

Chapter 6

Making Space and Place for Knowledge Production: Socio-Spatial Development of Knowledge Community Precincts

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ABSTRACT

In the knowledge era the importance of making space and place for knowledge production is clearly understood worldwide by many city administrations that are keen on restructuring their cities as highly competitive and creative places. Consequently, knowledge-based urban development and socio-spatial development of knowledge community precincts have taken their places among the emerging agendas of the urban planning and development practice. This chapter explores these emerging issues and scrutinizes the development of knowledge community precincts that have important economic, social and cultural dimensions on the formation of competitive and creative urban regions. The chapter also sheds light on the new challenges for planning discipline, and discusses the need for and some specifics of a new planning paradigm suitable for dealing with 21st Century's socio-economic development and urbanization problems.

INTRODUCTION

The economic and social importance of knowledge production is clear, if not precise (Westlund, 2006). Insofar as it is an emerging social phenomenon and research agenda in the urban planning discipline. The impact of what has been broadly labeled as the 'knowledge economy' has, however, been such that

even absent precise measurement it is the undoubted dynamo of the contemporary global market and an essential part of any global 'knowledge city' (Clarke, 2001; Carrillo, 2006). Advanced urban economies all across the world are now moving, if not already, from a period of sweeping change in the structure of their industries. The enterprises, their activities and their importance to the economy differ significantly from the position three decades ago and show radical

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changes from the position that existed at the early 20th Century. This change can be seen as a shift from manual to mental labor. At the beginning of the 20th Century manual labor was a massive social presence. In the advanced economies of the 1950s people employed to make or move things were still in the majority. By 1990 they had shrunk to one-fifth of the workforce. By 2010 they will form no-more than one-tenth. On the other hand, in the same year it is projected that broadly defined 'knowledge workers' will comprise 20 percent of the total workforce (Drucker, 1993).

It is against a background of growing economic and social importance that one of the important research agendas of the 21st Century is to investigate socio-spatial development for the production of knowledge. In recent years not only in the fields of urban planning and development but also in the field of economic geography, under the influence of knowledge economy, a different approach is developed that deals with the geography of R&D and innovation (Vence-Deza and Gonzalez-Lopez 2008). Several research have shown that academic research and R&D are key components for the production of both codified and tacit knowledge and they tend to be geographically concentrated mainly in the creative urban regions (i.e. Feldman, 1994; Baum et al., 2008). During the past decade knowledge-based development has been a key in order to boost knowledge production for developing globally competitive urban economies (Yigitcanlar et al., 2008c). The *raison d'être* for the recent strong spatial urban development focus of the knowledge-based development policies is that spatially speaking knowledge production is an urban phenomenon. This important spatial focus has caused the birth of a new development approach so called 'knowledge-based urban development' (Yigitcanlar et al., 2008a). However, this development approach is not integrated into the urban planning process, mainly because of the incapability of modernist planning doctrines dealing with the socio-spatial changes of the 21st Century. Hence at that very point in the knowledge

era, planning is still searching for its new paradigm or in other words its new identity.

As cities and their economies become competitive, knowledge production and knowledge-based urban development are becoming more important for success in the tough global competition, particularly for attracting and retaining knowledge workers and industries (Florida, 2005). The immediate object of analysis of knowledge production and knowledge-based urban development, therefore, is the urban 'knowledge community precinct', which is a magnet place for global talent and investment. Borrowing from Henry and Pinch (2000) and Baum et al. (2007) a knowledge community precinct can be described as an integrated centre of knowledge creation, learning, commercialization and lifestyle that is created through a cooperative partnership of all tiers of government, the education community, private sector operators, a group of highly talented people and the general public. Knowledge community precincts distinctively differ from what have been developed as business parks, technology parks and industry clusters where the emphasis has been much more on the advantages of business co-location (Yigitcanlar et al., 2008d).

The broad aim of this paper is to explore the role of knowledge-based urban development, as one of the key research agendas of urban planning, in making space and place for knowledge production. The socio-spatial development of knowledge community precincts, as the nexus of knowledge-based urban development, has important economic, social and cultural dimensions, all of which contain surprisingly novel features. Therefore, the specific aims of the paper include to: scrutinize socio-spatial development of knowledge community precincts; contribute to the discussions on knowledge production and urban spatial transformation; and underline the importance of further investigating this new form of development, knowledge-based urban development.

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