

# Chapter 10

## Have Rebranding Strategies Improved the Economy and Environment in an Old District of a Metropolis?

### A Pilot Study in Wanchai, Hong Kong

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#### ABSTRACT

*Wanchai was the first old commercial district in Hong Kong to undergo redevelopment with much economic activity and environmental changes. This study con-*

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*ducted fieldwork, including urban land use surveys, environmental quality surveys, questionnaires, and cross-examined secondary in newspapers, government reports, and online information to find out if these rebranding strategies through building reconstruction improved the economy and environment of Wanchai. Results indicated that though the economy has grown significantly with such development strategies, the quality of the environment has not been improved much. Some suggestions are given accordingly.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Urban rebranding refers to the process of altering the perception of an urban area through strategic initiatives aimed at reshaping its image (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2007). The goals include enriching a city's reputation (or branding), boosting economic growth, and improving the living environment for citizens. Such rebranding strategies are particularly beneficial for underdeveloped regions or areas associated with negative connotations, as they can be revitalized to address urban challenges such as decay, poverty, and pollution. Consequently, economic development is stimulated, enhancing the quality of life for residents and fostering sustainable living practices (Herstein & Berger, 2013).

Wanchai, the first historic commercial district in Hong Kong to undergo redevelopment, has undergone a series of regeneration policies, making it a pertinent case study for this research. This study investigates the effectiveness of these policies in improving Wanchai and identifies which aspects of development could be optimized to benefit other districts in Hong Kong requiring rebranding.

Previous studies of urban rebranding have mainly focused on the West but have rarely focused on Asia, especially metropolises in this area. Therefore, this study explores the possible outcomes and influences of implementing city rebranding strategies in Hong Kong. The first part of this chapter reviews the importance of urban rebranding and the influences that urban rebranding contributes to. Next, the method of conducting this study is detailed, followed by the analysis and results. Finally, this chapter discusses the practical implications before concluding with suggested research directions.

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