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THEORETICAL STUDY ON URBAN REGENERATION

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Theoretical Study on Urban Regeneration

Synopsis:

This is a study of theories of urban regeneration, which is an important topic in sustainable urban development . This study focused on urban regeneration theorists. This paper includes Evan's theory, Florida's theory, Relph's theory, and so on.

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1. Introduction

Urban regeneration takes attention not only from urban related researchers but also from culture related researchers. The reason why a city takes attention is mainly because its changeability and dynamicity. City can have competitiveness only when it changes as the physical, spatial, political and economic conditions and environments of city promotes changes and dynamicity of city. That is to say, changes and dynamicity of city plays a role in demonstrating urban identity.

It is inevitable to conceptualize urban regeneration in order to explain changes and dynamicity of city. Theoretical studies on urban regeneration have been produced from various perspectives. The background of urban regeneration theories can be said a kind of efforts to overcome problems and limits of existing urban regeneration and to provide a new direction and narrative of urban regeneration. However, the need of integrated studies has been ceaselessly suggested as most researches are limited to interested areas of scholars.

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to sort out preceding studies on urban regeneration with such problems in mind, to compare theories and types of scholars and to lay a foundation for basic studies of further integrated studies.

2. Theoretical Considerations on Urban

2.1 Concept of a city

Defining what is urban has been a difficult task, and no commonly agreed-upon definition exists. Each country defines the term in this own way, whether referring to cities, towns, villages, conurbations or localities. One could distinguish three criteria whereby urban can be defined:

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Table.1 <Different criteria for defining the geographical extent of cities>³

Criteria	Definition
Administrative competence	Administrative 'competence is the place classified as a city for administrative purposes.
Physical indicators	the density of buildings, of people or of other indicators such as the proportion of any unit of area covered by hard surfaces (such as concrete or asphalt) or the intensity of night light emissions.
Functional definitions	Functional definitions relating to the behaviour of households and firms to reveal the boundaries of what is 'urban' territory (see below for instance the OECD Metropolitan Database).

Each of these methods of urban definition has strengths and weaknesses. The most obvious advantage of using administrative definitions is that it is easier, both in terms of data gathering and political support. The fact that policy and funding for data gathering is ultimately dependent on governments should not be ignored. The most obvious disadvantage of using administrative and political boundaries is that they are often arbitrary and often reflect outmoded patterns of life.

2.2 Change of city

A city that functions as a center in modern society is an area where industrialization has occurred and grew up in the process of modernization. Cities that have grown up in general are undergoing the phenomenon of 'urbanization'. Urbanization refers to a process in which the entire industrial structure is changed as the population is concentrated in the city and the spatial expansion and urban lifestyle are expanded. The degree of urbanization varies from country to country, but generally shows a tendency to urbanization. In general, cities will also change due to population movements resulting from the industrialization process after the Industrial Revolution.

The problem of urban decline is different according to the conditions of the city. However, Many measures have been proposed to solve the urban decline problem. One of them is 'urban regeneration'.

3. Urban regeneration theory

Florida, Evans, Roberts, Sykes and so on have become the basic theories to explain urban regeneration. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

³ OECD, *China Development Research Foundation, Trends in Urbanisation and Urban Policies in OECD Countries: What Lessons for China?*, OECD Publishing, 2010, p.9.

3.1 R. Florida

In 2002, Richard Florida articulates an entirely new framework for evaluating a creative economy in *The Rise of the Creative Class*. According to his “creative capital theory”, the centres of the creative class are “more likely to be economic winners”, who succeed in generating high-end jobs and economic growth, thus further enhancing the regional advantage of the individual regions.⁴ His theory in explaining regional economic growth builds around the “3Ts” – Talent, Technology and Tolerance – which argues that creative people prefer places “that are diverse, tolerant and open to new idea”, and that the presence and concentration of creative capital in a region“ in turn lead to higher rates of innovation, high-technology business formation, job generation and economic growth”.

The figure illustrates the interconnection of the three T’s in the creative class approach. As the model shows, the three T’s are all equally related. In theory, the three T’s are equally important, and only by combining the three will competitive, attractive and creative regions emerge.⁵

Table 2. <Simplified model of the relationship between technology, talent and tolerance>⁶

Tolerance	Talent	Technology
Quality of place which attracts highly educated people: Openness, Cultural diversity, Cultural and welfare amenities	Concentration of people with a high level of education or who are in creative occupations : helps innovation and entrepreneurship	Strong competitive knowledge intensive industries help to secure cash inflow and a competitive economic structure.

3.2 G. Evans

G. Evans reviewed 3 models of culture’s contribution to regeneration. This review has identified three models through which cultural activity is incorporated into the regeneration process. The three models are as follows: culture-led regeneration, cultural regeneration and culture and regeneration.

3.2.1 Culture-led regeneration

In this model, cultural activity is seen as the catalyst and engine of regeneration. The activity is likely to have a high-public profile and frequently to be cited as the sign of regeneration. The activity might be the design and construction (or re-use) of a building

⁴ R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Brilliance Audio, 2004.

⁵ Høgni Kalsø Hansen. *Technology, Talent and Tolerance – The Geography of the Creative Class in Sweden*, Lund University Rapport och Notiser 169, 2007, p. 4.

⁶ *ibid*, p. 4.

or buildings for public or business use (e.g. Tate Modern); the reclamation of open space (e.g. the garden festivals of the 1980s and 90s in Gateshead, Liverpool, etc.); or the introduction of a program of activity which is then used to rebrand a place.

3.2.2 Cultural regeneration

In this model, cultural activity is fully integrated into an area strategy alongside other activities in the environmental, social and economic sphere. Examples include Birmingham's Renaissance where the arts were incorporated with policy, planning and resourcing through the city council's joint Arts, Employment and Economic Development Committee, and in the 'exemplar' cultural city, Barcelona. This model is closely allied to the 'cultural planning' approach to cultural policy and city regeneration.

3.2.3 Culture and regeneration

In this model, cultural activity is not fully integrated at the strategic development or master planning stage. The intervention is often small-scale: a public art program for a business park, once the buildings have been designed; a heritage interpretation or local history museum tucked away in the corner of a reclaimed industrial site. In some cases, where no planned provision has been made, residents and cultural organizations may respond to the vacuum and make their own interventions – lobbying for a library, commissioning artists to make signs or street furniture, recording the history of their area, setting up a regular music night, etc. Although introduced at a later stage, cultural interventions can make an impact on the regeneration process, enhancing the facilities and services that were initially planned.⁷

3.3 Roberts and Sykes

Roberts and Sykes, the two representative scholars in urban regeneration defined urban regeneration “as a comprehensive and integrated vision and action that leads to the resolution of problems of area, especially urban area and that seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.”⁸ They stress a comprehensive urban planning aspect of urban regeneration. It emphasizes social and environmental aspects as well as physical aspects.

⁷ G. Evans, *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Report to the DCMS - Evans and Shaw*, LondonMet, 2004, pp.4-5.

⁸ J.B.Kim, Y.H.Jung, S.W.Lee, Y.H.Jin , *A study on community business surport for urban regeneration*, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, 2009. p. 19.

3.4 Myeong-rae Cho

Myeong-rae Cho points out differences between urban redevelopment and urban regeneration. “Redevelopment seems similar to urban regeneration at a first glance as it demolishes poor or deteriorated residential area and installs new residential areas. However, urban regeneration aims at “improving urban economy, society and environment in an active manner (contents and method of urban regeneration) in order to create a new urban competitiveness in a global era (target of urban regeneration) while adapting social and economic changes actively (background/ context of city) surrounding city as well as a simple spatial and physical reconstruction.”⁹

4. Conclusion

As shown above, theoretical perspectives on urban regeneration has logical and empirical foundations of respective scholars. When summing up preceding studies on various theoretical perspectives of urban regeneration, it can be divided into functional perspective that researches urban function, typological perspective that schematizes urban regeneration and conceptual perspective that narrates the concept of urban regeneration. As for functional perspective, this study examined Creativity Index theory of Richard Florida. The theory argues that physical index and invisible conditions such as creativity or culture for urban planning can be visualized through ‘indices.’ To the contrary, in the typological perspective, the study examined a cultural strategic type of Graeme Evans. It has a logic that urban regeneration types can be divided into 3 and each effects and purposes can be divided to maximize key capacities. Lastly, in the conceptual perspective, the study examined theories of Roberts and Sykes, and Myeong-rae Cho. Roberts and Sykes argue that the concept of urban regeneration must be dealt comprehensively. Myeong-rae Cho conceptualizes the concept of urban regeneration through the comparison with urban redevelopment. And, the study could figure out that such 3 layers affected formation of various types of urban regeneration.

This study is significant in that it suggests theoretical foundation for further integrated studies and figures out a concept to exercise strategic urban regeneration. It is recommended to specific and deepen the scope of studies based on the concept of urban regeneration developed in this study.

⁹ Ibid, p.21.

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