New Introspection on Cultural Policy Regarding Urban Regeneration

Saemee Kim, Hanyang Peace Institution, South Korea

Abstract
Arts and culture are considered a common method of pursuing urban regeneration. However, one should approach with caution in defining a successful culture-led regeneration. Even if physical environment may be improved in making cultural city, it cannot be considered successful if people cannot fully utilize and benefit from the improvement but feel a sense of incompatibility between their daily life and the changed environment. In this line, this paper will analyze problems that arise from a culture-led regeneration and how culture and urban regeneration are applied these days with specific focus on the example of Changdong, Seoul. Case of Changdong demonstrates how its flagship strategy helped revitalize the area and motivated the residents to create open culture platform themselves that serves as a networking space.

Keywords: culture-led regeneration, art community, cultural public sphere

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Arts and culture are considered a common method of pursuing urban regeneration. Converting an old factory into a new arts museum, hosting cinema festival and arts and street fair are utilized to rejuvenate an area. One can easily find numerous examples of cities around the world that use arts and culture as means to achieve regeneration.

Then, what makes a culture-led regeneration successful? What does a successful cultural city mean? A cultural city refers not only to the physical change of the city but also the change in the people who reside in the city and their lifestyles. If people cannot fully benefit and take advantage of the improved infrastructure and environment from the project, such regeneration will be considered a failure since the environment and the residents' lifestyles cannot successfully be merged. Additionally, if the changes of the city make the indigenous residents feel uncomfortable and inevitably be forced to leave, those improvements cannot considered a successful regeneration.

Putting aside the purpose of urban regeneration, cultural cities have shown a remarkable progress in a short period of time. Those cities have focused the economic and societal benefits that come from art and culture and have conceived to create cities that epitomize a particular culture that fit them. As the responsibility of regional governments has grown through globalization, many have decided to utilize art and culture as means of rejuvenating an underdeveloped area or revitalizing its economy. Such a trend has started a discourse on creativity and cultural diversity, and in line with the expansion of city clusters, cultural cities have been widely proliferated. The United Nations and UNESCO have publicly emphasized the culture's vitality in a urban regeneration and the importance of economic value from creating cultural cities. The Protection of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions, a treaty agreed by 148 countries, has emphasized a culture's role in economy and creativity and the importance of its consistent improvement and also argued for expanding multicultural qualities to effectively utilize culture for urban regeneration (UNESCO 2009).

Discourses about a cultural city, diversity in culture, innovation, and creativity are very meaningful and effective. Most of all, creating an environment where residents have a full accessibility to art and culture of the city leads to positive results. However, urban regeneration that solely focuses on the economic aspects of art and culture has raised doubts about its effectiveness. Vickery(2007) has warned about an instrumental approach towards a reckless culture-led regeneration: "Yet we need to be careful, for creativity is one of the great ideologies of our time." Analyzing the Liverpool case, Miles(2005) claimed that a culture-led regeneration has become a popular method adopted to achieve economic growth and reputation. Bayliss(2004), who studied the cities in Ireland, argued that "the image-making effect of urban regeneration through cultural events, iconic projects and symbols has become increasingly critical in the establishment of urban and regional identity." These warnings are mostly towards the so-called "copycat cities". Aware of these warnings and problems, the following paragraphs will focus on the problems that arise from a culture-led regeneration and how culture and urban regeneration are applied these days.

Culture's role in urban regeneration and the aftermath

Urban regeneration has been vitalized through garnering attention from an iconic building or a gargantuan event or utilizing a clustering method. Culture has always been emphasized as the vital piece to the extent that Zukin(1995) even argued that "Culture is the city's business." As more emphasis were put on the culture's role in urban regeneration, it is important to note the problems that arise from the idea. Then, how can the potential problems be categorized? The following paragraphs lay out the problems that arise when one considers (1) the standards of successful urban regeneration and (2) what the experts worry.

Firstly, there is a problem of inequality. As a successful urban regeneration creates a new image of the city, such view tends to result in the inflation, especially the housing price. The increased housing price often replaces the indigenous people with newcomers from outside the cities. This gentrification process amplifies economic inequality as the newly created environment are more favorable towards the rich.

Secondly, the problem of social exclusion is noticeable. This problem can be divided into the crisis of city's identity and cultural gap. Urban regeneration. If the bureaucrats implement a new image with no consideration about the qualities that distinguish the city from the others during the process of regeneration, the locals cannot feel a sense of community within the city of their own residence. A city is composed of history of individuals and the local community's distinctive qualities. If an urban regeneration does not consider the identity and the history of the city, the regenerated city leads to the residents feeling secluded.

In a similar context, the art and culture in from the regeneration must be useful for the local people in the future. In an urban regeneration, the usage of art and culture has been typically applied exclusively to the physical environment, economic benefits or a limited group of artistic individuals. Therefore, the results that come from such regeneration efforts are hard to access and serve very little use for the majority of the residents which may lead to wider cultural gap. For those who previously enjoyed art and culture may benefit from such changes, but those who have not would not feel included in those events. It could even lead to a misconception that such culture is only for the exclusive elites rather than for everyone.

New Discourses on Culture-led Regeneration

Although the gentrification caused from a sudden introduction of capitalism can be put aside for later, people have attempted to solve the problem of social exclusion with different methods. Especially after the financial crisis from 2007 to 2008, urban regeneration utilizing art and culture along with economic approach has become trend. To increase the sense of community within a city, more emphasis is put on approaches that focus mainly on 'conviviality' and 'coexistence'. The importance of public space and community has resurfaced and the usage of art and culture has led to a social movement to increase awareness on how vital public space and community are.

With regards to the topic in the previous paragraph, Magdalena Nowicka and Steven Vertovec (2013) mention that the term 'conviviality', based roots for 'with' and 'living,' has long been associated with sociable, friendly and festive traits. Highlighting the phrase "Le droit a la ville, Right to the city", Lefebvre (1996) argued that the residents should exercise their rights to fully engage themselves in solving the issues of the city, to have accessibility to the public space, and to create a state-of-the-art city. This kind of zeal and enthusiasm from the residents, he argues, will create a distinctive city. Harvey (2012) sees that the development of the place-based political movements as offering potential for re-appropriation of the symbolic capital of the urban by a new politics is one of regeneration's most trenchant critics. In addition, Bell and Binnie (2005) claimed that urban culinary culture can play a paramount role in producing the habitat for on-going regeneration, and also provide a powerful symbolic statement about urban fortunes, highlighting the potential of food culture bringing symbiotic culture in the process of urban regeneration. Lugosi(2010), who analyzed Hungary's urban regeneration, observed that the cafes, bars, and restaurants not only were places that provided space for people but also became a cultural capital for cultural produces and consumers. Culture and regeneration enable us to identify the potential manifestations of hospitality, which may occupy different positions within the regeneration process and the various stages of urban change.

Young Bum Lee (2017) has also advocated the paramount role of sharing and coexistence through lifestyle culture. An example of such culture he gives is the food culture, the most crucial aspect in our daily lives, and provides "The House of Minjoong", a non-profit organization located in Mapo, as a specific example. This organization gathers many elderly women around the city once a week and provides them an opportunity to cook and share food that is most memorable in their lifetime. In this process, other local residents can join the grocery shopping with those women involved in this organization and learn about the recipe of different food and even their personal history and stories. Such communication and connection among the residents of the city will create a community that shares life and moral values with others. Many experts in this field have confirmed that social movements like "The House of Minjoong" will lead to a new direction of urban regeneration. This particular example of urban regeneration is quite different as it focuses more on social unity within the community rather than the infrastructure change in the city. There is another example in Seoul that relates to this non-physical type of urban regeneration.

Seoul Changdong District Case Study

The mayor of Seoul, Park Won Soon, is carrying out several urban regeneration projects since his inauguration in 2011. He started Seoul Urban Regeneration Project in January of 2015 in order to start off the industry in this field. In March of 2015, Park designated 27 cities as the urban regeneration areas and implemented 13 regeneration projects in these areas as part of '2025 Seoul Urban Regeneration Plan' since December 2015. In the past, cities focused on tearing down the old buildings to create new ones. Now, Park aims for consistent development and regeneration rather than destruction of the past. The Seoul Metropolitan Government wants to utilize some vacant space and strives to enhance cultural and artistic diversity, thus improved accessibility of arts and culture for its citizens.

The old office for Seoul Railroad Station has turned into a cultural complex, and a former Defense Security Command building from military-dictated era has transformed into National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. Like this, Seoul also turned factories into art spaces. The city of Seoul helps its citizens to build their own alternative living culture and spaces through community-building projects. For example, an ideal society can be referred to a community that embraces handful groups such as the elders, the disabled, and the immigrants by increasing their understanding and involvement in cultural activities in their everyday life at public spaces. This type of society will lead to people wanting to create a shared space out of their free will. This increasing motivation to create more communal spaces within a city can encourage those that may feel isolated from the rich to enjoy art and culture of the city. Therefore, cities attempt to make more public spaces for the purpose of promoting cultural activities that people can enjoy on daily basis. This essay pays special attention and examines a mega urban regeneration project that took place in Changdong, Seoul that successfully involved the residents of the city throughout the process. Changdong is located in the northeastern part of Seoul, and is famously known for affordable housing price with reasonably easy commute to central Seoul. Therefore, Changdong is full of apartment complexes and lacks the cultural environment which makes the area relatively culturally impoverished compared to that of Gangnam. The urban regeneration project of Changdong used two different cultural approaches that show the current patterns of different regeneration projects throughout Seoul.

◇ **Platform 61, the music complex**

Changdong was widely known as a culturally impoverished area within Seoul. In order to rejuvenate Changdong, Mayor Park designated Changdong as the city of music and started a project called 'Platform 61'. In May of 2016, 'Platform 61' created a communal space for musical concerts by stacking 61 intermodal containers in a parking lot. This space became a place for different musicians to practice, record, and even play their music in front of 300 people. As 'Platform 61' expanded, the city decided to meet its demand by creating a public concert space for 20,000 people in the hope of making Changdong as the central city of K-pop. This change helps to achieve the coexistence of the mainstream artists and genre artists in order to create both diversity in culture and a different image for Changdong through expanding a particular industry.

Currently at Platform 61, there is a particular intermodal container called 'Red Box' that brings different genres of concerts such as rock, electronic, and hip-hop. According to the MCST(Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism 2016; OhmyNews 2017), the rate of operation for concerts in 2016 was 90.7% in Changdong. The average rate of operation was 65.8% which was 24.9% lower than that of Changdong. Some famous musicians that moved into Changdong Sound Studio create their own music and even have music lessons for the residents of Changdong. Aside from music, there are many informative programs and events that involve fashion and other culture. A program called "Young Creative School" is a mentoring program for teenagers that want to study art and culture and have them learn from famous experts in music, movies, game contents, acting, design, and other fields.

◇ **Chang-go, Village art creation place supported by the city of Seoul**

Changdong's Chang-go was designated as the first experimental industry in the program 'Village art creation place' led by the city of Seoul. As the city wanted people to be the leaders in expanding the lifestyle culture, it created a program called 'Village art creation place' in 2013. The residents in the area have the chance to enter a competition of creating a program that focuses on both local community and artistic culture, and to win a 3-year sponsorship from the city of Seoul that grants a maximum amount of 10,000,000 Won. There are 33 cultural places in 2017 kicked off by the motivation of local residents to contribute to the restoration of the community through promoting cultural arts activities. The program turned the community service center into a three-story cultural art space.

From 2013 to 2014, all the residents of Changdong took Joseph Beuys' quote, "Everyone is an Artist" to heart, created a new slogan "All residents are artists", and contributed to turning a ruined community service center into a brand new cultural art space. In Chang-go, there is a communal space that has a soundproof concert hall, a kitchen where people can share food, and a workplace for woodworking. A renowned program that many residents participate in is called 'mini 30 minutes village concert'. From 6:30 to 7 in the evening, anyone can perform his or her music. The program is more of a recital of one particular group rather than having different groups perform. According to Dae Geun Kim who leads Chang-go, concerts are held around the time residents return home regardless of how many people come. These programs that encourage participation of the residents create opportunities to change the culture of the community. At the same time, the programs work to embed culture and art in the daily life of the residents rather than have cultural art be isolated and separated from the society. Dae Geun Kim is the person who planned this program and explained the principle of carrying out the concert.

Quoting Joseph Beuys, "Art is not a summative function of Life, but Life itself", weekly performance proceeds deliberately in order to become a routine event.
(Dae Keun Kim)

According to Seoul Community Support Center(2014), one of the presenters in Chang-go program was seen that 'Village Art Program' can find their creative ways to solutions to community issues with locals.

"Prior to urbanization, the townspeople solved the minor problems of the town themselves. But as urbanization expanded, solving of those minor problems that used to be handled by the townspeople was gradually transferred into the domain to the public institutions, even the simple tasks as taking the trash in front of my house or shoveling snow. I'm advocating for bringing these types of tasks back to the domain of ourselves. It is to bring out what we have put in the coffin back again. It goes the same to 'Village art creation place'. In the meantime, as beneficiaries, residents who have only enjoyed the program will now become creators themselves. The key is blurring the boundaries between the creators and the beneficiaries." (presenter).

As you can see from the interviews, Chang-go program demonstrates how the citizens are participating in the community and how the urban space in daily life is changing little by little. Robert Putnam argues that, in 2010, more Americans should be encouraged to participate directly in cultural activities such as dance festival, community theater, and rap competition. He suggested that art could be used as a driving force to bring together various fellow citizen groups. In this way, 'Village art creation place' is trying form meaningful communities by breaking down the boundaries that distinguish between arts and daily life and artists and local residents. The 'Village art creation place' Chang-go constitutes a program that allows citizens to participate in local communities and encourages them to voluntarily engage in a program to promote cultural arts in their living culture. This can be a major way of embracing diverse civic cultures, overcoming the phenomenon of alienation and exclusion found in many parts of the city. In other words, it is considered to be an alternative to change the urban space that is encapsulated in capitalism through the normalization of art.

Conclusion

According to the Seoul Institute of Survey in 2013(Seoul Statistics 2017), residents of Seoul have confidence of a family: 8.77, of neighbors: 5.36, of the first person they meet: 3.66, and of people from other countries: 3.02. In other words, the trust and confidence of the community to which they belong is very low. However, Seoul is a cosmopolitan city with many foreign workers coming into the country. As well, the picture of Seoul is rapidly changing due to globalization and aging society. Therefore, issues surrounding communication, cooperation, convergence, and coexistence should be handled with importance especially in the age of cultural conflicts and differentiation rather than social integration.

In urban regeneration, it is not only important to infuse revitalization of the area with a large complex like 'Platform 61', but also to embed social unity as an important aspect. In that way, 'Village art creation place' is a place to build relationships between residents and learn new life and cultural skills. Through artistic activities, the place can serve its purpose as a networking space that can improve each other's lives by providing opportunities to build meaningful relationships'. In the past, the space where the culture was created or shared at the village level was a public place operated by the government rather than an open space such as a library or a literary arts center. On the other hand, the public space that was run by the government has now turned into space that is operated by the residents with openness and autonomy. Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to the new phenomenon of the open culture platform at the village level.

Acknowledgements

References

Bayliss, D. (2004). Creative planning in Ireland: the role of culture‑led development in Irish planning. *European Planning Studies*, *12*(4), 497-515.

Bell, D., & Binnie, J. (2005). What's Eating Manchester? Gastro‑Culture and Urban Regeneration. *Architectural Design*, *75*(3), 78-85.

Harvey, D. C., Hawkins, H., & Thomas, N. J. (2012). Thinking creative clusters beyond the city: People, places and networks. *Geoforum*, *43*(3), 529-539.

Lefebvre, H. (1996). The right to the city. *Writings on cities*.

Lugosi, P., Bell, D., & Lugosi, K. (2010). Hospitality, culture and regeneration: Urban decay, entrepreneurship and the 'ruin'bars of Budapest. *Urban Studies*, *47*(14), 3079-3101.

Miles, S., & Paddison, R. (2005). Introduction: The rise and rise of culture-led urban regeneration.

MCST (2016) Survey on the Performing Arts(공연예술실태조사) Seoul: KAMS

Oh My News. (2017) 다들 멀다고 꺼리는데 신대철은 왜 창동으로 갔나 http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0002273198

Nowicka, M., & Vertovec, S. (2014). Comparing convivialities: Dreams and realities of living-with-difference.

Seoul Community Support Center. (2014) "우리동네 '예술 꽃'이 피었습니다." http://www.seoulmaeul.org/programs/user/board/webzin/webzin_read.asp?index_pageno=&idx=100&cover_idx=17&searchVal=&pageno=&category=

Seoul Statistics (2017) 서울시민은 서로를 얼마나 신뢰? http://stat.seoul.go.kr/pdf/tbs20170727.pdf

UNESCO. (2009). *Cultural Diversity world-report* Paris: the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization

Vickery, J. (2007). The Emergence of Culture-led Regeneration: A policy concept and its discontents.

Zukin, S. (1995). Whose culture? Whose city?. *The urban sociology reader*, 281-289.

Young Bum Lee(이영범, 2017), 도시재생, 주체의 공존과 가치의 공유 http://peaceinstitute.hanyang.ac.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=column&wr_id=15