

# CITY LINK CONGRESS

## CITIES, CULTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

*Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Hamburg, Germany*



How can culture and urban policies strengthen urban societies? How can they contribute to make our cities more sustainable? How can they help to unfold the creativity of urban dwellers in general? What can we learn from urban communities and self-organised initiatives that evolve on the background of social changes? How can we foster them? Where can we find space for more sustainable projects in our cities?

250 international activists, artists, architects, curators, cultural entrepreneurs, researchers and interested others met at HafenCity University for a conference about the role of urban communities in creating more creative, democratic and sustainable cities. The organizers invited eight scientists, activists and city planners from Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Austria and the US to talk about sustainable urban and culture policy. The keynote „Inequalities and Dependencies of the Creative Ecosystem: A View From New York“ was given by Sharon Zukin, Professor of Sociology at the Brooklyn College and Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Urbanist Michael Ziehl from Hamburg (urban upcycling) organized this public debate as part of the City Link Festival from September 5th to September 14th. City Link is a co-creating network initiated by Jesper Koefoed-Melson from Copenhagen ([givrum.nu](http://givrum.nu)) in 2012 with the support of the municipalities of Hamburg and Copenhagen to encourage cultural exchange and theoretical debate. In 2014 other cities will be invited to joint the project in order to widen the network.

This first City Link Congress focused on questions of urbanity and cultural innovations that emerge from everyday practices, lifestyles and the creativity of urban dwellers. Fundings of the „creative and cultural economy“ do focus on their producers, but in the first place



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by targeting economic efficiency. Also these fundings rarely have an impact on social and ecologic levels. On the contrary they risk to stress urban societies by emerging elites and advancing processes of gentrification. To be sustainable culture and urban policies have to take this into account. Current policies like the »Growing City« or the »Creative City« are not sustainable. They reduce the understanding of cities to investment locations and the meaning of culture to a location factor. Instead of strengthening the producers of culture and urbanity, these kind of policies promote their exploitation.

To deal with urgent challenges like demographic change, a changing world of work and the consequences of climate change policies are needed, that strengthen social coherence. On the background of these changes in many cities self-organised initiatives emerged, that already implement sustainable policies on a project level.

Videos of the lectures and the full congress program are online at

[www.city-link.org](http://www.city-link.org)

There you can find also further Informations about the City Link Network and the City Link Festival 2014 in Hamburg.

