

Impact of Overtourism: The Dark Side of Urban Renewal

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Abstract

Every city and nation aspires to create the best living environments for their residents. This pursuit has led to numerous urban transformation initiatives aimed at making areas more attractive, accessible, and economically viable. These approaches vary depending on the specific context, ultimately shaping the affected areas and entire cities differently. In this paper, we explore the motivations behind urban transformations and the challenges posed by overtourism, an inevitable consequence of revitalising areas. We particularly focus on the factors influencing the decision to prioritise tourism as a primary economic driver and the variables impacting such a transformation. To investigate this, we analyse two locations in Taiwan and the Czech Republic, highlighting the distinctions in design, context, outcomes, and impacts. Our research combines observations, interviews, and secondary data to provide insights into the intricate relationship between urban transformation and overtourism.

Keywords: city development, Kaohsiung, overtourism, Pier-2, Prague, tourism, urbanism

1. Introduction

The urge to cultivate public spaces grows as many cities worldwide expect to attract tourists and new workers by renovating abandoned or non-attractive urban areas. There seem to be efforts towards modernising places that do not necessarily need it. The reasons for this change reflect recent trends and the authorities' need for making certain iconic, busy, or central areas more appealing.

Aside from boosting the economy and maintaining prosperity, the aim is often to attract tourists, which is partially connected with the economic growth of the areas. But where is the line? What can it cause? And what to watch out for to keep things in our hands? In this article, we will be looking for answers to the following questions: (1) How does overtourism impact on urban revitalisation projects' long-term viability and sustainability? (2) What are the key factors influencing the success or failure of urban renewal initiatives in mitigating the negative effects of overtourism?

We used observation, interviews, and secondary data analysis to analyse the background and features of the renovation of Pier-2 in Kaohsiung (Taiwan) and the Karlín district in Prague (Czech Republic). We used these two locations because of their different characteristics, enabling us to do a comparative analysis. We propose a hypothesis suggesting that regional variations exist, influenced by both the geographical location of the renovated area and the objectives set by city officials. Consequently, our focus extends to striking a balance between attracting tourists and addressing the essential needs of local communities.

2. Literature Review

In the field of urban planning and city development, historical perspectives have played a significant role. However, the modern concept of urban regeneration, which emerged in the 1980s as a response to revitalising areas affected by industrialisation (Jones & Evans, 2013:7), has injected fresh energy into this domain. As a result, urban planning and development hold promise for the emergence of innovative ideas and concepts.

There are many definitions of urban transformation, where every author understands the scope and individual aspects with slight nuances and from different perspectives. For instance, Hurlimann, Moosavi and Browne (2021) consider urban transformation to be primarily environmental and introduces a three-part typology: coping, malaction, and transformation. Similarly, Hölscher & Frantzeskaki (2021) suggest that "... urban transformation narratives have been driven by the recognition of the need and opportunity for radical change towards sustainable and resilient cities," which in the context of recent events reflects the negative human impact on nature.

According to Caves (2004:710), the purpose of urban transformation is to restore economic viability to a given area. He believes that attracting external private and public investment is the key purpose to boosting a given area to make the transformation successful. Lastly, Inam (2013:5–7) avoids the standard definition of urbanism altogether. Instead, in his repeatedly asked question "What can urbanism be?" and "What purpose does urbanism serve?" he refers to urban transformation as a bridge that connects the gap between planning and architecture as a morphological definition. The last, more direct definition that complements the previous statements is by Akkar:

"As a fundamental outline definition, urban transformation is the sum of the comprehensive and integrated approaches, strategies and actions implemented to improve the economic, social, physical and environmental conditions of urban space that experienced collapse and degradation (Salihoğlu, Albayrak and Eryilmaz, 2021)."

We would like to challenge this definition by suggesting that urban space doesn't have to undergo collapse or degradation. Considering our earlier claims that urban transformation is often driven by contemporary trends, the objective of enhancing an area to align with these trends is a valid rationale. It's possible that Akkar defined the area's obsolescence as a form of degradation; in such a scenario, the definition aligns perfectly.

Overall, the scope of urban transformation's definition is fairly broad and hard to capture, but the consensus remains – as every development relates to money and investment in mind, it reflects recent tendencies driven by society. Sustainability and environmental protection are the cases here.

Factors of money and recent trends go hand-in-hand. The reason for this link is understandable – transforming the area to reflect the trending topics raises the attractiveness of the specific area. This evolution attracts new demographic groups of inhabitants and workers, and creates demand for various services, resulting in prosperity growth and money turnover. Generally mentioned drivers of modern urban transformation are economic, social, and environmental factors. These are described in various sources with different focuses. Jones & Evans (2013:7), for instance, emphasise the need to balance these three factors, regarding developing from an obscure concept in the late 1980s, which tried "... to locate developments on the cheapest land in areas with the highest demand. In the UK context, this would result in pressure to relax constraints on greenfield development, particularly around London and the southeast." According to the Eurostat report (2022; see also Kabisch *et al.*, 2018: 237), environmental preferences, along with economic factors (such as income), influence residents' decisions. Moreover, economic factors that determine individuals' position within society, directly impact the social aspect of life, which is the last main factor defining urban transformation. If the residents identify with their district, their street, and their social bubble, the society becomes more unified, communities grow stronger, and cultural institutions or events set up and organised by residents can attract more visitors to the area, resulting in a greater economic boost.

Business and tourism represent a significant impact on urban transformation and vice versa. Successful urban transformation attracts owners and vendors, and without a proper plan for establishing conditions for business development, there is no guarantee that the urban transformation project will be successful. Intensive increases in the number of buildings, offices, job positions, and people seeking jobs in areas that undergo urban transformation (each of the mentioned items leads to another) are an inevitable effect of the process. Even if the subject of the transformation is a city park, there will still be new job positions related to staff operating at facilities, guards, or vendors. This example suggests that even if the

significance of business in the renovated area is marginal, it should never be neglected. Operating firms that arrive in a transformed area are expected to be willing to advance and progress. Digital technologies and their implementation are, according to the study about sustainable businesses in smart cities, one of the ways to retain sustainability and participate in bilateral agreements with the city, since firms and smart cities live in symbiosis (Dana *et al.*, 2022). Another trend of recent years is the growing demand for alternative food markets with a local identity, nature, health, and trustworthiness products, which can help businesses using agricultural transformation focused on small business models, entrepreneurship, and human relations (Wiśniewska *et al.*, 2023).

There are several concerns about integrating businesses into new areas. Ambitions of many local authorities are a very radical change because they do not want to risk bad results by not putting enough effort into the project and losing even the little that they would have always done. This might result in the destruction of the local character by introducing chain stores to the area and discriminating against small vendors (Zukin, 2009: 1–5). With more and more firms coming, property values and rents can rise high. There is usually little to no effort from the authorities to regulate this because higher prices offer faster financial healing after such massive investment in the whole area. As a result, low-income residents and entrepreneurs are disadvantaged (Lees, slater & Wyly, 2014:4). Some concerns are being raised, however, the advantages (led by economic boosts and improving quality of life) in most cases far outweigh, and with proper planning, urban transformation can be a game-changer. Some locations are just not meant to be “touristified”. While the impact of tourism on local communities can be negative in the perspective of raising prices, and displacement of local residents in favour of shared housing services (Goodwin, 2016:11), it can also act as a catalyst for change in cities, encouraging investment in infrastructure, cultural amenities, and public spaces (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1994:535). One of the positive examples of tourism connected to revitalized areas will be thoroughly discussed in the research part – Pier2 in Kaohsiung has transformed from an industrial hub that was closed to the public into a thriving and busy place that has offered many opportunities (Hung, Lin & Hsueh, 2018).

Tourism is one of the darker sides of urban transformation – strongly connected to the topic of business development (where there is demand, so there will be supply), even tourism is a side effect of almost any renovated area. Whenever we tried to find some purely positive examples, there was always a “but.” Kaohsiung seems to be the most positive case we have found, nevertheless, the future of the limited area and growing population is uncertain as well. While acknowledging the negative aspects, it is important to highlight that a well-managed tourism sector has the potential to generate employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy positively. Tourism can serve as a means to promote a city's unique character and cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride among its residents. To benefit everyone involved, urban transformation should aim for a harmonious equilibrium between the needs of the community and those of tourists. It is also up to local authorities how they will regulate the inflow of tourists, how much power they will give to business owners, and if they manage to strike the balance between residents and companies, as it should be in an ideal world.

3. Methodology

When selecting the locations, we took our familiarity with the environment into consideration. It would be extremely difficult to capture the essence of the environment and all aspects of it without any personal connection and deeper previous knowledge about the area.

Having this condition in mind, we decided to make a Pier-2 area (駁二) in Kaohsiung (Taiwan) to be the main area for the primary research. The reasons that play in favour of this selection were the proximity to our residences (the area is easily accessible from there) and the fact that the transformation it has undergone over past years is remarkable; it is being given as an example of a successful urban transformation of the entire country. The case of northern Prague (namely districts called Karlín and Holešovice) was selected as a secondary location, which serves as a comparison and verification that areas in different parts of the world do differ. The reason for this decision was the same as Pier-2; even though it is not our current place of residence, We have contextual knowledge about the area and are capable of introducing the story and different ways to renovate the place without having to stay there

physically. Residency in the Sizihwan area which lies beside Pier-2 has provided the opportunity to study it for nearly two years. Therefore, observation immediately became the top choice for the research because of already obtained data to the extent of hundreds of pages of notes and observations. In the analysis part, we will summarise those notes into a list of perspectives, containing the relevant key points to each of them (the full set of notes is too long for the scope of the article).

It is certainly crucial to document the situations that we passively observe. However, actively engaging in communication with individuals who frequent Pier-2 refines research findings. Sometimes, initial impressions can be deceptive. Through interviews with visitors, business proprietors, and individuals who contribute to the area in various ways (for instance, we were able to interview one of the artists responsible for a mural on the primary promenade), our objective is to corroborate the impressions gathered from our observations.

We used semi-structured interviews for all cases. We see this approach as the most effective; while having a clear picture of what questions we want to ask and what topics we want to cover, we leave room for improvisation for both the interviewees and interviewers in case some topic gets more interesting to talk about. Analogously to different groups of people, we used different forms of interviews – we contacted some respondents in advance and organised a focus group once, but we mainly focused on approaching the people without any heads-up or discussions. During our interviews, we considered various viewpoints. We amalgamated the perspectives of "regular visitors" with those of business owners and vendors operating within Pier-2. We accorded slightly greater significance to the latter group since our research primarily focuses on perception. The secondary sources we used are the brochure provided by the Pier-2 Art Center office. The data bank related to the Prague case consists of online articles and social media posts from the authorities who manage the district. Searching for unified views and frequently discussed keywords is an important part of conducting research. However, since all the interviews had a semi-structured character and therefore were not easily comparable, we decided not to use any statistical software for qualitative analysis.

4. Findings

Unlike standard urban development projects, Pier-2 is a specific case in terms of being built in a former-abandoned area. Therefore, we do not have much data about the previous situation there. Instead of a time comparison then, we do a geographic one which has two parts – a cultural comparison with northern Prague which is the secondary source, and an occasional association with other urban areas in Kaohsiung, to accent the difference from the rest of the city and examine the city identity shaping of Pier-2.

4.1. The Story of Pier-2

In the book that Pier-2 Art Center recommended as a reliable source of information, Liming Xu (許立明), the former acting mayor of Kaohsiung City mentions in the preface called "A Wave of Cultural Innovation in the Old Warehouse in Minato":

"(...) Although the Third Boat Canal in Kaohsiung Inner Harbour is no longer popular for commerce, and the warehouse cluster located on the edge of the port has been silent for a long time with time, the Pier 2 Art Special Zone, which starts with the Pier 2 Warehouse, has enthusiastically promoted the new use of the old warehouse by virtue of the envoys of art and literati" (駁二營運中心, 2018, prefix, translated).

There was a part-time worker at the Cultural Affairs Bureau who mentioned the inspiration from Europe: "At the beginning of Pier-2, the city wanted to use the abandoned containers and warehouses at the wharf to create value in this area, so they borrowed foreign experience, such as the Netherlands" (Interview 7). The result is a very exotic vibe of the place that draws many different groups of visitors to the place, as one of the respondents also supposes:

“...the environment is so different from a typical Taiwanese street, it’s very attractive for Taiwanese to come and see it with their own eyes. And for tourists, I think it has somehow become an iconic place that they want to see. (...) I see many young foreigners who I suppose are students (...) for them it’s some kind of comfort zone because it’s closer to the environment in their country, either Europe or the US (Interview 3).”

4.1.1. Transportation Composition

The area’s promotion materials state proudly that one can find a connection to MRT, LRT, bus, and ferry. Without a doubt, LRT (short for Light Rail Transit) is the connection with the boldest presence. It runs directly through the area and, according to an associate professor of the Institute of Taiwan Studies of Kaohsiung Normal University, Wen-Huan Li (李文環), it includes all four stations located on the right bank of the Love River (Hamasen, Penglai Pier-2, Dayi Pier-2, and Love Pier [駁二營運中心, 2018:171, translated]). This conclusion has been derived from the brochure passages and no other detailed facts about the LRT are further mentioned. The reason might be because the book records only the 2008–2018 period, while the LRT in this section has been finished in 2017 (駁二營運中心, 2018:13, translated).

The impact that the light rail has brought to the area is immense. The respondents from the focus group (Interview 4) said that LRT has made the area much more accessible: “... Kaohsiung citizens like to ride motorcycles, but tourists may not necessarily do so. There may be places that can be reached by the ‘tram’, and then Pier-2 becomes a good choice” and admitted that if there was no LRT and they had to walk for several minutes to reach the place, they would probably pick another destination. All respondents agreed that the LRT is a good idea.

Another plus is that even though it may seem like tourists primarily take the tram, it can be a pleasant alternative to take a look at the area when the weather conditions are not good:

“It’s early June, the beginning of the ‘tough times’ – the temperatures exceeded 30°C (...) I see the people moving steadily in the stream like a line of ants. They’re heading from the LRT station over the Great Harbour Bridge to the Kaohsiung Warehouse Depot buildings (Observation, Perspective 1).”

Foreigners, however, do not seem to share the excitement to the extent of locals about this choice. A visitor from the Czech Republic, who is currently studying in South Korea for one semester and came to Kaohsiung for the first time, did not expect this kind of area at first, but is not so surprised about the LRT: “...for us, having a tram is quite normal. In Prague, I use them all the time (...) But here it’s become an attraction! I was so surprised! There’s only one line, only tourists take it, and they’re so excited about it... (Interview 8).” However, the respondent admits at the same time that it is a very convenient and attractive choice and does not deny its impact.

Naturally, people have different opinions about all aspects of Pier-2, we observed the most differences in the topic of art you can find in the area. There was also one complaint about the LRT from a mother-son couple when the mother wanted to know the difference between LRT (light rail) and MRT (subway). After the son mentioned that LRT is slower, the woman could not understand the meaning of the LRT and screamed “Why do we even have this then? Why there’s no MRT instead?” (Observation, Perspective 8). The speed of the trains that operate in the area is definitely a downside, also according to our observation and previous experience: “To my surprise, the journey of around 12 km took me almost 50 minutes! That’s when we realised how incredibly slow this system is (Observation, Perspective 8).” However, the route is very well resolved, and it offers many beautiful views and delightful scenery as the train goes by.

The second option to move around Pier-2 other than walking is riding a bicycle. Despite undeniable advantages such as being an ecologically aware while relatively fast way to get from point A to B and accessibility (according to Google Maps, there are five charging stations for YouBike [a bicycle-sharing

service] that are at or in immediate proximity to Pier-2), although it must be said that we have some reservations about the execution of bike lanes at the area. Pier-2 is generally oriented toward pedestrians and the bikes either have to zigzag their way through the people (which is not safe) or take a bike lane on the other side of the LRT tracks. However:

“... the construction and finishing renovations on the buildings make it incredibly narrow (...) even if all construction is finished, the narrow path is defined by grass strips from both sides, meaning that it probably won’t get wider (...) Bikers also need to get off their bicycle and walk while crossing the Lingyaliao Iron Bridge (...) in the end, they won’t save much time by riding around Pier-2 at most times (Observation, Perspective 8).”

We would generally advise the bike riders not to enter the Pier-2 area directly and use the regular streets that run parallel to it.

Overall, the hit of the Pier-2 area is the LRT. Despite serving mainly tourists because of its specific character of being relatively slow and offering sceneries that are good for pictures, it gained so much recognition that it became a focal point not only from the perspective of transportation but regarding all elements that can be found here. Aside from bicycles, no other vehicles are allowed to enter the area which is safe and meaningful for the purpose Pier-2 has.

4.1.2. Stores Composition

Since the project was created from scratch, there was no data in the “before” period to compare with the current situation, which is something quite unique when revitalizing urban areas – we can observe this phenomenon in expanding the cities or deforestation and cultivating nature for a living, among other things. However, we can provide a comparison between Pier-2 and other urban areas in Kaohsiung.

When conducting interviews, the opinions on the situation at Pier-2 area were quite similar – it is very difficult, and not so much in a good way for locals. The tourism objective of the area principally predetermines the character of stores and the choices of goods you can buy. The first factor that is “discriminating” against the locals and dissuading them from coming often to buy things is the price, as mentioned by one of the respondents:

“I think the stores here are quite expensive, so it’s not really beneficial for the residents. Because I think they will just complain: ‘Why are the noodles so expensive? I can have NT\$25 for one bowl but here it’s like NT\$45 or NT\$50 (Interview 2)?’”

It is true that going to a restaurant or for a coffee is significantly more expensive than taking a few stops by MRT or just walking a few blocks away to get something cheaper. This gap coexisting within a few metres confirms our assumption about targeting tourists as the primary source of income. As mentioned in the literature review, decisions made by authorities have an impact on the inflow of tourists. By choosing and retaining the current composition, the dominance of tourists is encouraged.

The second issue to discuss is the types of stores that are located on Pier-2. Usually, the tourist purpose of the area reflects not only the price but also the range of goods that are offered to customers. According to the men from the focus group, the biggest disadvantage is that there is no convenience store. One of them said: “Overall, the shops in Pier-2 are unique, but not very practical (Interview 4).” Another respondent observes:

“If you look around, you can see two T-shirt print stores (I have no idea why two), there is a souvenir shop across the bridge, the majority of Taiwan-themed things to buy in KW2, and the rest is pretty much food. No convenience stores, no ‘normal’ stores. There is for example Cosmed around the corner behind the tram station, but I believe that’s not a part of Pier-2 anymore, they’re just lucky to have it there (Interview 2).”

Business owners share the same feeling as the visitors. The owner of Golden Mango agreed that most of the visitors are tourists, mainly because “... there are cruise ships nearby that bring a lot of people from Hong Kong and Macau twice a week (Interview 6).” Staff at one of the T-shirt print stores said that their usual customers are exchange students from France. The employees of the gift shop in the KW2 building said that “... most of the tourists are from the United States, Britain, Japan, or Macau (Interview 10).” They also mentioned the freshest addition to KW2 – a hostel. One of them says:

“I think the whole atmosphere has changed after the hostel moved in. Although the layout has become a bit crowded, it is still quite lively, and more people come to inquire, so it is basically a good influence.”

On the other hand, it is admirable how many stores there are on Pier-2. According to my experience, if an area is being revitalized as dramatically as Pier-2 and there is no need for housing development, the place gets turned into a park with not so many stores, which is, in my opinion, another extreme with lost potential. Not this place, though. The area across the Great Harbour Bridge (Kaohsiung Depot) has been added just recently and the expansion is not done yet, as found by the Golden Mango ice cream shop owner:

“As far as I know, the government wants to develop the entire harbour area, from KD1 to KD10. You can also see that there are still some undeveloped areas here, which are still being repaired, so I expect them to become more prosperous in the future (Interview 6).”

There are also some construction areas to be seen beside the Kaohsiung Depot buildings which confirm this impression, but so far, the progress is not very fast. It seems like the area itself can expand only in terms of new space, not redevelopment of the existing space.

The financial aspect in terms of support from the authorities is one to praise. The world has been challenged by several global disasters, but luckily, things are going back to normal, as mentioned by the Golden Mango owner: “Of course, after the epidemic weakened, the crowds returned, and the number of tourists also increased (Interview 6).” After sharing that she has “a little positive” feeling about the development, we asked her if it is because of insufficient financial support from the government. She denied that and added that Pier-2 “... holds some annual events or small local events at a fixed time, which can actually stimulate tourists and crowds.”

4.1.3. Art as a Catalyst

Art and visual exhibitions are one of the boldest elements that every visitor will notice when coming to Pier-2. Houses covered with murals of all colours, motives, ornaments, and illustrations watch visitors wandering around and admiring various art pieces. Interactive elements are incorporated into buildings, such as a giant swing, where “... there are more adults on it to see rather than kids (Observation, Perspective 5)!” or a “peeing boy” statue with a faucet that is a part of one of the Dayi Warehouse buildings. Architectural giants like KW2 and Kaohsiung Music Center dominate the space and set the vibe for the whole area. The statues accompany tourists on their stroll along the promenade.

The area is vibrant and lively, attracting many visitors. After all, our interviewees also mentioned art a lot and they agree that it shapes and distinguishes the area from regular Taiwanese streets, unlike historical centres of European cities:

“Kaohsiung City learned from many European countries, but at that time there was no clear goal, so many artists were recruited to do the planning and design of the area at that time. In fact, I am very grateful to the artists who came in at the beginning. From the Dayi Warehouse at the beginning, to the Penglai Warehouse later, and then to the Pier 2,” says the Cultural Affairs Bureau worker (Interview 7).

The art we value the most is the one that reflects some culture or trends. In that sense, we admire pieces that present Taiwan and its culture the most. Aside from the “Hao Ke Ai” mural, we would like to mention one more installation that is quite new to the area – “The Taiwan Dream”. It consists of “... many signboards that present Taiwanese culture (...) – a barber shop with red, blue, and white strip lights, a traditional clinic for curing injuries from accidents, and the sign with roads names consisting of numbers in Mandarin that exist in Kaohsiung, for example, Yisin (一心), Ersheng (二聖) and Sanduo (三多) (Observation, Perspective 5).”

4.1.4. Visitors' Demographics

The summary from Perspectives 1, 2, and 7 of our observations is that the busiest time for Pier-2 is, aside from special events such as Christmas, New Year, or CNY, weekend evenings in Spring and Fall. This suggests that most visitors consider both the most suitable and stress-free time to come to visit and the weather (summer days are not the best periods because of the lack of shadow). Another factor that plays a role is traditional weekend markets which attract around 25% more people (as per observation). At those times, Pier-2 is on the very edge of its capacity which is most visible at the market areas and LRT station and trains that are packed with people.

Special occasions we experienced in person were the Christmas light show and New Year Countdown on the facade of Kaohsiung Music Center, New Year concerts near Banana Pier, and a drone show during the Lunar New Year festival. In all cases, Pier-2 experienced its most difficult moments as the masses of people were flowing in all directions with no spare space. LRT trains could not handle the demand and people were overflowing the stations' platforms. Only during the concert, the organizers managed to keep people spread on the entire surface of the area by setting up two locations of the concerts, each on one side of Pier-2 (Observation, Perspective 4). Aside from the breathtaking shows that always come with those events, respondents complained quite a lot in our interviews, one respondent even said the weekends are enough reason for her not to come:

“...for the weekend, it will be more tourists because they have more tourist attractions like the shops, the bridge, the view, and everything. That's why I almost never come to Pier-2 on weekends because there are just so many people, I don't like it (Interview 9).”

After all, we describe a story from the drone show during the Christmas light show and CNY drone show which even became dangerous at times because of the crowds and poor organization:

“I'm meeting my friends near the LRT ‘Love Pier’ station which is directly beside the music center. But before they can conquer those 30 metres full of people to the bridge where I'm holding a spot for them, the show is almost over. Whenever there's an event, the area becomes extremely stressful – people are confused, so many of them try to find their way through the crowd to the other side (...) People could only see around half of (the drones), the rest was covered by the music centre. When some of them find it out, they tried to run around the building to catch the rest of the show. This caused a panic in the crowd and many people started running in all directions, dangerously close to the harbour edge (Observation, Perspective 4).”

4.2. The Case Study of Karlín

Almost the entire city of Prague was paralysed after a devastating flood came in August 2002. The chaos and damaging conditions lasted for over two weeks. Karlín, however, suffered the most from it because of its geographical conditions and proximity to the Vltava River. Several buildings collapsed, all transport connections were interrupted (the water flooded all metro stations), and in total 17 people and 134 animals (from the Prague Zoo) died consequently ((Ray, 2006). Karlín as an area was sealed off for several days because it was too dangerous to move around.

After the disaster, the authorities began to repair all buildings and renovate the area. The flood was a catalyst to begin a radical renovation which resulted in original classicist houses with freshly painted

colourful facades coexisting with modern minimalist office buildings, green squares, and many restaurants, cafés, and other businesses.

The renovation is running continuously; the construction of Kasárna Karlín has been finished six years ago. Negrelli Viaduct (a dominant construction, an important train connection, and cultural heritage) was rebuilt in 2020. The novelty here is the incorporation of shops and cafés into the arches of the viaduct, which brings the area back to life.

We see the biggest difference in the integration of the entire area into the rest of the city. Since Karlín had a reputation as a busy district before the floods and the renovation and not being far from the city center, it had a better starting point in becoming an organic district for both tourists and locals. We mentioned that "... it feels like Pier-2 still has a label of an oasis in the middle of concrete jungle (...) I'm certain that this will change in the future once there are more areas to be renovated, and there will be some connection between them." However, Pier-2 can help eliminate the reputation of being an isolated tourist attraction by utilizing more public transport modes (not only slow and touristic LRT) and introducing local-friendly shops.

One of the similar features of both renovations was the thought of breathing a second life in the particular area; whether it was the case of Pier-2 where the authorities wanted to bring back to the "golden era" from the 1930s (Interview 2), or renovating Karlín after the floods which destroyed parts of the city. It is, in a way, a revolutionary idea, too; Prague wanted to integrate pedestrian-friendly zones into a bustling city, while Pier-2 looks like no other area in Kaohsiung. Both locations also collaborated with many artists and designers, and there are many events to enhance the rate of visitors.

The character of both revitalizations is naturally different – Karlín and Holešovice are more connected to other Prague districts, the infrastructure has been developed enough in the early times, and the population density of Prague is much smaller than Kaohsiung. From this point of view, Pier-2 could have tried to build some office buildings or taller apartment buildings directly in the area which could both utilize the space that Kaohsiung is in need for and at the same time, the buildings could break down the area a little bit, making it more interesting and providing a shade that is lacking during the day as a bonus.

What we see as the worst downside is Pier-2's initial orientation towards tourists at the expense of locals, who do not want to drink overpriced coffee, buy a funny T-shirt, and fight their way through endless crowds on weekends and during events.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

This article formulated two research questions: (1) "How does overtourism impact urban revitalisation projects' long-term viability and sustainability?" and (2) "What are the key factors influencing the success or failure of urban renewal initiatives in mitigating the negative effects of overtourism?"

Regarding the first question, the most significant finding of this research is the crucial role of the purpose of urban revitalisation projects in their long-term viability and sustainability, especially concerning overtourism. The study underscores that the initial clarity and alignment of the project's purpose, whether it leans primarily towards tourism, caters to local needs, or adopts a hybrid approach, strongly affect its vulnerability to overtourism.

In the case of Pier-2, the data gathered suggests that the area failed to serve the needs of residents and local communities as it shows apparent signs of the purpose which is in this case to attract masses, which inevitably means outweighing tourists and oppressing locals mainly through the character of stores, nationwide events, and transportation solutions. The excessive concentration of events and the heavy promotion of Pier-2 as a tourist hotspot has disrupted the daily lives of the nearby communities and the natural harmony of the location. This imbalance in providing primarily to tourists has negated

the area's potential to act as a city identity shaper, deepening the differences between Pier-2 and the rest of the city, and resulting in an isolated island in the middle of a concrete jungle.

However, there are positive aspects to Pier-2's renovation efforts. The transformation of the area into a pedestrian-friendly space that Taiwan so desperately needs and its commitment to fighting the climate crisis by incorporating green spaces have been successful. Despite some concerns about the lack of shade and trees, Pier-2 has still made significant progress compared to other urban areas in Kaohsiung. The area has brought people to the district, serving as a tool to liven up the abandoned space.

To ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of urban revitalisation projects like Pier-2 in the face of overtourism, it is crucial to find the balance between attracting tourists and satisfying the needs of the local community. The composition of stores within the area shall be adjusted to cater to both tourists and locals, making it more inclusive and affordable. Additionally, aligning Pier-2's operations with the mindset of environment protection, namely through sustainable development goals (SDGs), can further boost its value and contribute to its long-term success.

Concerning the second research question regarding the primary factors that collectively impact the success in managing overtourism in refurbished urban areas, the study identifies three key factors: the area's purpose, the composition of stores, and transportation choices.

The research findings emphasise the purpose of the area as a character shaper. While Pier-2 has primarily focused on attracting tourists, our research suggests that to achieve prosperity, the area should consider becoming an organic and seamless part of the whole metropolis, not just a touristic attraction. This involves aligning the composition of stores with the needs of both tourists and locals, striking a balance that fosters inclusivity and affordability. Transportation choices also have an impact on the success of urban renewal initiatives in mitigating the negative effects of overtourism. The problem of Pier-2 is integrating the touristic LRT as the only mean of transportation that has a direct connectivity with multiple anchors, making the most convenient and only choice to travel around. In that regard, we propose integrating more choices that are more local-friendly and available to use daily to commute to work or school. By resolving this issue, the previously mentioned concern about the area not being an organic and seamless part of the metropolis is partially taken care of as a result.

By creating pedestrian-friendly areas and limiting vehicle access, Pier-2 has successfully created a space where people can slow down, enjoy the environment, and improve their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, integrating Pier-2 with other restored areas and promoting minor events can contribute to cultural integration and a more inclusive environment. The implications and contributions of this research extend to the societal level, emphasising community well-being, unity, connectivity, and cultural integration. By adopting a local-oriented approach, aligning with SDGs, and embracing a city identity-shaping mindset, urban renewal initiatives can create spaces that are not only attractive to tourists but also foster the well-being and inclusivity of the local community.

As for future research directions, it would be beneficial to further explore the implications of store composition, transportation choices, and the impact of urban renewal initiatives on the overall character of the city's identity. Additionally, studying the financial aspects of Pier-2's renovation and conducting a comparative analysis with similar context areas would provide valuable insights for further studies.

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