

The Challenges from the Multiculturalism and the Contemporary Response from Democratized Museums: the Comparative Study on Museum's Historical Interpretation of the U.K. and Taiwan

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Abstract

When facing the new paradigm of democratization and the competing different voices from multicultural societies, it is crucial for contemporary democratized museums to reconstruct the policies of interpretation and display in not only dismantling the cultural barrier between museums and visitors but also forming as public forums in which individual visitor can construct each own meaning and diverse interpretation. In light of the concept of democratized museums, this paper proposes to discuss comparatively the two modes of the U.K. and Taiwan on how museums respond to the contemporary democratic and multicultural societies using historical interpretation. In the U.K., the de-centralized historical interpretation and museum system empower local museums and local people to play pivotal roles in the shaping of national identity, moreover, establish the combination of people and their local living environment. In Taiwan, the diverse, de-constructed, and margin-representing historical interpretation has been developing. Emphasizing on constructing the diversity of the immigrant society and re-writing of marginalized history, the democratized mode of Taiwan's museums dedicates to present the various historical experiences of each ethnic groups and transitional justice of history-writing. By studying comparatively the democratization of U.K. and Taiwan's museums, this paper suggests that through de-centralizing museum's historical interpretation and encouraging visitors to make their own meaning and share their viewpoints after visiting museums, in contemporary democratized museums, the information asymmetry between museums and visitors can be balanced while the museum's authority of interpreting the past can be gradually shared with people.

Keywords: Democratization, Multiculturalism, Cultural Barrier, De-centralization, Historical Narrative