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CULTURAL DIVERSITY: CREATIVE CITY AS AN URBAN REGENERATION TOOL

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Abstract

The countries with inequities and regional disparities are far from achieving sustainability. Hence, to create a strategy for sustainable urban projection and development, it is important to promote regional and cultural diversity as well as competitiveness. This article examines the concept in a creative city and focuses on conceptual exposition on the social environment and cultural aspects. This preliminary study explores the emergence of creative city's discourses and practices and their significance related to communal identity, sense of place and sense of belongingness. In designing the form of core competency, it will be done in the next phase by determining the regional competence of the industrial development program of the city. The preliminary study shows that the place identity and creativity plays a fundamental role in the change of the image of a city.

Keywords: *creative city; urban regeneration; sense of place; cultural diversity; community planning*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a well-known catalyst for urban development and the regeneration methods was through cultural functionality. The integration of culture in urban regeneration projects has been utilized, as well as the image of the city, community involvement, impact of culture on the local economy, the quality of life and city identity. Additionally, the cultural aspects based on tourism have been recognized by planners, marketing companies and cultural policy decision makers. In fact, culture is used for tourist attraction as well as in the investment sector.

To develop an integrated city with social, physical and cultural elements, this situation brought in the new models of urban development such as the concept of creative city. This concept focuses on the elements and creation of conditions for people to have an idea, strategic planning and react in line with the specific aims of taking part in solving some urban problems. In view of this, ideas and human skills have been the driver for economic growth.

Over time, people have opted to grow and live with a better quality of life, with an open and green environment and cultural element, and these are characteristics of the creative city. Due to these demands by the people regarding constant development, preferences and observations, these situations have led to a research subject. Based on the different approaches and concepts of culture and creativity in urban development, the study is to determine their role and importance in the process of urban regeneration. The objective is to highlight the fundamentals of the development of urban regeneration strategies in relation to cultural aspects and creativity. Particularly, focusing on the analysis of examples of cultural and creative initiatives of cities in Malaysia.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Urban regeneration-starting the Process and Goals

The process of urban regeneration has been transformed with physical structures and restructuring of urban areas, the renewal of city image, reformation of the urban economy as well as the continuation of social participation. There are a number of factors influencing the urban regeneration found in the literature (Ghaphar Et al., (2016), Ujang and Zakaria (2015), Roberts (2000). In reference to the above impact of regeneration, it can be explained that among the issues that lead to urban changes and urban regeneration process are economic, social, spatial, environmental, cultural, traffic and institutional. Due to that, the issues related to culture were the cultural events and the disturbance of cultural heritage. Moreover, the challenges of social inclusion, poverty, and an aging population are among the significant problems that have been encountered during the process of urban regeneration.

In order to attain great success of urban regeneration it is crucial to set goals which consist of economic, social, environmental, cultural and others (Roberts, 2000). For instance, the most important goals are as follows;

- Promote economic growth.
- Rehabilitation of urban structure
- Improvement the infrastructure
- Improvement of quality of life of city residents.
- Preservation of valuable heritage buildings and building reconstruction.
- Control and prevention of deterioration of specific urban areas (e.g. residential).
- Restructuring of the economy
- Development of new forms of business and professional opportunities.
- Enhancing the basic services for vulnerable population groups.

2.2 The Role of Culture in Urban Regeneration

Culture contributes to urban development progress in a multitude of ways (Bianchini, 1993) In fact, the variety of guidance documents on heritage management was a significant part of social movement for cultural development in urban policy. The aims were to produce people with better cultural activities and facilities as drivers for inclusive economics and social development. In the earlier millennium, the significance of the economic impact has been minimized which included the local participation in cultural activities. The urban regeneration policy has an advantage in providing opportunities for local and social participation and adapting in various sections of population. Thus, this process will enhance the understanding between groups as well as contribute to social cohesion (Zhang et.al, 2020)

Sasaki (2010) highlighted the cultural mode of production utilizing the cultural capital model:

- Goods and services production with cultural value added. Skills and sensibilities of art and high technology integration.
- Cultural-goods industry to high tech business with the aim of obtaining new cultural investment
- Circulate the cultural investments with development and establishment of creative human resources
- Cultural consumption by upgrading the local consumer markets

In recent years, cultural quarters were created to be an integral part of urban regeneration strategies such as the historic city centre of Melaka which include commercial, residential, governmental, and religious buildings. Ertan and Egercioglu (2016) argued that these projects should be part of an economic and social development plan which considers the urban site users' ideas as an important input. The integration promotes further economic and social benefits for the local community.

Three groups of elements were highlighted by Montgomery (2003) which are necessary for the successful development of cultural quarters:

- Activity – economic, cultural, social
- Form – the relationship between buildings and space
- Meaning – historical and cultural sense of the place

Many types of modes and development approaches to culture have proved successful in many cases. The cultural process is recognized, and culture is becoming an integral part of urban regeneration strategies. The different models of cultural strategies can be noticed. The three major categories of cultural strategies pointed out by Rahbarianyazd and Doratli (2017) are creative industry strategies, entrepreneurial strategies, and creative class strategies. By considering all of these, the cultural strategy that a city can develop depends on many different factors which include the economy of the city, historical heritage, and the local context of the city. Rahbarianyazd and Doratli (2017) explained the strategies as (1) Product-oriented strategy, (2) Process-oriented strategy, (3) Place-oriented strategy (4) Theme-oriented strategy (5) People-oriented strategy and (6) Time-oriented strategy. These strategies distinguish themselves by gathering forms of cultural production and consumption in urban contexts.

In general, culture has become a 'product' that can be sold like any other. To have similar spaces and landscapes, some cities took the initiative to create this place that can be seen elsewhere. Particularly, there will be an interrelated aspect to local heritage and sense of place. Therefore, the role of communities in the development of cultural regeneration is important for maintaining local physical appearance and uniqueness Ertan, T., & Egercioğlu, Y. (2016).

2.3 The Role of Creativity in Urban Regeneration

Culture-based model development has resulted in the creation of similar globalized places without identity. The competition among cities has led to the requirement for variety and different unique places. Recently, creativity and uniqueness have become the reason for economic development. In fact, the lower prices for goods and services was no longer the key element in global competition.

Florida (2005) explains the inception of creative groups in American society, thus influencing the improvement of the creative sector which makes almost half of total revenue in the United States. Florida (2005) argues that every human is creative, but the creative class consists of people bringing economic value through their creativity. In accordance with the economic growth in the region it is driven by creative people, and these people prefer the places that are innovative, diverse and tolerant. Nevertheless, a more significant strategy with the aim of creative development is the concept of creative city. Eventually, a dynamic concept focusing on creativity, community development and culture as key indicators of a dynamic, comfortable, and sustainable city (Varbanova, 2007) . The main idea is that cities must use their creative potential and material to attract the talented creative individuals.

The implementation of strengthening the arts and culture fabric as well as promoting the creative industries were the main strategy executed by many cities in Europe (Ferili et. al., 2017). However, creativity cannot be limited to arts and science but may consist of social as well as political creativity and imagination. The important key is to set on creative people, process, ideas and product interaction (Landry, 2012). The creative city must focus on its own uniqueness and characteristics rather than presenting itself as a universal model. The concept of creative city has to put forth a strong identity which consists of open, interrelated and mobility for a society which allows adaptation, new trends and ideas as well as prepare for the uncertainty in attaining the goals. Thus, according to Scott (2006) the presence of creative people in sustaining urban creativity cannot be completed over a long period of time without mobility and direction toward the practical method of learning and innovation input.

Apparently, creative city can be defined as “a city that cultivates new trends in arts and culture and promotes innovative and creative industries through the energetic creative activities of artists, creators and ordinary citizens, contains many diverse “creative milieus” and “innovative milieus,” and has a regional, grass-roots capability to find solutions to social exclusion problems such as homeless people” (Sasaki, 2010). Besides, Landry (2012) pointed that there are seven groups of factors that are necessary for the implementation of the concept of creativity:

- personal qualities;
- will and leadership;
- human diversity and variety of talent;
- organizational culture;
- local identity;
- urban spaces and buildings; and
- networking. Cities can be creative with some of these factors, but they would operate the best in the presence of all factors.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the different approaches and concepts of culture and creativity in urban development, the study is to determine their role and importance in the process of urban regeneration. The objective is to highlight the fundamentals of the development of urban regeneration strategies in relation to cultural aspects and creativity. Particularly, focusing on the analysis of examples of cultural and creative initiatives of cities in Malaysia.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Interaction of Culture and Creativity: The Role of Culture in Urban Regeneration

The basic idea of creative city is referring to the idea that culture consists of values, expression, and lifestyle. Due to that the basis of inception and development of creativity lies in the principal of creative innovations (Landry, 2012). Cultural main resources are the raw materials and tools for implementing the process. However, creativity must be established to maintain the culture of the city. Scott (2006) describes that the foundation of the creative city is making an equitable between two main elements, the production system and cultural environment of the city, to enhance and emphasize their qualitative functions.

Local cultural activities have an impact on the enhancement of cultural tourism by offering new information and experiences to satisfy cultural needs of tourists. Eventually, for an active observer's tourist can take this opportunity to engage in certain activities and contribute to the acquisition of new knowledge and closer contact with the local population, creative cultural tourism develops (Djukic and Vukmirovic, 2010). Thus, tourism may contribute to the economic development of society while preserving cultural values. Yet despite the contribution to the merged development of the creative city area there are challenges for this area on how to determine the cultural resources. Due to that, an accommodate culture at the center of decision making, the connection between it and any public policy related to housing, education, tourism, economics, urban planning, social services and culture itself is being established.

4.2 Creative and cultural interventions in Malaysia

The Malaysian creative sector has yet to become a significant element in the cultural, social, and economic aspects of urban society. Moreover, it is still considered as an alternative culture. At the same time, the cultural element was not recognized as the tool of regeneration and it is an inadequate relation with the economic and urban development strategies though initiatives have been taken in urban development. The reasons for the situation were due to the unofficial movement of creative opposition and the need for individualization of cultural and intellectual production. Besides, for the purpose of maintenance and enhancing the architectural heritage of the city by acknowledging urban recycling as a method for providing the space for living and working of the creative (Gligorijevic, 2007).

The initial idea of starting to study this theme was due to the positive development throughout the globe. Different urban areas were identified as different potential sites for

development, regeneration, and urbanization. For the creation of the intellectual support of the creative city, it is important to have comprehensive research and education as well as a research system especially regarding the concept of traditional streets and related issues. Apart from that, the streets in an urban context are places of economic and social significance. The successful cities and places are in most cases identified by the main streets which the urban settlement begins with and the character of the streets shows the image of the cities itself (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008).

One of the existing traditional streets is normally edge by rows of Pre-World War II shophouses designed with a continuous public walkway, known as "five-foot walkway". This walkway functions as a pedestrian way and additional space for shops itself (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008). The characteristics of traditional streets are influenced by business activities and transactions while the modern design streets were focusing more on shopping complexes and upgrading the place for leisure activities. It was found that activity is the most influential quality that attracts visitors and shoppers to the traditional streets in Kuala Lumpur itself (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008). This is an example of culture-led regeneration, while in the whole process the most dominant was the human activity.

According to Ertan, T., & Egercioglu, Y. (2016), the historic city centre in Melaka, is also another example of a place for social interaction whereby the crowds are found on the streets engaged in tourism activities. This is due to the design of the buildings that were built in the Portuguese era in the 16th century. Here is where the diverse culture i.e. Chinese influence is much felt hence reflected especially in the building designs and daily life. Therefore, the form of attachment to the cultural intervention is influenced by the form of economic activities historically developed in the local context. Both the streets and cultural influence therefore contribute to the sense of place through this basic role as the major setting for human behaviour in Malaysian cities.

Most importantly, the issues of deterioration in the identity of the areas and being incompatible with new and existing place character in the cultural value. The issues are reflected in the cultural values that are associated with the traditional and cultural spaces. One such example is the erosion of the traditional street as major public spaces and the gradual reduction in the significance of public open spaces as a focus of social and cultural interactions itself (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008). Moreover, the process of enhancing and upgrading the physical identity of the traditional streets within the city center with large mixed properties consisting of commercial business center and shopping complexes have been built in the centre of the city replacing the site originally occupied by two and three storey traditional shophouses.

As a result, the identity and cultural characteristics have disappeared which reduce the diversity of the cultural experience and loss of meanings attached to them. This has given an impact on the inherent local place identity and the sense of place embedded in the cultural identity. Therefore, the meanings associated with the attributes and characteristics of the place should be identified and valued.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The culture creates the identity for a city and basic way of life while creativity are the elements to be used in the development of cultural resources. Cultural activity can be integrated into urban development and urban regeneration strategies as the profitable activity. Cities around the world have emphasized the importance of culture and have developed different approaches for the inclusion of culture in urban regeneration. The balance integration between promoting creativity and heritage conservation have shown effective ways.

Significantly, it is important that the successful strategies in implementing the culture within the urban regeneration is done by referring to the local context as it is the best tool to compete globally as well as improve the quality of life. Thus different cities with different structure, identity and culture, is a simple way to create a successful model of creative city that can be applied worldwide. In the end, it will ensure all investments in the creative city can be returned through culture, by creating an attraction or by the development of new innovative technologies that can also be used by others. Hence, the emergence of discourses and practices of creative city and their significance related to communal identity, sense of place

and sense of belongingness is a result of the talent and skills of people, which are creative solutions for the successful connection of the new trends as well as local traditions and customs.

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