Working Carnival
Ethnic cultures and the regeneration of the global city

Lionel Arnaud

Centre de Recherches sur l'Action Politique en Europe (CRAPE)
Université Rennes 1 (France)

Challenges for the « Global City »

- **To be competitive**
  - ➔ economical development

- **To be attractive**
  - ➔ cultural development

➔ Use of **festive time strategies**
to combat the deleterious impact
of globalization on local economies
(Eisinger 2000, Gotham 2002, Harvey 1990, Hugues 1999)

Hypothesis

« Ethnicity » as a new cultural capital ?

Community links, multiple identities,
cultural resistance, a general resiliency associated
with the ability to endure hardships
and overcome obstacles

are now turned

from *handicap* into *resources*

in the liberal cosmopolitan city

(Cf. Bourdieu 1979; Putnam, Leonardi, Nanetti, 1993)

Process of cultural and economical
enhancement

State of the Art

The Cultural Economy of Cities

➜ Governance and urban competition
(Le Galès 1995, Scott 2000)

➜ Culture industries and re-embeddedness
(Basu and Werbner 2001, Granovetter 1985)

➜ Confluence between commercial culture/ethnic identity (Root 1996)

The New Middle Classes & The Fantasy City

➜ Increasing role of "professionnals" and "creativity" (Florida 2002; Lash & Urry 1987)

➜ Gentrification process (Ley 2003, Zukin 1995)

➜ Political interdependances and civilization process (Elias 1939, 1969)

Methodology

Comparison of two large urban festivals
which involved ethnic minorities

**The Notting Hill
Carnival**

[London]

**Le Défilé de la
Biennale de la danse**

[Lyon]

Tools

Interviews with professionals and participants *(n : 37)*

from 2000 to 2005

Participant observation

in Lyon (July 2002) : *Maravilhoso Project*

in London (August 2002) : *Yaa Asantewaa Arts & Cultural Centre*

Ethnographic materials *(reports, leaflets & websites)*

Local & national press releases

from 1976 to 2002 *(London)*

from 1996 to 2002 *(Lyon)*

- Part I -
Ethnic Minorities
From Political Exclusion to Cultural Re-Invention

- Part II -
Multiculturality
From Handicap to Resource

- Part III -
Carnival
From Culture to Economy

Ethnic Minorities

From Political Exclusion to Cultural Re-Invention

The Failure of a Unitary Political Mobilisation

White & Black Split

- **Spatial divisions**

  Segregation in London
  Relegation in Lyon

- **Racist attacks**

  e.g. Notting Hill White Riots
  (1958)
  e.g. Les Minguettes' Murders
  (1981-1983)

Communautary Divisions

- **Inside the Caribbean community**
  e.g. failure of the *West Indian Standing Conference*

- **Inside the anti-racist movement**
  e.g. failure of the *Marche des Beurs*
  (1983)

Carnival as a New Form of Cultural Mobilization

From Trinidad to Notting Hill

- **1958 :** Creation of the first Caribbean Carnival

  →*Claudia Jones*

- **1965 :** Integration of the festival into the Notting Hill Fair

  →*Rhaunee Laslett*

- **1975 :** Creation of the *Carnival Development Committee (CDC)*

From Hip Hop to Contemporary Dance

- **1980's :** Development of hip hop culture in the Great Lyon

  → *Rillieux, Vaulx-en-Velin, Vénissieux,...*

- **1981-1986/1988-1993 :** "Minority cultural expressions" public policy

  →*Jack Lang*

- **1996 :** Défilé de la Biennale de la Danse

  → *« Projets culturels de quartier »*

  → *Guy Darmet*

Emergence of a « new ethnicity »

- Marginalization
- Socialisation in the chinks of the public space
- Identitary re-creations

➔ **Sub-cultures of exclusion**

PROBLEM FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS :

How to channel these minority cultural expressions ?

Multiculturality

From Handicap to Resource

Carnival ➜ A Problem

A Problem of Law & Order

➜ **Criminalization** *(1976, 1986)*

A Problem of Culture

➜ **High Arts** *vs* **Popular Arts**

➜ *"Cultural colonialism !"*

Carnival ➜ A Strategy

A counter-cultural strategy
Cf. Great London Council (1981-1986)

➜ **A counter-hegemony strategy**

➜ **"Learning from Thatcherism"**

A bypassing strategy
Cf. Ministère de la Culture (1981-1986)

➜ **"La démocratie culturelle"**

➜ **Give the speak to the "immigrés"**

Emergence of a « new ethnicity »

- Marginalization ⇨ Interdependance
- Socialisation in the chinks ⇨ Globalisation
- Identitary re-creations ⇨ Creativity

➔ **Sub-cultures** = **New Cultural capital**

**CULTURAL STRATEGY
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Carnival

From Culture to Economy

Carnival Development ➔ Identity work

The Notting Hill Carnival as an "*international class event*"
(Interview, Senior Cultural Project Officer, GLA, 20/09/2002)

"*Notting Hill Carnival is a showcase of Caribbean culture, but it is also a showcase for London*"
(Lee Jasper, Chairman of the Mayor's Carnival Review Group, 27/08/2002)

Le Défilé as a « rituel d'agglomération »
(Millénaire 3/Grand Lyon Prospective, 2002)

"*L'organisation de fêtes publiques rencontre un besoin profondément ancré d'appartenance et de communion avec la société environnante*"
(Millénaire 3, 2000)

Carnival Development ➜ Economic work

Creative industries

"*Creativity :*
London's core business"
(Mayor of London, 2002)

- **London Development Agency**

- **Carnival Review Group**
- **Mayor's Economic Agency**

Art therapy

"*Le détour créatif*
est au coeur de l'insertion"
(C2D-Tremplin ANEPA)

- **Politique de la Ville**

- **Volet insertion**
- **Plan local d'insertion par l'économique (PLIE)**

The æsthetisation of multiculturalism

Regulation
- ✓ *Policing*
- ✓ *Management*

➡ **Art to serve
the economic and social
development of cities**

Rationnalization
- ✓ *Didactization*
- ✓ *Production*

➡ **Searching a
« new multicultural æsthetic »**

Project-Identity

Conclusion

From Marginality to a New Cultural Capital

To be attractive ?

Community

⬇

Social capital

⬇

Cohesion

⟺

To be competitive ?

Expression

⬇

Creativity

⬇

Innovation