

A Quality-Oriented Urban Development Pattern? Two Case Studies in Shanghai

Xin Yi¹

School of Architecture, Southeast University, Nanjing, 210096 China; Email: xinyi.tum@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. This article concentrates on the transformation of development patterns due to economic transitions in Shanghai through two case studies looking at different spatial levels. In the transformation process, the improvement of spatial quality in the existing urban space will play the central role in achieving a balance in the future among the relevant economic, social and environmental aspects. Relatedly, economic growth is no longer seen as the only important goal. Social and environmental issues have gained more and more attention, and are increasingly seen as the basic foundation for sustainable development. Given that such significant changes have occurred within a very short period of time, the author will discuss different critical factors and related symptoms as embodied in urban planning practice. Two case studies regarding the transformation in goal setting and the implementation process will be introduced, with a focus on the issues of accessibility and quality of life. One case relates to the development plan for Hongqiao Business Park, which is one of three focus development areas for Shanghai and is located near the comprehensive Hongqiao Transport Hub. The other case considers an area located to the south of the area of interest in the first case; both areas are well connected with each other. A new development strategy for the development of new towns in knowledge economy clusters has been advanced in the outskirts of Shanghai's city center, and has also influenced such efforts on the regional level, i.e., where the Huangpu River flows through the planning area and connects to other parts of the broader Shanghai region.

KEYWORDS. *Quality-oriented, urban development pattern, economic transition, Shanghai*

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1. EFFORTS TO REORIENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In the post-reform period, China has achieved an economic boom that has lasted for over 30 years. Changes to the economic structure of China have also been reflected in the transition from an agricultural country to an industrial country. Even several developed cities in China's eastern region have begun to experience the deindustrialization process.

This transformation has been marked by the hosting of a series of mega-events, e.g., Beijing's Olympic Games in 2008 (Yi, 2011) and Shanghai's Expo in 2010. Such developed cities and regions have assumed the mission of providing connections with the global economy. Their further development will also to a large extent depend on their own respective roles within the global economy and even on the extent to which they become influential players. A global city plays important roles such as serving as a node for the world's economic organization, being an important location for financial and advanced urban industries, and acting as a production center for creativity and innovation, as well as a serving as a market for innovative production and consumption (Sassen, 2001). A study of four world cities identified four key groups of advanced service activity: financial and business services, 'power and influence' (or 'command and control'), creative and cultural industries, and tourism (Llewelyn-Davies, 1996).

With such references, the development of service sectors in Chinese cities was accordingly accelerated in a short period. As a result, such cities are confronting a series of challenges associated with economic transition. With that in mind, the present study will discuss a quality-oriented urban development pattern with a focus on several key aspects. The improvement of spatial quality in the existing urban space will be taken seriously as an important strategy by decision makers involved in the economic transition process. Given that such significant changes occurred over a very short period of time, the author will discuss different critical factors in development frameworks and related criteria as embodied in urban planning practice. Thereafter, this reorientation process will be concretized with the introduction of two case studies in Shanghai. One case considered a key development project that was implemented during the Expo. The other case consisted of a strategic planning study that delineated reconsideration of development concepts and related development paths for the local decision makers after the hosting of the Expo.

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