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Eleonora Redaelli

Division of Communication, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, USA

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Assessing a place in cultural planning: A framework for American local governments

Eleonora Redaelli*

Division of Communication, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, USA

In the last 30 years, numerous studies have sought to define cultural planning. A common theme that emerges is the emphasis on the need to create a planning process for “placemaking” purposes. However, the definition of what a place is remains vague. Using administrative boundaries, this study draws a framework that formulates an operational definition of place that helps to connect spaces to empirical data about their cultural resources and residents. The focus on administrative boundaries is particularly relevant to understand American cities whose territories have a tangled morphology. Using Geographical Information System, this framework is then applied to assess the current situation in Madison, Wisconsin. The results suggest that the use of this framework could help policy makers to assess the texture of their territory in its administrative, cultural and social dimensions.

Keywords: cultural planning; placemaking; Geographical Information System; cities; local authorities

Introduction

In the US, local governments include arts and culture as one of their concerns. For more than three decades, cities have been committed to developing cultural plans and place-based cultural development (Gibson & Stevenson, 2004; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Based on the Americans for the Arts’ (AFTA, 2005) 2003 triennial report on the nation’s local arts agencies, up to 22% of local arts agencies have cultural plans. At the same time, cultural planning has become a popular policy tool in many different countries, creating different types of cultural planning projects (Curson, Evans, Foord, & Shaw, 2007).

Numerous studies have attempted to define what constitutes cultural planning (Dreeszen, 1997; Gray, 2006; Jones, 1993; Kovacs, 2010, 2011; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Rivkin-Fish, 2004; Sirayi, 2008; Stevenson, 2004). A common theme that emerges is the emphasis on the need to create a planning process that uses urban policy for “placemaking” purposes. However, the definition of what constitutes a place remains vague. The contribution of this study to the existing literature consists of offering a conceptual framework for describing a place. This framework offers an operational definition for the collection of empirical data, which contributes to the effort of improving the access to statistical data in the cultural sector, and it helps to connect a space to its cultural resources and its residents. As such it could be used for an empirical assessment of a place in the context of local governments.

“Assessment” is thought of as the process of documenting the status of a place through an inventory of its assets. It is a diagnostic process that provides a snapshot of the current situation of a place. It is preliminary to an evaluative step, which needs to be carried out by the specific

*Email: eredaell@uwsp.edu

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community (Stevens, 1987). Each community has different values, and these specific values should be used to evaluate the current situation towards a shared vision for the future.

As an example of its usefulness, the suggested framework has been applied to Madison, Wisconsin. I gathered empirical data about space, cultural assets and local population and connected them through the use of the Geographical Information System (GIS). The aim is not to provide recommendations, but rather to help setting up the questions that can be used as evaluation tools during the cultural planning meetings by the administration and the community. This article lays out the framework and its application in four parts. It starts with a literature review about cultural planning. It continues by drawing a framework for assessing a place. Then, it proceeds to apply the framework to Madison, Wisconsin. Finally, some implications for policy and future research are proposed.

Cultural planning

Over the last 30 years, interest in cultural planning has increased around the world. A number of handbooks and toolkits have been released in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia to support community leaders and policy makers to understand the relevance of cultural planning for local governments and to provide guidance for how to proceed in engaging in this process of cultural planning (AuthentiCity, 2008; Baeker, 2010; Borrup, 2004; Dreeszen, 1997; Grogan & Mercer, 1995; Guppy, 1997; Russo & Butler, 1991). These handbooks describe, in various ways, a lengthy and complex cultural planning process. Despite various differences between them, they have some common procedural traits and goals. A common procedural trait is the layout of several steps to guide the process, and the common goals include the involvement of the community, the development of cultural resources and the solution of social issues.

Cultural planning takes different forms in different countries and, despite the growing exchange of ideas, it has a variety of configurations (Curson et al., 2007). Several authors describe cultural planning as a policy process for cultural development (Adams & Goldbard, 2001; Grodach, 2010; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Rosenstein, 2009; Sonn, Drew, & Kasat, 2002). Whereas Ghilardi and Bianchini (1997) state that it is important to clarify that cultural planning is not the “planning of culture”, but a cultural approach to urban planning and policy. Moreover, Stevenson (2004) explains that cultural planning has been promoted to reach several goals: fostering community development, promoting partnership between private and public sectors, and positioning the arts as an industry. Finally, Borrup (2006) and Dreeszen (1997) define cultural planning as a process necessary to assess the community needs and develop a plan of action that uses arts and culture to address these needs. “The beauty of the term cultural planning lies in the fact that it can assume multiple meanings and can be applied to different contexts” (Sirayi, 2008, p. 335).

According to the seminal literature (Bianchini, 1996; Evans, 2001; Ghilardi, 2001, 2003; Ghilardi & Bianchini, 1997; Landry & Bianchini, 1995; McNulty, 1991; Mercer, 2006), cultural planning is much more than a policy framework for the arts because it links cultural resources to the localities’ wide range of social and economic needs. The literature places a big emphasis on differentiating cultural policy and cultural planning. Cultural policy is about supporting the different artistic sectors such as visual arts, dance, music etc., whereas cultural planning is about taking cultural aspects in the process of planning and development into consideration and requires a vision of urban planning not limited to the physical aspect. Furthermore, cultural planning is a strategy about place and has a territorial focus that requires the integration of culture across different facets of local planning (Stevenson, 2004). As stated by Ghilardi (2001), “[b]y linking culture and other aspects of economic and social life, cultural planning can be instrumental in creating
development opportunities for the whole of local communities. In other words, while cultural policies tend to have a sectoral focus, cultural planning adopts a territorial remit” (p. 125).

Attention to place emerges as a key factor in cultural planning. However, neither the handbooks nor the academic literature explain how to define a place in its empirical dimensions, including spatial, cultural and social aspects. On the one hand, the toolkits list the elements that should be considered when preparing the inventory of the community, but little consideration is given to the criteria for considering the limits of the territory under investigation. On the other hand, the academic literature focuses on moving away from a sectoral approach towards a territorial approach without specifying the crucial elements of the territory. But what is a place? In the cultural planning context, what are the elements necessary for defining and assessing a place? What are the empirical components that characterise a place for the purpose of cultural planning? In the following section, I develop a framework that provides an operational definition of a place.

A framework for assessing a place

The geography and planning literature contains some significant discussions about the meaning of place and the forms of management necessary to deliver sustainable places (Gillen, 2004; Healey, 2004). Over time, the idea of “place” has been studied from several perspectives (Dreier, Mollenkopf, & Swanstrom, 2004; Florida, 2002b; Graham & Healey, 1999; Madanipour, Healey, & Hull, 2001). In this context, it is necessary to think about place in a way that is useful for cultural planning purposes. Given that the cultural planning literature suggests stressing the idea of place in its territorial dimension, it is necessary to be able to indicate where one place ends and where its neighbour’s begins (Coombes & Wymer, 2001). This does not mean to reduce the definition of place to a plain and bi-dimensional surface. Rather, it means to identify a spatial area as the location where the multiple qualities of a place can be tracked and studied.

For instance, quantitative data can be collected about cultural resources and residents within a specific space. Bringing quantitative data about cultural resources and the local population together with administrative divisions of the territory presents a preliminary assessment of a place that provides a snapshot of the current situation and informs the planning process.

This space offers a preliminary grid within which to study the other elements that make up the complexity of a place. Articulating the dimensions of a place is a very selective process (Healey, 2004). The exercise described in this article offers an operational tool that could be used by American local governments for assessing a place when embarking in a cultural plan process. It attempts to provide a holistic way of thinking about place, while gathering data about specific elements. As cultural planning considers that arts and culture are intertwined with a specific place and its people (Stevenson, 2005), three main facets have been chosen to enable the collection of empirical data: administrative boundaries, cultural assets and local population (Figure 1). The following sections will provide a detailed description and conceptual clarification for each.

Administrative boundaries

Attention to place promotes the idea of “joined-up” thinking for the delivery of policy programs that serve the residents. Where things are and happen becomes essential to a policy planning process that focuses on place (Healey, Goran, Madanipour & De Magalhaes, 2002).

The “place” focus brings attention to all the relations which transect a particular geographical space, the patterning of nodes and peripheries in each relation, the extent to which they link to each other, the significance this gives to geographical spaces which become nodes of intersection, and the value that are placed on qualities of these “locales.” (p. 16)
In order to be able to capture in a snapshot the elements that give significance to a particular place, the first step should be drawing the limits that define this geographical space. In fact, this study draws upon the literature that identifies in administrative boundaries a spatial, political and cultural framework for studying a place (Harvey, 2006).

Local administrative activities are coordinated in relation to specific boundaries and, for a long time, the “spatial dimensions for urbanism” have provided a tool to examine local government and politics (Lyons & Lowery, 1986). Local units are entities defined by jurisdictional boundaries, and boundaries define who is part of the political process and who the “outsiders” are. Therefore, in a policy process like cultural planning, the space of concern can be defined by the administrative boundaries that mark out the territory in which the policy makers have jurisdiction and highlight the areas where they do not.

The identification of a place using administrative boundaries is not without criticism. The planning literature has claimed that defining local government boundaries is driven by administrative and political concerns rather than by geographical realities (Coombes & Wymer, 2001). As such, they are mere artefacts. However, they are suitable analytical tools when dealing with policy.

The focus on administrative boundaries plays a significant role for policy purposes in the US. Over the last 50 years, the proliferation of local governments redesigned the morphology of the city, drawing a territory with several jurisdictional boundaries (Lewis, 1996; Oliver, 2003). The sudden growth of suburbs created a tangled morphology of the territory in which a suburb could be even within the larger limits of the city. Currently, there is no agreement on the political unit implied when mentioning the name of a city. On the one hand, people mention a city without considering the political boundaries, but rather refer to its larger social and economic dynamics. For instance, when speaking about Pittsburgh, New York or Atlanta, people consider each of them as a city, broadly speaking, not as a specific political entity. On the other hand, residents often consider a small inner suburb simply as a neighbourhood of the larger city without grasping the implication that, in reality, it is a separate political entity.
Cultural assets classification

Cultural planning removes arts and culture from the margins into the mainstream of the planning process (Sirayi, 2008). This requires a clarification of what arts and culture are at the beginning of any planning project. The American cultural policy discourse has drawn on different terms and a variety of stakeholders when talking about arts and culture: non-profit organisations, commercial enterprises, cultural industries and arts districts (Markusen, 2010). At the same time, different approaches, from occupational to industrial, have studied arts and culture in different ways (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005; Markusen & Schrock, 2006; Scott, 1996). As a result, the definition of cultural assets is thorny, and it is still difficult to find agreement not only in the academic literature but also among practitioners.\(^1\)

Drawing on arts management literature, this article takes an organisational perspective to define cultural assets as the organisations involved in the production and consumption of cultural products and services (DiMaggio, 1983). This is not to disregard those individuals who are part of cultural resources, but simply focuses the attention on “the instrument – institution, company, group – by which they reach the public, by which, in effect, they become “live”” (Lowry, 1978, p. 3).

The term “culture” includes both high arts – the artistic and literary activities developed by European tradition – and popular culture – the leisurely entertainment for mass consumption. It draws from the pluralistic conception of culture illustrated by Gans (1999) that overcomes a separation between high arts and popular culture which, for a long time, characterised the cultural world in the US (Levine, 1990). In the policy arena, the separation between high arts and popular culture has been referred to as the division between non-profit and commercial art (Wyszomirski, 2002). Whereas a 1999 issue of the *International Journal of Arts, Law and Society* focused on suggesting ways to bring the two sectors together, today there is no agreement on a holistic definition (Cherbo, Stewart & Wyszomirski, 2008).

The arts and cultural sphere is Balkanized into competing commercial, nonprofit, and community segments, and often there is little solidarity within each group. Although artists crossover these sectoral divides all the time, the organizations at the helm of each sector rarely work together on common problems or policy agenda. (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 18)

The working definition of cultural assets used in this article includes the organisations involved in production and consumption of high art and popular culture, integrating both the non-profit and commercial sector. A classification based on 10 categories was created to facilitate the collection of empirical data: advertising, architecture, audio-visual, photography, publishing and the Web, museums and galleries, performing arts companies, schools, community organisations, and services (see Table 1).

However, this classification system has some limitations:

- The integration of the commercial and non-profit sectors implies the merger of two different streams of literature: the literature describing the cultural industries, and the literature describing the non-profit organisations bound by a specific institutional framework (Redaelli, 2008). As a result, some categories are defined by discipline and others are defined by their organisational structure.

- The categories are not mutually exclusive since there are establishments that, for some characteristics, would belong to one group and, for other characteristics, would belong to another. For example, music organisations can be found in the audio-visual category but also in the categories of performing arts companies, schools and community organisations. Finally, there are mutual relationships among categories partly because organisations often
collaborate at several levels. For example, publishing, film, music and television have a mutually reinforcing relationship. There are clear interdependencies of technologies, labour markets and content among these activities.

Any kind of classification needs to draw boundaries and in so doing never really does justice to the continuum of reality, and much is always left out. Nonetheless, the task is not to capture everything. As Stevenson (2005) stated, “[o]nly when planners adopt a cohesive and rigorous understanding of culture as something rather than as everything will cultural planning emerge as an effective and relevant policy for local creative endeavour” (p. 46). Despite its limitations, the strengths of this classification are to provide a preliminary taxonomy that includes both non-profit and commercial art – overcoming the longstanding separation – and provide a system to guide the collection of empirical data.

### Local population profile

The main purpose of cultural planning is “placemaking”, which is intimately linked to who lives there (Grogan & Mercer, 1995; Stevenson, 2004). An empirical assessment of a place that aims to inform cultural planning decisions needs to collect data about the cultural resources and also data about the local population. To meet this objective, the first step is to identify some indicators that can describe the people living in the territory impacted by the cultural plan.

For more than 30 years, scholars and companies have used “segmentation” to look at population in localities (ESRI, 2007). Segmentation is a research strategy that divides the local population into groups. Each group is defined by an indicator that describes particular social or economic characteristics of the population in a measurable way. Social science research has been working on theoretical and empirical studies for the development of indicators that could be meaningful for policymaking decisions for quite a long time (Bauer, 1966; Innes, 1990).

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**Table 1. Cultural assets’ categories.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Advertising agencies, advertising consultant, electronic media advertising representative, printed media advertising representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Architectural services, interior design services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual</td>
<td>Audio-visual program production, disc jockey service, entertainers and entertainment groups, film rental, motion picture and tape distribution, music recording producer, record and pre-recorded tape stores, television broadcasting stations, video production, music stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Camera and photographic supply stores, commercial art and illustration, commercial photography, photofinishing laboratory, photographic studios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing and the Web</td>
<td>Music books, publishers, bookstores, commercial art and graphic design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums and galleries</td>
<td>Art dealers, art gallery, historical society, museum, science centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing arts companies and</td>
<td>Orchestras, actors production, dance production, live theatre producers, opera, theatre companies, festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presenters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Professional school, university, recreational education, music and dance instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community organizations and</td>
<td>Recreational performance and art production, foreign countries associations, libraries, historical societies, friends of “…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Local arts agencies, foundations, professional societies and associations, instrument repair service, theatrical services, agents, advocacy groups, arts supplies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Table 1. Cultural assets’ categories.*
The first comprehensive national indicators project was initiated by President Hoover, who in 1929 established a research committee to reveal major social issues through “records” rather than opinions (Sawicki & Flynn, 1996). The most intense period for scholarly and policy interest in social indicators occurred in the 1960s and developed a multi-dimensional local social indicator systems (Kingsley, 1999).

This study uses a few basic indicators: population, race, median age and median household income. These provide demographic and economic information which makes it possible to compile a straightforward profile of the residents of a place. Although the indicators chosen are very limited, they establish a baseline that is enough to satisfy the purpose of getting a snapshot of the local population. Other indicators could be considered to draw a more articulated profile, from level of education and lifestyle to people with disabilities and non-English-speaking groups. Each community could decide which characteristics, besides the basic ones suggested, they consider worth capturing to accurately portraying their population.

Applying the framework – Madison, Wisconsin

To demonstrate the usefulness of the framework described above, I chose Madison, Wisconsin. Madison is the capital of the state of Wisconsin. According to 2008 US Census Bureau estimates, it has a population of 231,916 in an area of 84 square miles. In the summer of 2009, the city started a cultural planning process. They held information-gathering meetings, roundtables and focus groups across the city. However, these strategies for collecting data were not carried out using a spelled-out idea of place that would explain what data would be collected and in which way they would intersect.

The following application of the conceptual framework described above may be viewed by policy makers as a guideline for the steps to be followed when drawing a snapshot of a place. First, gather data about the administrative boundaries of the area; second, collect data about the cultural assets within the administrative boundaries selected; finally, collect data about the local population.

Method and data

The method used for the following empirical investigation is a GIS called ArcGIS, which is the software used by most states and local municipalities in the US. A GIS links two types of data: base maps or shapefiles – which provide information about administrative boundaries – and data in spreadsheet format. The shapefiles for this analysis were obtained from Dane County and the City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development. These files contained several layers of political geographies and geo-coded addresses.

The spreadsheets assembled data about the local population and cultural assets collecting data from different sources. The main source for data about the local population was the 2000 US Census. The sources for data about cultural assets were identified through a complicated process. Given the lack of agreement about classification methods and the scarcity of empirical data, this operation was a cumbersome procedure. For several organisations, information was not readily available. As DiMaggio (2006) points out, some non-profit programmes are embedded within organisations that are not considered producers or distributors of the arts, such as churches, universities, community development organisations or youth-assistance programmes. Yet other organisations are untraceable because they are unincorporated “minimalist organisations” with few or intermittent programme activities, part-time or volunteer staff and tiny budgets.

The classification of cultural assets in the 10 categories suggested in this article brings a variety of organisations together (see Table 1). For each of the 10 categories, I collected lists...
of organisations integrating three pre-existing sources: the data set pulled together by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) for their Creative Industries research, which uses Dun & Bradstreet's national database; the Business Master File by the National Center for Charitable Statistics; and the Reference USA database. Each data set has different criteria for classification; therefore, I had to consider each individual entry to assess into which category it could most appropriately be placed.

Grogan and Mercer (1995) explain that information can be gathered using quantitative and qualitative data to describe the current situation of a community. This study is based on quantitative data because it aims to contribute to the effort of improving the accessibility of statistical information in the cultural sector. However, the framework suggested could be used also for qualitative inquiries – well-informed cultural planning should integrate both of these methods of collecting data. The following collection of data merely offers a starting point that could be improved by adding data collected through interviews, surveys and focus groups.

**Administrative boundaries**

When studying a city, issues of scale require the consideration of several possibilities: metropolitan statistical area, county, city limits, neighbourhoods etc. At first, the most logical choice seemed to be to focus on the city limits due to the fact that the cultural plan is commissioned by the city; this makes it important to unpack the territorial discourse of the area where planners have jurisdiction. However, the need for a snapshot of a place requires the ability to bring together all parts of a fragmented territory (Dang & Duxbury, 2007). Moreover, the literature states that, from a sustainability perspective, planning should be regional. Even when planning is focused on one specific small area, such as the so-called cultural quarters, that area needs to be studied as part of the wider regional economy (Newman & Smith, 2000). The final choice was to include other municipalities besides the city of Madison.

In particular, I chose to consider all the municipalities that are part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – the metropolitan policy body responsible for cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning and decision making – as criteria for selecting the suburbs to include in this analysis. This organisation is based on the same spatial concept of a place that is used in this study. They bring together municipalities in order to plan the use of transportation in the territory, a task which needs to consider the administrative boundaries on the one hand, and needs to have a unified picture of the territory on the other. The MPO includes the city of Madison and 27 municipalities as illustrated in the map in Figure 2.

At the same time, I wanted to be able to grasp the territorial dimension of the city administration. The lens chosen is the Neighbourhood Research Team (NRT) area. In 1992, Mayor Soglin established NRTs as a way to better coordinate city services within 10 smaller areas of Madison. An NRT is intended to be a resource for residents and focuses on improving the delivery of services to neighbourhoods, thus creating cross-agency solutions. A team leader for each area can be contacted by the residents to address issues in their neighbourhood. Currently there are five NRTs.

The map in Figure 2 shows the tangled morphology of the territory and the numerous administrative units involved in the management of the Madison area, including the division of the city territory into NRTs. On the map, cities and villages are shown in grey, towns in white. The five NRTs areas are displayed in solid colours. This map clarifies at a glance the territory where the city has jurisdiction, and at the same it shows how the Madison area – which represents the Madison place – includes other municipalities. Given this complexity of Madison’s area governance, the city needs to take into consideration the attention to coordination among neighbouring municipalities during the planning process. The map can be used as a starting point to collect the
input of the community for the choice of the municipalities to involve, and the information collected for each municipality can further direct the choice.

**Cultural assets**

Using the administrative boundaries as grouping criteria, I collected the data about cultural assets and local population. Then I ranked all the administrations involved – the 27 suburbs and the five NRTs – using the different sets of data. First, I ranked them according to the highest data of cultural assets and then according to the highest data of their socio-economic characteristics. Table 2 illustrates the results and offers an assessment that allows policy makers to raise some questions in order to identify the strengths and the needs of the place. Such questions could guide the evaluation process and lead the discussion between the administration and the community.

Table 2 shows that the highest density of cultural assets is in the downtown area of Madison. Do policy makers want to highlight the density of cultural assets in the downtown area or do they want to create more opportunity in the rest of the city? Lately, the literature has encouraged the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Cultural assets Rank</th>
<th>Density Rank</th>
<th>Population Rank</th>
<th>White Rank</th>
<th>Black or African American Rank</th>
<th>Median age Rank</th>
<th>Median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West NRT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68,538</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central NRT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43,787</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South NRT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29,838</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North NRT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30,173</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East NRT</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35,189</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton – city</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15,770</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitchburg – city</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20,501</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Prairie – city</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20,369</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monona – city</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8,018</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoughton – city</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12,354</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waunakee – village</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8,995</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verona – city</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7,052</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton – town</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,594</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McFarland – village</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6,416</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison – town</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.14</td>
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promotion of the cultural lives of single neighbourhoods instead of supporting the concentration of cultural offerings in a single place (Rosenstein, 2009; Stern & Seifert, 2007).

The top category among the cultural assets in the overall Madison’s area is audio-visual. Do planners and the community want to emphasise the top category, audio-visual, and brand the city by using the strength of this category to attract and retain residents and new businesses? The literature supports this direction. In the US, one of the most invoked rationales for cultural planning is that the arts and cultural sector should be the means for economic development (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010) and development is often pursued as an attempt to attract new people and businesses (Florida, 2002b, 2005). But in order to turn a location into a destination, a distinctive brand is necessary. In city branding, the construction of a city’s image appeals to people by enhancing the symbolic values of its assets, and a city’s cultural assets have been among the most valued resources for this purpose (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Florida, 2002a; Strom, 1999, 2002, 2003). A recent survey conducted in 29 American cities confirmed that cultural activities are considered to be an important way to emphasise a city’s uniqueness in an overall branding strategy (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007).

Local population
As for the data concerned with socio-economic characteristics of the local population, I identified the wealthiest and the most racially diverse places. Shorewood Hills – a village located within the city boundaries – emerged as the wealthiest place. It has the highest median age, although it is not particularly rich in cultural assets. Based on these findings, cultural planners and the community could address the following questions: are the residents of Shorewood Hills using much of the cultural assets of the city while they do not pay the taxes that support them? If so, what kind of collaboration might the city of Madison develop with Shorewood Hills? These questions could be expanded to include the surrounding communities. Does Madison need to collaborate with all the neighbouring municipalities to better support cultural assets? Can this collaboration be part of the cultural plan, or should the cultural plan be limited to individual municipal policies?

The town of Madison, which is within the southern boundaries of the city of Madison, ranked first for the presence of African American population and last for median age and median household income. These findings raise other questions for cultural planning meetings: is the racial diversity of the town of Madison represented in the offering and use of its cultural assets? How can the central city collaborate with the town of Madison to involve its diverse population? Can some workforce development initiatives be created in concert between the city and the town, maybe using the development of cultural assets as a driving factor?

Conclusions
This study offers a workable framework to assess a place for cultural planning purposes. The place limits have been identified by administrative boundaries, and the basic place components have been categorised as cultural assets and local population. This way of articulating the dimensions of a place offers an operational definition that can be used to gather quantitative data. Finally, by using GIS to bring these quantitative data about cultural assets and the local population together with administrative boundaries, this framework provides geo-political knowledge of a place. This is a fundamental issue for a local administration, which needs to be aware of the borders of its jurisdictions when developing a vision for the future but at the same time needs to grasp the complexity of its place.

American local governments could use this framework as an operational tool to assess the current situation of their place – as exemplified by the case study of Madison, Wisconsin – as
a starting point for developing a cultural plan. Its strength is that it is a permeable tool that can be further modelled and refined by the values of each community.

This framework has several implications for the practice of cultural planning:

- It helps cultural planners think critically about the choice of the territory investigated during the assessment phase, suggesting the need to pay attention to the administrative fragmentation and the numerous municipalities involved in managing a place in the US. In this way, cultural planning will help bring about more regional thinking.
- It provides a classification for the collection of data about cultural resources. This taxonomy could be used as a blueprint during the initial discussion in which each community defines what they mean by culture. It could be modified according to the context and the values of the community.
- From the social sciences, it harnesses a series of indicators that are commonly used to collect data about the population. Each community can add different indicators to the basic ones used in the Madison example accordingly to the characteristics of the community that they want to capture.
- It links space and its components using GIS, thus providing a better understanding of the territory in its administrative, cultural and social dimensions.
- It allows cultural planners to raise a series of specific questions that are key for a discussion between the administration and the community.

These questions could be used as evaluation tools during the cultural planning meetings in order to develop a collective interpretation of the data geared towards the creation of a shared vision.

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Notes
1. A review of the several definitions is beyond the scope of this article. However, in a previous study (Redaelli, 2008), I conducted a broad literature review merging the domains of the cultural industries and arts organisations that offered the underlying framework for the suggested working definition.
2. In the 2000 US Census, race and ethnicity were considered separately. The categories for race were: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, two or more races. On the other hand, the categories for ethnicity were Hispanic or Latino and Non-Hispanic or Latino. In this study, I look at the data about race.
3. For a description of the situation about the data sources available for conducting research about arts organisations in the United States, see Kaple, Morris, Rivkin-Fish and DiMaggio (1996) and Kaple (2002).
4. In Wisconsin, as defined by the US Census, the term “municipality” applies to cities and villages. Towns are categorised under “township”. However, in this study, cities, villages and towns are all considered municipalities or suburbs.

References


