Flagship Regeneration: panacea or urban problem?



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EURA Conference Glasgow, September 12-14 2007



What are flagships?

- Large scale land and property developments which play an influential role in urban regeneration
- Catalyst for further regeneration and development
- Marketing tool or advertising board for re-imaging cities



Examples

- Convention Centres (SECC, Glasgow)
- Luxury shopping malls (Faneuil Hall, Boston)
- Museums (Guggenheim, Bilbao)
- High-profile office developments (Canary Wharf)
- Waterfront developments (Inner Harbour, Baltimore)
- Also some tourist attractions, high profile housing developments (Montevideo, Kop van Zuid, Rotterdam)



Inner Harbour, Baltimore





Kop van Zuid, Rotterdam





Aims of this paper:

- To better understand:
- Why flagships are still a popular form of urban regeneration?
- What have been the major criticisms of flagships?
- How these relate to the perspective of local residents.



Why do cities still pursue flagships?





1. Ideological shift

- Shift in public policy away from redistributive measures
- Belief that they will solve urban problems
- Belief that they are secure investments



2. Tangible benefits of flagships

- Physical transformation of areas/symbol of change
- Catalyst for further development
- Catalyst for a new industry (i.e. tourism)
- Increase property prices, gentrification
- Residents: hope to boost civic pride, provide new spaces to visit



3. Re-branding and reimaging

- Flagships are linked to re-imaging campaigns
- Large advertising billboards
- Primarily aimed at outsiders, rather than residents
- Copy successes in other cities (Baltimore, Glasgow)



4. Cities have few other options

- Little else that city councils can do to attract public and private investment
- "Keeping up with the Jones"
- Because other cities are launching flagships and re-branding themselves, others must follow suit



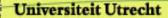
Critiques of flagships





1. Conflicting visions of the city

- Vision of the city promoted by boosters is different from one seen by residents
- Who are flagships designed for: residents or outsiders?
- Selective idea of 'liveability'
- Will many residents feel excluded?



2. Flagships as a diversion for the masses

 Spectacle serves to divert attention from the real social problems of the city

Roman Bread and Circuses formula

 To what extent are residents aware of this?



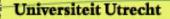
3. The Cookie-cutter effect

- "Clone Cities"
- Not every city that wants to have a major international flagship can have one
- How many successful stadia, Disney-worlds, harbour places and spectacular shopping malls can there be?" (Harvey)
- AutoWorld, Flint Michigan



4. Greater socioeconomic polarisation

- Focus on wealth creation, rather than distribution
- Failures of trickle-down (jobs)
- Divert scarce municipal funds
- Create high-end consumption-based spaces
- Resident responses: cynicism, exclusion?



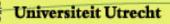
5. Greater Spatial Polarisation

'Two Speed Revitalisation'

 Site Specific, focus on areas of highest return (city centres, waterfronts)

Examples: Baltimore, Glasgow

Flagships as a catalyst for gentrification



Conclusions

 Flagships are necessary to create a new image of a city, and act as a catalyst for further investment

 Flagships as a regeneration tool cannot adequately address issues of poverty and inequality



- But what are the views and perspectives of <u>residents</u> towards flagships?
- Do they embrace them or do they feel alienated by them?
- How would these results vary among different socioeconomic groups? In different neighbourhoods?



Questions? Comments?

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