

## Sociological Study on a “Creative City” Policy: A Case of Yokohama

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### SYNOPSIS

Since the 2000s, the creative city policy has been attracting worldwide attention as a strategy for regenerating cities and localities that are declining by globalization and deindustrialization. This study focuses on the City of Yokohama, which adopted a policy of the Creative City Yokohama in 2004, examines the causes and aims of that policy as well as the actual process of its implementation by collecting and analyzing field data and various documents, and evaluates its achievements and remaining problems.

The immediate cause of forming the policy was the decline of the central area through the globalization of economy. Creative bureaucrats in the city government discussed how to utilize historical buildings in order to maintain the symbolic value of central urban space and adopted the creative city policy, which suited well to the urban design and cultural policies that the city had been implemented from the 1960s onward.

The objectives of the creative city initiative in Yokohama are to attract artists and designers, to form a cluster of creative industries, and to reshape the waterfront areas of downtown. In the last decade, the initiative has been successful in attracting artists, designers, and architects, but not in forming the cluster of creative industries. And the restructuring of the waterfront area has been limited.

The success in attracting artists was caused by several factors. First, the city hall adopted excellent leaders of non-profit art organizations and delegated to them the use and management of historical buildings. Second, the creative bureaucrats have had a great affinity for artists, designers, and architects. Third, some architects have played a significant role in connecting artists to city officials. And lastly, the slowdown of urban renewal projects in downtown due to depreciation of land value has made the conversion of old buildings to studios easier.

Regarding the creative industry, the initiative assumed to attract a certain firm of the image industry at first, but not fulfilled it. Also there was no business launching support given by the city hall. As for the plan of reshaping the waterfront, which indicated the spatial dimension of the initiative, a part of the harbor has been improved, while there was no consideration for socio-economic relationships of the artists' studios to industries. And the role of the general citizens was not clear in the plan. Thus the change of mayors has been turning the initiative from the strategic policy to an ordinary administrative work and diminishing its spatial perspective.

Our analysis indicates that the agenda of the creative city in Yokohama is characterized by urban design and has a weakness in relating it with industrial and cultural policies.

In the second part, we examine an integrative role of the urban construction policies in Yokohama since the 1960s, suggesting that the conditions are changing under the fiscal reformist regime from the 2000s onward.