

# Tourism, Gentrification and Neighborhood Management in Regenerated-Cities: Towards a “Post-regeneration urbanism”

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## Abstract

*For these two decades many cities have succeeded in urban regeneration, based upon the simple concept that is to make a city people-friendly and comfortable to live in. The emergence of ‘regenerated’ cities has raised traditional problematic issues: gentrification and neighborhood management. Tourism policy would boost those processes that began to be identified in some regenerated cities like Torino and Barcelona in the late 1990s. The sustainable management of areas where socially vulnerable people live seems to be included in regeneration process, which would be described as ‘post-regeneration urbanism’.*

Keywords: tourism, culture-led regeneration, gentrification, neighborhood management

## 1. Introduction

The main issues to be discussed in this article are to describe how the contemporary cities require tourism as a central strategy within regeneration policy, and to identify how the already “regenerated cities” such as Yokohama, Kyoto, Torino and Barcelona have been affected by a gentrification process on the one hand, and have approached to maintain social coherence in neighborhood level on the other.

Japanese cities have been faced a necessity to promote tourism policy along regeneration projects and still have not been faced severe problems of immigrants, while Barcelona is well-known for its creative urban regeneration and tourism as well as gentrification and issues of immigrants. Reviewing these cities that might offer numerous suggestions for architect and planner, this article discusses in what ways social sustainability can be integrated into urban planning and neighborhood management in a “post-regeneration urbanism” era.

## 2. Urban scenery in ‘regeneration urbanism’ period

The 1990s and the first decade of twenty first century are a “regeneration urbanism” period in all countries. Its urbanism gives people many choices for living an urban lifestyle in sustainable, convenient and enjoyable places, and greatly advanced solving problems of urban decline mainly seen by 1970s in

depressed downtown and historic neighborhood, overdevelopment area in city's periphery, decrepit housing estate, brown fields.

In these two decades or more, apart from traditional approach like urban design, community development, and *machizukuri* which is used for long years in Japanese cities and can be literally translated as community building or empowerment, various urban strategy concepts that theoretically and politically support city's regeneration such as "creative city", "compact city", "sustainable city", "new urbanism" and "urban village" have been created one after another. Although the names are different, it is easy to see that all these concepts suggest common key values that include historic continuity in build environment, pedestrians-oriented urban space, human-scale public space, mixed-use development, a sense of belonging and identity to community where we live, civic pride, and so on.

Cities that are attempting to recover from industrial decline are also placing much emphasis on these main public spaces. These cities are regenerating their old public spaces and creating new ones to help them project a new image that can attract new investment through tourism. In recent years tourism policy has become one of the predominant elements for city's regeneration. Tourism is often associated with culture. Culture often divides urban areas into gentrified parts, when applied in urban regeneration policies. To be 'creative class-friendly city' or 'tourist-friendly city' must be placed as high-priority needs for many cities. For city centers, image of cultural facilities like contemporary museums designed by star architects and the high quality public space where high-class residents enjoy everyday life in open cafeteria seems to be indispensable for future city promotion.

As many cities not only in Europe but also in Asia have been confronted with heavy geo-economic competition with each other, they have also been encouraged to promote tourism and creative-city policies that can be a catalyst for urban redevelopment. Also in Japan, cities like Yokohama, Kanazawa and Kyoto has placed culture-led regeneration and tourism as a central strategy for future. On the other hand, promotion of tourism has aroused traditional but relatively new issues for social sustainability, which highlights the importance of social inclusion, coexistence with culturally different immigrants, gentrification, poverty, unemployment and the lack of power balance of capitalism-oriented posture or socialism-oriented one in regeneration projects in a limited area. There is a risk to ignore alarming issues like social and cultural inclusion for the socially vulnerable groups.

### **3. Significance of gentrification in regenerated cities**

Learning from the urban strategies applied to contemporary cities all over the world, regeneration of impoverished built environment considerably overlaps the process of neighborhood revitalization utilizing power of culture and creativity.

As urban redevelopment and regeneration projects fundamentally aim at the rise in land prices, those actions necessitate gentrification process. Not a few areas where lower income class and immigrants have lived for long years are forced to apparently transform their landscape, culture and its traditional social structure, due to the regeneration projects that promote settling of potential creative class such as middle class artists and high educated couples. In addition to the advent of a trendy neighborhood, the promotion of tourism policy has recently encouraged luring of more investment and tourist.

The “success” of urban regeneration often causes a rise of house rent so that relatively lower income group would be displaced from their neighborhood. The negative effect of the gentrification process has been pointed out from the mid 1960s (Atkinson et.al, 2008), a problem setting questioning the collapse of existing community due to the redevelopment has no longer been new. However, the following two aspects should be noted in recent regeneration trend;

- (1) Recent regeneration challenges do not require scrap and build redevelopment as Urban Renewal mainly done in United States so drastic change of neighborhood’s physical conditions would not be easy to figure out. Rather, rehabilitation-oriented policy instead of renovation makes situation much more difficult to be aware of the ongoing social structure changes in a neighborhood.
- (2) Potentially impacted resident becomes diversified. It is essential to understand the existence of economically poor immigrants coming from abroad, varying from a new comer to a second or third generation. Most of the immigrants are obliged to live in a area whose house rent is relatively cheap, due to the economic problem. These neighborhoods as represented by historic district and built-up areas in city’s periphery have been the target areas of regeneration policy for more than twenty years. Under the present situation, it is obvious that the most vulnerable residents by the gentrification process must be immigrants.

In addition, social and cultural conflict between traditional residents and newly coming immigrants that have just started settle down in a margin of “hot spot” of regeneration area as a flagship pilot project. The clearest example of this is Barcelona. In Barcelona’s old city that is a well-known successful regeneration experience among European cities, diverse ethnic groups that makes a contribution to the multiplicity as a significant characteristic of the neighborhood, but the coexistence problem with Spanish inhabitants has become evident. This means that, in parallel with the progress of gentrification, multiculturalism with different places of origin is on the horizon as one of the new urban issues after experimenting urban regeneration.

#### **4. Challenges for a multicultural society**

Even in Japanese cities that have relatively few immigrants from abroad yet comparing with European countries, management of social sustainability would be an inescapable problem. Regeneration projects in European cities have drawn on the power of markets but have also given careful attentions to the vulnerable neighborhood so that residents in a target area would be displaced due to having in its project the best economic interests for developer.

Typical example can be found in housing policy that the public sector constructs affordable housing and the socially vulnerable people would be given priority for entering. For the defined areas where public sector should provide social and economic support preferentially, affordable housing blocks are concentrated: in case of Paris, affordable housing managed by habitation à loyer modéré, and in case of Barcelona, those managed by INCASOL (Land Institute in Catalonia) from the Catalonia State. The existence of these houses rather visualizes the reality of social exclusion.

In a “post regeneration urbanism” period, a whole concept of neighborhood management after achieving constant level of built environment should be called into question. In this regard, multiplicity of

neighborhood remains a continuing key strategy for future. In the following neighborhoods, such as Kreuzberg in Berlin known as “Little Istanbul”, Islamic neighborhood in Amsterdam, Affordable housing estate areas in Paris, El Raval and Santa Caterina in Barcelona’s old city center, Lavapiés in Madrid, Porta Palazzo and San Salvario districts in Torino, and Kazimierz in Krakow, many efforts are being made so that the socially vulnerable districts would not be isolated as immigrant concentration areas but would be a place to realize social inclusion with the adjacent community;

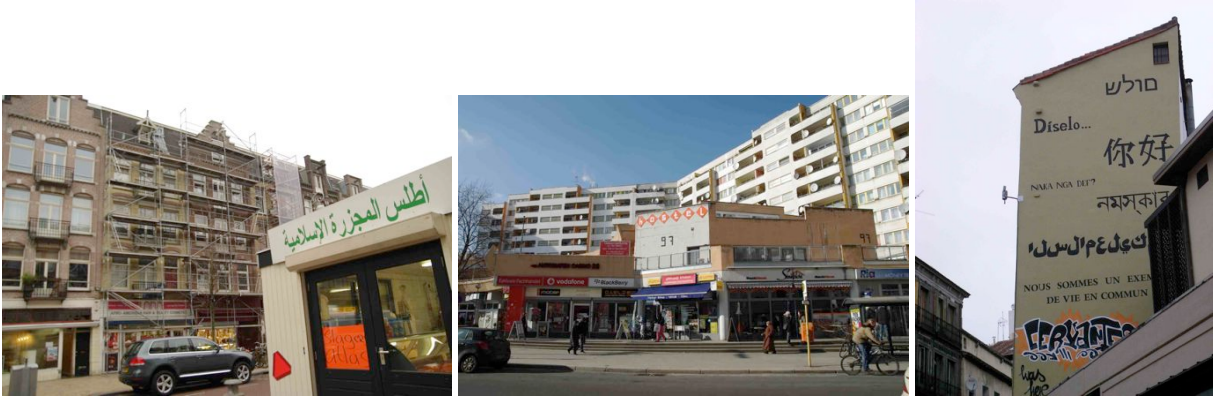


Fig.1 (left) Islam town in Amsterdam. Islamic market in traditional landscape.  
 Fig.2 (middle) Kreuzberg (Berlin). Neighborhood management through Social City Program (Soziale Stadt).  
 Fig.3 (right) Lavapiés (Madrid). Wall art written in various languages.



Fig.4 (left) Santa Caterina (Barcelona). Public Space created in a densely populated and run-down area.  
 Fig.5 (middle) Porta Palazzo (Torino). Neighborhood management through market revitalization.  
 Fig.6 (right) San Salvario (Torino). Civic cultural center as a place for social inclusion.

Under the clear need to achieve social sustainability, the public spaces are considered to be more important place to see more than ever, being perceived as landmark in European cities’ social life and cultural heritage.

## 5. Role of Public Spaces. Case of the District Law in Catalonia Region (Spain)

In Catalonia Region, having Barcelona as a regional capital city, a new law dealing with neighborhood management in declining areas in June 2004; Law on the improvement of districts, urban areas and towns, which require special attention, normally known as District Law (*Ley de Barrios*).

There has been a common perception for social dimension that Catalonia Region: inequality within a city or region. The revitalization process of a region, especially launched after the birth of democratic city hall in the late 1970s, means at the same time the process of social segregation. Particularly in Barcelona, where ‘successful’ regeneration policies known as ‘Barcelona Model’ have brought about entrepreneurial mentality and approach toward city’s development, there clearly exists the socially vulnerable neighborhoods that are generally situated in urban periphery. In those areas, the income level has kept lower and the urban physical problem including the renovation of cheaply built houses and the adjustment of topographical barriers arose from marginal urbanization. In addition, recent property market-oriented and tourism promotion-oriented urban policies in city center have taken place a rapid inflow of immigrants to city’s periphery.

The District Law calls for applications for investment that help cities and towns achieve the comprehensive interventions. During 2004-2008, the Generalitat de Catalunya (Parliament of Catalonia) has approved subsidies for 92 projects of comprehensive intervention not only for a big city like Barcelona but also for a medium-scale city like Tarragona and small villages. The District Law includes an improvement program for a neighborhood and urban areas with deficiency in planning, building maintenance social welfare (population issues, economic and social gaps in services, public spaces, facilities, accessibility, etc), especially in old city centers, housing estates built in 1960s and 1970s, and areas arising from the marginal urbanization.

The District Law has unprecedented significance in terms of (1) a clear indication on the dramatic increase in immigrants and the gentrification in a regeneration process as recent urban problems that have to be tackled with, and (2) a provision of a series of intervention projects as a remedy for urban social problems. The following eight fields are defined in District Law as an object for investment.

1. Improvement of public spaces and provision of green areas
2. Maintenance of the common equipments of buildings (façades, drainage, escalator, roof, etc)
3. Provision of public facilities (center for
4. Installation of communication technologies (WiFi etc)
5. Provision of energy and environmental infrastructures (residues collection, recycling equipments etc)
6. Promotion of gender equality in the use of urban spaces and facilities (access of women’s associations, training activities, etc)
7. Program for social and economic integration in a neighborhood (supporting programs for socially excluded people that include job training and commerce promotion)
8. Improvement of accessibility and removal of architectural barriers (barrier free actions like widening of pavement, installation of escalator, etc)

Among them, the biggest amount of investment during 2004-2008 is the improvement and provision of public space that is described in (1) of the above mentioned fields, which accounts about 46% of all investments (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009).



Fig.7 (left) Barceloneta (Barcelona). Accessibility improvement inside neighborhood.

Fig.8 (mid1) Roquetes (Barcelona). Improvement of Public Space in urban periphery.

Fig.9 (mid2) Trinitat Vella. Improvement of existing public square.

Fig.10 (right) Trinitat Vella. Provision of open escalator that overcomes topographical barriers.



Fig.11 (left) Camp Clar (Tarragona). Creation of promenade as a central public space.

Fig.12 (mid) Camp Clar (Tarragona). Employment measures (street sweeper)

Fig.13 (right) Camp Clar (Tarragona). Job supporting program for immigrants.

## 6. Social Dimension of Sustainability for “Post Regeneration Urbanism”

The initiatives of the District Law in Catalonia raises the traditional but important questions: the public spaces that had played fundamental role in “urban regeneration urbanism” period becomes increasingly significant in these latter days when the cultural conflict and coexistence between traditional inhabitants and the new-comer are put into question in various parts of city. In “post regenerated-urbanism” period, when large part of cities have achieved overall redevelopment of their city centers, the public spaces have to be a place where new urban values are developed overcoming the control of gentrification within urban policies and the social inclusion through neighborhood management

## References

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