

Reconsidering the concept of the “creative city”: Theory and reality in Japan¹

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ABSTRACT

Facing aging and depopulation, Japan is being forced to change its socio-economic structure from one based on growth to a more sustainable model. Globalization is also having a great impact on Japanese society, including the Japanese economy as a whole as well as people’s daily lives. “Creativity” has been proposed as one of the key concepts for sustainable development in cities in Japan, as creating new values in a way that leads to further development can contribute to ameliorating negative side effects of structural change. In this paper, a brief outline of ongoing socio-economic changes in Japan is introduced, and then the theoretical framework concerning development of cities is examined on the basis of an analysis of statistical data. It is found that the presence of a relatively large population of artists correlates well with economic prosperity, but that this is more likely to be an effect of the prosperity than its cause.

Keywords: creativity; sustainable development; arts; statistical analysis.

Socio-economic changes in Japan

Japan has modernized itself for the past 150 years. After World War II, Japan’s new constitution renounced war, and placed a strong focus on eco-

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