

National Institute for Research Advancement research report

Creating Urban Spaces: Cultural Urban Policy in the Transborder Age

Overview of research

The 21st century will be the “century of the city,” replacing the “era of the nation.” Against a background of increasing globalization and decentralization, the city will emerge as the actor at the forefront of innovation in socioeconomic systems. At the same time, cities and regions face the formidable challenge of finding their own paths to revival in a situation of continuing financial pressure and declining birthrates. Under these circumstances, what is the appropriate direction for urban policy? The research discussed here considered policies and issues related to the development of attractive urban spaces through the utilization of two characteristics of cities in this age of globalization: their multiculturalism, and their potential to form linkages and networks across national boundaries.

In more concrete terms, the research examined key concepts and frameworks for innovation in urban policy, such as "**culture**," "**creativity**," "**collaboration among cities**," and economic foundations for regional revitalization, while seeking measures for the revitalization of regional and urban areas that are responsive to the knowledge economy. The research focused in particular on experiments in Japan and abroad towards the achievement of "**creative cities**." It defined comprehensive urban policies that utilize the unique cultural capacities and creativity of regions and cities rather than adopting conventional centralized development models as "**cultural urban policies**" and examined the direction of such policies.

*The definition of “culture” used in this paper is broad, and includes art, lifestyles, sports, the interaction of human beings with the natural environment, etc.

Proposals

Towards the development of cultural urban policies

1. (Re)discover unique regional cultural resources and use them effectively in a multifaceted way.

- Define "culture" broadly, without limiting it to the existing frameworks of cultural properties and art.
- (Re)discover the unique tangible and intangible resources of regions and cities, assign them value as "cultural capital" and "cultural assets," and present them creatively.
- (Re)utilization or renovation of existing facilities and spaces will control costs and protect the environment.
- Human beings create culture. Aim for a society that is aware of the "right to culture" (the right to produce culture and to access and consume culture produced by others; this is accompanied by the obligation to respect other cultures).

2. Develop cultural policy as part of comprehensive urban policy that transcends conventional vertically-segmented administration to unify various policy areas (urban planning, social policy, industrial policy, etc.).

- Study the possibility of establishing specialized organizations at the local government level and departments to coordinate culture-related programs within and between government agencies at the national level, in order to enable flexible management of cultural policy and cooperation with other policy areas.
- Actively support the creation of small businesses related to cultural industries in order to connect art and culture with creative industries.

3. Promote cooperation involving a diverse range of actors.

- Open leadership of cultural city policies to a diverse range of actors (government, citizens and residents, NPOs, corporations) that includes people from diverse backgrounds.
- Encourage the financial involvement of citizens in cooperation programs as an extension of the household budget by promoting an awareness of the benefits of investing in their region and providing financial products that are sufficiently attractive to purchase with funds from their household budgets.
- Use policy to support social economy organizations related to cultural industries.

(The social economy sector is a new sector positioned between not-for-profit organizations and voluntary NPOs, and for-profit private-sector corporations and public institutions.)

4. Use networks effectively through collaboration among cities.

- As the relationship between national and regional governments changes, the building of horizontal partnerships among cities and regions based on shared agendas will be of benefit in terms both of problem solving and of enhancing regional vitality.
- Inter-city cooperation in which each city displays a creativity and originality that remains firmly founded in its unique circumstances and specific

historical background (for example, in the progressive use of existing sister city relationships) can be highly effective as a mechanism for regional revitalization.

Case studies and proposals

I. Formulation of comprehensive urban policy through the strategic utilization of cultural policy

To enable cultural policy to be used strategically and effectively, its purpose must not be limited to the promotion of the arts. Comprehensive urban policy will address problems more effectively by being formulated in collaboration with other policy areas such as welfare, society, and the environment. In particular, it is necessary to consider the establishment of specialized organizations at the local government level and departments to coordinate culture-related programs within and between government agencies at the national level in order to achieve broader and more flexible management of cultural policy.

(Model case 1: Yokohama)

Commencement of initiative to develop a "Creative City of Art and Culture" in April 2004: Utilization of historic building (the former Fuji Bank, constructed in 1929) as a base for artistic activity, and as the site of the Graduate School of Film and New Media of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. This program integrates three areas: cultural policy, industrial policy (economic revitalization through the formation of a cluster of creative industries based on visual culture) and urban planning (redevelopment of the city center by means of the National Art Park Plan). A specialized government bureau, the Creative City Headquarters, was established to combine functions in these three areas.

(Model case 2: Montreal)

"TOHU, la Cité des arts du cirque," founded in 1999: Being developed through integration of cultural policy (promotion of circuses), environmental policy (redevelopment of a landfill as a park), industrial policy (establishment of environment- and circus-related small community businesses), social policy (revitalization of the surrounding community, which is the city's poorest), and labor policy (promotion of local employment and empowerment).

II. Utilization of collaboration among cities

Another key to regional and urban revitalization is the utilization of "collaboration" among cities nationally and internationally. As decentralization progresses, national and international collaboration among cities will be an effective means of generating results in terms of responses to shared policy issues and new experiments in cultural creation.

The different types of collaboration among cities can be categorized as 1) collaboration among cities in a single nation (e.g., councils of neighboring cities, regional collaboration among cities, etc.), 2) regional cooperation and economic zones that transcend national borders (e.g., Pan Yellow Sea City Conference, Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements, etc.), 3) collaboration on shared issues/agendas (e.g., International Conference of Aquapolises, League of Historical Cities, etc.), and 4) conventional sister city relationships.

The type of ideas that are put into practice in a collaborative relationship between cities has the potential to maximize the benefits of collaboration. Below, we provide

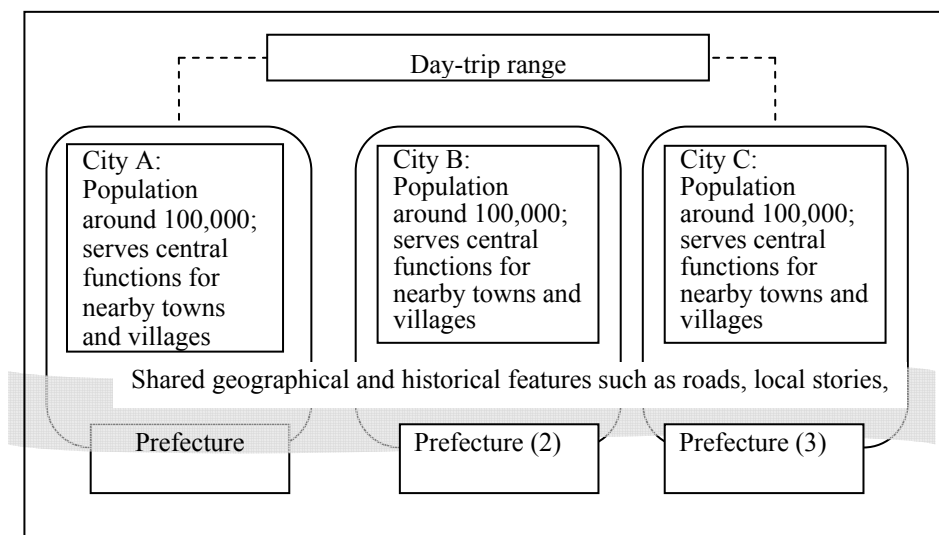
models based on two examples in which collaboration has produced excellent results by implementing creative ideas.

1) "Izumo Road type"

Medium-sized cities with populations of around 100,000, perhaps but not necessarily located in the same prefecture, collaborate in artistic and cultural exchanges based on shared geographies and histories. Such exchanges could be easily implemented even by cities in semi-mountainous areas.

Establishing a single office, sharing information materials and enabling performances to be attended in each city in a single day trip would control costs by reducing travel time and expenses, etc. At the same time, it would increase the opportunity for local residents to be exposed to or to display art.

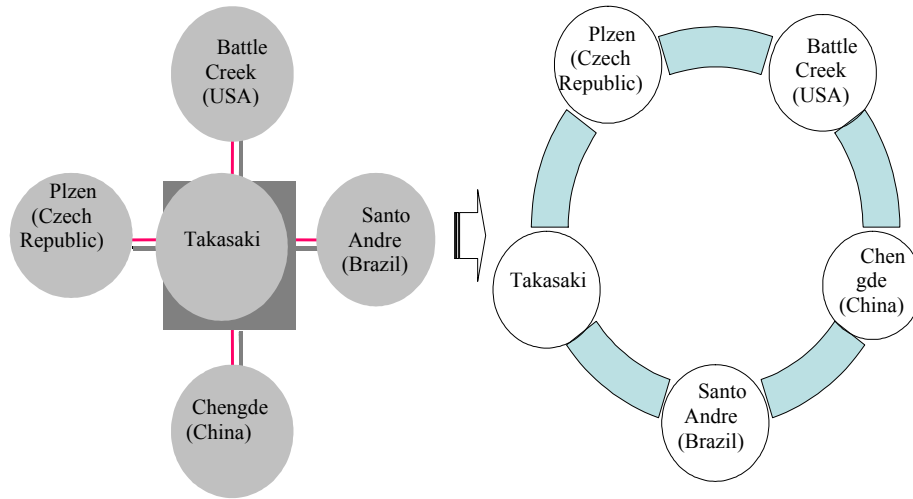
Izumo Road type



2) "Progressive sister city/Takasaki type"

This model develops initial one-to-one sister city relationships and relationships of friendship between cities into networks of international collaboration among cities. Takasaki City had bilateral relationships with four sister cities, none of which had relationships with each other. Takasaki developed those relationships into a permanent interaction among the five cities. Collaboration among cities can be developed from conventional sporting and cultural exchanges towards more substantive exchanges that seek solutions to shared problems. This has been the case in the exchanges among Takasaki and the other four cities; they have developed from the areas of sports and culture into collaboration to mutually develop methods to solve problems, centered on an environmental program. Each city has a permanent organization to coordinate their collaboration, and they share a website; ongoing everyday exchanges have been a key to success.

"Progressive sister city/Takasaki type"



Research system

Members of the Research Committee for the project "Cities and Cultural Dynamism: Networking and Collaboration in a Transnational Era - Towards a Future of Creative Urban Spaces"
(As of April 2006)

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Research report

Title: *Toshi kuukan o souzou suru—ekkyou jidai no bunkatoshiron—* ("Creating Urban Spaces: Cultural Urban Policy in the Transborder Age")

Authors: Nobuyuki Hata, Hirochika Nakamaki, NIRA (eds.)

Date: April 5, 2006

Related report

Name: *Toshi no jidai ni okeru renkei to kyouchou* (NIRA Research report 0508; "Collaboration and Cooperation in the Age of the City")

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