

# Kyoto's Glocal Identity: Establishing Balance between Identity Change and Persistence

Saeidreza Ameli<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatemeh Azimzadeh Mousavi<sup>2</sup>, Seyedehsareh Sajjadi<sup>3</sup>

1. Professor of Communication and North American Studies, University of Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author: [ssameli@ut.ac.ir](mailto:ssameli@ut.ac.ir))
2. M.A. in North American Studies, University of Tehran, Iran ([azimzadeh@alumni.ut.ac.ir](mailto:azimzadeh@alumni.ut.ac.ir))
3. Ph.D. Candidate of Sociology, Sun-yat-sen University, China ([sajjadi.sara@gmail.com](mailto:sajjadi.sara@gmail.com))

(Received: 21 Jan. 2017 Accepted: 18 Apr. 2017)

## Abstract

Kyoto is a miniature of Japan; through centuries of experience and persistence, it has maintained the symbols of the country's civil and cultural identity. The city has demonstrated a collection of Japan's noble identity and characteristics through its material and spiritual heritage. Kyoto's rich history and its position have gathered a collection of religion-based works, artistic innovations, and cultural heritage and have passed them through to the modern world. Kyoto is the symbol of an effort for the persistence of the city's identity as well as the coexistence of the modern and native characteristics within itself which indicates the glocal logic of the city. The question which is raised here is: what are the cultural and identity-related elements of Kyoto which have come together in a glocal structure and how have they been formed as such/in this way? Has Kyoto really been successful in glocalizing itself in a balanced collection of civil, cultural, and identity-based characteristics *and* advance in the process? Considering the important role Kyoto plays in reflecting Japan's history and culture, and the position it holds as the country's cultural and historical heart, this paper has reviewed the city's experience as Japan's cultural capital and has aimed to analyze and specify Kyoto's persistent and identity-making characteristics in a glocal frame. In the end, the study will form a schema of the solidarity and dynamism of the analyzed elements based on Japan's identity and culture.

**Keywords:** Change, Dynamic City, Glocal identity, Kyoto, Persistence.

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Journal of **World Sociopolitical Studies** | Vol. 1 | No. 1 | July 2017 | pp. 33-59

Web Page: <https://wsps.ut.ac.ir/> Email: [wsps@ut.ac.ir](mailto:wsps@ut.ac.ir)

Print ISSN: 2588-3119 eISSN: 2588-3127 DOI: 10.22059/wsps.2017.62279

## Introduction

However the cities were used to be built in the past, they contained a visual uniformity which, gradually growing more sophisticated, constituted the foundation of the societies' social life. The appearance and the shape of the city was itself the representation of the unique characteristics of the society's population (Mozayeni, 2002). Yār Ahmadi (2008) believes that a city is like a documented evidence which presents the history and identity through its general appearance; thus, each one of these manmade structures, more than presenting their own appearances, reveals a certain identity. Cities are the reminders of the stories and events which have created– and are created by– a specific identity and, therefore, may be interpreted as chapters of history.

The identity of each city in terms of its symbolic formats is the representation of the city and distinguishes it from other cities. Sometimes the city also reflects the symbolic identity of a civilizational era. For example in Japan, although the country's official capital is Tokyo; Kyoto is the representation of the country's heart and soul. This city, with its rich history, is a miniature of everything that Japan has witnessed and possessed throughout centuries. Kyoto represents, for the Japanese people, the country's identity and traditions. The city, with more than two thousand Buddhist temples and Shinto houses of worship, contains 20% of Japans national reserve and 15% of its cultural assets. Possessing 17 World Heritage Sites, Kyoto is a rich source of Japan's religious, artistic, and cultural heritage (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005). The efforts and achievements of the artists, craftsmen, monks, warriors, and the people who have inhabited this city throughout history is reflected in Kyoto's symbols, traditional structure, and heritage. The city stores Japan's ancient culture and is a place which has garnered a large portion of the country's history. According to UNESCO, there are more than 1600 Buddhist and 400 Shinto temples in the city

which have turned it into a culturally rich territory<sup>1</sup>. Kyoto's cultural background is so splendid that one can say the city is equally a must-see— at least once in a lifetime— city as Paris, London, and Rome (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005).

The importance of this city in Japan's history and identity is such that it is believed that Kyoto itself can generate a universal vision of Japan. Most of what constitutes these days Japan's image is made up of stems from Kyoto. The picture presented by literature or even seen by the tourists regarding the city of Kyoto is merely a small portion of the culture and beauty of the city. There are, in fact, thousands of picturesque sights in Kyoto which, being concealed in its roots, are not visible at first sight (Judat, 1996).

Kyoto, a city of more than a thousand years old, is an important artistic, religious, and commercial center. The city has a powerful cultural heritage thanks to the settlement and contributions of artists, craftsmen, businessmen, poets, warriors, monks, and other influential individuals. It can be argued that most of Japan's culture stems from the economic and aesthetic procedures applied in Kyoto through the ages. Kyoto has

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1. *Shinto* gods have been worshiped by the Japanese since the 7th and 8th centuries. People brought offerings to them and held special ceremonies in temples. Since then, the roofs of the temples would be built in an unfamiliar way they assumed was harmonious with the nature. The entrance to the temples were simple structures built on the hills and plants or in the side of the roads and would act as offerings to the local Kami (spirits). All of these are part of the Japanese routine chores. There used to be Shinto altars in Japanese houses which would act as place for the household to worship the family's passed spirits. The visible world is as real for the Japanese as the invisible one. They have always feared the invisible forces and making a god out of nature is a way to domesticize these forces. They believe that the world is shared between them and the invisible forces and they try to keep these forces under control by offerings and magical rituals. Large (grid) red gates are symbolic gates or entrances to the supernatural world of spirits. The fox which sits in front of the entrance to some of the temples is the manifestation of one kind of the spirits. Buddhism was declared the official or state religion of Japan in 592. *Buddhism*, which was born in India, expanded to China and Korea in the 6th century and found its way into Japan from there, forming a hybrid with *Shinto* after a period of conflicts. Since then, the religious rituals, such as prayers and personal rituals, followed the Buddhist ways, but all private and official ceremonies were still dominated by the *Shinto* beliefs of ascendants' union and the invisible forces (Delay, 2003).

inspired a lot of beauties and spiritualities, while hosting various moments of violence and destructions as well (Nile Guide, 2010).

“Kyoto is a historical city, having been the capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years from the Heian Period. {Its} total area is 827.90 km<sup>2</sup>. Three-quarters of the city is covered in forests, and surrounded by imposing mountains and beautiful rivers. Kyoto is also a city of manufacturing and innovation and a vibrant university city” (Kadokawa, 2009).

Kyoto was the capital of Japan from 794 to 1868 when Tokyo was chosen as the capital. Yet, Kyoto did not abandon its industrial development and modernization after 1868. Because the city did not seriously suffer during the World War II, it was able to remain the educational and cultural center of Japan and preserve an important part of its cultural assets (Nile Guide, 2010). When the official capital was moved to Tokyo, a new function was defined for Kyoto: it became the country’s cultural capital, Osaka became the commercial capital, and Tokyo assumed the role as the political capital of the country (Gordon, 2006:113).

Presenting this short introduction and considering the importance of Kyoto in reflecting the history and culture of Japan and its success in creating and preserving its assumed role as the country’s cultural and historical heart, this study aims to review the local and global identity-making elements of the city and study the way Kyoto symbolizes Japan’s identity. To this end, the study utilizes the concept of “glocalization”, used by Robertson in 1995, to specify Kyoto’s local-global identity and point out its success in preserving the local identity while earning global credit. “Robertson used the term *dochakuka*—originally referring to a way of adapting farming techniques to local conditions— to define ‘global localization’. He used the glocalization concept to express the contradictions apparent in

the absolute globalization view while arguing that even Japanese businessmen have taken *dochakuka* as 'glocalization' or a form of globalization adapted to the local conditions" (Ameli, 2006:19-20). What Robertson stated as "glocalization" illustrates the consolidation and integration of the effects of the global and local forces more accurately (Ameli, 2002).

### **Glocalized Approach to the City's Identity and Symbols**

Identity reflects what there is and what there is not. When analyzed in the context of a city's cultural and identity-based characteristics, it is reflected in three traits: persisting identity-based elements, distinct elements, and specific characteristics. On the other hand, the way that the Old and the New are connected reflects three kinds of civic identity and, consequently, three cultural identities in the civic society. These three identities are categorized as (1) traditionalist or archaist identities, (2) modernist identities, and (3) traditionalist-modernist or glocalist identities. We will discuss these three forms of civic identity before studying Kyoto. These three identities reflect three kinds of philosophy of life, identity, and culture which are accounted as large schemas of human, cultural, and civilizational identity.

**Traditionalist Cities:** These types of cities introduce themselves merely using their ancient civilizational characteristics and avoid any kind of reference to the New. This view holds the originality of life dependent on preserving the ancient heritage and treats the New as the demolisher of the civic environment; any form of transition between the New and the Old is considered as a demolishing the urban identity's consolidation.

**Modernist Cities:** Absolute modernism holds the Old as an obsolete matter and considers the return to the Old as a return to "death" and the Obsolete. This view

regards even a small portion of civilizational past in the civic environment as too much and only sometimes finds it necessary to preserve very small elements of the historical identity-based elements to avoid losing the sense of attachment.

**Traditionalist-Modernist Cities:** These cities represent an effort to endure the positive experiences and the globalized capacities of the city. In this approach, one does not sacrifice the past for the present, and vice versa, trying to develop the identity synergy of the city. This view holds the city as an ancient plant with its roots in history which will grow and fertilize in “today’s environment”, bridging between the present and the past.

Based on these three views, the principal reason for Japan’s success in different domains has been the fact that the Japanese strongly value their traditional ways of life. That is why they have such a powerful national identity and resist against alien cultures; yet, this resistance does not keep them from modern developments (Netzley, 2004). Netzley adds, “The Japanese have studied the American society and have cooperated with the United States whenever they have felt it necessary for their own development. They have never allowed the Western ideas to change their cultural views, although they play a significant role in the international community” (Netzley, 2004). Applying this rule, Kyoto has been able to preserve its coherent identity and, while advancing in step with the modern developments, avoid an environment with absurd and disconnected identities.

Traditional culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan is still alive and respected compared to many other countries. One of the reasons that Japan’s traditional culture is still alive is the ability of its people to blend the new and the old and the internal and imported elements. Alex Kerr, an author who has lived in Japan

for many years, compares the country to a seashell which has miraculously converted its inner raw materials into a pearl. A Japanese author writes in 1940, "It is destined that in our land, as the modern history indicates, old and new, up and down, east and west, be in constant relationship with each other" (quoted in Reeve, (1388 [2009 A.D]):10).

There is a page in the "Kyoto website" titled "This Is Kyoto". This page has categorized the parts which introduce the city into the following headlines: introduction, history, art, architecture, gardens, performing arts, festivals, four seasons, traditional crafts, Kyoto: the city of handicrafts, ancient and modern Kyoto, education, culture and sports, eco city, and citizens' lifestyle (Kyoto City Web, 2004). Accordingly, the coordination between the old and the new in Kyoto is obvious. The new buildings and urban context do not undermine the old textures of the city and prevent the abolition of the city's cultural context. On the other hand, dynamism and effectively utilizing the new methods of construction in the city has prevented Kyoto from turning into a dull, rusty city. In other words, there has been an effort in the city to place the old and the new in their own positions, so that the new applies on the native culture and the old adapts with the new environment. Generally, the identity-making characteristics of Kyoto demonstrate the successful and efficient coexistence of the Old with the New and the ancient heritage with the modern achievements; and, in a larger scale, a balance between the city's local and global identity.

### **Kyoto's Identity and Symbolic Characteristics**

Together, the identity and symbolic characteristics of Kyoto are explained in relation to the four components of (1) historicism, (2) spiritualism, (3) naturism (respecting the nature), and (4) architecture and specific urbanization.

## Historicism

The atmosphere in old cities which have a specific identity is such that their civilizational characteristics are exceptionally manifest in their structures. These cities are felt deeply by their inhabitants and they respond unconsciously, but with a great sense of identity, attachment, and interest to their special and objective experiences. The environment, in cities which have preserved their old urban textures, historical locations and buildings, provokes a sense of faithfulness and pride among the inhabitants. In fact, the effort to establish order in the modern urban context indicates the need to retrieve the spiritual values dominating ancient societies (1387 [2008 A.D]). Ruskin (quoted in Yār Ahmadi, (1387 [2008 A.D]):111), in his essay “the Seven Lamps of Architecture”, has pointed out the retrieval of the principal values of the past heritage and calls upon the managers and the architects to seek guidance from those values: “if the advantages of knowledge about the past or satisfaction of leaving a good name for the future generations can help us to tolerate the present times and consolidate our present efforts, then the national architecture holds two great responsibilities: first, interpreting the contemporary architecture based on history; second, preserving the valuable heritage of the past.”

Kyoto has acted exceptionally successfully in the second term. For example, categorizing this heritage and making laws regarding each category has helped the process of efficient planning and execution of policies. Kyoto’s city planning pays great attention to the matter of land use interference. Accordingly urban areas do not develop without following certain patterns and considering the specifically defined use of land. Categorizing what is known as national heritage into city’s natural heritage, residential historical buildings, nonresidential historical buildings, city sights, nonstructural symbolic constructions, world heritage, etc. (Kyoto City, 2009; Shapira et al., 1994) has made the planning, policymaking and lawmaking

easier and more efficient. On the other hand, the execution and supervision on the execution has been conducted in a more careful and efficient manner.

### **Spiritualism**

A quiet and comfortable urban space is not merely achieved through utilizing scientific and technological methods; rather, it is the spiritual and inner dimension which makes the desirable environment. Accordingly, considering everything related to the people's spirituality (which is part of the culture) plays an important role in making a desirable urban space. The population growth, the urban development, the emergence of modern products and other urban problems have not inflicted any damage to the city's spiritual locations and buildings such as temples and gardens. Naturally, the spiritual spaces are not merely the temples; every space which responds to the human's spiritual and nonmaterial needs can be considered as spiritual space.

It must be underlined that a critical question in modern Japan is: how to reconcile science and religion. To this end, the major task of the Japanese philosophers is the duty of creating a religion which would introduce science to the Japanese modern society. In fact, science and religion are not two separated concepts and have come close through a secularization process. In other words, the specialists and scientific professionals along with the official Shintoism created a secular modernist religion in the years before the War. The situation changed after the War and secularization hastened considerably, separating religion from the public sphere and especially scientific world. However, religion is communicating with the scientific world and optimism towards development has turned into a new belief in the scientific world (Nakajima, 2013). Meanwhile, the connection between religious learning and beliefs and plans has

been modified through the time, scientific developments and technological achievements are executed with an accurate coordination. The attention accorded to the spiritual matters has prevented land deficit or growing society needs to push religious teachings to the side of the road or even make them the second priority. Therefore, most of the time meeting people's growing needs has been as important as creating spiritual places in the city and utilizing religious teachings.

Japanese people still go to Shinto temples in large numbers. Normally, for the Japanese who have a wish or request, the temples as still the best and surest way to grant their wishes; women who want children, those whose loved ones are ill, farmers and fishermen who want to have better incomes, and even students who have an exam ahead are always in the temples. It must be noted that Japan's constitution ensures the religious freedom for all citizens and no religious organization is allowed to receive governmental grants or opportunities to enforce political preferences. The state and state organizations avoid participating in any kind of religious acts. Accordingly, Japan has no official religion, but Shinto and Buddhism constitute the largest number of followers (Mo'in Zādeh, 2003). Thus, it seems that, with all the changes occurring in lifestyle, the feelings caused by religious acts remain unchanged and abandoning them completely would cause a sort of spiritual crisis.

### **Respecting the Nature (Naturism)**

Japan's coasts, mountains, and forests have caused some of its parts which have not yet been destroyed by industrialism and population to be of most exceptional beauty. One of the main reasons of preserving this natural excellence is the Japanese historical attention to the natural marvels and the people's interest in natural beauties (Reischauer, 2000). Also, it is not

surprising that “respecting the nature and the environment” would be another principle which strengthens spirituality and generates peace in the urban space. This happens in Kyoto while “destroying nature” is the first step in developing the cities and, especially in developing countries, this has brought upon them horrible and irreparable consequences. In fact, numerous constructions whose only purpose is to settle large populations in small spaces have not only caused dangerous environmental pollution, but also have forced people to confront numerous physical illnesses and psychological crises. Thus, a principal reason of Kyoto's success in urbanization and urban development is “naturism” which is born after the Japanese architecture principles and has risen from the ancient religious teachings.

Population growth has disturbed the natural equilibrium and the life continuum (Yār Ahmadi, 1999), but this does not mean that people are relieved of their responsibilities to overcome this crisis and go back to the time when they consider themselves as part of the nature. It seems that considering the fact that Japan has preserved its cultural coherence with the past, using new developments, the country has wisely tried to control the parts which may separate it from its past and avoid falling into a cultural vacuum and thus losing its identity. Because of this, the Japanese people have tried to build their modern constructions in harmony both with the nature and the traditional Japanese architecture.

### **Architecture and Specific Urbanization**

A critical factor in successful implementation of every action is setting clear goals from the beginning. Emphasizing the creation and the preservation of a “peaceful and desirable” city, representing “Japan's cultural capital” has been apparent in the urban planning of Kyoto (Kyoto City, 2001). Through centuries,

the authorities in Kyoto have planned their city construction and maintenance having these goals in mind. Even in critical situations, such as war or natural disasters, the city's authorities remained faithful to these goals, which have set Kyoto's urban planning and policy making for years.

A principle which is followed in urban planning is the principle of "uniqueness of land usage". This means that each land must have a particular usage such as residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, etc. Regarding this principle, urban spaces would not develop without planning and following a specific schema (Kyoto City, 2009). The first consideration in Kyoto's urbanization is dividing the city into urban development and urban control districts, and implementing construction rules and restrictions regarding the urban assets and facilities. Development districts as earlier mentioned have been divided into nine districts: grade one exclusively residential areas, grade two exclusively residential areas, residential, periphery commercial areas, commercial, semi-industrial, industrial, exclusively industrial, and specific industrial areas. In addition to this categorization, there are specific areas in Kyoto which are considered as preserved historical, cultural, and natural areas. Today, one fourth of Kyoto's land constitutes picturesque and green non-central areas which are both development and controlled districts. There can be no constructions in these areas without getting a permit from the municipality which is granted according to the construction and architecture laws (Shapira *et al.*, 1994: 67). In addition, the "Master Plan of Kyoto City" has outlined macro guidelines for the urban development of the city regarding its natural and historical environment (Kyoto City, 2001).

### **Consistency Instead of Renovation**

An important tool in preserving the unique urban space of Kyoto

is asserting the consistency of the city's historical urban textures, buildings, or structures with its new/modern atmosphere and requirements. This means that the policies would avoid demolishing the old buildings and structures and reviving, reconstructing, and renewing consistency would be set as a priority. Therefore, based on the policies and plans written according to the conservation of the city's historical buildings, the demolishing of the historical and cultural assets would be avoided. Even in case of the structures which have suffered serious damage or have completely been destroyed during natural disasters or wars, the main goal has been to remake the exact same building and not to replace it with a structure which is different in architecture and construction characteristics.

Another characteristic of Kyoto's architecture is the *mélange* of the oldest traditional wooden buildings and the newest buildings and subway stations; one can see buildings with mid-school architectures among the primitive and modern ones which have largely been forgotten. Also, this city reflects a more religious architecture compared to other cities in Japan. Temples of Kyoto and the marvelous Japanese gardens are among the bests throughout the country. It is interesting that the secular traditional architecture of Kyoto, such as the wooden imperial villa of Katsura Rikyu, is also largely visible. Another example is Machiya, the traditional wooden houses of Japan which are in a way the main structures of Kyoto (Ishikawa, 1998).

Kyoto's historical buildings, which belong to specific historical eras, are mostly temples and gardens; these temples and gardens are the city's remarkable symbols in today's Japan. The religious buildings which belong to different Buddhist and Shinto religions have other functions in addition to religious ones. Because of this, most of what constitutes the historical symbolism of the city is categorized under the temples. In addition, Kyoto was the imperial capital of Japan from the 8<sup>th</sup>

century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the magnificent architecture representing these eleven centuries is still seen in the city. Most of the buildings in Kyoto have been destroyed several times by war or fire, but the city has been reconstructed again and again in order to preserve its rich historical monuments. In other words, the city's historical look in central parts is not because of the persistence of old buildings since they were built; rather it has been preserved by numerous reconstructions based on traditional methods. It must be noted that most of the remaining and original historical buildings in Kyoto are in the city's suburbs and not central parts.

A review of Kyoto's architectural history reveals that the buildings that are considered as the important and unique scattered symbols and landmarks of the city are mostly temples and gardens. The existence of temples in the modern Kyoto indicates the role this city has always played in the Japanese spiritual life. The areas that represent the historical façade of the city and are considered as its symbol contain mostly tombs, temples, gardens, and streets which portray the ancient times and can be considered as the birthplace of the Japanese culture. Japanese architecture is also the dominant style in parts of the city's residential and public structures. Therefore, although Kyoto has benefited from the expertise of foreign and international architects and urban planners to build Western-based buildings, it has been able to preserve the Japanese cultural and traditional characteristics in itself. This section points out a general understanding of Kyoto's architectural symbols.

Temples are greatly different in terms of structure which is related to their school and historical era. There are three main architectural schools in the construction of the temples: Tenjikuyo (Indian<sup>1</sup>), Karayo (Chinese),

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1. This is not actually Indian.

and Wayo (Japanese) (Lonely Planet City Guide, 2005).

Houses of Worship usually have simple wooden structures and are built on plain grounds. Characteristics such as gable roofs and entrances in the back of the buildings distinguish their design from that of the temples (Rowthorn, 2007).

Gardens and Palaces: Gardens have a long history in Japan and they convey the history of religion in the country. There was originally an endowed purified, plain site covered with sand called *Saniwa* where a deity was worshipped by the emperor. During the Heian Dynasty the gardens became more beautiful and the noble kiosks each contained a water garden which was built from a low-depth artificial lake or multiple connected pools with islands and waterfalls (Yasa, 2005). Ponds, pools, and lakes constituted the heart of the Japanese garden in terms of design. Generally, the shape of the Japanese garden would be manifest by some landscape elements. One of the most important ones was the lavatorium and the basin, but not of cement or metal materials. The pipe they used as the basin was sometimes made of bamboo and its curved shape would call to mind a sense of extreme humility, associated with bowing while entering the ceremonies and gatherings (Piš Bin, 2005).

Streets as Cultural Symbols: Streets shape the main body of the cities. They are the main field of public activities and the most prominent public spaces in each city. Therefore, as the main frame of the city, they represent public values and reflect the identity of the city. In a city with coherent and identified identity, streets which have been the basis for the formation of

the city do not lose their historical textures because of urban development, reducing urban density, the need for open spaces, or any other reasons, rather, their identity-making functions would achieve more importance through the time. The streets in the historical part of Kyoto have an adaptive network. There only remain some original temples and a street network from the primary origin of the city built in 797 and the other parts have been destroyed through bloody wars. But Kyoto has reconstructed itself. Kyoto's design approach is community-based. In addition to that, the planning philosophy of the city is based upon creating a healthy environment through maintenance, reconstruction and construction, and also a dynamic and innovative culture. "The guidelines which preserve and strengthen the historical and traditional architecture", "street landscape design", and "imposing strict restrictions on new constructions" are three principles to preserve the physical status of the city (Historic Case Studies, 2010).

**Traditional Lodging Houses:** There are modern hotels in Kyoto built in Western fashion; modern halls which are not constructed according to the Zen halls of the religious believers. But the traditional lodging houses present a rare opportunity to experience the Japanese traditional lifestyle (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005). A novelist is quoted that, "time is halted in these houses, in a way that I feel that I can experience the peace of the old Japan." Japanese traditional lodging houses are called *Ryokan*. The oldest *Ryokan* in Kyoto is called *Tawaraya* which is superbly hospitable. The visitors are greeted with warm and kneeled Okami San (women who greet you with traditional clothes and manners). They are taken to their private rooms through

the anfractuons inner gardens. The rooms are decorated in a Japanese style. There is a short table in the middle of the room, silk cushions with flower designs to rest on, a decorated alcove on which, the installation of flowers show the time in each season, old but not so expensive materials and paper lanterns (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005).

### **Combining Culturalism and Technological Modernism**

Paying more attention to culture, in fact, consolidates the national identity-making elements. Benevolo (2005) argues that Japan might be a country which, without being naturalist or primitive, has a tradition different from that of the West; at a time, Japan was largely influenced by the western values, but through the time and passing through numerous difficulties, the country found its way and followed up its own independent path. Kyoto, here, is the first center for Japan's traditional culture and religions. Numerous historical buildings and beautiful gardens have preserved the beauty of Japan before the modern age (Bugheyri, 2010).

In Kyoto's civic schema, culturalism is not in contrast with technologism and the prominent approach is a combination of these two concepts. However, integrating these two approaches and achieving a combination which both seeks to move in step with the technology and center itself upon cultural values is rarely possible. Culturalist cities are small areas whose traditional context has remained unchanged and the modern technologies have not found their way into them. These cities are not usually populated because they cannot meet the basic needs of the modern daily life; in fact they are accused of committing "archaism". On the other hand, large and populated cities, trying to maximally use the modern assets, deliberately destroy the past and do not feel the need to preserve the inner

cultural principles. They follow down the path of building modern, chaotic, or identical constructions and are hopeless when it comes to responding to their inhabitants' cultural and human needs. Integrating the positive aspects of each one of these approaches gives birth to a new approach which is basically what has been used in Kyoto planning. In this approach, for example, architecture is not merely construction, rather, it is an activity which establishes a desirable relationship between the buildings, landmarks, memorials, roads, and squares, and in this way, creates an arena for collective memories and cultural savior whose main characteristic is dynamism along with utilization of modern facilities. In fact, Kyoto is not a product of a mere imitation; rather, it is the product of a clever innovation which includes different cultural aspects.

The geographical isolation of Japan has provided the possibility to give birth and promote one of the richest cultures in the world and Kyoto, considering its history, is determined to preserve the title of the country's "cultural capital". Reischauer (2000) writes, "imagine things that are original like their traditional clothes, thick straw mats on the floor [tatami], their cooking, their native architecture, their lifestyle, sliding paper panels, the open and expansive structure of all houses, shelves for artistic works, fireboxes for burning charcoals, wooden or iron washers, bathing as a method for relaxation at the end of the day and in the winter to feel warm and happy; all these are simple but principal aspects of daily life in Japan which are traditional and specific to this country and they are more a representation of an innovative culture than a mere imitation."

Kyoto craftsmen are famous for their professionalism in traditional crafts and arts (Bugheyri, 2010); Kyoto handicrafts are also part of the ancient and spiritual fame and cultural assets of the city. Kyoto has always attracted the best artists and

craftsmen. The original schools of tea traditions, calligraphy, floriculture, *Buddhist* main sects, theatre and other performing arts schools have all been flourished in Kyoto. There are very simple facilities in parts of the city where the artists and craftsmen are working. Some of them are the thirteenth generation of a family who have kept the same profession for centuries. Handmade dolls, sliding and rotating doors, dyeing, paper-making, pencil-making, woodcraft, metal craft, glass craft, sculpting, engraving, pottery, needling, broidery, and bamboo baskets are Kyoto's most important handicrafts. In the modern age, traditional and handicraft professions have been redefined in Kyoto and the artists, preserving the old principles, have been looking for new forms and functions and have continued the innovative spirit and preservation of the beauty and innovation as an honorable tradition (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005).

Kyoto has created a relatively open environment for commerce and business and because of that many companies and industries have located their headquarters in this city, such as Nintendo (a multinational gaming company), Rohm (Japanese electronics company), and Omron (electronics company). Totally, there are 170 European and American companies headquartered in Kyoto. In addition, the Kyoto Research Park located in the city's downtown has attracted technology developers and scholars from around the world and is one of the centers responsible for the international prestige of the city. Tourism is a prominent industry in Kyoto. The city's work force is about 730,000 people which 65 percent of them working in tourism. After tourism, electronics, production, and textiles are the city's most important industries. Municipal and commercial officials of Kyoto work to maintain tourism and handicraft as two of the most important parts of the city's economy. To this end, there have been efforts to preserve the traditional Kyoto and, on the other hand, there have been

enormous investments in scientific facilities and public and private sphere as a domestic economic prosperity program which includes the establishment of the Kyoto Research Park, Kyoto Science City, and Kansai Science City (Carpenter & Soshitsu, 2005). Currently, more than 50 million tourists visit Kyoto annually from Japan and other countries (Kadokawa, 2009).

### **A Model of an Innovative and Dynamic City**

Before conclusion, we shall discuss the model which Imai<sup>1</sup> (2004) called the “New Kyoto Model”, which is a model in which the historical and identity elements and textures of the city are preserved along with the modern procedures of the urban life and innovations. He believes that this model is achievable by studying and analyzing the daily life innovations. Based on his proposed model, Japan, instead of mourning its economic weaknesses, should try to rediscover its economic strength and attractiveness and then strengthen those areas. The final goal of this kind of action is to create and develop an “economic-cultural city” which can be generated by the citizens’ innovative actions in different aspects of their daily lives. This schema exists in Kyoto and Imai tries to specify clear elements and examples visible throughout the city. Imai, who has lived in Kyoto for 12 years, uses a book titled “The Rise of The Creative Class” (subtitled, How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life) by American sociologist Richard Florida to develop his argument. According to him, it seems that presenting a cultural-economic model of the ancient capital of Japan is possible and we can call that the “new Kyoto model”. Imai adds, “Professor Florida suggests that the accumulation of innovations can be defined by “Three T's”: technology, talent, and tolerance, and he places special

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1. Director of the Board, Stanford Japan Center

importance on the combination of the latter two. In order to lure creative talent, tolerance and an atmosphere of freedom within the local society is important, and this explains why places like Austin Texas are now becoming new creative areas. Simply put, it is becoming Silicon Valley vs. Austin Texas”.

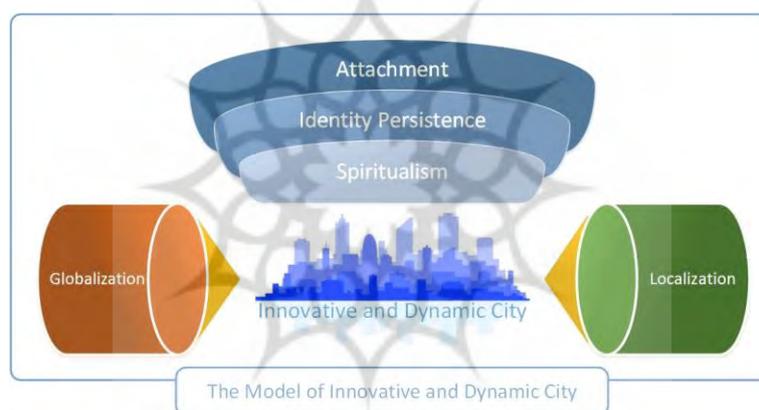
Imai (2004) suggests that studying these three elements in Kyoto indicates that Tokyo is a city inhabited by a variety of different social streams and layers and, thus, Japan's capital has a high capacity and tolerance to accept different people from around the world. Diversity is too high in this city and “a structured disorder” is apparent in its layers; many of Tokyo's scenes are chaotic and make it difficult to assess the city's nature. Maybe analyzing Tokyo in detail to rediscover and re-identify the city would give the same results as if it was studied generally and through a macro analysis. This means that there is a diversity of foreignness in this city which is a small part of the transformation existing in the larger plan. On the other hand, Kyoto is a city which, if micro analyzed, would give us new results of recognition and discovery. Maybe the reason for this is the smaller scale of the study in this case. Kyoto is a city which inherits the three mentioned elements and the city has been able to combine technology, talent, and tolerance. Imai adds that in case of Kyoto's technology, it should be pointed out that there are numerous economic institutions and companies in the city which possess technological supremacy and distinct identities. Kyocera Corporation, Horiba Ltd., Rohm Co., Ltd., and Murata Manufacturing Company Limited are some of these companies whose profit ratio is twice the average Japanese companies' profit. He continues “for "talent", the number of graduate students relative to the number of business offices in Kyoto is the highest in Japan. Regarding "tolerance", the 36 universities of Kyoto accept foreign students from various countries, and observations have been provided as in "*Kyoto-shiki Keiei* (Kyoto-Style Management)" by *Chihiro Suematsu*,

that the pride and nobleness inherent in Kyoto bring about the tolerance to productively exploit individuals' characters”.

Imai's notes suggest that Kyoto has connected the skill and advanced technology together. He elaborates that considering the needs of today's world; the word “creativity” must be redefined. Normally, it visualizes a prominent invention or a new innovative product. These kinds of inventions and innovations are truly important and critical, but today a kind of innovation is desirable and needed that is able to form new jobs and lifestyles through interactions between individuals and citizens and by preserving their individuality; the point is that the interactions between individuals are constantly happening everywhere. Imai's examples include the Machiya houses in Kyoto which are reborn by connecting the information technology and people's interest in Kyoto's ancient structures, and in this way, achieving new and innovative values by that merge together the new and the old, the modern and the ancient. In these cases, the experts and scholars can be effective and bring many other things into reality. Kyoto's experts have also created a system in the field of industry and business which is highly profitable and at the same time preserves their identity. Imai concludes that by connecting culture and economy, a new field should be provided for economic culture and the works of cultural strategists should be reassessed and reanalyzed. He believes that Japan needs to build a cultural-economic city which attracts the people of the world to live and work in it. Imai adds that Kyoto's capabilities to achieve this goal have, for example, attracted Larry Ellison, a prominent figure in America's information industry. As a result Imai writes, “With Kyoto as an example, cities in Japan should launch a competition to attract key persons from Japan and abroad to recreate their cultural economy. Through intellectual mingling of these key persons, the high qualities of Japan's tradition will be rediscovered, and associated economical cultural values will

begin to be recognized internationally. Such processes and projects should eventually create and support a common notion that criteria for global values should be flexible and diverse”.

Considering Imai's model and concluding what it is discussed to this point, the following model, depicting an innovative and dynamic city, points out the five elements necessary for this kind of city to possess a lively and thriving urban atmosphere. These elements have been present in Kyoto and have been discussed.



**The Model of the Innovative and Dynamic City**

### **Conclusion: Identity Change and Persistence**

The challenge of change and persistence is the largest identity challenge of universalization, globalization, and expansive translocalization. Kyoto is a prominent example of the world's cultural cities which has been able to integrate identity change and persistence. The persistence of the city's identity which has caused the persistence of "Kyoto's noble identity" is a subject much attended in this city. This component emphasizes the interpretation that the city's development must not lead to the loss of the past Kyoto in the present one, rather, the new layers of the city must be made of the old layers and be a continuation of them. The two other components, localization and

globalization, are in relation to the first component and in this integration the concept of glocalization takes shape. Globalization which capacitates the entrance and presence of the global elements, begins a process of selection which can be called “global staffing”. Global staffing selects components which strengthen the localization process and improve the globalization as well. As a result, Kyoto can be known as a city where the sense of localization and globalization mutually exists and the procedures of modern life do not have a negative effect on the city’s historical tradition which is a symbol of Japan’s culture and civilization, and, even in a way, strengthens the civilizational identity of the city. The glocalised view of the urban management and planning ensures the persistence of the identity-making elements of the city in the middle of the continually changing modern life. The next component which will be the main source of the coherent development of the city is “integration”. Integration will always consider the city as a harmonious body which will grow and develop as a whole.

In the end, it should be noted that the “powerful city” is the source of strengthening the “cultural and civilizational power” of the city and will decrease the identity losses and defeats. Of course, it must be remembered that one of the characteristics of powerful identity-based cities such as Kyoto, is the meaningful and persistent connection between the city’s material and spiritual heritage. In this connection, the high religious-moral elements would be able to give meaning and depth to other civic elements, such as the material ones, and even act as the spirit of the city. In doing so, the city would not be a meaningless body; the reflection of the religion and morality would be manifest in the manners of the citizens and the modesty of the urbanization process and architecture as well as urban furniture and even urban services. In other words, it could be said that power here does not mean domination over others; rather it is in a form of civilization, spirituality, and morality.

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