

ABSTRACT

Cultural planning is a new approach of strategic urban planning that is becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization and the associated growth in urban and regional place competitiveness. It highlights human creativity and cultural innovation. Urban theorists, planners, and policy makers have increasingly started recognizing the importance of integrating culture in urban development and city's regenerations models. Culture is a vital part of the modern city. Cities which are the engines of the economy are competing on human capital, investments and urban image on a global basis. Traditional theories of economic growth and urban development emphasized the role of natural resources and physical assets.

Cities that faced decline after the economic transformation and restructuring in the last two decades are now competing for attracting and retaining talented and highly skilled people, who generate innovations, develop technology-intensive industries and power economic growth. Such talented workers (members of the creative class) are attracted to cities that offer a high quality of life, rich lifestyles, valuable arts and educational institutions, ethno-cultural and intellectual diversity and opportunities for social and cultural interaction. The mean to achieve these culturally vibrant environments is by cultural planning. Thus, the main goal of this study is to investigate this growing new phenomenon represented by the use of cultural planning that integrates concern for place, culture and economy as a tool for city's regeneration and as a mean to achieve the creative city.

The thesis begins with a thorough review of cultural planning literature in order to examine the theoretical ground of this new turn in urban planning and to identify cultural planning deficiencies and the research gaps in the international literature. A criterion is developed to assess the efficiency of cultural planning, and then two case studies are analyzed to determine the weaknesses and strengths of using cultural planning as a tool for urban regeneration and its applicability to other cities. The impact and outcomes of cultural planning are also examined within the two case studies which were also complemented by in-depth interviews with academic professionals in planning and urban planners. The information derived from these interviews, and from document analysis and field work was used to address four important issues that have been identified as research gaps: grounding the theoretical basis of cultural planning, developing criteria for assessing its efficiency, evaluating its impacts and outcomes, determining the characteristics of a successful cultural planning.

The study concludes that cultural planning is an efficient tool for urban revitalization and that planning for cities in the twenty-first century should not follow the traditional approach. Thus, planners should supplement their traditional preoccupation with land-use issues with both tangible and intangible cultural resources as part of the city's overall strategic direction. The study emphasizes that success in attracting and retaining creative people by cultural planning is now a decisive factor in determining which cities prosper while others languish. Lastly, that study concludes that planning is moving from urban engineering approach to a creative city-making approach.