



# ***THE INFLUENCE OF URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS ON SOCIAL PATTERNS***

## ***OVERALL AIM:***

***Gaining knowledge of the social dimension of the city, how it can be influenced by /play a key role in urban changes***



# **Erasmus+**

# Social sustainability and urban renewal

- In the post-industrial scenario, cities come (back) to being an economic arena of primary importance as a consequence of the crisis of the nation-state as a meaningful unit of competition.
- They have to face increasing demands and standards in terms of, among others, the:
  - (1) efficacy of infrastructures: accessibility, transport, energy, etc.;
  - (2) efficiency and transparency of labour and factor markets;
  - (3) environmental sustainability and quality of life;
  - (4) production and dissemination of ideas and attainment of educational and research excellence;
  - (5) networked vitality of the cultural sphere, as well as participation and involvement of citizens in cultural and social life.

# Social sustainability and urban renewal

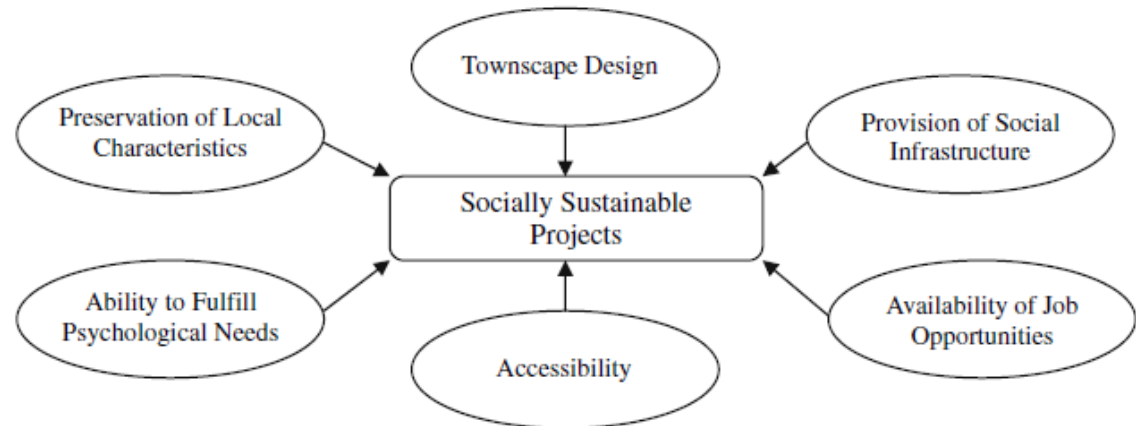
- The relevance of these factors as key drivers of post-industrial local development processes has been highlighted from several different disciplinary points of view: urban economics, urban geography, urban sociology, urban ecology, cultural economics and cultural policy.
- There seems to be a basic agreement on the fact that cities must be regarded as multifaceted hubs where all aspects of contemporary living—production, residence, leisure, social relationships, personal expression—tend to occur in the same, deeply layered economic and social space.

# Social sustainability and urban renewal

- Urban renewal is commonly adopted to cope with changing urban environment, to rectify the problem of urban decay and to meet various socio-economic objectives
- the urban renewal projects are often beset with social problems such as destruction of existing social networks, expulsion of vulnerable groups and adverse impacts on living environments
- sustainable urban design has gained popularity to deal with the problems and to increase positive outcomes of urban renewal projects
- This approach intends to take into account of the sustainability concept when designing the projects in order to create sustainable communities for the citizens.

# Social sustainability

- Social sustainability refers to maintenance and improvement of well-being of current and future generations
- A project is said to be socially sustainable when it creates harmonious living environment, reduces social inequality and cleavages, and improves quality of life in general



**Fig. 1** Significant factors affecting social sustainability of development projects

# Social sustainability

## Provision of social infrastructure

- Provisions of various amenities are vital to a society.
- Public facilities such as schools and medical centers cater for the basic needs of the citizens, sports facilities and community centers offer venues for holding different leisure activities.
- To look after vulnerable groups such as disabled, elderly and children within a community, special provisions should be readily available for their uses.
- open spaces and green areas provide buffer zones in crowded areas to facilitate social gathering and public interaction
- Provision of accommodations is another matter of concern as people of different socioeconomic groups desire shelters to cater for their housing needs

# Social sustainability

## Availability of job opportunities

- Employment is one of the major focuses of social sustainability
- Employment provides incomes to the individuals and the working area offers a place for social contact and interaction, which are essential to improve the feeling of social well-being of the citizens.
- Divorce rates, suicide rates and the incidence of alcoholism would be much higher if unemployment rate was high in the community.
- social problems such as poverty, social exclusion, welfare dependence and psychological problems reduce when the employment rate increases.

# Social sustainability

## Accessibility

- Accessibility seems to be an essential theme in improving social sustainability.
- The citizens aspire to live, work and participate in leisure and cultural activities without traveling too far.
- people would like to be housed in areas with employment opportunities and facilities for different family members in the proximity. Everybody regardless of his/her age and physical condition should have proper and convenient access to certain places in their daily lives.
- Freedom of movement from place to place is recognized as a basic human right that should be preserved anyway.



# Social sustainability

## Townscape design

- Poor townscape design practices destruct uniqueness of places and hinder development of a sense of belonging among the residents.
- pedestrian- oriented streetscapes could encourage outdoor interaction among the citizens. visual images of street furniture and pavement, and interconnectivity of street layouts have impacts on social sustainability of places.
- In addition, the citizens are more satisfied when the visual appearance is nice and building configurations in terms of density, height, mass and layout are properly designed

# Social sustainability

## Preservation of local characteristics

- Heritage should be preserved properly for enjoyment of future generations. It bears witness to changes in time and it is left by former generations identifying who we are, what we do and how we live in the past.
- Apart from preserving historical structures and features, local characteristics/distinctiveness of an area should be respected and existing community network has to be conserved.
- Daily activities, customs, ways of living and interaction, etc. of a community can be retained or improved through urban design since those abstract features can be reflected by altering physical built forms.

# Social sustainability

## Ability to fulfill psychological needs

- Security is an essential element in every neighborhood. As mentioned people prefer to stay in a safe and security place where thieves, burglars or vandals are absent.
- The public would like to know what is going on in the public areas around their dwellings and hence urban design that fails to keep the spaces under public surveillance reduces a sense of security of the citizens.
- Public participation is another matter of concerns during urban design process. When the residents are involved in urban design of their communities, the finalized design proposal is very likely to meet their needs and desires.
- At the same time, the citizens may feel that they are part of the community and their senses of belongings are also enhanced.

# Sustainable urban design

- The concept of sustainable urban design refers to a process in which sustainability concept is taken into account when deciding which urban design features should be incorporated into urban (re)development plans
- The concept of sustainable development was defined by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as “a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” in 1987 (WCED, 1987).
- It is generally agreed that economy, environment and social equity are three foremost components of sustainability concept.

# Sustainable urban design

- To ensure that the level of sustainability of urban renewal projects can be significantly enhanced, due consideration to various needs and expectations of different present and future generations is required in urban design process.
- Urban design is defined as “the art of making places for people”. It is considered to be a process to satisfy functional and aesthetic needs. It gives design directions to buildings and spaces arrangement in order to create a high quality and sustainable built environment for the citizens
- Previous studies supported that good urban design could bring a lot of benefits to a community. Various parties are better off as more investment opportunities are offered, productivity increases, higher return can be obtained, more jobs are created, a wide variety of accessible amenities is provided and quality of life improves

# Social inclusion and creativity

- In the EU, socially excluded populations have suffered poverty and discrimination and have also lacked sufficient educational opportunities.
- As a result of inadequate education, employment, and income, not to mention discrimination, these populations have been driven into a corner, socially.
- This, in turn, has created a situation where individuals can easily come to feel powerless, and therefore may find it difficult to function as active members of society and their communities.
- On the other hand, a policy of social inclusion should allow for all members of a particular region to participate economically, socially, and culturally in their communities.
- Such a policy should provide a basic standard of living and welfare, as well as the necessary opportunities and resources, to guarantee the basic human rights of the residents of a given community.

# Social inclusion and creativity

- A policy of social inclusion should bring an end to the factors that lead to social discrimination in the first place, and promote the social participation and interaction of individuals.
- These guiding principles are quite congruous with new ways of thinking about social discrimination that emerged in Western Europe in the 1980s–1990s.
- This new paradigm went beyond regarding a requisite level of income support and social welfare as adequate inputs to insure social inclusion.
- Instead, the social participation, identity, and empowerment of socially-disadvantaged individuals have increasingly come to be seen as important factors in the formation of policy.
- Furthermore, social inclusion has become an important theme in EU discussions of urban regeneration.

# Culture-led regeneration and the city

- The idea that culture can be employed as a driver for urban economic growth has become part of the new orthodoxy by which cities seek to enhance their competitive position
- this practice has become globalised in cities in the economically advanced nations that the use of culture-driven strategies largely originated
- Within the space of little more than two decades, the initiation of culture-driven urban (re)generation has come to occupy a pivotal position in the new urban entrepreneurialism.
- the language of place marketing has become as integral to the Asian city as it has the European or North American city
- This reflects the rise of the cultural sphere in the contemporary (urban) economy, and how the meaning of culture has been redefined to include new uses to which it can be put to meet social, economic and political objectives.



# Social inclusion and creativity

- In the effort to adapt the urban environment to new demands arising from the economy and society, cultural capital has turned out to be a rather flexible instrument, coping with several different tasks

# Culture-led regeneration and the city

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# Culture-led regeneration and the city

- The question: do we really understand the complex nature of the impact of cultural investment on our cities and how far are such decisions based on an informed analysis of how investment might change a city?
- what do such developments actually mean in terms of the lives of those people who live in that city?
- to what extent is culture-led regeneration more about rhetoric than it is about reality?
- Great Britain gave its answer with the Core Cities initiative, a culture-led agenda for cities set by the British government in partnership with other key stakeholders to promote the role of the cities as the drivers of regional and national economic growth and to create internationally competitive regions.
- here cities are the key drivers of economic change and that culture should play a key role in this process

# Culture-led regeneration and the city

- This emphasis on culture owes much to recent debates on the relationship between culture, creativity and the city and not least the work of Richard Florida (2002) which has had a significant role in underpinning the assertion that cultural inputs translate into social and economic outputs
- Florida argues that cities and regions should focus on promoting creativity and on attracting creative people, not least through their creative 'offer'
- For Florida, the clustering of human capital is the critical factor in regional economic growth and is the key to the successful regeneration of cities.
- In Britain, such an understanding has been taken up enthusiastically at regional and national levels and not least by the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS). In the document, Culture at the heart of regeneration

# Culture-led regeneration: pros and cons

- the cultural element can become the driving-force for regeneration, however, there is undoubtedly a danger of exaggerating the potential impact of cultural investment.
- this sort of approach is inherently misleading to the extent that current trends suggest precisely the scenario of a rapidly regenerating and gentrifying urban core surrounded by a ring of intensely disadvantaged residential areas
- How do we go about understanding the impact of culture-led regeneration in a way that provides a more balanced understanding of its pros and cons?
- The impact of culture-led regeneration is clearly closely tied up to a localised sense of place

# Culture-led regeneration: pros and cons

- it remains doubtful as to whether local issues are given full rein when broader economic ones appear to be so much more immediate.
- local economic development strategies have increasingly identified cultural and creative industries as a key growth sector in urban and regional economies
- The 'social' of social inclusion has become synonymous with the economy to such an extent that participation in society (full citizenship) can only be achieved through participation in the economy
- the degree to which culture itself is implicated in the reproduction of inequality is largely neglected as a result of the apparent fusion of the social, the economic and the cultural

# Culture-led regeneration: pros and cons

- Although there have been studies pointing out limits and contradictions of culture-led urban transformation processes a growing consensus is mounting among scholars and analysts, and cultural planners often quote specific case studies as a demonstration that culture is an objective key factor to make towns and cities successful.
- most of these analyses focus on the assessment of the changes in particular dimensions, such as the physical and the built environment (such as the dislocation and use of space for housing and leisure), economics (the production of goods, services and activities) and relevant social instances (such as poverty, segregation and crime).

# Culture-led regeneration: pros and cons

- Analysis of culture and urban transformation (and of the related local development strategies) has so far placed relatively little emphasis on the impact on human and social capital and, in particular, little or no attention has been given, either at a theoretical or a policy level, to the relation between culture, urban transformation and the development of human capabilities, although this proves to be fundamental to understanding the developmental role of culture.
- Participation in cultural activities of different kinds matters for local communities in that it provides unique opportunities for non-instrumental, collective sense-making whose meaning and importance goes beyond the direct economic benefits it produces, however, relevant they may be.
- In a nutshell, the developmental role of culture is not its ability to generate income to ease social sustainability, but on the contrary is its ability to generate income because of its social sustainability



# Cultural planning

- Social inclusion therefore becomes determined by an individual or social group's relationship to the marketplace and, by implication, their role as consumers
- The problem is that too often the rehabilitation of the urban is conceived as able to automatically revitalise the public sphere
- This is the perspective adopted by the so called «cultural planning» comprising culture-oriented and integrated methods, for a sustainable growth and for urban regeneration
- Culture is conceived as a dynamic factor of social cohesion and the driving force for an integrated and longlasting spatial development
- The "cultural" factor is at the base of this development and is analyzed under an identity point of view
- Cultural planning is premised on a kind of strategic pun that sees cultural activity and the creative industries as the scaffolding upon which vibrant urban economies can be established
- these very same strategies and outcomes are touted as a means of developing the cultural capital of the local population in a way that addresses social exclusion

# Cultural planning

- if cultural planning is to be a success, culture needs to mean something, but it can and should not be expected to mean everything
- The promotion of culture as a sort of an economic panacea is profoundly shortsighted and indeed underestimates the value of culture for the people of a locality
- funders and policy-makers continue to underestimate the degree to which cultural developments succeed depending on how well they engage with local communities and cultures

# Further readings

- S.Miles and R. Paddison, 2005. Introduction: The Rise and Rise of Culture-led Urban Regeneration, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, Nos 5/6, 833–839
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