Urban Gentrification and Social Exclusion: How Cultural and Creative Interventions Influence the Cities?

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Abstract

This research focuses on the impacts of cultural and creative policies on issues of urban gentrification and social justice. Through case studies of Gateshead, UK and Cachoeira, Brazil, this research argues that these cultural intervention policies, whether they utilise arts and cultural projects to attract real estate investment or combine arts and cultural projects with real estate projects to stimulate regeneration, have led to gentrification and forced some residents out of affordable housing. At the same time, these policies may also exacerbate uneven development and social exclusion within cities.

Keywords

Cultural Policy; Creative City; Urban Gentrification; Social Justice.

1. Introduction

This essay introduces two kinds of policy discourses of cultural and creative interventions, including instrumental cultural policies and creative city discourse. Next, by considering the case studies of Gateshead in England and Cachoeira in Brazil, the impact of these interventions will be further discussed, including how they exert influences on urban gentrification and social justice. The social justice issues discussed in this essay mainly involve the unbalanced development and social exclusion within cities. It is worth noting that there is also a link between unbalanced development and social exclusion.

2. Instrumental Cultural Policies and Creative City Discourse

Instrumental cultural policies and creative city discourse are regarded as two important components of the government's cultural and creative intervention.

In the 1980s, the British government began to emphasise the contribution of arts and cultural activities to the economy (Belfiore, 2002). This is a defensive strategy to keep funding and expand public spending on culture. The economic importance of culture and the arts has been recognised and celebrated because the arts sector was able to create jobs, promote tourism, etc., in an era of industrial decline. However, it has also been noted that art and the symbolic economy do not solve the problem of structural unemployment because the jobs they provide are low-wage, part-time and insecure.

Since the 1990s, the focus of policy has shifted to the ability of culture and the arts to address social inclusion issues and their positive impact on urban regeneration and community renewal, which involves four key indicators- health, crime, employment and education (DCMS, 1999, pp. 21-22). Culture and the arts sector is able to obtain stable or even increased funding by proving their contribution to solving social problems. This is by no means an exclusively British phenomenon. The shift to instrumental cultural policies justifies public art spending on the basis of the benefits the arts bring to the country (economic, social, related to urban renewal, employment, etc.) is indeed a European trend (Vestheim, 1994, pp. 57-71). However, Belfiore (2002) questions whether the vision of urban regeneration can be proved possible when arts and cultural projects focus more on economic growth than deeper social problems.

As for the concept of creative city, there has been no consensus. Laundry (2000) argues that residents of creative cities have a sense of innovation and that innovative ideas can be put into practice. Florida (2002) highlights the importance of the creative class, a group that cities need to be highly inclusive to attract. Hosper and Pen (2003) proposed that creative cities could not be created, but cultural policies could provide more favourable conditions for the formation of creative cities, mainly including concentration, diversity, instability and positive city images. Cultural policies can promote the formation of creative cities or provide more favorable conditions, which is an important reason why many cities release cultural policies that are beneficial to the creative economy.

3.   Culture Policy Intervention and Gentrification

The term 'gentrification' refers to the transformation of central city where low rent and land prices spur reinvestment to the property sector, along with a series of social changes.

Many scholars have written about the inextricably linked relationship between artists and gentrification. Capital and culture are the two most critical factors in this process, while artists play an important role in the process of gentrification (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). In the first stage of gentrification, artists are attracted by downtown blocks that lose investment, which can provide low-cost accommodation for their lives and work. They transform the original industrial building into their living and working space, which implicates the loft-living life style. It is also where artists have contributed their labour and invested in "sweat justice" to transform the city centre (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). In the following second stage, the aesthetic value and romantic qualities that the artist created for the space symbolised a cultural model of the middle class that attracted the high-income middle class. Real estate projects and capital flows benefit from this aesthetic conjuration (Zukin, 1988, p. 15).

The third stage of gentrification is considered to have several characteristics: the expansion of gentrification into more remote areas; the participation of large-scale developers early on in the process; the decline of activism and resistance surrounding the process (Hackworth and Smith, 2001, p. 468). Since the 2000s, gentrification has been increasingly state-led rather than developer-led, and is thus seen as a 'global city strategy' related to the global circuits of capital. Policy strategies emphasise how culture and the arts can attract investment, drive up real estate values, shape a city's image and foster a sense of local identity. What we focus on here is the examples of gentrification under the cultural and creative intervention of the government.

Gateshead is an industrial city with a population of about 190,000, which 'hit hard by deindustrialisation and the closure of the coal mines in the second half of the last century' (Van der Graaf, 2009). It faces a declining population, polluted land, high unemployment and other social problems. For the past three decades, Gateshead has been making endeavors to use cultural and artistic interventions to promote urban regeneration programmes that are ultimately largely responsible for the gentrification of the area.

The construction of cultural facilities means to provide a middle-class lifestyle, an artistic and romantic lifestyle and cultural consumption behavior, which makes it possible to attract real estate investment.

For instance, Art in Public Places Programme which have been carried out since 1986, usually involve sculptures and decorations placed in public places, with the purpose of showing the history of the region's industrial economy. (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). One of the goals of this project is to improve the overall landscape of the area. It is undeniable that real estate investment will flow to areas with rich visual enjoyment and excellent cultural atmosphere.

Another example is Gateshead Quays, located in the 'South Bank' of the River Tyne, which is a cultural and arts park and serves as a catalyst for new real estate projects for high-income groups and middle-class people. The two core projects of cultural quarter of Gateshead Quays

are the Baltic Art Gallery and the Sage Centre for Music and Performing Arts. The former, the Arts Council National Lottery funding project, is the largest contemporary Art exhibition center in Britain, transformed from a grain warehouse in the 1940s. The Sage music center is the birthplace of northern symphony and folk music as well as a music education center (Bailey, 2004, p. 58).

As a result, policy interventions based on culture and the arts have led to a proliferation of real estate projects at Gateshead, attracting people to queue up overnight to buy apartments that are usually expensive. As the leader of Gateshead Council proudly claimed that they have more leverage in negotiations with developers than ever before. What is also obvious is that the skyline views that complement the Baltic Art Gallery are obscured by newly-constructed skyscrapers in Gateshead Quays (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005).

In a word, both the use of cultural and artistic projects to attract real estate investment and the use of cultural and artistic projects and real estate projects as a combination to stimulate regeneration have led to gentrification, forcing some residents out of low-cost housings.

Gateshead provides a typical example of the gentrification generated during the regeneration of industrial cities in developed countries, while the case of Cachoeira, an ordinary city in the Global South, provides a similar but different perspective to analyse the impact of cultural and creative interventions on gentrification. Cachoeira is an easily overlooked small and medium-sized city with a highly underdeveloped economy, different from those global cities in the Global North. The similarity between these two cases is that cultural and creative interventions of the governments of both two cities are seen as "saviours" to promote economic growth.

Cachoeira was an important part of Brazil's colonial system. Cachoeira's economic growth came from growing cash crops because it was at the heart of the largest sugarcane and tobacco growing area in colonial times. Colonial architecture sites there still show people the special history (Baumgartner, 2009). After the 1950s, the railroads that connected Cachoeira to other cities were replaced by new road systems that did not pass through Cachoeira. Thus, the economy decline rapidly, leading to the closure of factories, warehouses and trade centres and an increase in poor migration (Baumgartner and Rothfu, 2017). Nowadays, most of the city is rural areas where more than 15,000 people live, accounting for 95% of the total population.

Holding the hope and purpose of stimulating local economic growth, the Federal Government carried out a number of development projects, the most important one of which is the installation of the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia - UFRB (Ministry of Education) (Baumgartner and Rothfu, 2017). In order to promote the creativity of urban economic growth, the university has set up a series of courses in humanities and social science, including journalism, visual arts, history, film, etc. Gust Bardons (2012) analysed that geographic proximity is conducive to the development and diffusion of innovation, which means that this open public university campus is an infrastructure that can gather ideas and capital and spread them to other regions, thus benefiting the city's creative economy. But the university's impact on the city is not as rosy as it might seem.

Gentrification firstly shows up in housing. Although several cultural interventions, including the establishment of the university, attracted migrants, the sharp rise in property prices in 2006 and 2007, from R$ 200 to R$ 800, forced local residents to move out of their homes and into cheaper marginal areas (Baumgartner and Rothfu, 2017). Second, local small businesses have been replaced by hypermarket chains. Originally, local people could earn their living by sell their agricultural products they grow directly and residents could buy them at a lower price, but now brand supermarkets sell goods processed in other cities, and local residents cannot afford to buy these relatively high-priced products (Baumgartner and Rothfu, 2017).

4. Imbalanced Development Within the City

If you follow the "checklist" your paper will conform to the requirements of the publisher and facilitate a problem-free publication process. ultural and creative interventions are used to regenerate cities, which means artistic and cultural projects agglomeration can lead to a regional economic development, leading to the imbalance development and the social injustice within cities. The area having successfully implemented cultural regeneration projects, compared with less developed area will attract more generous government funding and private investment. Ironically, some projects aimed at building a creative economy have come at the expense of expelling businesses and people deemed uncreative, which implies a 'embrace-purge redevelopment' (Wilson, 2017).

In Cleveland, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum designed by I.M. Pei, the Great Lakes Science Center and First Energy Stadium, home to the Cleveland Browns, are clustered on one side of Lake Erie (Wilson, 2017, p. 113). However, behind this seemingly grand regeneration plan, there is a disconcerting fact that about 55 enterprises, 500 sets of affordable housing and two large and vibrant youth activity spaces have been driven out of the area (Wilson, 2017, ibid). It is estimated that 70% of these evicted businesses and 80% of the abandoned population end up in the poor east end. This has led to further uneven development within cities and to more serious poverty and a host of other social problems.

Gateshead's culture and art based intervention policies and projects, including two major cultural and art projects and the millennium bridge which connects the Newcastle and Gateshead and other small projects, make Gateshead successfully get rid of the identity of the poor relation and become a representative of urban regeneration, but it may once again lead to the unbalanced development within the city. Although the river Tyne between Newcastle and Gateshead separates the two areas, the two sides of the river Tyne form corresponding urban regeneration projects with the connection of the bridge. However, it seems physically and socially separated from the areas beyond the hillside (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005).

The Gateshead quayside resembles an 'urban fragment', 'floating free from the rest of the distressed urban area' (Wilkinson, 1992, p. 207). Although the renaissance of Gateshead is seen as part of a broader development strategy, and there is also evidence that the influence of artistic and cultural strategies extends beyond Gateshead Quays, development efforts to address the problems of East Gateshead outside the quayside are often seen as a by-product of its redevelopment (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). The culture-led urban renaissance of Gateshead failed to improve the living conditions of low-income residents in the surrounding communities (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005).

This uneven development within the city is more pronounced in Cachoeira's case. Cultural and creative interventions seem to work, but they also create spaces of conflict and confrontation – the university city and the local city.

5. Social Inclusion or Exclusion?

The concept of social exclusion 'represents a shift from the previously dominant concept of "poverty" ' (Belfiore, 2002). The advantage of this concept is that it not only focuses on the material disadvantages, but also embraces many other new aspects. Many countries, including the UK, take cultural, artistic and other creative activities as the effective method to promote community renewal and improve poverty, health, employment, crime, identity and other aspects as well as enhance social inclusion.

However, in practice, the influences exerted by cultural and creative policies on the problem of social inclusion and social exclusion are not as clear and uncontroversial as we imagine and

predict. In other words, in some ways, these policies may have led to positive changes in society, but at the same time, they could cause social injustice in other levels.

According to a ten-year longitudinal study on Gateshead's cultural and artistic projects, Bailey (2004) believes that Gatehead's cultural and art-based urban renewal project gives local people confidence and plays an important role in building a sense of pride and identity as a whole. Understanding the concept of local identity in the context of Gateshead is of great significance to our comprehension towards the social impacts of cultural policies. Immigrant groups from Ireland, Scotland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Scandinavia and other parts of England, attracted by the promise of high incomes and came to Gateshead. When the history of steel production no longer supported the development of this area and the process of deindustrialization had to be implemented, a transition from production to consumption occurred. The anxiety and aggression brought by this transitional period can be reaffirmed as a collective identity by cultural projects of Gateshead (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005).

One example that reflects their identity is the design of sculpture, the Angel of the North, in making people feel part of the whole. In 1994, the Gateshead Council commissioned the internationally renowned sculptor Anthony Gormley to create the Angel of the North, which was unveiled in 1998 (Bailey, 2004). He used steel cast from the local coal and mining industry, which was once in decline, to create the work. The Angel of the North is a monumental structure that welcomes visitors from the south into the borough with open arms (Bailey, 2004), showing an open posture and suggesting a sense of continuity in local history and culture. It has gained international recognition as a work of modern art. However, it has also been pointed out that the practice of designating everyone as a whole is another manifestation of social exclusion, because it precludes the possibility of other perspectives and ideas (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005).

Moreover, social exclusion could come with unbalanced urban development. As mentioned above, the positive effects of Gateshead's cultural intervention policy on the poor or other marginalised and vulnerable groups are very doubtful, as the real estate projects that are built to attract high-income people and the middle class push the poor out of the low-rent houses in the area. In the case of Cachoeira, social exclusion not only exists through the investment to real estate industry, but also happens when the inequality of cultural capital has evolved into the classification of the population. The establishment of the university enables local people to experience the modern lifestyle from other places, but most of them can not become practitioners of this way of life. These migrants who bring the modern lifestyle have a high degree and a wealth of knowledge which can be conducive to the creative economy of the city. Their daily life is associated with cafes, bookstores, music festivals, literary festivals, parties and other places with middle-class tastes (Baumgartner and Rothfu, 2017). In addition, the courses offered by the university does not generate many positive connections with the local ordinary people when a creative segregation is created, which means that creative people with high cultural capital can have a place in the college town, while others, ordinary people and uncreative people are placed elsewhere.

In short, the idea of creativity and creative cities is introduced from the developed world to Brazil, the world's most unequal country that has a long history of covering up and ignoring inequality problem, and is expressed as a positive discourse that can lead to economic development. However, the process of concealing and cultivating unequal reproduction is covert. Such cultural and creative policy interventions bring about the modernisation of the city on the surface, but in fact it has reshaped the pattern of inequality and injustice within the city. It is indeed a good hope to guide the diffusion of creative activities to the whole city through the establishment of the university, but the invisible wall created by cultural capital, social capital and economic capital completely separates the two types of people, the creative ones and the others. This has led to a more pronounced marginality than before.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the case study of Gateshead reveals that cultural and creative interventions make a difference in the third stage of gentrification with artists' role as intermediaries and victims. Both the use of cultural and artistic projects to attract real estate investment and the use of cultural and artistic projects and real estate projects as a combination to stimulate regeneration have led to gentrification, forcing some residents out of low-cost housings. Moreover, in the case of Cachoeira, gentrification attributed to the cultural policy implicates the rising housing rent and land prices and the different consumption spaces. In addition, imbalanced development within the city caused by cultural policy can be observed in both two cases. Finally, although cultural policies may be conducive to social inclusion, both cases show the phenomenon of social exclusion that cultural and creative interventions lead to.

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