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# Port cities, cultural cities?

## The symbolic impacts of culture-led urban regeneration on port-city relationships across Europe

# Structure of the paper

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- Methodology
- The rise of culture-led urban regeneration
  - Examples from Rotterdam, Genoa and Valencia
- Culture-led regeneration and symbolic port-city links
  - Cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation (with examples from a range of cities)
- Port cities and culture-led regeneration in a post-pandemic world

# Methodology

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Critical realist, retroductive comparative approach

- Culture-led regeneration policies as 'hybridised' recurrent instances of the same structural process
- Focus on the (potentially hidden) generative mechanisms behind recurrent phenomena

Methodology

- Comparative case study analysis (Rotterdam, Genoa, Valencia)
- Semi-structured interviews, street surveys, non-participant observations (February-June 2018)



# The rise of culture-led urban regeneration

- 1980s – CLR as a response to the negative impacts of deindustrialisation
- Globalised practices after heralded experiences (Barcelona, Bilbao, Glasgow)
- Little attention towards the 'maritime exceptionalism' of port cities and the role of/impacts on symbolic port-city links



Barcelona – Port Vell.  
Photo by David Iliff.  
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



# Rotterdam – culture, reconstruction, attractiveness and the port

- CLR goals 1990s – 2010s
  - Celebrating the reconstruction of Rotterdam
  - (Re)building the city's cultural infrastructure
  - Increasing the city's attractiveness as a means to pursue port competitiveness
- Pivotal role of contemporary architecture "Manhattan on the Meuse" (e.g. regeneration of the Kop van Zuid area)
- Mega events (UEFA EURO 2000; European Capital of Culture 2001)



Luxor Theater (2001) and Kop van Zuid (late 1980s-2010s)

# Genoa – mega events and long-term regeneration

- CLR goals 1980s – mid-2000s
  - Reconverting the derelict old harbour
  - Launching Genoa as an international destination for cultural and heritage tourism
- Long-term vision of CLR, pursued through a series of actions
- Mega events (Columbus Expo 1992; 2001 G8 summit; European Capital of Culture 2004)

Bigo, Piazza delle Feste and Biosfera in the old harbour (Columbus Expo 1992)



Galata Maritime Museum (European Capital of Culture 2004)



# Valencia – mega events and city branding

- CLR goals 1990s – 2010s
  - Launching Valencia as an international tourist destination and 'global city'
  - Redeveloping the inner harbour
- CLR as a means to pursue aggressive city branding
- Mega events (America's Cup 2007 and 2010; Formula One European Grand Prix 2008-2012)



City of Arts and Sciences (1998-2002)



Valencia's inner harbour during the America's Cup 2007.



# Culture-led regeneration and symbolic port-city links

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- *De/remaritimisation* – concepts used in transport economics to define the reduced or greater importance of established or new maritime activities for the local economy



- *Cultural demaritimisation* – the loss/reduced importance of maritime cultures and tangible/intangible heritage
- *Cultural remaritimisation* – the growing relevance of established/created maritime cultures and tangible/intangible heritage



# 'Port cities' vs 'Cities of Culture'?

- Clashing urban imaginaries (*but also different types of societies?*)
- **Cultural demaritimisation** – local policy makers may overlook/attempt to get rid of the 'port city' image due to interurban competition (more common in the 1990s)

## Rotterdam

*"... most cultural policy makers have this mantra of 'we've got to get rid of this port-city name, of this port-city image.*

*We've got to get culture in [until] it becomes a cultural city, instead of a port city"*

*(Interview, expert, 2018)*

## Genoa

*"... in the late 80s [...] there was a famous [politician] who ended a rally in Piazza de Ferrari by saying 'we don't want the city of waiters', meaning 'we don't want the tourist city' [...]. Because the tourist city was seen as an enemy of the industrial city"*  
*(Interview, expert, 2018)*



# 'Port cities' vs 'Cities of Culture'?

## HULL CITY PLAN

HOME

ENERGY CITY

DESTINATION HULL

COMMUNITY

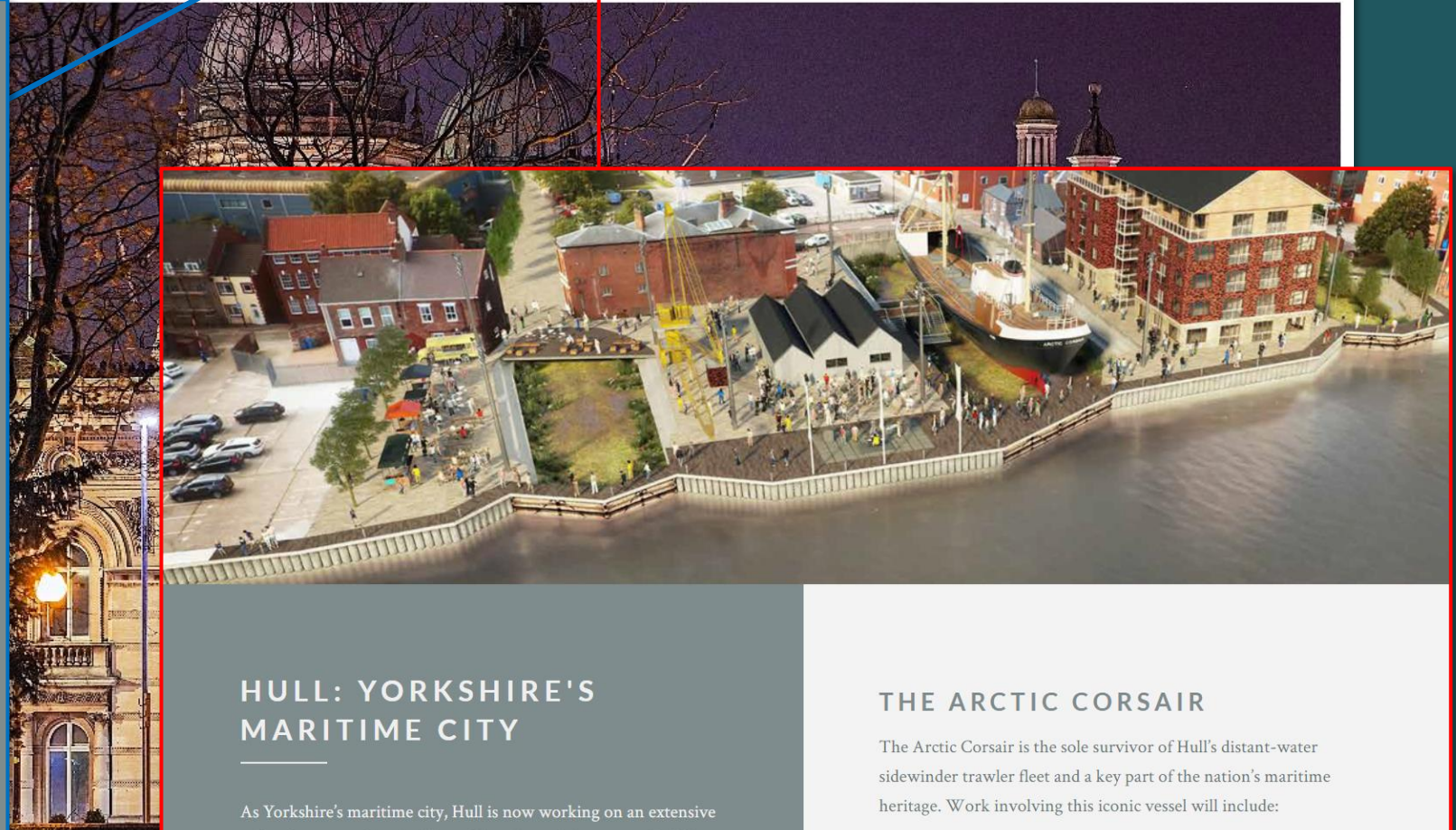
COMPLETED PROJECTS



## GREEN PORT HULL

Following £310m joint investment by Siemens and Associated British Ports (ABP), Europe's largest wind turbine manufacturing plant commenced operating in December 2016. The factory, at Alexandra Dock is, 396,000 sq m in size and the service and maintenance facility 12,300 sq m. The area covered by the Green Port Hull development is equivalent to the size of 78 football pitches.

Preliminary evidence from an impact assessment, two years into a three year study, undertaken by the University of Hull's Logistics Institute, shows that Greenport Hull has created more than 2,000 jobs in the renewable sector and its supply chain.



## HULL: YORKSHIRE'S MARITIME CITY

As Yorkshire's maritime city, Hull is now working on an extensive redevelopment of its significant historic maritime assets. Building upon the legacy and success of UK City of Culture 2017, it supports Hull's aspiration to become a world-class visitor destination.

## THE ARCTIC CORSAIR

The Arctic Corsair is the sole survivor of Hull's distant-water sidewinder trawler fleet and a key part of the nation's maritime heritage. Work involving this iconic vessel will include:

- Full restoration
- A permanent dry-berth to ensure long term preservation
- Ongoing marketing and promotion to raise awareness of her



# 'Port cities' vs 'Cities of culture'?

- Spectacularisation of (clean) aspects of the port city image
- Different attitudes towards modern port?



Cruise ship in Venice city centre.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cruiseship\\_passing\\_Venice.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cruiseship_passing_Venice.JPG)



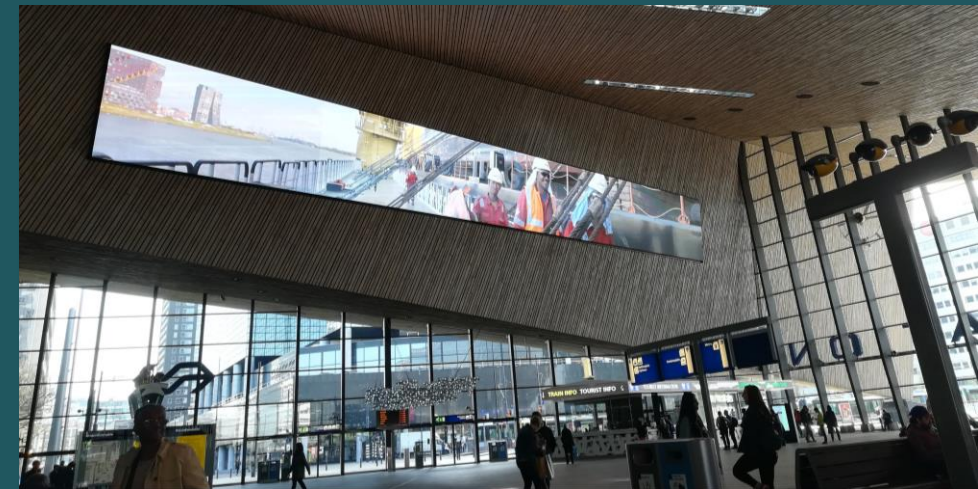
Panoramic viewpoint on Genoa's cruise and ferry terminal (2018)



Footpath with port cranes in the background in Cádiz (2019)



Christmas market at Malaga's harbour (2019)



Screen with images of ships sailing along the Maas River at Rotterdam's Central Station (2018)



# Redesigning port-city relationships

- **Cultural remaritimisation** as the creation of new symbolic port-city links, overriding existing ties

## Valencia

*"... this will to connect the city to the sea was a will [...] to impose to the Valencia that was facing the sea a certain manner to be by the sea [...].*

*(Interview, event team member, 2018)*



Former America's Cup Team Bases in Valencia's inner harbour(2018)



Veles e Vents building (2018)



# Reinstating symbolic port-city links: maritime cultural quarters

- Example of cultural remaritimisation building on local maritime history and heritage

ASÍ SERÁ LA FUTURA CASA DELS BOUS

## El Museu del Mar de València da sus primeros pasos aún en pañales

Álvaro G. Devís

MUSEU DE LA MAR

GENERALITAT VALENCIANA  
Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esport

*Lo más leído*

- 1 ¿Cultura en la España vaciada? Sí, por favor

La nueva música 'made in València' que suena... en Instagram

Nace Vlex, una discográfica desde València para una nueva realidad

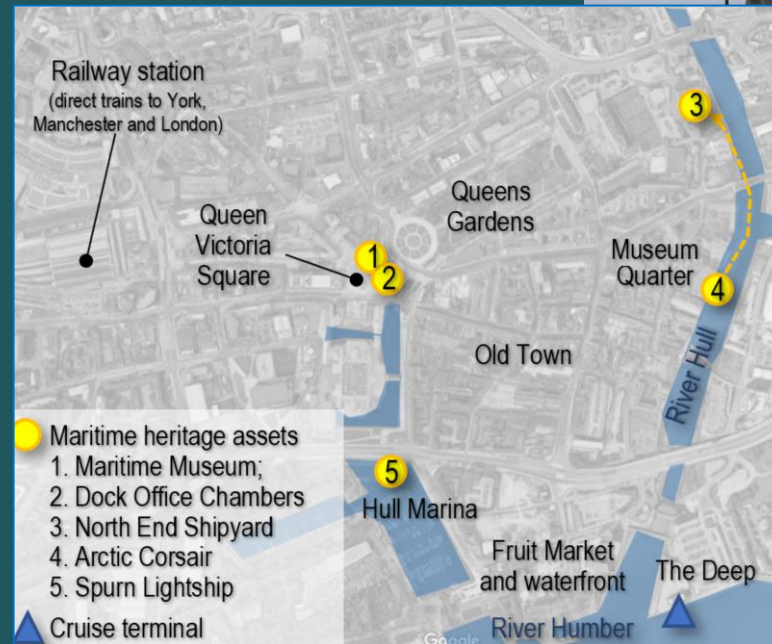
Los cines se resignan con el toque de queda y apuntan a la cartelera como su gran preocupación

Última temporada: 'Alguien tiene que morir', una telenovela mexicana con aires de Almodóvar



Valencia's proposed multi-venue Maritime Museum

The maritime-inspired, heritage-led regeneration project  
Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City



# Port cities and culture-led regeneration in a post-pandemic world

<https://www.cruisetotravel.com/2020/05/01/rotterdam-world-port-days-2020-canceled/>

- Reduced resources for cultural activity
- Changing meaning of cultural events (e.g. digitalisation)
- Changing public attitudes towards cultural consumption, leisure and the use of public space
- Post-pandemic patterns of tourism

[http://www.viuvalencia.com/articulo/Musica\\_Pergola\\_La\\_Marina/601281630](http://www.viuvalencia.com/articulo/Musica_Pergola_La_Marina/601281630)

Rotterdam World Port Days 2020 canceled

This year's edition of the World Port Days in Rotterdam is canceled. The 43rd edition was scheduled for early September, the year in which the Netherlands celebrates 75 years of freedom, offered an excellent opportunity to demonstrate with the theme 'Port of Opportunities' what that freedom means for the port of Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands to this day.



MÚSICA

**La Pèrgola de Cervezas Alhambra, en La Marina de València, estrena temporada a toda vela**

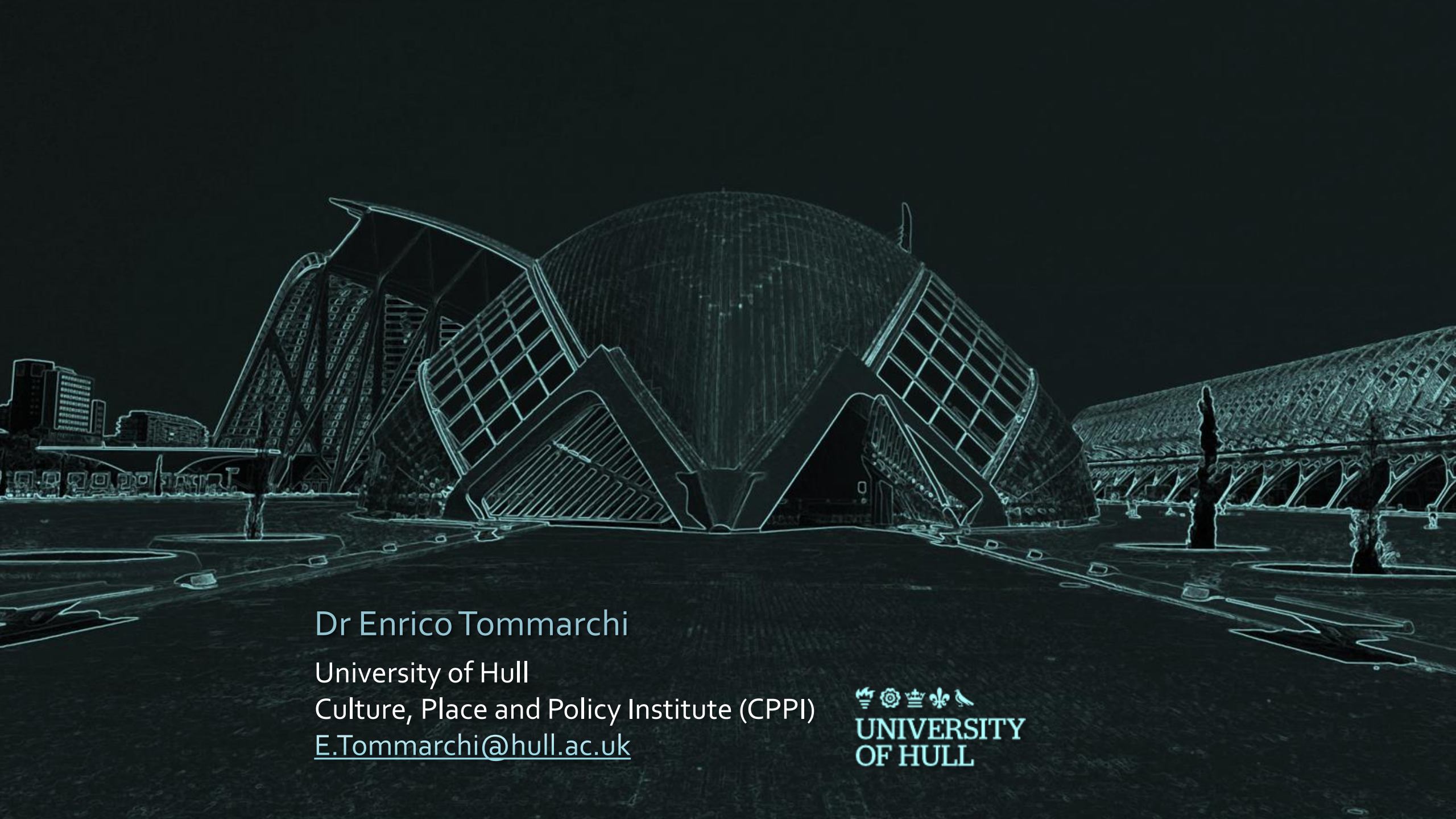
14 nuevas fechas y 28 propuestas, para los sábados a mediodía de septiembre a diciembre de 2020



REDACCIÓN 2020-09-16







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