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## THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AREAS

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**Summary:** Creativity is one of the most desirable features of the 21st century. To develop a creative attitude, a special framework must be created in the form of education, culture and the relevant features of the space. Increasingly important issues for the quality of life in a city are cultural entertainment and adequate infrastructure. This shows the changes in thinking about urban space and the development of the modern city conditions. The city is not just a functional unit with separate spheres of work and leisure, creative cities can be seen through the prism of specific, distinctive symbols and characters that attract the creative class, using its endogenous potential.

**Keywords:** creative economy, public space, metropolis, gentrification, revitalization

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### 1. Introduction

Contemporary cities constitute the hubs which often have a decisive influence on the social and economic development of entire economies. They are subject to continued transformation connected with the modification of the paradigm of development and progressing globalisation. They are such places in the social and economic space which concentrate the main functions of the global economy, especially the innovative activities which generate the majority of value added. As they contain the intellectual capital, creative and comfortable infrastructural solutions, they are good places for the location of transnational corporations, companies providing specialist services, and are attractive to live in [Florida 2009].

A contemporary city is a space where manufacturing and industrial activities are less important, while the business activity connected with more sophisticated services (management, information, knowledge) becomes increasingly significant. The leading world metropolises generate economic growth and development thanks to their assets based on science, culture, and technology. They are created by outstanding, active and creative people who form the so-called metropolitan class.

In the long evolutionary process, a contemporary metropolis becomes a city of symbols and urban space interpreted both as a physical place and product of culture.

A modern city is characterised by the increasing diversity and correlation of urban cultural spaces and their connections with both the local and – first of all – global economy. The growing role of metropolises arises from the fact that they determine the creation and dissemination of information and the circulation of international capital [Szul 2000, p. 423]. Simultaneously, the basic factor supporting the developmental possibilities of cities and having an effect on taking location decisions includes the exceptional assets of the place, knowledge and creative abilities of the people living there which are difficult to reproduce in other places.

The aim of this article is to present chosen aspects of the meaning of public space in a contemporary economy with special attention placed on the creative city concept and the revitalization and gentrification process.

## **2. Creativity in a modern economy**

According to R. Florida, the contemporary economy is accelerated not by information or knowledge but by human creativity [Florida 2009, p. 2]. This is defined as the ability to create original and new forms. It is diverse and multidimensional. Many authors have expanded on Florida's concept with creative potential. This is a combination of the individual phenomenon of creativity with social and cultural surroundings, and can be fully developed in big cities. Landry claims that the category of creativity becomes again a developmental factor as many world cities are going through a crisis and are in the a transformation period. Traditional industries located in cities play an increasingly less significant role, and the value added is much more shaped by the application of new knowledge in the production process. In the game for competitive advantage played by the cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new attention is given to places which have created desirable conditions for companies in the area of knowledge and innovation, that is cities with universities, research centres and culture industries. Nowadays, the competitive advantage is less based on held resources and location and more on the ability to develop an attractive image and symbols [Landry, Bianchini].

New determinants of development increasingly more often emphasise the significance of the so-called creative industries. Enterprises and specified types of human activities form lines of creative industries called the "creative economy". The creative industries have been isolated from the processing sector and services sector on the basis of intellectual property. In a more general meaning, they are defined as lines of business and types of activities which generate any type of intellectual property. They include culture industries and science industries [Rogowska 2011, p. 57-66]. The first notion encompasses individual creativity combined with the production/commercialisation and distribution/sale of cultural products which embrace different forms of planning and design, arts, including highbrow culture, media activities, different forms of advertising, handicraft, cultural tourism [Klasik 2009, p. 31].



Creative industries are characterised by the following features [Klasik 2009, p. 31]:

- values and products, especially intellectual, artistic and scientific,
- mental effort – individual and collective,
- activity with the hallmarks of creativity,
- micro, small and medium enterprises and public institutions,
- outlays and results that are difficult to estimate and evaluate in market terms.

The culture industries have various definitions in the literature. The term ‘culture industries’ was first used by T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer in 1947 to define the instruments which deprive the artists and their artistic work of values because the technology caused that the culture industries were focused on the production of standardised cultural goods [Znaczenie... 2010, p. 6]. In *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, the report suggested by KEA, the authors draw attention to the fact that creative industries overlap with the industry of culture. The former are concentrated on the production of non-cultural goods based on culture. The culture industries, on the other hand, produce cultural goods.

At present, creativity is becoming one of the most significant developmental factors for a contemporary city within the discussed culture industries. They develop in cities with the biggest adaptive capacity. This occurs most often when companies located close to one another, e.g. in one district, start cooperation and when the public authorities provide the necessary support. In the case of high-tech industries, the role of leading universities specialising in the needs of the culture industries is also essential [Gorzela 2008, p. 92]. Creative industry is a diversified sector of the economy that produces goods and provides services of an artistic and creative content for a wider public. It influences e.g. the quality of life, the sense of identity, the development of tourism [Matusik 2009, p. 50]. Traditional sectors of the economy become increasingly less important and the ‘cultural product’ turns into one of the most important indicators of metropolitan growth [Matusik 2009, p. 50].

Since the creative industries generate an attractive range of new jobs and are established by creative people who are freelancers, they concentrate in specified districts, most often downtown and city centres. Those groups are more and more often perceived as the driving force of the creative economy and therefore they may be a unique tool in the revitalisation of city centres, old districts with deteriorated and dematerialised urban fabric, a tool of regeneration of excluded social environments and the revitalisation of post-industrial areas [Klasik 2009, p. 33],

Creativity is at present an essential source of the development of metropolises. The creative class settles in areas of a special type – where technology coexists with talent and tolerance. R. Florida calls them creative metropolises. In such places, creative people stimulate the undertakings of one another, and the openness, diversity, richness of cultures, tolerance and promotion of talents foster their work by creating the conditions for avant-garde and unconventional behaviour [Ilnicki, Janc 2008, p. 13].

### 3. Public space

The location preferences of the creative class show a tendency for spatial concentration and the creation of so-called creative spaces or creative districts in metropolises which are places characterised by unique architecture, with great public accessibility, and with a good range of cultural and entertainment facilities and recreational areas. Creative areas are often established as a result of the gentrification and revitalisation in urban districts that have earlier had a post-industrial nature.

**Table 1.** Phases of gentrification

	Signs of gentrification	Early stages of gentrification	Proper stage of gentrification	Advanced stage of gentrification
Social groups	Pioneers (artists, students, photographers)	More pioneers, first gentrifiers (well-educated persons with high social status)	Pioneers start complaining, more and more gentrifiers	A district becomes dominated by gentrifiers.
Prices of land/ rents	They continue to be quite low/ small renovation and modernisation works	Real properties in the area become the object of speculations. The prices increase, but the increase is small.	Dynamic increase in prices, speculative prices	Stabilisation of prices at high level
Image of the area	No changes	Beginning of changes, the area becomes attractive (cafes, entertainment)	Changes visible mainly in the structure of shops and services	Attractive area
Displacement	Only vacated flats and houses are re-occupied; no displacements	Beginnings of displacement of residents	Continued displacement of residents, the pioneers also leave	Continued displacement up to the establishment of a ghetto

Source: [Jadach-Sepiolo 2009, p. 132].

Gentrification, which is often defined as the rise to middle class, is a process which occurs in older districts of a city where the population with low social and economic status is replaced with relatively young residents with high social and economic status, and the existing deteriorating housing resources are restored and modernised [Korenik, Rogowska 2011, p. 9-16]. Gentrification occurs within the social, demographic and morphological structure of cities. It belongs to processes of a fragmentary and comprehensive nature. It is a process which is at present clearly visible in the biggest metropolitan cities of post-communist countries [Matlović, Ira,

Sykom, Szczerba 2001, p. 12]. The higher social and professional group gradually becomes the majority in specific areas of a city. This often refers to those parts with historical value [Węclawowicz 2002, p. 76].

The term 'gentrification' was coined for the first time in 1964 by R. Glass in the research on spatial transformations in London and the rapid change of the social structure in central districts. The notion of gentrification is strictly connected with the process of revitalising the central (inner) cities of great metropolises although it is also applied in other contexts.

The gentrification process consists of several stages which have been described in the table above. The classification includes the categories of pioneers and gentrifiers. The group of urban pioneers comprises people who undertake activities aimed at the transformation of deteriorating and unfavourable urban environment into a resident-friendly place. Beauregard indicates that they are willing to risk their security and savings within this process. This group includes artists, people with different sexual orientation (seeking shelter) and people ethnically and culturally different. They are not only the passive audience of the space but they also influence it (by organising performances and presenting their own artistic work). The influx of pioneers into the district results in the arrival of new people coming from the outside who may become gentrifiers in the future [Jadach-Sepiolo 2009, p. 131].

Most frequently, gentrifiers have high social status, work in high positions, and earn a lot. Those people represent the metropolitan class (creative class) that value living downtown with quick access to unique forms of entertainment (clubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, meeting places) and to their workplaces to which they are much attached. They are inclined to interfere in the urban fabric and are the successors as they come to attractive flats, apartments which have been restored from the old housing resources [Jadach-Sepiolo 2009, p. 131].

Revitalisation may be viewed as a complex, coordinated, long-lasting process of spatial, technological, social and economic transformations carried out within a specified area and initiated by local government to overcome the crisis situation in that area through giving it new functional quality and creating the circumstances for its development on the basis of characteristic endogenic conditions [Wytyczne...]. Gentrification, in turn, means that the middle class takes over – pursuant to market conditions – the buildings which have been vacated or occupied by the working class, then carries out their gradual rehabilitation and consistently transforms the delapidated or threatened with delapidation parts of city centres into areas inhabited by the middle and higher classes without signs of decay [Smith, Williams 1986]. The basic differences between these categories are that, unlike revitalisation, gentrification is not a coordinated or pre-planned process and people who initiate it usually act in their own particularistic interest, that is having a unique place to live in. Revitalisation goes with a rich catalogue of objectives and its area is not spatially limited as in the case of gentrification, which mainly involves the transformation of central districts in the cities.

The gentrification process is usually a spontaneous process initiated by market forces. It may also be a consequence of the revitalisation process, and in such a case the main task is assumed by gentrifiers who bring with them a specific manner of acting, behavioural patterns and a style of living. The existing residents may find this process difficult to accept and therefore an adequate revitalisation policy is of particular importance (e.g. imposing an increase in prices of real properties and rents within the areas of revitalised districts, which should stop unwanted removals). Gentrification that is the consequence of revitalisation usually is softer in form ('soft gentrification'). Due to the obvious improvement of social structure in a given area, it is considered as a remedy to the problems of spatial segregation, and a sign of a revival in the area. Apart from traditional gentrification with displacement and the protests of residents (the occupants are rehoused in temporary accommodation outside the revitalised area), there is also gentrification supported by the revitalisation policy whose goal is to create a new monoculture based on representatives of the metropolitan class, and to establish a balanced social structure [Jadach-Sepiolo 2009, p. 133].

#### **4. Conclusion**

Creativity is a new determinant of development of contemporary urban areas. The creativity factors have different origins. However, they are often related to the cultural capital of the city, economic and spatial structure, and infrastructure. A typical representative of a society in which free time and entertainment represent dominant values is 'homo urbanus' that does not only work in the urban areas but also looks for inspiration, knowledge and conditions for rest, and different forms of their creativity determine the diversity of the environment in which they live.

Contemporary cities have become increasingly more often a product which should be shown outside as an interesting place to invest, run business, visit and live in. A brand of a place is one of the characteristics of creative metropolises and highlights their uniqueness. The way of perceiving a given city determines the amount of funds invested therein, for instance. In such circumstances, the issue of city management, the quality of public space and the scope of its privatisation becomes more and more significant. The problem whether a city belongs to its citizens or they merely become the users of the city is still current. The existing public space in cities connected with cultural heritage is a very important element that determines the brand of a place and attracts creative capital. It may inspire the emergence of original ideas, and – in consequence – of high quality products within creative sectors and outside them. The aesthetics of the space is an integral element of the revitalisation strategy either as an inspiration and background to the revitalisation processes, or as a flagship aspect of the revival process covering a given area. It is a basic element that makes a place attractive.

Creativity is one of the most desirable features in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The development of creative attitudes requires the existence (creation) of relevant frames in the form of education, culture, and adequate spatial characteristics. According to Landry, this last feature has only marginal influence, while Florida views the place (its quality) as a key to social and economic success, and the establishment of the relevant creative environment is the basis for the success of a city. The quality of life in cities is at present much more influenced by the issues of entertainment culture and the relevant infrastructure, which shows the changes in the way of thinking about urban space and the determinants of the development of contemporary cities. A city is not only a functional unit with separate spheres for work and leisure, as in Le-Corbusier's concept. First of all, it is a creative city seen from the perspective of specific and characteristic symbols and signs that attracts the creative class and uses its endogenic potential. Pursuant to Landry's concept, the cities of success are diverse, tolerant and artistic places.

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## JAKOŚĆ PRZESTRZENI PUBLICZNEJ W ROZWOJU AGLOMERACJI MIEJSKICH

**Streszczenie:** Kreatywność staje się jedną z najbardziej pożądanych cech XXI wieku. Aby rozwijać postawy kreatywne, muszą istnieć (zostać stworzone) odpowiednie ramy w postaci edukacji, kultury, a także odpowiednich cech przestrzeni. Dla jakości życia w mieście coraz większego znaczenia nabierają kwestie kultury, rozrywki, a także odpowiednia infrastruktura. To pokazuje zmiany zachodzące w myśleniu o przestrzeni miejskiej i o uwarunkowaniach rozwoju współczesnego miasta. Miasto to nie tylko jednostka funkcjonalna z wydzielonymi sferami do pracy i wypoczynku, jak w koncepcji Le Corbusiera, ale też kreatywna jednostka widziana przez pryzmat określonych, charakterystycznych symboli i znaków, przyciągająca klasę kreatywną, wykorzystująca swój endogeniczny potencjał.

**Słowa kluczowe:** gospodarka kreatywna, przestrzeń publiczna, metropolia, gentryfikacja, rewitalizacja.