

Chapter 3

Beer as Cultural Lubricant: Brewing Tsingtao, Regenerating Qingdao



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Abstract Beer has become a driver of urban regeneration worldwide. In particular, breweries have become symbolic when physically transforming former industrial areas. Beer festivals, visitor centres created by major breweries and the popularity of the craft breweries and brewpubs each contribute to the growth of beer tourism. Meanwhile, adaptive reuse of former industrial breweries brings new life to former industrial spaces. This chapter focuses on the ways in which Tsingtao beer influences regeneration of Qingdao, China and this work frames these developments in the broader perspective of beer-led urban regeneration.

Keywords Beer heritage · Brewery · Beer tourism · Tsingtao · Qingdao · Urban regeneration

3.1 Introduction

The adaptive reuse of old industrial districts has become an important urban regeneration strategy (Leary-Owhin 2016; Wise and Clark 2017). During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, large factory sites developed on the edges of urban areas. As cities expanded, many of these large sites eventually found themselves surrounded by housing districts. For locals and tourism planners, these industrial areas were perceived as barriers between the historic city centre and other districts, not the least because they were barricaded off to assure only authorised personnel could enter the premises. Many of these industrial complexes have since been vacated, either due to a lack of opportunities to expand or modernise operations on site, or as a result of deindustrialisation. After closing down, such industrial complexes could be ‘handed

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back to the city'. Fearing the financial burden of these industrial structures to the city, some sites were completely demolished and replaced by new housing developments; whereas other sites were reused. In a few cases, (parts of) the factories remained in use but made an attempt to connect with the rest of the city—physically and functionally.

This phenomenon reflects a major shift in heritage and planning paradigms, coinciding with the attribution of heritage values to industrial remains and the growth of adaptive reuse to turn these places into attractive cultural hotspots (Pendlebury 2013; Janssen et al. 2014; Botti et al. 2016). It illustrates how the traditional dichotomy between conservation and development lost its relevance and how in today's heritage management practices development is necessary for protection and protection is seen as a dynamic process (Janssen et al. 2017). This chapter focuses on a specific example of these developments—breweries. These often took a special position within towns as they were well known throughout the town and often used the town in their branding. Therefore, breweries provide an interesting case study in industrial heritage, adaptive reuse and urban regeneration.

This chapter focuses on the Tsingtao brewery in Qingdao, China. This work is presented within the context of other breweries that were part of processes of urban regeneration through tourism, branding and adaptive reuse. This chapter is based on a literature review, field observations and desk research of official Qingdao urban planning documents and tourism policies.

3.2 The Significance of Beer and Brewing

Around the world, beer brewing had existed as a small-scale activity in many towns and villages, but from the nineteenth century onwards, brewing would develop into a sector dominated by large (highly mechanised) factories. Although breweries, like other industrial complexes, were surrounded by walls to keep intruders out (and the beer in), breweries have a long tradition of offering guided tours to visitors as a part of their marketing strategy. It shows the peculiar situation of beer production and sales that required branding early on to suggest special qualities for a product that is in effect rather uniform: the output of large breweries mostly consisted of standard 'pilsner' beer (Harley 2014).

Strong competition and a fast process of consolidation further raised advertising budgets. Meanwhile, the same competition drove major brewers to cut production costs and to look for further economies of scale and this has led to the closure of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century production facilities. The long tradition of branding efforts, combined with the rise of the experience economy and beer tourism, have however created an opportunity for reusing parts of these production facilities as brewery museums and beer experience centres (Baginski and Bell 2011). Meanwhile, craft breweries have likewise singled out former industrial buildings as suitable locations for production and consumption in the shape of brewpubs. Beer,

one could say, has become an important lubricant of urban regeneration processes in former industrial areas (Mathews and Picton 2014; Gatrell et al. 2018).

The majority of research into urban regeneration and adaptive reuse of industrial sites has a Western focus. Leung and Soye (2009) stated a decade ago that while industrial heritage and its reuse was a widespread phenomenon in old industrialised countries of Europe and Northern America, similar developments in Asia were rare. In Asia when factories transformed, planners often copied best practices from cities in the West. This, however, is changing and a growing interest in such projects exists in China and other Asian countries, as is exemplified by 798 Districts in Beijing, Songshan Cultural and Creative Park in Taipei, Tomioka Silk Mill and Meiji Industrial Revolution Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining industrial sites in Japan, and Camp Mare shipyard area in South Korea (see Cerutti 2011).

The Western focus is even stronger concerning research into beer breweries and their role in urban rejuvenation (e.g. Kohn 2010; Feeney 2017a, b; Walker and Miller 2019), as in Asia beer culture is still a rather recent phenomenon and therefore beer heritage is still rare. However, there are notable exceptions, one of them being the Tsingtao brewery in Qingdao (China) that was established over 100 years ago as the Germania Brauerei when Qingdao (then known as Tsingtao), on the north-east coast of China, was a German model colony (Matzat 2003; Zang et al. 2019). This chapter will show how the Tsingtao brewery is involved in the material and symbolic transformation of the city of Qingdao. The Tsingtao brewery is an interesting case study for several reasons. Firstly, Tsingtao has developed into the second largest brewery in China and the 6th largest worldwide (Ille 2009). The annual Qingdao International Beer Festival draws large crowds and has contributed to the reputation of Tsingtao beer and Qingdao as a town/destination (see Zang et al. 2019). Secondly, research into the phenomenon of beer-led urban regeneration has concentrated predominantly on the craft beer movement and less on global brewing companies that became involved in regeneration processes of their historic brewery sites and their surroundings. A notable exception is Carlsberg Brewery in Copenhagen, where recent work has assessed the transformation of these breweries (e.g. Riesto 2015, 2018).

What makes the Tsingtao case really stand out is its colonial origins that make the brewery buildings and the brand unique—but has caused dissonance as well (Zang 2019). Qingdao has a short colonial history, founded in 1897 by the German navy; the town was later conquered by Japanese forces in 1914 and was under Japanese administration until 1922, and again between 1938 and 1945. Qingdao's industrial development, in general, is entwined with its colonial past. Part of Qingdao's ports, railway system and its textile mills were established under colonial rule (Lu 2008).

The history of the brewery reflects the history of the town. In 1903, the Germania Brauerei was established with German and British capital and German equipment was shipped in from overseas. In 1916, the brewery was taken over by the Japanese Dai-Nippon Brewery, followed by Chinese ownership in 1945, nationalisation in 1949 and privatisation in the early 1990s (Matzat 2003; Yang 2007). Decisions about the heritage values of the original brewery buildings are not only influenced by aesthetic evaluations of industrial buildings but also by renegotiations of the colonial past of the city and the beer. Previous research on Qingdao and the Tsingtao brewery by Ji

(2011) has shown that beer is a distinctive element of the place image, while research by Yang (2007) has demonstrated how, in the wake of major political–administrative shifts, different representations of place were used in the marketing of Tsingtao beer in its attempts to reach new consumers.

3.3 Beer, Tourism, Branding and Urban Regeneration

Beer is a drink consumed globally. While sales are declining in the traditional beer markets of northern America and Europe, new markets have emerged in China and Brazil (Bamforth and Cabras 2016). The economic history of beer brewing is remarkable. For centuries, a significant number of small local breweries existed. Technical innovations during the nineteenth century introduced ‘steam brewing’ which resulted in large factories further expanding and profiting from mass production as they grew their economies of scale. Bavarian breweries were the first to combine steam engines (following British examples) with bottom-fermenting (invented in present-day Czechia), producing a beer that was uniform in quality and could be better preserved (Schippers 1992). This beer soon came into fashion, and consequently names such as Bavaria or German became symbolic for new beers. In Amsterdam (the Netherlands), for example the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Beyersch-Bierbrouwerij [Royal Dutch Bavarian Brewery] (1888–1927) and the Beijersche Bierbrouwerij De Amstel [Bavarian Brewery the Amstel] (1871–present) were established (Schippers 1992).

What followed for most brewing companies was a century of continuous search for economies of scale, leading to enlargement and homogenisation (Holtkamp et al. 2016). Strong competition and consolidation of demand led to mergers and take-overs and resulted in a relatively small number of surviving large breweries. In the early twenty-first century, this resulted in further concentration into a small number of multinational firms such as Anheuser-Busch InBev, Heineken and China Resources Snow Breweries that now own several brands and dominate the world market for pilsner.

From the 1990s onwards, an unexpected countermovement emerged. The beer landscape would become encompassed by increasing numbers of small (so-called micro and craft) breweries. The establishment of these smaller brewery operations has managed to conquer a growing niche in the beer market by branding their beers as local and unique (Schnell and Reese 2003; Mathews and Picton 2014; Bamforth and Cabras 2016). Their popularity can be interpreted as exemplary of Neo-localism, as a countermovement against the globalisation and homogenisation of the beer market. Craft beers are perceived as more authentic, artisanal and more daring than the global brands (although a number of these brewers in the past decade have been bought by the global beer corporations as a way of vertically integrating them into their business plans). Drinking craft beer thus became an act of conspicuous consumption for those who distrust the power of global brands and those who demand more sustainable production through locally sourced ingredients and socially responsible businesses

(Holtkamp et al. 2016; Mathews and Patton 2016; Gatrell et al. 2018; Hubbard 2019; Walker and Miller 2019).

Meanwhile, beer tourism is on the rise (Kraftchick et al. 2014; Rogerson and Collins 2015). Although consumption of foods and drinks is part of the tourists' general needs, particular products and brands as well as certain pubs and restaurants have become tourist attractions in their own right. The recent increase in gastronomic tourism coincides with the growing importance of the experience economy, hedonistic and heritage tourism and food movements and Neo-localism (Bell 2008; Getz and Robinson 2014; Andersson et al. 2017; Feeney 2017a; Curtis et al. 2018). As a result, gastronomic tourism is recognised as an important opportunity for place branding, developing tourism and hence stimulating the local economy (Cabras and Ellison 2018).

From a small position in the niche market of gastronomic tourism, beer tourism has grown into an established segment worldwide (Myles and Breen 2018). Tourists purposely travel to taste new beers, visit breweries and buy beer souvenirs. They enjoy seeing the brewing process of their favourite brand, embark on beer trails, frequent beer festivals and chase after new or local tastes (Kraftchick et al. 2014; Stone et al. 2019). Breweries of all sizes—global players, mid-size national companies as well as small-scale craft breweries—have begun to cater for tourists that search for unique experiences that rouse more than their visual senses (Feeney 2017b; Alfonso et al. 2018). Bujdoso and Szucs (2012) distinguish between two types of beer tourists, those whose main reason to travel is beer and those that mainly want to experience a particular place. The first group is motivated to taste a particular beer, and they embark upon brewery visits, beer trails, or look for specialty beer shops. The latter group focus more on experiencing places by visiting the 'must-see' venues—such as highly rated pubs, beer museums and famous beer festivals such as the Oktoberfest (Munich), the Czech Beer Festival (Prague), Öllesummer (Tallinn) or other reputed craft beer festivals.

The notion that a place or local culture can be experienced through consuming its products creates several opportunities for branding. A place can be used to market a product. In foods and drinks business, this is a well-known strategy to emphasise the quality of a product (Mathews and Patton 2016). 'Terroir' has thus become important in beer sales. Especially fresh water from a spring is vital in the brewing process and in the taste of beer (Zhao 1989). In the past, Tsingtao, for example used images of Laoshan springs on its labels—implying that these famous springs were used in the brewing process (Yang 2007). Today, breweries still capitalise on this local connection to establish a unique brand. Craft breweries, for example claim to capture 'local flavour', while regional brands advertise their beer as embodying regional culture often through images of some rural idyll. Local symbols, names, landscapes or legends feature in the names of craft beers, on their labels and websites (Schnell and Reese 2003; Mathews and Patton 2016; Feeney 2017b; Reid and Gatrell 2017; Myles and Breen 2018). Such efforts to brand beer as local may even add a layer of meaning to the place itself as it infuses the landscape with (rediscovered) folk legends, heroes and local histories. The connection beer brands have with particular places not only resides in their (actual or imagined) past, but also continues in the

future. The Carlsberg brewery was well aware of this and kept the redevelopment of its former brewery site in its own hands to avoid damage to the brand (Riesto 2015, 2018).

Famous beer brands and popular beer festivals can equally become a part of place branding. Many governments recognise the potential of hosting such events for place branding purposes. When carefully designed, events can revitalise a city by enhancing its reputation, attracting tourists, creating opportunities for community building and promoting pride in local culture (Preuss 2007, 2015; Getz 2008; Richards and Palmer 2010; Smith 2012; Richards et al. 2013; Wise et al. 2015; Cabras and Ellison 2018). Beer festivals in particular promote loyalty to a beer brand, create familiarity with the place and stimulate positive associations with it both through pleasant experiences at the festival (Gillespie and Hall 2019). Some craft beer festivals focus on local tastes, catering to consumers who want authentic experiences and love to discover new tastes (Cabras 2017). Although based on quantity rather than quality of beer, the success of Munich's Oktoberfest has inspired many cities to organise their own version (Cabras and Ellison 2018)—where “particular icons of Germanness are performed centred on particular drinks, drinking practices and drink enabled socialites—a kind of temporary version of the themed pub” (Bell 2008: 299).

3.4 Breweries and Heritage, a Creative Regeneration Strategy?

The rise in beer tourism not only signals changes in tourism markets, or peculiarities of the beer market, but also coincides with changes in/of the city. ‘Intoxifying gentrification’ is a concept coined by Mathews and Picton (2014) to point at a specific type of consumption-led gentrification where adaptive reuse of industrial heritage transforms derelict areas of production into thriving places of consumption. Similarly, adaptive reuse is increasingly seen as a sustainable alternative to urban sprawl that does not waste materials and has the potential to reinstate connections of local inhabitants with the site (Loures 2015).

The large ‘beer factories’ of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were usually located on the edge of towns well connected to railways and canals that allowed easy access to the markets and delivery of ingredients. In recent decades, a number of large urban breweries have moved to suburban/rural areas, which offered more space for extensions and better transport connections. This has raised questions regarding the future of the old brewery sites. Some breweries have been transformed into museums, such as the 1860s Heineken brewery, which was closed in 1988 and was redeveloped into the ‘Heineken Experience’ in 1991. As the main production processes of Carlsberg beer moved to a greenfield site in Fredericia in 2008, the oldest parts of the brewery at the original Valby site were transformed into the brewery's visitor centre (Riesto 2015, 2018). Other former breweries sought a second life as heritage, housing cultural and social functions, such as the Linden Brewery in Unna

Germany (Tufegdzcic 2013). In Cardiff, the Brains Brewery moved out of the city centre, and the site was redeveloped, using part of the old buildings, as the recreational (Old) Brewery Quarter, focusing on (junk) food and drinking.

In addition, some breweries that kept their old location, tried to improve connections with the surrounding town and with loyal consumers. Tyskie Browarium (Tychy Poland) has both modernised its production facilities and renovated part of its historic buildings, now showcasing the original equipment for visitors (Tufegdzcic 2013). The springs underneath Union brewery in Ljubljana, which provide the brewery with vital, high quality water, were the main reason for staying at the old urban site. However, pressure from possible alternative uses was felt and the brewery decided to improve its connection to the town by opening a museum and, later, a pub (Zevenbergen 2019). From these examples, it is clear that adaptive reuse has become a 'second life' strategy for old large brewery factory buildings. Elsewhere, craft breweries have singled out derelict industrial buildings as suitable locations for both the production and consumption of their beers. Beer and adaptive reuse thus go well together. Adaptive reuse has opened new development opportunities for abandoned industrial remains, while heritage-led urban regeneration is pursued as a sustainable revitalisation strategy that contributes to the local economy (Gunay 2008; Bowitz and Ibenholt 2009; Plevoets and Van Cleempoel 2011; Lazrak et al. 2012; Loures 2015).

3.5 Tsingtao

The Tsingtao brewery was started as Germania Brauerei in 1913, it brewed German style beer following the Reinheitsgebot and catered for German and British settlers in the region. The First World War meant the end of the German model colony. As the Japanese took over, the industrial development (textile) of the city continued. The brewery survived although the Japanese owners did struggle to find new consumers as the majority of the Chinese population was not used to drinking beer. After the Second World War, the Tsingtao Brewery was handed over to Chinese management. It owed much of its growth to branding the Asian and Chinese roots of the beer (Yang 2007). Today, Tsingtao is the second largest brewery in China, and has developed into a globally recognised Chinese brand, for example as a key national sponsor of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics (Ille 2009).

Tsingtao beer has become a part of urban revitalisation projects most notably through reuse of the original brewery buildings and through the beer festival. The Tsingtao Brewery was also converted into the first beer museum in China in 2003 (Tsingtao Museum 2019). The building itself was valued as national heritage in 2006, and in 2018, it became a central icon in the first list of national protected industrial sites (中国工业遗产保护名录[第一批]). The museum visit starts with an exhibition of the history of the brewery, followed by an explanation of the ingredients and the process of beer brewing and ends with beer tasting (arguably the main attraction). Figure 3.1 shows the inside of old brewhouse and the original German equipment



Fig. 3.1 The exhibition of old brewhouse. The original German equipment is still present and admired by visitors (photograph by Jichuan Zang)

brought to China to make beer. The museum represents the history of the brewery as exemplary of the coexistence of the Eastern and Western cultures and emphasises how beer connects people by focusing on the shared memories of beer, the city and its population over the last hundred years.

Following the opening of the museum, the surroundings of the original Tsingtao Beer Factory transformed into a beer street. The beer street has become a major tourist attraction for both domestic and international tourists. From the beer museum, visitors can walk through Dengzhou Street which houses many beer-themed restaurants and pubs (displayed in the image in Fig. 3.2). Visitors that post favourable reviews about the area recommend the beer street for its fun atmosphere and the fresh, authentic beer “[...] Freshness is the selling point on the beer street. The Tsingtao Beer is delivered to the restaurants through their special channels.” However, other reviewers complain



Fig. 3.2 Beer-themed restaurants and pubs in the Beer Street (photograph by Jichuan Zang)

about the price of beer and the quality of food, suggesting that the beer street has become a tourist trap.

In 2011, the Qingdao Government announced they would support the regeneration of the area surrounding the brewery. Except for the brewery itself, very little historical remains can be found in this area of Qingdao. In a previous 1980s redevelopment project, the original residential and industrial buildings from the early twentieth century were replaced by high-rise residential buildings. The Qingdao government sets the objective of transforming the area into a cosmopolitan recreational and business district with beer as its unique selling point (CNWINENEWS 2015). The planning area covers about 2.7 km² and will become a mixed-use district, a hub of restaurants, souvenir shops, galleries and exhibition centres. The spatial structure should follow the original local grid pattern and is designed to have three ‘layers’. The first layer, ‘The Centre’, concerns the development of Tsingtao Beer Factory as the cultural core of the area. The second layer deals with the interconnection of public spaces by a fluid network of footpaths that connects both ends of Dengzhou Road. The third layer focuses on the development of the residential environment. In the regeneration plan, the Tsingtao Beer Museum plays an important role as it embodies the connection between the place, its history and the beer culture.

Another way in which beer has supported the revitalisation of Qingdao is through its beer festival. In 1991, the Qingdao government decided to host the first beer festival. The event has since evolved into Asia’s largest beer festival. The main objective

of hosting the festival was to promote beer sales domestically and internationally and help improve the brand of the city (Yang 2007; Du and Qu 2011). The positioning of the festival has since moved beyond selling beer to promoting beer tourism, the festival nowadays offers the experience of Qingdao's beer culture, history and its craft breweries (Zang et al. 2019). In 2019, the festival was extended from 14 to 31 days, and during the festival, the Huangdao site attracted over 7.2 million visitors (MSWEEKLY 2019).

The festival is inspired by Munich's world-famous Oktoberfest event. Traditional customs and decorations from the Bavarian Oktoberfest are incorporated, such as tapping the first barrel of beer, the beer tents with rows of tables, maypoles, Bavarian flags or logo's, barbecues and carnivals (Zang et al. 2019). In 2019, the setting was changed to stage a German Bier Garten (beer garden) themed event. The festival thus imports generic German elements that visitors recognise from beer festivals elsewhere. According to one reviewer on Tripadvisor: "*Everything, lookwise, is German styled*". The Oktoberfest theme does not make the festival unique nor provides strong brand associations. However, added to the Oktoberfest theme was typical Chinese entertainment on the stages and laser shows. Besides, the main attraction for locals may be the fond memories of meeting friends over a cup of beer (Zang et al. 2019).

The first festival was located along the southern seafront in Laoshan. Increasing visitor numbers forced the organisation to host the festival at six different sites dispersed throughout the city (Fig. 3.3). The main festival site was later relocated from the Laoshan to the Huangdao district because they required more room to accommodate for the festival's growth (using a 1,115-acre site). This new main site (beer city) houses a second beer museum in a Bavarian style small village that is open to the public.

Interestingly, one of the most important regeneration projects in Qingdao at the beginning of twenty-first century is the site where Qingdao International Beer City was originally founded in 1991, in Jinjialing (just next to number 2, the grey circle in Fig. 3.3). In the 1990s, this area was newly developed for the beer festival. With the expansion of the city, the site has become more centrally located and is now redeveloped by both the central and local governments whose objective was to create a financial district of banks, brokers and insurers, building high-rises to create a more dynamic city skyline. One of the core projects in Jinjialing is the ¥10 billion (Chinese Yuan) program led by Shanghai Industrial Investment, which covers 1 million square metres of multi-functional consumption space. The project focuses on four key functions: celebration, recreation, shopping and business. Although there are no physical remains of the beer festival present in the area, the place and the festival resemble intangible heritage. The place is celebrated as the birthplace of the beer festival—as a place where beer, beer culture and socialising with friends can be celebrated. In the redevelopment plans, integrating intangible heritage is seen in parade avenues, green spaces and themed parks. The shopping centres, such as Parkson and Liqun, will be opened gradually and are geared towards an upmarket clientele. The financial hub has already attracted a number of international banks and insurance companies, and 200-metres high twin towers are built to house luxury hotels like Diaoyutai and MGM Resorts International (Qingdao News 2018). The project thus implies a huge

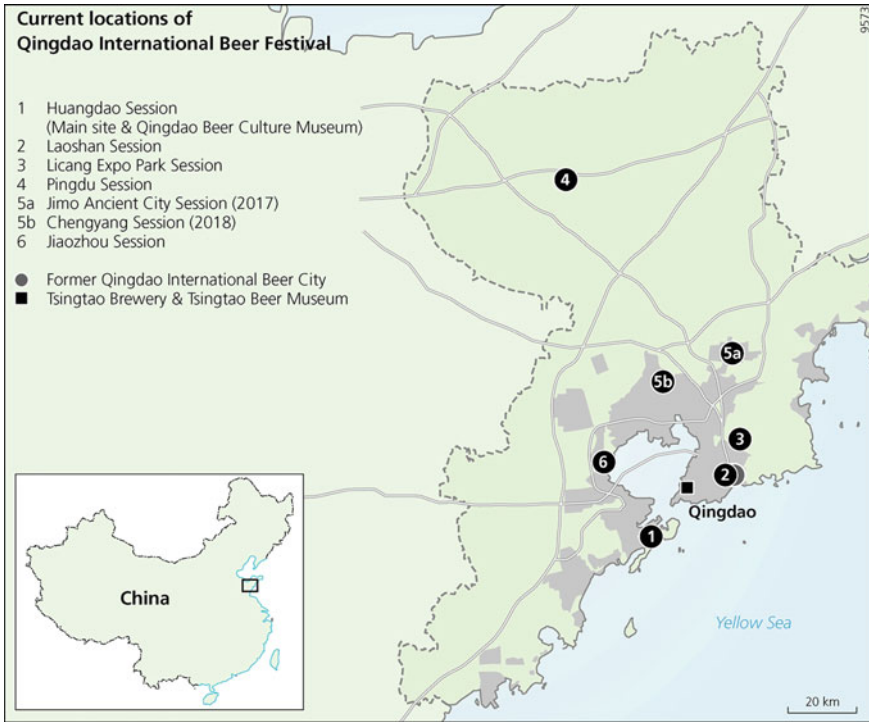


Fig. 3.3 Map of the city with the locations of the festival, brewery and museum. *Source* Zang (2019), reprinted with permission of Geomedica, Faculty of Geoscience, Utrecht University

transformation of the former beer city which still capitalises on beer as part of its identity.

3.6 Discussion

Not everyone shares the enthusiasm for beer-led redevelopments as a fluid urban lubricant to enhance revitalisation. Several authors raise concerns about the selective nature of heritage in these projects. Heritage is a selective reading of the past and although adaptive reuse opens these formerly fenced off areas to the public, these new places are not as inclusive as the term ‘opening up’ suggests. These places are created for particular types of consumers (Walker and Miller 2019). Kohn (2010: 367) concludes that the upmarket bars, restaurants and cultural facilities of Toronto’s Distillery district “appeal to the demographic that has benefitted most from deindustrialisation and globalisation”.

Even though the sites of former factories are reconnected to the city, they may exclude inhabitants that cannot afford to consume in these places. This leads to Wise

and Whittam's (2015) statement about who is regeneration for? Both redevelopment projects in Qingdao are likewise geared at more affluent consumers. The rejuvenated city has thus become a city for well to do inhabitants and consumers with purchasing power (Mathews and Picton 2014). Original inhabitants, labourers and consumers are displaced by this commercial gentrification that seems to be part and parcel of the redevelopment of former industrial or waterfront areas. The Cardiff example shows that this is not necessarily the case. With this comes the power or/ and challenges associated with place branding. Place branding, as critics argue, provides the rejuvenated city with a narrative that further legitimates the neo-liberal strategies tied up in these transformations (Kavaratzis and Kalandides 2015). As a result, alternative readings of the place are excluded. Riesto (2015, 2018), for example highlights how perceptions of the heritage values of former labourers or the local population were not included in the redevelopment plans of the Carlsberg brewery, while Boland et al. (2017) demonstrate how 'public interests' in regeneration plans often prioritise tourists' needs.

Another concern is the selectivity of what is actually conserved and reused, and thus which elements of the industrial past are on display. Riesto (2015, 2018) points at the selectivity in adaptive reuse of industrial sites, where the nineteenth century buildings are clearly favoured. Buildings or open spaces from the second half of the twentieth are demolished without giving them much thought. Architectural values rule over historical values and eventually result in a rather polished look as pipes that used to connect steps of the brewing process are removed from the buildings. The resulting landscapes are accused of being kitsch and inauthentic, reducing industrial remains to a mere spectacle and décor that suits nostalgic and romanticised tastes of consumers (Kohn 2010; Mathews and Picton 2014; Walker and Miller 2019). The entire production process can no longer be understood from looking at the remaining buildings. For breweries, it is exactly this production process that attracts visitors (combined with the free beer tasting). The Tsingtao beer museum is located in the original buildings of the Germania Brauerei which still contain the original equipment (as shown in Fig. 3.1). Many Chinese visitors marvel at this original equipment and see it as exemplary of the quality of German engineering (Zang et al. 2019). In fact, however, the place and the exterior façade of the brewery has a polished look as well (see Fig. 3.4).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlights how beer has become instrumental in urban regeneration. The transformational potential of beer goes beyond serving drinks to tourists who want to spend money to consume a particular beer or to literally taste local culture (Bujdosó and Szucs 2012). Beer can aid in the symbolic transformation of places: together with breweries and beer festivals, it has become part of the place image and must-see sights. Breweries moreover have been involved in the physical transformation of parts of the city, turning formerly closed off areas of production into places of



Fig. 3.4 The appearance of Tsingtao Brewery was polished (photograph by Jichuan Zang)

consumption where heritage adds value to the experience of place and product. Large brewing companies have opened up (parts of) their breweries to the general public, reusing historical breweries as museums or experience centres. Meanwhile, derelict industrial buildings have been turned into brewpubs. Taken together, these developments illustrate how conservation and development can be entwined.

Local and regional governments have attempted to stimulate beer-led urban regeneration, and Qingdao might be considered rather successful and this display of cultural heritage helps enhance tourism and city branding. However, critics argue that the common practice in urban governance of copying best practices has resulted in a new kind of homogenisation where best practices have not only involved similar reuses, but even generic aesthetics leading to the homogenisation of cities, beer and consumer experiences (Mathews and Picton 2014). Two decades ago, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) already observed the introduction of generic ‘old’ street furniture. As a result, the local distinctiveness of many revitalised industrial areas can be questioned (Atkinson 2007; Airas et al. 2015). The use of (beer) festivals has likewise become a rather generic strategy as we increasingly see events mimicking Oktoberfest staged in many cities worldwide.

Developments in Qingdao seem to follow the pattern: the brewery has become a museum and subsequently a catalyst for subsequent transformation in the surrounding areas to help increase consumption and meet growing product and festival demands. What is unique about Qingdao is the colonial past where the use of the brewery

and beer implies renegotiation of this past. Moreover, the Oktoberfest theming of Qingdao International Beer Festival has led to a number of unique developments from the perspective of heritage such as the nostalgic Bavarian small village on the new permanent festival site in Huangdao. However, only a few visitors draw a connection between the generic Oktoberfest theme and the German occupation in Qingdao. The German colonial culture remains embedded in the Qingdao Beer Festival and the event imitates Bavaria's Oktoberfest (MAFENGWO 2013). Other visitors to the festival may remain oblivious of the German roots (in taste and history) of Tsingtao. Although the festival mimics Oktoberfest, it has become a significant display of intangible heritage in Qingdao.

The simile depicted in the chapter title 'beer as cultural lubricant' signifies the fluid importance of beer to the history of Qingdao in the past and contemporary urban regeneration strategies today. Tsingtao has helped shape the brand of Qingdao with the factory and festival attracting many tourists to the city. Although the local connection of beer and city can thus be exploited in branding. With both the drink and the city, one should be aware that this relation is not wholly unproblematic, especially when drunk encounters create nuisance to inhabitants or visitors (Cabras and Ellison 2018). In such circumstances, beer drinking backfires on the brands.

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