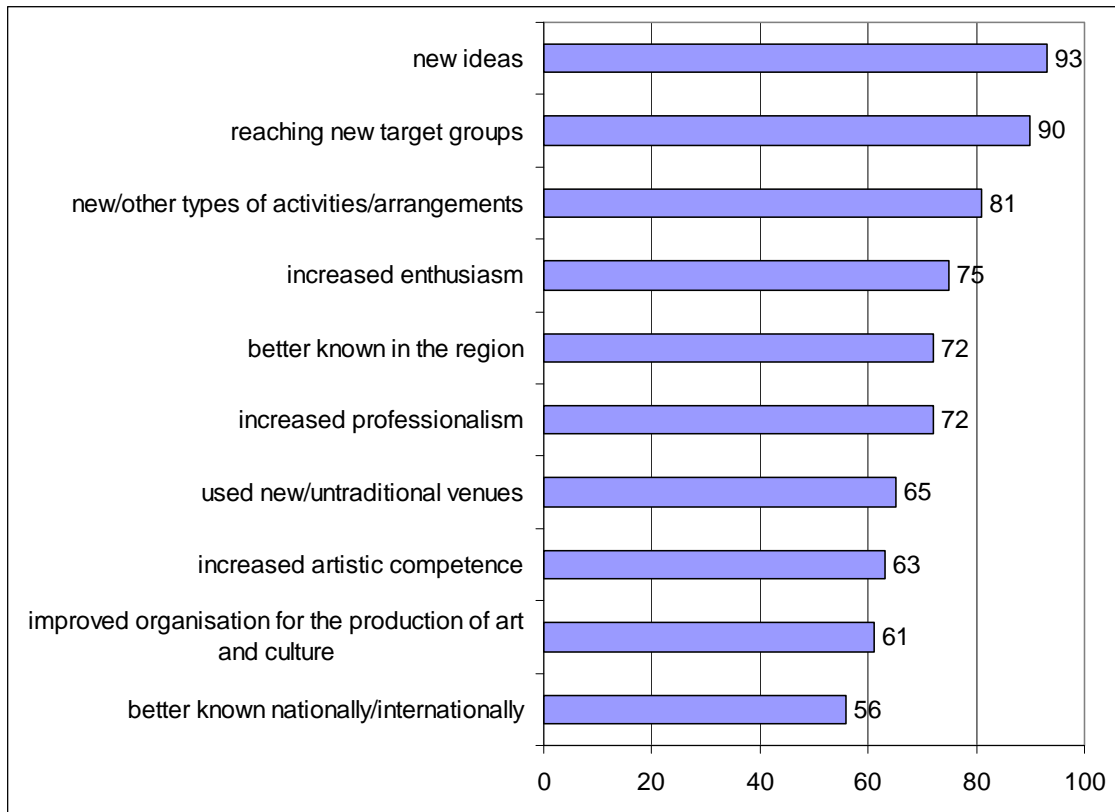


Figure 3: *Implication of the project carried out as a part of Stavanger 2008. The proportion that answered to a large or to some degree. (N=57)*

In sum these answers points toward an increased innovative basis for the organisations that were included in the year of ECC. In addition, more than half of the projects owners responded that the participation in Stavanger2008 to a large or some degree had, directly or indirectly, implied other/more financial support from sponsors/government and so on. So, it is not surprising that eight out of ten report that Stavanger 2008 has contributed to innovation in their production of culture and art, herein two out of ten that it to a large degree had such an effect. There are however no clear patterns regarding the size of the organisation and the evaluation of the innovation effect.

Findings from our qualitative interviews illuminate the processes that these numbers reflect. In the following, we highlight some of the themes in the figure above, focusing on (i) new methods and ideas for organising art and cultural projects, and (ii) increased professionalism.

New methods and ideas

In a number of the cultural institutions and companies involved in Stavanger2008, the projects has resulted in new methods for production of art or for the creative input in production of non-cultural goods. The interface between well-established cultural institutions on the one hand, and project organisations carrying out the 2008 project on the other, created new opportunities. New models, new methods of producing art and

culture may be the result. According to one informant, many large institutions often ‘stiffen in ways of working and in specific art forms. Being a part of a Stavanger2008 has made it possible to shaken loose some mortar’.

Another effect is that the 2008 project showed the organisation, and the rest of the world, that they could tackle large scale productions: ‘If we can accomplish [projects of this magnitude], then we have potential’, commented an informant from a relatively large institution. We were told by an informant from a smaller company that the 2008 project ‘has given us an important production on our portfolio, we have taken a step further regarding international co-operation, to accomplish large productions’. Yet another informant emphasised that the project has ‘laid the seed to new forms of collaboration that can imply changes in how concerts are arranged’

A third effect is the use of new and unfamiliar *venues* for presenting art and culture, both using the nature surrounding Stavanger and different spaces and location inside the city. ‘Our ambition for other venues for dissemination existed before 2008, but it got obvious for us that we could try more with Stavanger 2008; try something that was an addition to the venues that existed, break out of the frame of them’, one informant told us.

For others, often ones with lesser funding, the project did not imply new ways of organising the cultural production or new art forms, just the possibility to do more (of the same). Also some of the larger institutions with substantial funding claimed that the funding by and large merely presented them with a possibility to do more of what they already did and knew how to do. ‘Not a change in paradigm’, but ‘new ways of presenting music’, as one informant from one of the larger projects reported. ‘Believed that I should have learned more of general usefulness that could be transferred to other projects’, stated an informant from a medium sized company, however also claiming that they got some new ideas on and new ways of working with art. Excerpts from two different interviews illustrate the opposite poles in whether the ECC participation resulted in new methods and ideas. A project owner from a smaller institution on the fringes of ‘the cultural field’, with large funding from S2008 said that ‘Stavanger 2008 was actually a watershed for us. We think differently. It’s almost like I have gotten an altogether new job’. This quote contrasts to the one, from the interview with the representative for a medium-sized art institution, with medium-large funding from S2008: ‘Stavanger 2008 resulted in no real after-effect for us, it was more of a positive isolated incident [...] It was mostly a puff of wind, and then back to normal’.

The largest effect regarding new methods and innovation are probably seen in the freelancers and smaller firms working with productions and arrangements, especially when it comes to new forms of art performed at traditionally unused venues with unusual partners. In these cases, it is not just the organisation of the art production that is innovative, but also the piece of art in itself. According to one informant, the projects were ‘completely new, regionally and nationally’, while another stated that the project was a ‘laboratory for art’.

On the whole, the informants highlight interplay where different people work together in new and unfamiliar ways, as an important factor leading to innovative art production. Thus, networks and increased collaboration seem to be of significance. Still, the new

possibility given by increased funding – independent of new relations and increased collaboration – is maybe just as important for developing new methods and new ways of producing art and culture.

When it comes to the projects' lasting effect for the organisation, the judgements seem to distribute along the size of the institution or company: The larger institutions are more optimistic regarding the after-effect than the smaller/the freelancers. Also the fact that the larger institutions to a higher degree emphasise the contribution of Stavanger2008 to the innovation of their production of art and culture, can be seen in light of future productions. This seems to be related to the institutions' capacity to make use of the project, the extra funding and the year as ECC as such, in a longer perspective. Some of the smaller companies were nearly 'burned out' due to the extra effort that was put in the project during the ECC. And quite a few of the institutions that received relatively small amount of money complained that the support was a hindrance due to Stavanger2008s restriction regarding sponsorship.

Increased professionalism

In regards to the project resulting in increased professionalism on behalf of the institution or cultural producer, the viewpoints are quite positive, albeit somewhat diverging. In the web survey to project managers, 72 per cent reported increased professionalism being an effect of the Stavanger2008 project (to a large or some degree). In the interviews, many of the funded actors told us that their participation in Stavanger2008 did significantly improve their organisation and general knowledge. For instance, a large institution reported that their ability to carry out major projects had been strengthened, and another cultural producer stated that the competency for marketing their cultural product is now largely enhanced.

It perhaps goes without saying that no interviewees talked about *less* professionalism after their Stavanger2008 participation, but quite a few feel themselves to more or less untouched by their project, as far as professionalism is concerned. These state that the project mostly reflected their existing expertise and know-how. In these cases, Stavanger2008 resulted in the organisation having more and bigger activities than is the case in a regular year, but ones' organisation and the way one conducts one's artistic activities are more or less unaltered.

On a whole, however, the interviews do indicate an increased professionalism being an important result of the projects.

An interesting point of view was expressed by a representative for a medium-sized institution in fine arts. The person concerned was very positive about how Stavanger2008 had increased the professionalism of their own institution, enabling them to take on larger projects in the future, and gaining much-improved skills in for instance writing applications for funding (quote: 'money generates money').⁷ Yet, this person

⁷ This aspect was highlighted also by some larger institutions state that their cultural production during S2008 was a significant factor contributing to the organisation now applying for, and some also achieving, increased regular state funding.

was highly critical on behalf of the region’s cultural sector in general and their specific art form in particular.

‘When you spend this kind of money on culture, then it is important to involve the regional cultural sector, so that they can become more professional. Because there are few employers in this region, and there are few artists. Therefore, it is a shame that so few regional artists actually got the chance. The result of that is that fewer than what ought to be, are able to take bigger economical risks, for instance with large applications. (I: Do you see it as an opportunity lost to increase competence in the region?) Yes! Really! Our institution has had this opportunity, but hardly anyone else within our art form’.

Although the latter reflections are far from representative for our material on a whole, similar opinions were raised in other interviews too, especially with smaller institutions and freelancers. The quote is also a condensed expression of certain *ambivalence* about the outcome of the ECC, which emerged in a number of interviews. These reflections from the informant on the ‘opportunity lost’ take our discussion to the possible lasting effects of Stavanger2008, which we will discuss in the following chapter.

Possible lasting effects of Stavanger2008

The figure below lists the project owners’ answers to three statements in our web survey on possible lasting effects of Stavanger2008.

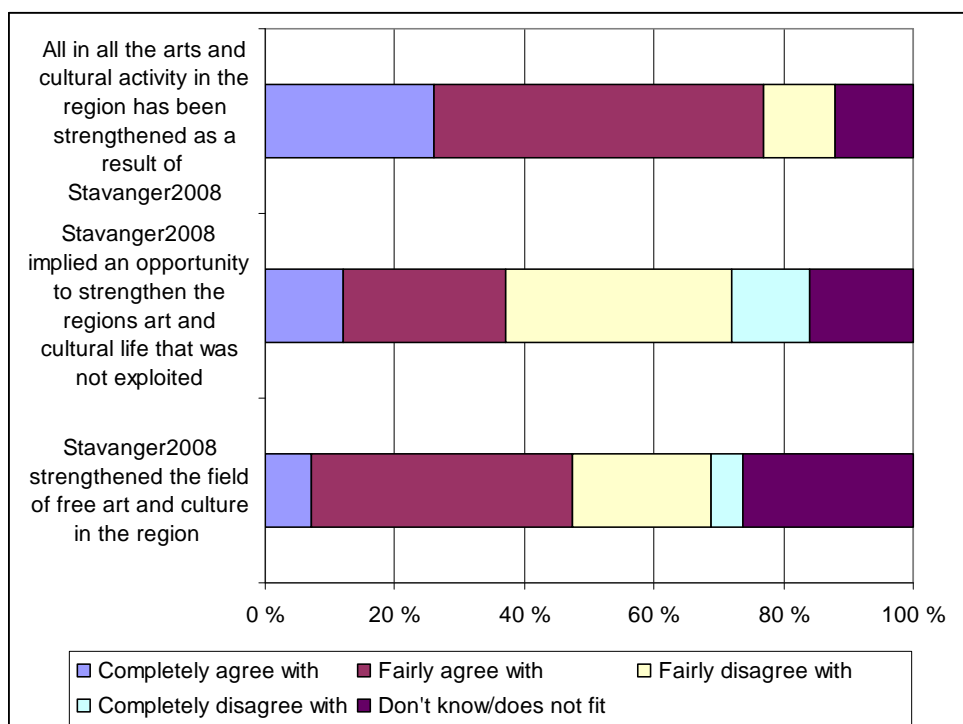


Figure 4: The project owners agree- or disagreement to three statements (N=57)

Answers to statement (i) and (iii) show that there is a felt perception of a strengthening the arts and cultural activity in the region among Stavanger2008 project owners, both on a whole (i), and also specifically for the field of free art and culture (iii), although the perceived strengthening of the latter is clearly much smaller (as < 50 per cent agree).

It is an interesting feature of these numbers that the most polarised answers are given to statement (ii) – Stavanger2008 being a *missed opportunity* to strengthen the region's art and cultural life (cf. informant above). Around 37 % agree with this statement, and about 47 % disagree. On statement (i) – all in all strengthened art and cultural activity in the region – answers are far more positive. Close to 80 % agree with this statement. On the surface, there seems to be a discrepancy between the answers to these statements, they seem to contradict each other. However, the differences probably reflect differences in the wording, as (i) is a weaker statement than (ii). As to the former, it is hard to imagine that introducing 160 mill. NOK to cultural projects in a region would *not* have strengthened its arts and cultural activities to any degree. Any notion or degree of 'strengthening' can probably be included here. In addition, it's a statement about 'all in all'. Statement (ii) reflect expectations and ideas about what *ought* to have been the results of an event of this scale – a mega event. On this statement, which is quite strong in its wording, project owners are far more reserved or negative: Answers are divided roughly down the middle. Once again, size is of importance. Small to medium-sized organisations more often agree with the opportunity lost statement (ii) than do large organisations and institutions. (The same is true with the more general strengthening statement (i).) Keep in mind also that respondents here are only organisations funded by S2008, who are probably more inclined to give positive answers at the very out-set than are non-funded organisations and cultural producers. In the interviews, the 'opportunity lost' perspective was expressed most often and most strongly by the latter, and also by some smaller funded organisations. Thus, although a large majority state that Stavanger2008 has strengthened the region's cultural life, the feeling that one should have been better off afterwards, gotten more out of it, is clearly quite wide-spread in the field, both among funded and non-funded organisations and persons, and decidedly most often among freelancers and smaller to medium-sized organisations.

There are two overlapping aspects to keep in mind when interpreting such a finding. First, there is the obvious possibility that Stavanger 2008 really *was* an opportunity lost. For 160 mill. NOK to projects (included 2006 and 2007 171 mill.), and a total budget of approximately 320 mill NOK (35, 4 mill €), one could realistically expect the region's art and cultural life to be impacted more, and more deeply, than it actually was. The regeneration has not been as strong as it should have been. The other aspect to keep in mind, however, is that the very *idea* of an ECC in Stavanger created enormous expectations in beforehand, expectations that perhaps could not realistically be met. Adding to the latter, Stavanger 2008 also introduced an 'open call', inviting project proposals from practically anyone who felt for it, thus raising the sector's expectations accordingly. One freelancer artist, who applied for, but did not receive any funding, spoke ironically about his expectations about the ECC in the years leading up to it: '300 millions, let's make culture!' Another informant from a medium sized organisation that got substantial funding noted that s2008, via the open call process, in a way 'obtained themselves opponents'. In the years before the ECC, a marked mismatch seems to have

constructed been the *perception* of the Stavanger2008 ‘opportunity structure’ and this ‘opportunity structure’ as it came to be.

Still, these huge expectations beforehand might also have had an unintended positive effect in the cultural sector. One aspect of Stavanger 2008 that our analysis has not touched so much upon is the possible lasting effect of the initial idea phase; when people decided to apply for funding from Stavanger 2008. In this phase, there seems to have been massive brainstorming and networking, generating project ideas and probably also new networks. Thus, there is now possibly a ‘reserve pool of cultural ideas’, which would not have existed otherwise. In addition, some of the non-funded ideas also resulted in large projects being conducted outside of the Stavanger2008 umbrella that would not have been conceived of without the ECC incentive. One informant, who carried out a novel cooperative art project, applied for funding, didn’t get any, but then succeeded in finding alternative funding, put it this way: ‘We wouldn’t even have considered starting such an extensive project, had it not been for Stavanger 2008 being there as a carrot, winking ahead’. On the other hand, huge expectations might also have contributed to a certain feeling of exhaustion in parts of the cultural field, when these expectations were not met. This was especially noticeable among freelancers without funding from S2008, some of which state that 2008 was a year of opportunity drought, both financially (many sponsors preferred Stavanger2008 projects) and work-wise; a few said that they have never before had so few commissions in Stavanger as they did in 2008.

Discussion and conclusion – the three scenarios

It was an important goal of the Stavanger ECC, and part of the regional policy of supplementing the region’s current economic basis (the petroleum industry), to strengthen the region’s cultural sector. What, then, does our analysis tell us about the impact of Stavanger2008 in this respect?

On a whole, the cultural sector’s evaluations of the effects of the ECC in Stavanger are varied and often quite ambivalent. In the introduction, we presented four scenarios for Stavanger 2008’s after-effect for the cultural sector. Briefly, these are: a) lift of the region’s cultural life; b) exhaustion of the region’s cultural life, c) ‘business as usual’; d) a refurbished cultural life in the region (a more innovative basis for cultural production).

Our preceding analysis tells us that in fact all of these scenarios are, to varying degrees, outcomes of Stavanger 2008. However, it seems plausible that the scenarios have played (and continue to play) themselves out differently in different parts of the cultural sectors. Here, size stands out as a crucial factor. Relating the four scenarios to our figure 1 in the ‘Background’, the different circles in the cultural field, let us present a tentative visualisation of the ECC dynamics in the figure below.

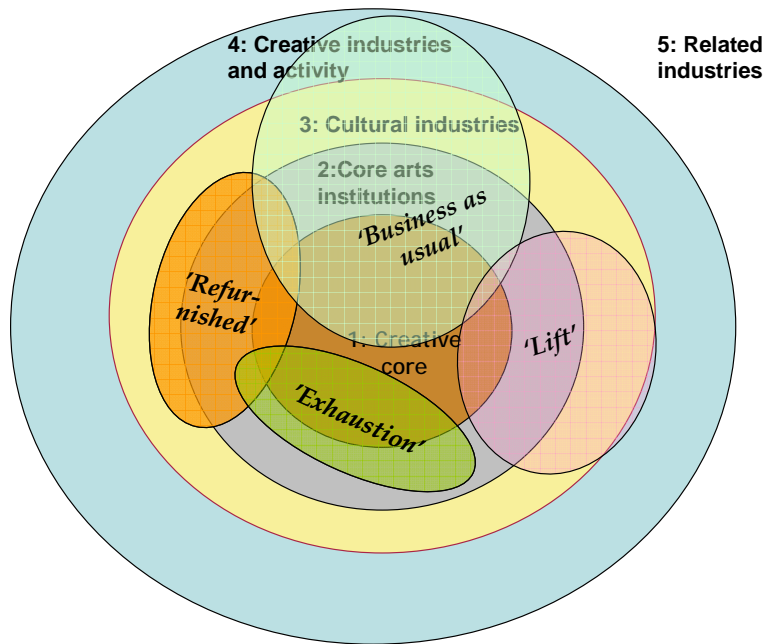


Figure 4: Stavanger 2008s impact on the cultural and creative sector. The four scenarios.

As the figure shows, the four scenarios are all relevant to several circles, but not all of them to every circle. In addition, the scenarios have influenced the circles in different ways.

The two most ‘optimistic’ scenarios, ‘refurnishment’ and ‘lift’, have their centre in the core arts institutions (second circle), but touch also on the creative core (first circle) and the cultural industries (third circle). As our analysis suggests, it is the core arts institutions that seem to have gained the most from the ECC, becoming more professional, generating new ideas and methods, and increasing their social capital through new collaborations. Parts of the creative core have also had ‘refurnishment’ and ‘lift’ impacts, but to a lesser degree. Within the second circle, the core arts institutions, the impact of Stavanger2008 seem altogether to be of a positive nature, in the eyes of people involved in this circle.

The two more ‘negative’ scenarios, ‘exhaustion’ and ‘business as usual’, have different impacts. ‘Business as usual’ is to be found through-out the circles. In all the circles, the perception of being more or less untouched by Stavanger2008, funded or not, is expressed by a number of producers. ‘Exhaustion’ seems to hit the inner circles only, and smaller organisations the most, a result of producers with limited resources becoming ‘burned out’ by carrying out projects of (on their part) unprecedented magnitude.

The size of the catchments area for the four hypotheses is of course very roughly, however the figure visualises the impact of Stavanger2008.

Social capital in a Bourdieuan sense refers to power in relatively strong dominant networks, and the capacity that these networks give an agent to enhance cultural and

economic capital, to convert social capital into cultural and economic capital. It seems clear that the more institutionalised a given cultural producer is, the more likely the organisation is to have its social capital, and thus also cultural and economic capital, strengthened by Stavanger2008 participation. The same goes for size, as larger organisations seems to have capitalised the most.

However, in the case of a mega event, wherein a number of new projects and huge amounts of funding are introduced to the field, social capital is not likely to be a zero-sum game: The *total* amount of social capital, or the total number of nodes in cultural networks, might very well have increased. If this is the case, it will imply that increase in one actor's capital not necessarily occurs at the expense of another's. This is an open question that our data does not permit an answer to. And still, it seems clear that the power structures within the cultural sector, as the dominating gained the most, has been reproduced and possibly also strengthened by the ECC.

Whether the increased social capital of the dominating then occurred at the *expense* of the dominated, if the latter are actually worse off than before, we are not in a position to answer. Contextual macro-economic factors – the global financial breakdown – complicate this matter significantly: There is on the one hand a widespread conception among the region's cultural producers that the year of the ECC increased the private sector's willingness to fund cultural activities. This implies that also those not benefiting directly from Stavanger2008, who did not experience a growth in their social capital, might also benefit economically in the long turn. On the other hand, the contemporary credit crunch has effectively put the breaks on private funding, possibly strengthening the imbalance between those who gained capital during the ECC year and those who didn't.

Does the concept of the 'bourgeois playground' (Hall 1997) then apply? Did the Stavanger ECC represent a celebration of the legitimate, conventional culture tied to the well-established cultural institutions; that is, the cultural taste of the bourgeoisie according to Bourdieu (1984)? This can be seen in light of the interaction of the mega event on the one hand and the field of culture in Stavanger at the other hand. The programming of Stavanger2008 did not include the short lived flagship and popular spectacle (and was criticized for it), and in some ways (although we who suggest this are not scholars in art) also fronted the avant-garde. Still in the meeting and interaction with the structure in the local field of culture, where especially the relation between traditional established institutions and the freelancers and free groups seems to be important, it is a reasonable statement that the legitimate and conventional culture came out on top.

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