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# Heritage Perception and Identity Construction Among Residents in Industrial Community Transformation: A Case Study of National Creative Park, Nanjing, China

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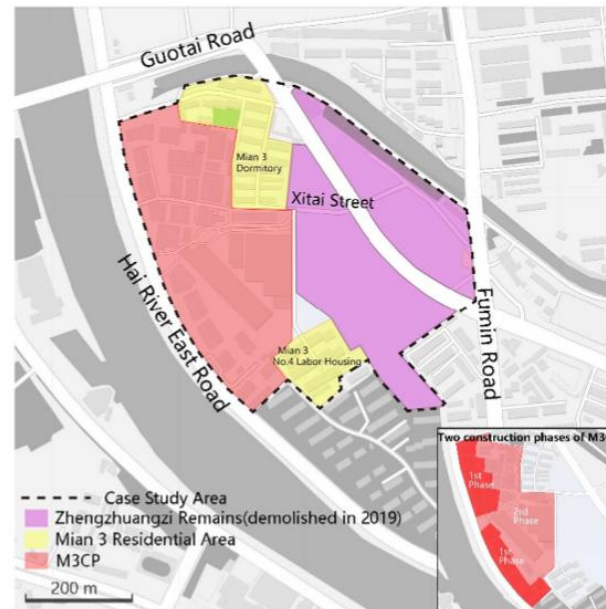
TRACK 06 URBAN CULTURES AND LIVED HERITAGE

# Aim

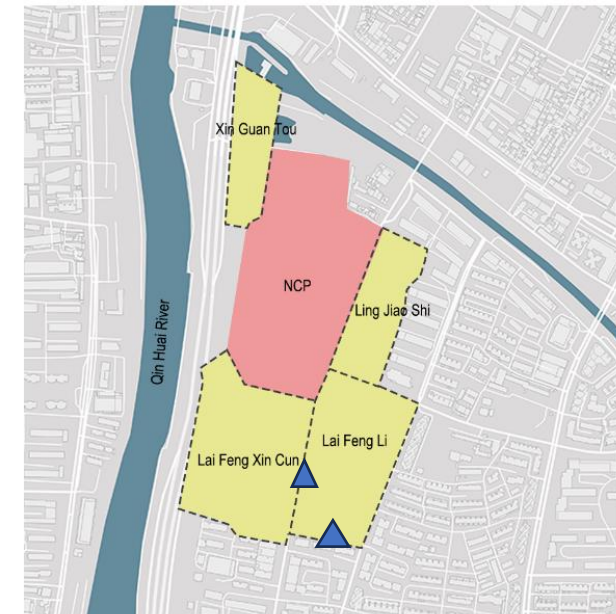
To understand heritage perception and identity construction among residents under different narratives during Chinese industrial community transformation.

# Research Background

Post-industrial transformation and adaptive reuse of industrial heritage are now core urban-transition issues in China. Unlike large-scale “industrial satellite towns” in the West or northern part of China, **southern Chinese cities such as Nanjing feature small-scale, embedded industrial heritage, deeply interwoven with residents’ daily life.**



Mian 3 community in Tianjing



NCP community in Nanjing

# Research Questions

RQ1:

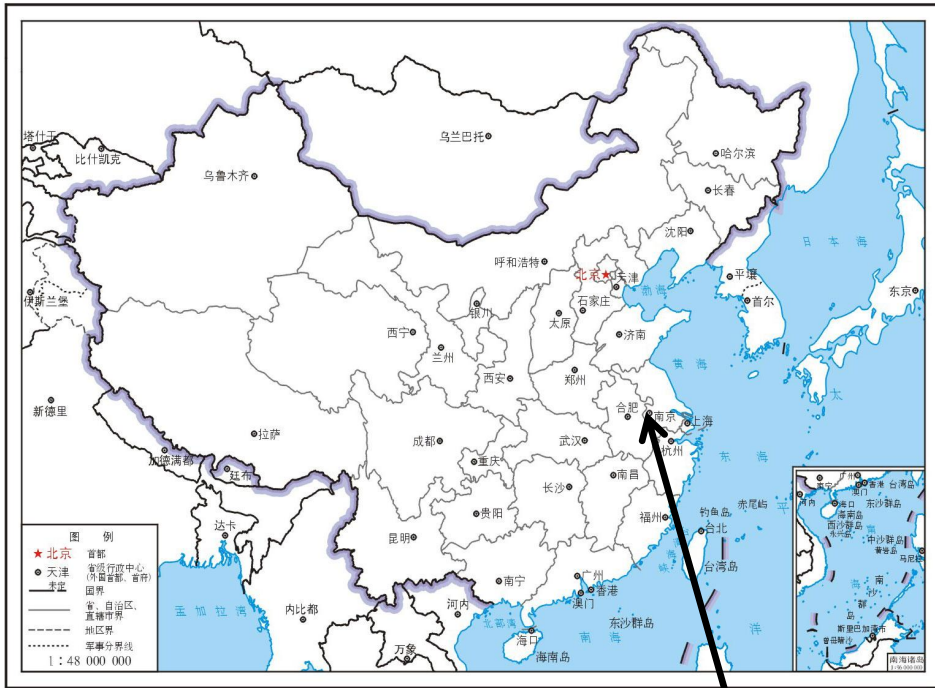
**How do residents with different backgrounds perceive spatial changes and construct identity?**

RQ2:

**In what ways do official function-consumption narratives interact or contend with grassroots stories?**

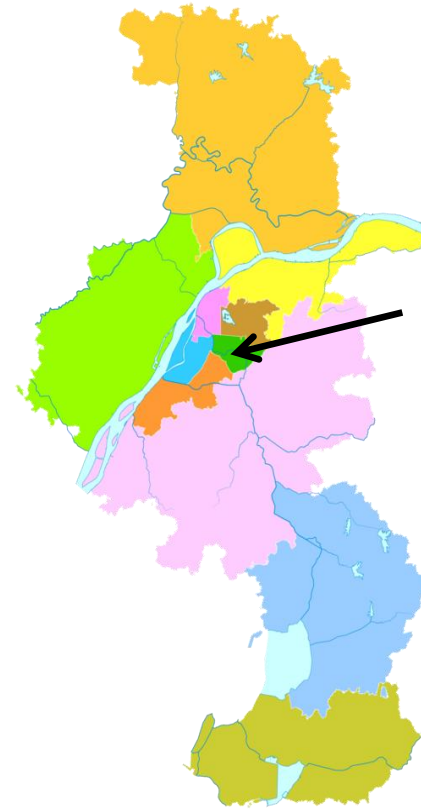
# Case Study: Nanjing Creative Park

中国地图



审图号: GS(2019)1824号

自然资源部 监制



Qinhuai District



 Nanjing National Creative Park (NCP)

 Qin Huai River

Nanjing,  
8.36 million urban permanent residents at the end of 2024  
about 11th largest in mainland China  
Used to be the captical city of Republic of China (ROC)

The National Creative Park sits  
in the heart of Qinhuai District.



# Case Study: National Creative Park

## Historical uniqueness:

The site's earlier incarnations were the Jiangnan Mint (for silver coins) and, later, the Nanjing No. 2 Machine-Tool Plant. The machine-tool plant served as one of Nanjing's key machinery-manufacturing hubs during the early years(1949-1990s) of the People's Republic. Now it become The National Creative Park(NCP).

Today's transformation therefore enjoys strong policy backing and offers rich potential for exploring how redevelopment can be woven into the local community.



1896

In the late Qing Dynasty, Liu Kunyi, Governor-General of Liangjiang, established the Jiangnan Mint Bureau for silver coin production, marking an origin point of modern industrial civilization in China.



1912

With the establishment of the Republic of China, the factory was renamed the Jiangnan Mint of the Republic of China.



1959

During the economic development of the People's Republic of China, Nanjing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant undertook the honorable mission of equipping the nation.



2013

The old factory buildings were renovated and transformed into Nanjing National Creative Park, a hub led by the cultural and creative industries.

# Case Study: Nanjing Creative Park

## Spatial uniqueness:

The NCP has gone through plant relocation, changes in property rights. Its role has shifted from a relatively self-contained factory compound to an integrated community asset.

Although the updated park still operates under an industrial-park economic model, **its spaces overlap heavily with the everyday life of neighboring residents, creating a park–community hybrid.**



1929  
The spatial extent of the Jiangnan Mint.



2024  
The spatial extent of the Nanjing National Creative Park.





# Case Study: Nanjing Creative Park

## Population uniqueness:

### Mixed-resident composition

The community is made up of **original residents, relocation households, the worker cohort (former plant employees, including both retirees and laid-off workers), employees from other work units, new residents, and tenants**—an arrangement that illustrates a classic overlap of demographic layers.



original residence  
( in Lingjiaoshi)



relocation households ( in  
Laifengli)



the workers' residence ( in Laifengli)



# Methodology

## **Multi-source qualitative data**

20+ planning / policy documents (1900 – 2024).

32 semi-structured interviews (Sep 2024 – Jan 2025).

# Findings: Official Narratives of NCP

## **Functional translation:**

industrial relic → culture-tourism / creative / digital-economy hybrid platform.

## **Subject replacement:**

workers → enterprises / investors / tourists.

## **Discourse logic:**

production → display and consumption, emphasizing economic performance while neglecting emotion/identity.

# Findings: Community Narratives

Group	Narrative traits	Typical quote	Transition of belonging
1. Former workers	Nostalgia and loss / compliance	“National policy takes priority.”	From producer to visitor
2. Workers’ families	Everydayness, positive use	“This whole row was factory’s dormitories.”	Maintains daily rhythm
3. Other long-term residents	Functionalist / resistant	“We never worked here.” “We go there every week.”	From spatial inclusion / cultural exclusion to cultural inclusion
4. New residents	Tool-use to growing identity	“Use first, understand later.”	Potential new narrative agents

# Discussion- interact between narratives

## **Selective fusion:**

- Officials absorb positive community narratives while ignoring protest.

## **Narrative silence:**

- Property regime, institutions, and collective-memory leave residents with little voice.

## **Planning insight:**

- Shift from “spatial aesthetics” to “cultural justice”.



# Policy & Planning Implications

## **Embedded narrative governance**

- Create resident–curator dialogue platforms during detailed planning and operation phases.

## **Multi-level data archiving**

- Integrate oral histories + digital archives into the NCP visitor center.

## **Inclusive spatial renewal**

- Engage former workers in co-creating public art.

## **Transferability**

- Offers a model for small-scale industrial-heritage renewal in South China and similarly mixed districts worldwide.

# Conclusions

## Key takeaways

- Narrative plurality and identity reconstruction are critical to social sustainable industrial-heritage renewal.
- Integrating *personal narratives* can enhance community cohesion and cultural continuity.

## Future work

- Cross-regional comparison
- Spatial ethnography mixed methods.

# Thank you!



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