

Comparative Research on Culture-Led Regeneration across Cities in China

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Abstract : This paper explores the findings so far from a major externally-funded project which operates internationally in China, Germany and the UK. The research team is working in the context of the redevelopment of post-industrial sites in China and how these might be platforms for creative enterprises and thereby, the economy and welfare to flourish. Results from the project are anticipated to inform urban design policies in China and possibly farther afield. The research has utilised ethnographic studies and participatory design methods to investigate alternative strategies for sustainable urban renewal of China's post-industrial areas. Additionally, it has undertaken comparative studies of successful examples of European and Chinese urban regeneration cases. The international cross-disciplinary team has been seeking different opportunities for developing relevant creative industries whilst retaining cultural and industrial heritage. This paper will explore the research conducted so far by the team and offer initial findings. Findings point out the development challenges of cities respecting the protection of local culture/heritages, history of the industries and transformation of the local economies. The preliminary results and pilot analysis of the current research have demonstrated that local government policyholders, business investors/developers and creative industry practitioners are the three major stakeholders that will impact city revitalisations. These groups are expected to work together with asynchronous vision in order for redevelopments to be successful. Meanwhile, local geography, history, culture, politics, economy and ethnography have been identified as important factors that impact on project design and development during urban transformations. Data is being processed from the team's research conducted across the focal Western and Chinese cities. This has provided theoretical guidance and practical support to the development of significant experimental projects. Many were re-examined with a more international perspective, and adjustments have been based on the conclusions of the research. The observations and research are already generating design solutions in terms of ascertaining essential site components, layouts, visual design and practical facilities for regenerated sites. Two significant projects undertaken by this project team have been nominated by the central Chinese government as the most successful exemplars. They have been listed as outstanding national industry heritage projects; in particular, one of them was nominated by ArchDaily as Building of the Year 2019, and so this project outcome has made a substantial contribution to research and innovation. In summary, this paper will outline the funded project, discuss the work conducted so far, and pinpoint the initial discoveries. It will detail the future steps and indicate how these will impact on national and local governments in China, designers, local citizens and building users.

Keywords : cultural & industrial heritages, ethnographic research, participatory design, regeneration of post-industrial sites, sustainable

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