

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CREATIVE CITY STRATEGY FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT: EXPERIENCES FROM SOME CITIES

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Abstract

This article offers a situational and experiential assessments on significance of creative city strategy for urban development policy. This paper has examines some creative cities of USA and Canada to illustrate an example of creative city and how they have boosted cities economy. Importance of preservation and diversification of culture for creative cities are also examined. This paper is a review article which has reviewed some experiences of creative cities and moreover, in this article an attempt is made to present experiences of creative city strategy adopted by cities for urban development. It is concluded that citizen's initiatives and commitments are vitally important for the urban development along with the policy enforced or adopted by the authorities.

Keywords: Urban, Creative City, Revitalization, Reutilizations, Stabilizing, Development

Introduction

Simply, urban development policy can be understood as a strategy to develop the physical infrastructures of a city and addressing the basic needs of the locals. Mallach (2010) has point major areas of urban development policy viz; revitalization of cities, reutilizing urban land, stabilizing economic base, revitalizing neighborhood and addressing the basic needs. 'Creative City' has become vibrant model for urban development; a way of addressing-globalization, technological change, cultural promotion and international city competition. It has emerged as a strong paradigm of development, which many urban governments adopt. Cities across the globe toil mightily to transform in the elusive effort to enhance their prosperity.

The 'Creative City' concept was first developed by Charles Landry in the late 1980s and his study, 'The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators', in 2000 has become the main reference document on creative city. Landry's creative city philosophy is based on people's imagination and he has described the creative city as 'places where people think, plan and act with imagination'. However, the creative city can be defined as a place where a high proportion of creative people reside and work, creative industries are the leading sectors in the economy and a creative milieu is provided by high-quality 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructures (Girard and et.al. 2011:25).

The creative city is, in general, understood and used in four ways: i) a creative city as a focal point of arts and cultural infrastructure, ii) a creative city as the action place of a creative economy, iii) a creative city as synonymous with a strong creative class and iv) a creative city as a place that fosters a culture of creativity (ibid., 2011:4). O'Connor and Kong (2009:1) defined the 'Creative City' as an approach to policy and planning that 'recognizes' the urbanistic context and infrastructure within which creative industry, innovation and growth take place.

Significance: Some Evidences

Significance of 'creative city' strategy for urban economic development policy making is discussed below.

Revitalization of the City,: Revitalization is a process of a city, improving after being undesirable. It is related to the process of urban renewal or programs of land redevelopment. It is also linked with property values, if

property values increase after long periods of decline or stagnation, that is the symptoms of revitalization. However, a questions arises as to when and how this happens ? Simply, this happens only if a place gets vitality. Here, vitals are various political social, and economic actions undertaken by the urban development authorities. A strong and suitable urban policy is very important to revitalize the city's growth and development. Revitalization of cities first, act as an ideal environment in which creative and cultural activities thrive. Second, places with strong institutions, particularly institutions of higher learning such as universities and colleges can act as 'anchors of creativity' to support creative activity. Third, cities have unique social characteristics and spatial environments that act to attract and retain highly skilled workers.

'Creative city' strategy can be viewed as a tool for promoting urban renaissance for urban policy makers. Urban policy primarily focuses on livelihood such as job creation and sources of household income, environmental sustainability and energy efficiency of the city and the quality of its service delivery, infrastructure development, financial and business centers, cultural preservation and tolerance and good governance (TCA, 2006:3). Therefore, a city needs broader and more rational planning of projects or strategies. Ponzini and Rossi (2008;1038) argued that, the creative city approach have given rise to a mode of urban governance. Landry (2006), claimed that currently two very popular concepts among city politicians and scholars are the 'creative city' and 'creative industry'. However, the popularity of the creative city thesis as an urban economic development strategy both in Europe and North America is partly explained by overarching processes of societal change that are beyond its emergence and are structural rather than momentary. These processes are economic as well as political, technological and socio-cultural in nature. The creative city has become a popular concept among urban policy makers worldwide.

The notion of a 'creative city' stands as much as for political and social mantra as an urban, social or economic policy, correspondence among objectives, policies and impacts (Pratt, 2010:14). Florida (2005a, 2005b) points out that a creative city is able to gather talents and thus can create new values and become a source of innovation. He also argues that the innovation caused by the creative city leads to the economic and social development of a region.

Let us examine the example of Toronto to see how significant creative city strategy is for urban economic development. Toronto, a creative city, focused in

creative city planning. The strategy is built on three underlying principles; prosperity, livability and opportunity for all. It is organized around four themes: Global Toronto (Toronto in the world economy), Proactive Toronto (business climate), Creative Toronto (creativity, productivity and growth) and One Toronto (economic opportunity and inclusion for all). Toronto ranks second in North America after Vancouver on the Bohemian Index- a measure of artistically creative people. It is Canada's top touristic destination drawing over 18 million tourists each year. Toronto's tourism sector alone includes 24,000 local businesses and employs 203,000 people. Between 1990-2000 employment in creative occupation in Toronto grew at an average annual growth rate just slightly over 4.0%. Toronto's growth was faster than that of many jurisdictions across North America, including Seattle (3.2%), San Francisco (1.8%), Los Angeles(0.8%). The annual growth in creative occupation was only 0.4% in New York (AuthentiCity, 2008 :16-17).

Reutilizing Urban Land. The traditional urban development strategy was largely hardware focused and idea of 'city' as a collection of projects focused on physical conditions and its vertical planning. Creative planning is more horizontal with the multiple uses of land, but in highly dense cities like Shanghai and Tokyo vertical planning is preferred. Renewal and regeneration programmes, therefore have contributed to the shaping of a new stage in 'entrepreneurial urbanism', centered on the dynamic combination of non-material (cultural atmosphere, sense of vibrancy and enthusiasm, creativity) and material factors (regenerated physical environment, monuments, cultural artefacts, museums, parks, church) in the reutilization of urban spaces and economics (Ponzini & Rissi, 2009:1040).

The creative city is a label for promoting cities. As the international competition among cities increases, together with the crisis of the national governments and the subsequent devolution of responsibilities to local actors, cities have now to promote themselves and their image on the global arena. The creative city is therefore addressed as the model to build by many local actors.

A public space is embraced as a source of civic pride. Reutilizing or multi-utilizing of such land or space is a creative strategy for urban development that promotes cities in one side and creates economies of scale on the other side. Let us explore how three American cities- Chicago, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati-have made significant investments in one particular facet of improvement. This

entails the ability to attract and retain workers, create a better quality of life and revitalization of city.

'The Chicago Riverwalk', envisioned as a mix of recreational, entertainment, food and beverage, and retail facilities, is a vibrant area enjoyed by residents, tourists, and visitors alike. Each new block provides a different kind of programmatic experience. The Marina Plaza, for instance, combines a dining terrace, custom seating, and boating infrastructure. Likewise, the Pittsburgh waterfront—a convergence of three rivers—has undergone an incredible transformation in recent years. This includes several major development projects from the past ten years, including the Rivers Casino, the Convention Center, and Point State Park Renovations. In addition, Cincinnati's riverfront makeover is no less dramatic than Chicago's or Pittsburgh's, and its planning and design have equally been a decades-long pursuit. The downtown reach of the Ohio River was once little more than a sea of asphalt—expansive parking lots dotted with remnant infrastructure and subjected to frequent floods. A highway separated a revitalizing downtown core from the city's former lifeblood, the Ohio River (Ford, 2017)¹.

These success stories of Chicago, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, offer powerful testimony for how creative use of public land and space could revitalize the city. These examples provide concrete strategies for cities and designers looking to take advantage of the wide array of value that such revitalization can capture.

Stabilizing the economic base is the main thrust of urban development. A stabilized economic base provides jobs for their residents and scope for businesses to grow. For that to take place, they must focus on transformative change – spotting the opportunities to integrate these cities into the postindustrial economy (Mallach, 2010:4). It is based on innovation and creativity for the creative and economic opportunity. The work of Florida (2002) has been particularly influential on the uptake 'Creativity' in urban policy. Central to his argument is that, to develop successfully cities and regions must be attractive enough to attract the so-called 'creative classes. In order to attract creative people that directly contribute to the local economy, cities and regions are to be pushed to improve their cultural liveliness, social inclusion and tolerance and, more generally, the quality of life. The implication is, therefore,

¹ Ford, Gina. (2017), <https://urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/three-u-s-cities-reinventing-modern-waterfront/>

that urban policy should focus on re-creating cities to attract this 'creative class'; the result should be that entrepreneurial activity will follow. To do this, cities should be liberal, 'cosmopolitan', 'bohemian' and 'multicultural'. Florida's concept of 'creative class' thesis of urban development advocated for the amalgam of physical, socio-cultural, economic and technological phenomenon that attracts as well as create the creative class. 'Network politics', 'intellectual technology', 'cultural revitalization' and 'social entrepreneurial' are the 'creative capitals' for urban economic development to attract 'capital class'. Therefore, the urban policy should focus on creating these localized high-tech and highly specialized activities in a city that fosters economic growth as well as development.

Let us look at the case of Baltimore, a struggling city that has become a highly cited example of 'post-modernist' urban regeneration. Baltimore's success, as Ponzini and Rossi (2010) viewed, is because of 'creative class theory or policy', which is based on the Florida's thesis of 'creative city'. Baltimore's urban governance and politics adopted 'creative city' initiatives in mobilizing institutions and organizing actors. 'Creative city' based on 'creative class' who directly contribute to the local economy through creative capital and intellectual technology. Cultural-led urban policy, tourism promotion and entrepreneurial urbanism are the key policy practiced in the Baltimore.

Revitalizing neighborhood- a 'cultural turn'. This aspect of city development policy emphasizes the arts and cultural capital development. Culture-led revitalization can be understood as a 'growth machine' for urban economic development. Culture-led urban policies have become popular and influential in the creation of creative class and cities discourses. Recent years have been witnessed a widespread 'cultural turn' in urban and regional policies. Policies of local economic development, urban regeneration and revitalization have been in the forefront of these developments (Ponzini and Rossi, 2010:1039).

Finding and recruiting artists in the local community, including visual artists, performing artists, poets, writers, musicians, designers, chefs, and other creative types. Engaging local artists will help build buy-in. It is hoped there will be no need to find talent elsewhere. The Macon Arts Alliance learned this hard lesson after bringing artists from outside the state to Mill Hill for an art initiative. It created an atmosphere of distrust, leading the alliance to rescind its action and rebuild the relationship. Consult local arts organizations and local and state government art councils to find local artists. For example, in the

Washington, D.C., metro area, the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is a nonprofit group dedicated to promoting the careers of artists and boasts a membership of thousands of local artists. Local art councils include the District of Columbia Commission on Arts and Humanities, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (Maryland), and the Virginia Commission for the Arts (Hardy, 2017).²

Development and promotion cultural products and artistic activities on the other hand, flourishes a tourism in a city. As a result, neighborhood or city attracts domestic and international tourism. We know that tourism is only a smokeless industry, which generates competitive advantage. Tourism helps in local economic regeneration, cultural exchange and understanding, and promotes global brotherhood. For the city, tourism is a 'creative business'; city planners must understand the growing value of tourism to urban economy. Asheville, which adopted by the mid-2002s 'tourism' as a main economic model for downtown development and started to preserve historical buildings. A participatory planning process established by the city council, private sectors, citizens and outsiders (non-profits and similar) using complex coordination is essential for revitalization of neighborhoods. Strom and Kerstein (2015:507) argued that today Asheville's downtown is anchored by several projects that represents different mixes of public and private involvement, known as a downtown coalition. This is how a creative city developed. Who does not like the creative city? That means presenting the city as a place full of entertainment, beauty, museums and nice people. It means promoting it with cool bars and the newest restaurants, in order to attract international tourisms, professionals and investments (d' Ovidio, 2016:8).

Conclusion

The 'Creative city' form various socio-cultural and environmental perspectives, is desirable or not?, may be a debatable issue. However, from city's development standpoint, it is a desirable concept. Creativity is a hidden treasure in cities, authorities and stakeholders of city needs to bring it out on the surface. Public, private and non-profit sectors are the main actors responsible for urban economic development policy making. These actors in partnerships or in coalitions need to work together for the 'creative city'. Likewise, citizens are discursive and the most influential actor in urban policymaking. The creative city requires constant feedback from their citizens. The act of voting in every

² Hardy, Juanita. (2017), <https://urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/10-best-practices-creative-placemaking/>

four or five years is not enough to convey people's idea to local government. So, every citizen's responsibilities are crucial for city development.

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