

CONTEXTUAL PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN: THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL AGREEMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS ON DYNAMICS OF THE CHINESE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This research focuses on the ongoing actions and initiatives of the Chinese authorities, and on their impact on the Chinese urban development and city-planning community. The research analyses the expected impact of widely-accepted international agreements, as well as of the phenomenon of the global exchange of urban concepts and their local contextualisation and implementation, on the creation of liveable and sustainable cities.

A central aspect of the research is investigating how the character and directions of continued urbanisation might influence contextual city-building in China by addressing the question how sustainable development and contextual planning are connected. Planning approaches that are embedded in local contexts are vital for sustainable development and use of the environment; the United Nations New Urban Agenda calls for 'context-specific and culturally sensitive sustainable solutions' (UN 2016, 30) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 11 (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). These issues are increasingly acknowledged in China, especially after the country has not only signed the Paris Climate Agreement (see Figure 3) but also ratified and agreed to implement the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III, Quito 2016; see Figures 4, 5, 6). On top of that, the party has modified its approach to city-building, criticising uncritical implementation of foreign architectural approaches or the popularity of gated communities (Zheng 2016). All this foretells important and broad changes in the way Chinese urban development is conceptualized, planned, and managed in China's next phase of urbanisation.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

In order to understand the driving forces behind the urbanisation phase in China that has been initiated in 2016 (NPC 2016) and therefore to answer the research question, a broad set of data is analysed. The design of the research is a deductive, qualitative, case study-based approach, while the diversity of the potential resources, together with the character of the topic, call for the application of multiple methods (e.g. numerical analysis of statistical data, path-dependence analysis of strategic documents, or examination of literature). Expert interviews are viewed as particularly valuable as they reveal the practitioners' view of which changes are likely to impact their work the most.

To summarise, this research analyses how the various recent steps of the Chinese authorities will impact the next urbanisation phase in China on the local level; looking at the adaptation and translation of spatial concepts to the Chinese context.

References:

- National People's Congress of China (NPC) (2016): China's NPC approves 13th five-year plan, Issue 1, 2016, Edited by The People's Congresses Journal. Published by The People's Congresses Journal.
- United Nations (UN) (2015): Paris Agreement. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1. Paris: United Nations.
- United Nations (UN) (2016): New Urban Agenda. Habitat III. Quito: United Nations.
- Zheng Jinran (Feb 22, 2016): China looks to regulate city growth. In: China Daily, The state council, the People's Republic of China. English.gov.cn. retrieved 22.9.2016.