**Cultural (Re)Imagination, Spatial Practice and Contesting Landscape in Xiamen Harbor, 2002- 2016,**

**from an Urban Fishing Village to a Tourism Destination**

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This paper examines tensions among cultural (re)imagination, spatial practice and contesting landscape within the context of China’s rapid urbanization through the case of making a tourism destination in the boat people’s settlement, Xiamen(Amoy), China since 2002 to the present. Located in the southern part of Xiamen Island, which is opposite to Gulangsu Island, the Shapowei area has long served as a safe and traditional harbor for house-boats and fishermen. The built waterfront environment is dynamic and hybrid with an influence from top-down governance and bottom-up practice. Since 2002, a house-boat anchor embargo acted, companying with a vibrant fishing landscape identity fading away. To the local government, the spontaneous landscape in boat people’s settlement is a potential tourism world with the distinct local fishing identity that should be transformed into a cultural and creative harbor. To the social activists, including academics and local residents, the fishing traditions, spontaneous spatial practice and the consequent social cohesion are featured characters. They should be well preserved, instead of being destructed, rewrote, reimagined and reconstructed. In 2011, a culture-led regeneration proposal was put forward, and seven months later, one Cultural and Creative Limited was founded entrusted by the authority to rapidly transform the urban fishing village. During this time, local government has started with the waterfront transformation, and regulated policy controls to attract outside commercial capitals and elite groups to reproduce the waterfront landscape. More and more cultural activities are host in a carnival spectacle way to attract outside tourists to boost the local economy. However, as a result, large amount of spontaneous spatial transformations and rapid grow of commercialization develop along the waterfront area by local residents and outside businessmen, which have largely changed the waterfront landscape.

In this research, the planning/ design documents, field surveys, in-depth interviews and long-term observations were employed to explore the specific socio-spatial dynamics. It begins with a historical overview of how/what the imaginations that occurred in local government’s development plan of this area. It exams how the authority departments involve professionals, social capitals and elite groups to translate their imaginations into the local spatial-cultural governance. It then discusses how the local residents and citizens apply self-organization networks, local knowledge and cultural beliefs to resist the conflicting landscape. Moreover, due to the different political system, the transplantation of community engagement practice from cross-strait side (Taiwan) inversely leads to a fictitious and consuming landscape society. By looking into how the specific waterfront landscape was re-imagined, regulated, perceived and lived within China’s rapid urbanization contexts, the paper will not only reveal how local authorities translate knowledge, culture and lived space to reproduce an imagined tourism landscape, but also demonstrate the production of space embodying political visions.

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Yongming CHEN started his PhD research at School of Architecture, CUHK in 2014. His research focuses on spatial-anthropological related issues of rapid urbanization, urban regeneration, heritage, and identity. He is currently doing his PhD thesis titled Socio-Spatial Dynamics, Urban Transformation and Cultural Governance: A Spatial-anthropology of Boat People’s Community in Xiamen Harbor (the 1920s to present). He is the recipient of numbers of international design awards, and also acts as a peer reviewer for Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering (SCI, AHCI) since 2015.

Lin LIN, is a lecturer at the Department of Architecture of Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College, and currently pursuing PhD degree in architecture at Tongji University, China. Her research interests range from urban anthropology and heritage conservation. She has long been concerned with the cultural interactions in the urban community development, such as the fishing religious practice within China’s repaid urbanization context.