CROSS-TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES OF URBAN PLANNING

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Abstract: This research explores the cross-traditional boundaries of urban planning and design. Using the United States as an example, many urban areas have become epicenters for crime, squalor and destitution. However, many cities have reinvigorated and revitalized urban areas to make them colorful, vibrant and product to society rather than being a focal point of crime and urban blight. This is where an effective urban planner comes into play. A good urban planner and/or designer will know the principles to adhere to and steps to take to maintain or improve the conditions of an urban area through effective planning and design. There are different major parts to this subject but they blend and mold together in many different ways. The objective of this research is to identify the trends and patterns that define good urban design and planning and some examples that are not emblematic of good practice. The methodology behind this study will be mostly qualitative analysis. The scope of what will be looked at will be urban areas within the United States. The findings of this report is that urban planning design is sometimes done extremely well and with excellent results while other times it is done quite poorly despite a wealth of funding and resources to help do it right the first time. The overall conclusion of this study is that urban planning can be done extremely well but the methodology and specifics to the urban area in question matter greatly.

Key words: urban planning, urban areas, Cross-traditional boundaries

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INTRODUCTION

Urban areas can be the heart and core of a vibrant and successful city. Using the United States as a focal point, a great example of an excellent and vibrant urban core is New York City. The city of New York has been at the forefront of sustainable urban design despite the amount green space in New York City being very limited in most areas (Farr, 2008; Brebbia, 2011).

However, the opposite end of this spectrum can be found in cities like Detroit. The former is bustling, successful and representative of what many refer to as the American Dream. Detroit, conversely, is bereft with urban blight, poverty and pervasive criminal activity although some urban designers have deigned to change that (Krieger & Saunders, 2009). These two cities have taken very different paths and both are instructive when discussing and analyzing what exactly comprises good urban planning and design and what does not and how all of the moving parts mesh together effectively, or not so effectively.

The issue to be addressed in this research is how to effectively plan for and implement the infrastructure and tasks behind a solid urban area and what should be avoided like the plague. This is important because urban areas defined by struggle and lawlessness can be utterly and

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completely destructive to the community and the lifestyles and life patterns of the people therein. This stands in stark contrast to excellent urban areas that give ample economic and social opportunities to all that are willing to reach out and take it (Ratcliff & Stubbs, 2009; Moor, 2006; Imrie & Street, 2011).

This research will cull data from mostly qualitative resources so as to identify the tasks and traits that are conducive to a good urban area being the result as opposed to half-measured or ill thought-out actions that actually do no good or even make things worse. Corroboration of qualitative data will be necessary as not all such data is reliable or valid and it needs to be ensured that quantitative data is complete and not being looked at in a. slanted or skewed way. The author of this research will be diligent in both regards.

In terms of what the research expects in terms of real-life events and practices, the cities that start or continue to execute good practices relative to urban planning and design and recognize how the different processes therein are related should do quite well for themselves while cities that either will not or cannot pour in the necessary capital and good work patterns will continue to suffer and/or will disintegrate into more advanced depravity and desperation. When looking at either of these, what a good outcome is versus a bad outcome will need to be defined definitively as even that is the subject of much debate.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- the totality of proper and productive tasks relative to proper urban planning and design will be defined and explained;

- the tasks that should never be done or those that should be done with extreme diligence and caution will be identified;

- the interrelation and boundaries that these tasks and processes all share will be explained as well.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- what tasks and habits define good urban planning and design?
- what tasks and habits define bad urban planning and design?
- what tasks and habits can be either good or bad depending on how and when they me implemented?
- how have model urban areas gone about their renewals and/or maintaining the excellence?
- how does one define success when evaluating urban planning and design?

HYPOTHESES

- cities that practice good urban planning design practices have and will continue to thrive;
- cites that practice bad urban planning and design practices have and will continue to fail;
- cities that change from bad to good methodology will notice huge improvements;
- funding levels are important but are not always correlated with the efficacy and results of an urban planning initiative.

VARIABLE DEFINITION

As mentioned above in the research question and hypothesis, there are a number of variables that will need to be looked at. First, the amount of capital necessary in terms of area, the density of the area in terms of population or square footage and the components of this capital (taxpayer money versus private investment) would need to be looked at. Unemployment rates at the city and / or state level and how they influence the progress of urban planning and design and its aftereffects should also be quantified. The demographic structure in terms of age, gender and race should be analyzed in prior test cases, with both positive and negative results, to see if there are any commonalities. It is very likely that this is irrelevant but it is also quite likely that it can matter greatly. On a related note, the predominant educational attainment patterns of these

populations can also be pulled into the aggregation of the data to see if there is any correlation between a highly or poorly educated populace and the effects of urban changes.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There are two major hypotheses being assessed during this research study. The first hypothesis is that a cross-boundary urban renewal approach that fosters a strong relationship and bond between the different parts of an urban renewal project will show better results than one that is more segmented. In other words, there is theorized to be a positive   relationship between cross-boundary methodology and overall results for the community in terms of economic benefit and overall performance metrics. Variables would include how much money is allocated relative to the size and scope of the project, the team members that comprise an urban renewal team and how they do (or do not) interact with one another, and what the causes are when things go wrong. Examples of the latter would include lack of communication, personality conflicts and disagreements, lack of funding and lack of a cohesive and coherent plan. Obviously, much of this study would be qualitative in nature and would be based on prior results as culled from other studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The amount of research and study documents available around the world is quite voluminous. In summary, the material is fairly varied in its focus and opinion but all are peer-reviewed and many share common themes and ideals that show a clear tendency and pattern of what good urban renewal is. How it is often based on crossing traditionc: 11 boundaries and what goes into all of the above.

The first book is a fairly atypical and perhaps controversial one: but it is worth of review nonetheless. The author notes that many bemoan the *"death"* of the great American city and how the more modern iterations of urban planning and strategy are missing the boat. The desired framework, as defined in this book, follows the patterns of Philadelphia, New York, Boston (Steiner & Butler, 2007). This stands in contrast to another book that says the birth of urban planning happened in the late 1800's (Banerjee & Sideris, 2011; Rama & Wenzel, 2011; Mason, 2008).

Another book discusses the importance of a focus on public service when undergoing and joining an urban renewal research project. This is the ascribed starting point that should motivate and drive everyone involved and their overall decisions and motivations (Steiner & Butler, 2007; Bayer & Valerius, 2007; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011).

Another dimension in urban planning is allowing for and planning for frameworks and setups that do not lead to healthcare disparities, or even corrects them, when revitalizing an urban area (Crane, 2012; Shi & Singh, 2011; Cohen, 2008). Yet another book points to the politics that go into creativity: urban renewal and education. Two of those subjects do not really relate to this report but they are interrelated, obviously, and any good urban planner would take, for example, the education system in an urban area into account when doing planning and design activities (Corburn, 2009). Management succession planning is also important if an urban renewal project is protracted management continuity is not optional for projects of this size and scope, as made evident by lack of succession planning and its effects in public schools (McAdams, 2006). Designing a project that is sustainable and that lends itself to efficient use (and re-use) of resources is important (Farr, 2008; Brebbia, 2011).

Another scholarly reviewed book points to priority funding points. In other words: rather than throwing money broadly at a wider are, certain large amounts of funds should be directed to areas that are of priority and that are pivotal to the overall success of the project. However, even with that: the funding does need to be sufficient enough to cover the important points (Mars & Hornsby, 2008; Ratcliffe & Stubbs, 2009; Soule, 2006).

Another consideration that is much more universal and less susceptible for debate is to make sure that any urban design scheme and plan accounts for traffic as it will exist, rather than just a best guess (OECD, 2007; WHO, 2012; Gordon, 2006).

Using land plots in the right way is also something that is not debated by many (Schwieterman Caspall & Heron, 2006; Levine, 2005; United Nations, 2007). Design elements and aesthetics matter as well (Mambretti, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The overall research structure will be to take tactics and planning patterns suggested and find instances where they were used. It would then be assessed whether the tactic was effective or not, assuming such a conclusion can be clearly made. Obviously, a lot of work and words on the subject, even those that are printed in scholarly-reviewed journals, is subject to opinion and groupthink. The sample involved will be cities of relative size that have medium- to large-sized urban cores. Good examples would be Los Angeles: Chicago, New York City, Detroit and Atlanta. Those five are a good sample because they are geographically dispersed and several of them have encountered major problems with urban projects and maintenance while others have done quite well for themselves. For others, mahy deem the results to be mixed.

Collection of data will come from scholarly-reviewed sources and unilateral opinions will be ignored. Sources that have hard data, behind them will be given much more credence than those that are lacking this or are clearly opinionated. Research tools involved will entirely come from scholarly reviewed journals as books are not subject to the same level of command, control and scrutiny. The limitations will be mostly imposed by sources external of the author of this report. Opinion and political axes to grind do indeed cloud a lot of the research involved and academic journals are not immune from this. However: newspapers and magazines are infinitely worse so those will not be used or consulted.

FINDINGS

A review of the literature clearly shows that a cross-boundary approach that is based on cooperation and not power-grabs and territorialism is the proper way to execute urban renewal. The entire planning process has to be planned well and thought out.

All decisions should be based on all the relevant data, money should go to where it will be most effective if the budget is tight and the overall project parameters should be tailored to the area in question. In other words, an urban renewal project in Detroit should not resemble one in New York City as they are two entirely different areas. For example, it is commonplace for people in New York to not have a car due to the massive transit structure they have there. Detroit residents do not have this infrastructure and building it to the level of New York City would be impossible without razing the city and starting over, which obviously will not happen. In short, as long as a project is planned out well, is based on relevant history for the city in question (or one that is similar) and is otherwise tailored to the preferences and culture of the area, things will go a lot smoother than if one or more of those is not addressed.

DISCUSSION

The problem with urban renewal subjects is that many people are very strident and opinionated about the process and this can greatly cloud the issue. A focus on personal opinions and power-plays should be discouraged.

However, this discouragement should be frame positively under the rubric that money resources are tight and what the community wants out of an urban renewal project should drive how it is run and executed. Any appearance of waste, incompetence or ignorance to the concerns of the community will cause a huge backlash and this will often cause a project to fail in its end-goal. Also, many people that pass judgments on the efficacy of urban renewals have hidden or not-so-hidden agendas that are not focused on results and efficacy and those sources need to be made to justify what they are saying, which they could not possibly do. The future vibrancy of the community depends on people setting aside their personal preferences, mostly because taxpayer money should not be used a political pawn (Buckley, 2011; Joshi, 2008; Fyfe & Kenny, 2005).

The liberal versus conservative vitriol has been flowing since the advent of modern urban design in the late 1800's and it rages until this very day (Crosby, 2011; Chavan, 2007).

One major issue that is pervasive throughout the literature on urban planning is the conservative versus liberal argument about government spending levels. Liberals generally advocate higher and more wide-reaching spending while conservatives generally ask that less be spent. Both sides hurl accusations and invective at each other regarding how careless, wasteful and/or heartless the other side's argument is. As noted throughout this report, the overall measurement of efficacy should be based on results and hard figures. Additionally, the hard figures cannot be cherry picked or skewed to mean something that they do not mean. Correlation and causality need to be parsed out as well as using statistics and figures that can be applied to the area in question. An example of the latter would be comparing the cities of Kansas City and Los Angeles.

Doing so is inherently difficult due to the very different cultures e1nd cost of living structures of the two metro areas. Another major question that is commonly pointed to and cited in literature, and it is related to the prior paragraph, is the proper level of involvement that the government should have in the lives of citizens and urban renewal is just one part of that. Many point to the fact that the government can and should be the main driver of urban renewal while others say private industry should be the driver because taxpayer money would be better spent on education and such. There are no clear answers but the viewpoints that many people possess are quite clear.

CONCLUSION

Modernization generally means changing urban environment in order to manage urban problems. This method will be applicable when citizens are participated in different stages of urban projects. These plans try to use available potential in old area. So, they try to enjoy wide participation of public and restore social life and economic prosperity to social tissue with the least expenditure of funds. Lack of financial credit is known as the most important problem of no progress in modernizing old texture. The only way to accelerate modernization and reconstruction of old tissue is participation and use of small capital inside and outside the country. In order to increase public participation and the use of small, medium and large capitals in reconstruction of old tissue, several plans should be scheduled and performed to reduce runtime. Identification of physical-spatial structure and available problems in old tissue are among the cases that are considered in planning by planners.

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An urban growth boundary, or UGB, is a regional boundary, set in an attempt to control urban sprawl by, in its simplest form, mandating that the area inside the boundary be used for urban development and the area outside be preserved in its natural state or used for agriculture. Legislating for an "urban growth boundary" is one way, among many others, of managing the major challenges posed by unplanned urban growth and the encroachment of cities upon agricultural and rural land. You are here: Urban Planning. Objectives: Implementation of programs and policies of government in the following areas: • To determine population centers and optimum balance between population and urban space across country for regional development planning and more efficient use of soil and water and to avoid urban problems arising from uneven growth and development of cities and subsequent waste of economic and human resource of the country • Integrated land. management with cooperation of executive organizations • To provide social welfare in housing • To participate in regulating capital m