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# **The Production of Creative Space in Taiwan and China**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Political Science

2014

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# Abstract

The concept of 'creativity' has in recent years gained significant currency in spatial governance, particularly as a form of urban redevelopment. Looking at three case cities in Taiwan and China, this thesis aims to answer how creativity is incorporated in urban redevelopment schemes and what the deployment of creative strategies means in practice, particularly in marginal urban space. While all the case cities have in recent years adopted a variety of 'creative city policies', they retain a vastly different capacity and style of governance, as well as different configurations of state and non-state actors participating in the production of creative space, resulting in local transformations of related policies.

Given that the norms and articulation of urban planning involve mechanisms of state control and management, while creativity is often understood as individual or grassroots practice, the research analyses the different approaches to the production of creative spaces along the state-society ledger, between the commonalities of the macro level and the contingent complexity of the micro level of politics. Using an ethnographic approach, eight creative areas in Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Beijing were analysed, adding to our understanding of how global policy discourses are localized based on differences in the organizational capacity of the state and non-state actors involved. Moreover, the emphasis on non-state actors has provided new insights into tactics of avoidance, persuasion and integration vis-à-vis the state. The resulting typology, differentiating corporative, entrepreneurial and normative approaches to creative space production, helps frame our understanding of how creativity is operationalised, as well as providing a comparative look at the Taiwanese and Chinese state's style of governing.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Creativity in the City

During my fieldwork in Taiwan and China, I realised my movements were being closely followed – by a giant rubber duck. The artwork by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman sometimes followed, sometimes anticipated my movement, having appeared in Kaohsiung, in Xiamen, in Taipei and in Beijing. The floating fowl was greeted everywhere by large crowds of curious citizens and, perhaps more curiously, the clamour of approval from city officials. In Taiwan, the competition between various cities reached such proportions that three ducks had been commissioned on the island. Although two deflated and one had to be dragged ashore during a typhoon, the yellow duck attracted millions of visitors and illustrates a readiness of the host cities to engage with public art on a far grander scale. Comical as the anecdote seems, it also underlines the radical shift in urban policy towards the deployment of art, culture, and creativity as tools of economic and spatial transformation.

Starting with New York and London, the sight of dedicated ‘creative spaces’ and artsy neighbourhoods has become commonplace in major cities around the globe, including the urban centres of China and Taiwan. Although art has long been associated with the urban setting, there is something quite different about the ways these spaces have been produced; while art is typically understood as the creative output of more or less talented individuals, the emergence of creative neighbourhoods, zones or districts has occurred against the backdrop of a re-evaluation of art as *creativity*. This elusive term has infiltrated the language of business, education, (un)employment and bureaucracy, and became the adjective of preference to concepts such as ‘lifestyle’, ‘living’ or ‘work’ in conjunction to their redefinition within a post-industrial society.

Arguably, this concept has nowhere gained more currency than in the field of urban governance, where it manifests itself both on the theoretical level of thinking about the city (most notably through the 'creative city' discourse), as well as physically as art- and culture-led interventions into urban space. While much has been written concerning the role of creativity in the city, the discussion is largely influenced by the prescriptive social engineering of Richard Florida's work on the 'creative class' (2002, 2003), and the 'creative city' policy toolkits of Charles Landry (2008), resulting in a field of policy influenced by a remarkably narrow set of canonical works. The cases in China and Taiwan, apart from being a suitable comparative pair due to their cultural and linguistic heritage, are also characterised by the *coherence* of the creative city discourse upon which the use of creativity in urban (re)development is based and justified. An expectation arising from this commonality would be one of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), which has throughout been an assumption with which the research has had to contend.

Another common feature of creative space is without doubt the transposition of culture and art into the realm of the economic, introducing the market as a mechanism for evaluating the success of such spaces. It is through this re-evaluation that the use of culture *as creativity* in urban redevelopment has been made possible, opening the doors for a range of urban forms such as the adaptive reuse of abandoned industrial infrastructure, the reuse of dilapidated historic buildings, or even art-led urbanization of formerly rural areas. Simultaneously however, the use of art and culture as a legitimizing tool for controversial redevelopment projects calls for a deeper investigation of how creative space supplants marginal, economically underutilised spaces often occupied by disenfranchised groups. Marginal areas are locations where a 'rent gap' exists, making their redevelopment profitable. While the vast majority of such areas are demolished and rebuilt, those that are preserved in one way or another (either as a physical or a social space) are increasingly being done so through the use of creative or culture-led redevelopment. In comparing state and social capacities of Taiwan and China, such redevelopments aid as a case study of differentiating power arrangements between professional groups, activists, residents' organizations and the various organs of the state.

Somewhat vague as a concept, the 'creative spaces' that make up the case studies of this research cannot easily be grouped into one neat urban form, nor should they be. Beneath the seeming commonalities of creative space policies adopted by cities large and small, there nevertheless exists a great variety of such spaces, from galleries, studios, artist villages, creative industry clusters and even whole creative neighbourhoods and towns. The variety of spaces is further matched by a variety of actors involved in the production of creative spaces: central and local governments, public and private institutions, state-owned and private enterprises, planners and artists, architects and residents, professional associations and loose affiliations of stakeholders. Lastly, there exists a great variety of ways of operationalizing creativity in the city, which suggest a contingent complexity not easily amenable to theory-building or categorization.

Taking into account both the commonalities such as the discourse on creativity, marketization, and the need to address large and complex constellations of stakeholders, the puzzle that presented itself can be formulated as the following question:

***"How is it that two regimes with broadly similar approaches to urban space produce such a variety of ways in which creativity is operationalised?"***

From this basic research puzzle, I proceeded to examine not only the policies and plans pertaining to their production, but to experience, observe and document the ways in which these creative spaces came to be, the ways in which some of them were extinguished, as well as the ways in which other continue to operate. As such, the way in which creative spaces are made is as much a question of the everyday practice of its inhabitants and users, as it is has become a question of urban planning. Given that the norms and articulation of urban (re)development involve mechanisms of state control and management, while the practice of creativity is typically understood as individual or small group activity, the research on the production of creative spaces in Taiwan and China necessarily involved an examination of the state-society relations in the two countries. Using an ethnographic approach, the research has tackled the problem by looking at the ways in which creative

spaces were made (often through a formal or informal process of negotiation), how they are used (in terms of their integration into the institutions of the state or their autonomy) and how their insertion into urban space has raised questions of equity (since the target spaces were often marginal urban spaces). Looking at this middle level of practice, the research locates a space where the commonalities of the macro level (which are often abstract ideas on space), and the contingent complexity of the micro level (often practiced space) meet, and where there has indeed been possible to construct a preliminary typology. Based on the examination of approaches to operationalization of creativity across the research sites, three tendencies have been found: a corporative approach tending towards the setting up of hybrid institutions spanning state and stakeholder groups, a normative approach which attempts to combine didactic appeals with targeted top-down redevelopment, as well as an entrepreneurial approach which relies on the mechanism of competition and invites state actors to participate as entrepreneurial actors, though the double position of the state as market participant (as the local state) and market regulator (as the central state) in the case of China complicates the definition of 'enterprise'. The typology is further developed in Chapter 2, following a review of literature on creativity as well as on the selected countries.

On this note, it should be emphasised that as a field of policy examined at a *comparative* level, the operationalization of creative spaces is an under-researched area, particularly in Asia. The present piece of research has thus attempted to provide the empirical work needed to learn about the specific mixes of state and societal flows, the specific ways in which policy and rhetoric are implemented, and the specific spaces that ultimately emerge. From a comparative perspective, these different approaches and ways point towards an underlying diversity which defies neat categorization along cleavages such as Taiwan-China, Communist Party-Guomindang, market socialism-developmental capitalism, but seems rather to be accompanying a new policy field as it emerges from obscurity to the limelight, bringing with it disparate groups and interests which are now combining in a great number of ways. These can be understood better through a comparative approach, which has highlighted not only expected isomorphism but also the unexpected complexity at the lowest level of political practice; a case in point is the comparison of

Taipei's URS programme (Chapter Four) and Beijing's Dashilar Platform (Chapter Seven), which are both defined as a policy tool called 'urban acupuncture' (small, targeted interventions), yet also present a very different practice in terms of how the programmes are evolving, their links to non-state groups, as well as the ways in which the programme has been integrated into the local state.

## **1.2 Methodology and case selection**

### ***Research design and case selection***

The research was designed as a sub-national comparative study, taking instances of creative space production within urban redevelopment as basic case studies. In total, eight sites across three cities were selected for ethnographic research, though additional sites are also discussed to construct a historical background for the selected eight. In order to avoid what Snyder (2001) calls 'mean-spirited analysis', i.e. one based on inappropriate coding of national means, comparable sub-national functional equivalents from China were selected against the template of Taiwan. China being an internally unevenly developed country with large differences between its cosmopolitan centres, provincial capitals and peripheral regions, Beijing was ultimately selected as the most appropriate location for a comparative study. Not only are the urban economies of Beijing, Taipei and Kaohsiung comparable in broad econometric terms, Taipei and Beijing are both locales where a strong interplay of municipal and national politics takes places, while Kaohsiung is similarly invested in national-level politics due to its status as the stronghold of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party. An additional case, that of Xiamen, was considered for inclusion in the research to provide better balance in case selection and was excluded primarily due to material and practical concerns, rather than a change in the epistemological grounding of the research – it remains a promising candidate for inclusion in further studies which could elaborate on the mechanisms of policy transmission and emulation within China itself. An alternative case study of Shanghai was also considered, yet its

distinct metropolitan brand of politics would perhaps not have found full comparative expression with Taipei, while its sheer size and global interconnectedness make it more amenable to a study of creative spaces in Asian cities such as Hong Kong or Singapore.

From the initial selection of a few representative cases (Pier-2 in Kaohsiung and Treasure Hill in Taipei), subsequent sites and interlocutors were selected through a snowballing approach. Thus, during initial fieldwork at Pier-2 Art Center, many of the artists commissioned there were found to have also produced work for a nearby park that replaced the demolished stretch of hardware shops on Gongyuan Road. In turn, research conducted there led to contacts with activists, filmmakers and artists who were now active in the movement to protect historic houses in Hamasen. All three research sites were also found to be inter-connected by virtue of having been included in municipal plans for the redevelopment of the entire area. This set them apart from sites such as the Qiaotou Sugar Refinery, which were ultimately excluded from the case selection due to their physical, temporal and thematic distance. The fieldwork sites in Taipei were selected through a similar approach, which led from the former veterans' village of Treasure Hill to other sites of culture-led redevelopment in the city. These were crucially also sites where a similar (sometimes identical) configuration of actors had been active, which ultimately led to the identification of the Urban Regeneration Station programme as representative of the city's cumulative efforts at creative space production. Lastly, case selection in Beijing originated from the 798 Art Zone as the city's representative creative space, yet ultimately resulted in emphasis being placed on Caochangdi and Dashilar. In a similar vein to the case selection in Taiwan, these were included by tracing where similar groups of actors had been active, as well as through following the suggestions of interviewees, these being taken as an important indication of the beliefs which inform their practice.

### ***Methods***

The backbone of the research rests on ethnographic observation conducted between September 2012 and July 2013; during this time, sites in Kaohsiung, Taipei and Beijing were visited in order to conduct fieldwork including nearly 40 semi-structured interviews of varying length (from two-hour conversations to

short Q&A sessions), photographic and video material, and supported by field notes and a journal to track the progress of the study and provide the starting points for the analysis of data. In addition, a large body of policy papers, local and national media reports, and government brochures were also included as supplementary material from which different discourses on creativity in urban redevelopment could be constructed. These were included primarily in order to examine how a narrative of creativity was being developed and propagated through officially sanctioned government publications in addition to the analysis of laws, regulations and policy papers.

One potential weakness of the methods used in relation to the research design is the relatively richer data obtained from non-state actors involved in the production of the creative spaces in question. Owing to their accessibility, which was on the whole far greater than that of state actors and institutions, the ethnography of their practice was constructed through lengthy participation and observation, which included semi-structured interviews of the kind used with state actors, but additionally allowed for a range of other interactions, from semi-formal to purely informal. As such, the situatedness of the author may present a point of contention for a more naturalist approach to qualitative study. Nevertheless, it is the position of this research that the rich narrative emerging from the extended interaction with communities of artists, activists, or spatial professionals such as architects, provided important insights into the lived spaces of the research sites which would otherwise not have been possible to obtain, while the study of policy and planning is to a greater extent possible through archival work and discourse analysis. This also relates to a second potential weakness with the research design – the case selection. While the sites do have certain broad commonalities already mentioned at the beginning of the Introduction, they also present a wealth of diverse ways of operationalizing creativity, with virtually as many ways as there are cases. Nevertheless, this research maintains the sites must be approached from different levels of analysis; just as they may seem uniform on the macro level, and multitudinous on the micro level, the mid-level nevertheless presented avenues for the construction of a typology, suggesting trends which may emerge from the ‘messy’ and unpredictable micro level.

### **Key terms and concepts**

**'Creativity'**, a key concept for this study, has been variously taken as an ingredient of genius (Eysenck, 1995), as a human instinct (Jung, 1964), or even as divine practice which separates it from mere production (as *creatio ex nihilo*). The concept is here defined as pertaining to a number of artistic, cultural and artisanal practices requiring the transfer of skill and inspiration from an abstract plain to one which can be distributed as a commodity. Creativity as a practice is associated with individuals or small groups, while also benefiting from what has typically been called the 'creative milieu'. While Törnqvist defines it as 'quintessentially chaotic' (Törnqvist, 1983), such a milieu has been the elusive target of economic planning, finding expression in creative clusters, innovation hubs, and art zones, underlining state and corporate involvement in the creation (attempted at least) of this precarious environment.

Quite apart from being merely a place where creative practices are pursued, the term **'creative space'** is understood here as a contested urban space wherein the different understandings of creativity (as a daily practice of artists, as an economic activity of the culture-creative industries, or as the resource from which the commodity of intellectual property is produced) are played out in physical space, following Lefebvre's conceptualization of mutually dependent spaces in dialectical tension. Thus, such spaces transcend a purely functional definition, accounting for the exclusion of cultural institutions such as museums or concert halls, as well as industrial clusters such as innovation hubs or high-tech zones. They are at once a lived space for artists and other residents, a planned space for municipal authorities, as well as an imagined space through their connection to national narratives on identity, culture, and art. Additionally, creative space is here defined as the object of a relatively new field of policy, which combines both elements of economic and cultural policy, as well as including an expanded set of stakeholders.

Another key concept, the **'production of space'**, is also developed from Lefebvre's work, and is understood here as a sum of practices which interpellate the different aspects of space, from the abstract to the lived and imagined spaces. As such, the study of the production of creative space must take into account not only the level of policy or planning, but must study the narratives and discourses which bring creative spaces into being as a specific

category, as well as experience the daily rhythm of these spaces.

**'Redevelopment'** is another concept used throughout this research and is defined as an organised, planned alteration of urban space designed to increase the space's value and utility, which distinguishes it from organic growth or small community-efforts, even though similar results may well be achieved. As a top-down, planned effort, it is usually, though not always, instigated by state institutions; although neoliberal reform has greatly changed the scope and style of redevelopment (from a comprehensive, high-modernist plan to a marketing-style 'strategic plan'), redevelopment retains a significant impact on residents and urban space.

Lastly, the research is throughout characterised by an examination of **'state capacity'**. While typically understood as the ability of a state to govern the territory, peoples, and resources under its control (cf. Skocpol, 1985), the term is here understood as the ability of the state to successfully address the non-state actors involved in the production of creative spaces. As such, it is related to another concept, that of the **'style of governance'**, which refers to the ways in which the negotiation with non-state actors takes place, for example through the evocation of normative standards, the adoption of a mechanism such as the market, or through a functional integration of societal demands. As such, it becomes possible to gauge not only the effectiveness of the state (measuring capacity), but to think about *how different ways of exerting power* result in different configurations of creative space across the selected cases.

### 1.3 Structure of the thesis

Following the introduction covering research questions, methodology and case selection in the first chapter, the thesis continues in **Chapter Two** with an overview of the three lines of inquiry that have informed this work in the broad sense. Discussing the condition of space, its form and how it relates to human activity, the first section begins the political inquiry of space with Lefebvre's seminal work 'The Production of Space' (1991). From here, the chapter discusses the applications of Lefebvrian spatial theory in the context of creative space production by interrogating tensions between the planned space

characteristic of statist management, and the lived space which forms the basis of many creative and artist communities. By connecting this debate to the neoliberal shift in urban governance, which rests on an ideological foundation of ‘organic self-organization’, the chapter introduces creative city strategies as an integral part of this neoliberal shift, though one which can better be explored through an examination of state and societal capacity, rather than through a rigid mould churning out ‘neoliberalisms’, i.e. only explorations of how the term can be applied in the Asian context. The chapter continues with a historical overview of urban space in China and Taiwan, focusing particularly on the retreat of the state, globalization, and commodification as the three changes which have set the scene for the advent of creative city strategies, which represent the third line of inquiry. Tracing the origins of creative city theory to a re-appreciation of art and culture as the economic category of creativity, it outlines how the discourse arrived in China and Taiwan, as well as how it was adapted to serve both as an economic policy, as well as the locus of discussions on identity and national development. Lastly, the chapter introduces how a typology of creative space approaches was constructed.

**Chapter Three** is the first of two chapters on Taipei, organised around a case study of Treasure Hill, a former illegal village of civil war veterans which was converted into an artist village through a long process of conflict and negotiation between the city and activist groups. The resulting spatial configuration is defined as a *museumification* of the village and its extant residents, and serves as an opening into the inquiry of the institutionalization of creative space production, which is taken up in **Chapter Four**. Here, the research traces the making of corporative institutions of spatial production in Taipei, emphasising the ability of the municipal state to usefully integrate professional and business communities’ input while also allowing access to the distribution of the state’s resources.

**Chapter Five** presents the case of Kaohsiung, Taiwan’s second city. Although three separate sites make up the case selection for the chapter, all three are found within what used to be the city’s central, coastal neighbourhood, but which had fallen into disrepair in the preceding decades. Here, a swathe of city-led initiatives has produced a set of creative spaces, displacing in its wake a

historically rooted community of metalworkers. The chapter analyses the discourse of 'historicization' used by the city to justify the large demolition project, connecting it with the way the neighbourhood is being transformed to fit with a normative view of creativity, replacing its working-class character with a centrally constructed 'creative zone' identity. Lastly, a look at a genuinely community-run project at Hamasen serves both to contrast the state's efforts and as a reminder of the importance of a grassroots perspective in the study of creative space production.

**Chapter Six**, the first of two chapters on creative space in Beijing, is set aside by its more theoretical slant; in order to underline the significant differences in the state-art relations in China and contrast them with the findings of the previous three chapters, the section of art and state underlines the reformation of this relationship from an ideological, Maoist one, via a two-decade long break, to a relation built on market tenets. While the state (especially the local state) is thus shown to have returned onto the contemporary art scene, the central state also retains a strong supervisory role, meting out punishment to artists who 'cross the line'. The centrality of contemporary art in creative space production is further explored in **Chapter Seven**. While Taiwanese creative spaces have often sprung from a broad coalition of artists, social activists, spatial professionals etc., Beijing's most renowned creative space have been set up by a globally mobile, financially independent artist elite, which also figures as a crucial factor in the entrepreneurial way such spaces are created and indeed perpetuated. The chapter closes with a look at Beijing's historic neighbourhoods, where creative strategies have been increasingly adopted by the entrepreneurial local state as a way to maximize redevelopment returns in protected neighbourhoods, as well as by small groups of independent actors whose fate is however unclear amid the increasing attention of larger financial interests.

# Chapter Two: Towards a Typology of Creative Spaces

## 2.1 Introduction: Planning and living the city

As a methodologically heterodox project aimed at the analysis of space between state and society, at the physical outcome of the meeting of two abstract spaces, one planned and the other lived, this project has inevitably suffered from foiled ambition and some necessary downscaling. Nevertheless, the central theme remains: the ways in which creative spaces relate to urban redevelopment in the selected cities of Taiwan and China. Being culturally, linguistically and economically related cities, the problem was not so much one of incommensurability, but rather of finding the balance between the study of planning policy ('the letter of the space') and grassroots practice ('the spirit of the space'). Moreover, belonging somewhere in the field of Greater China studies as well as that of urban studies, the research project had from the outset been designed to challenge the reluctance of both fields to venture beyond their immediate areas of study onto a comprehensive yet abstract level of political inquiry, one that would transcend the area and look at specific phenomena instead. From overarching, umbrella concepts such as urbanity, developmentalism, the creation of a civil society, down to the quotidian (sometimes mundane) observations on the practices of artist communities, one question pervades this work: why is the idea of creativity becoming a mainstay of the urban condition, and why does its operationalization produce such a multitude of outcomes at the lowest level? Is it a question of external constraints and resources, or simply a consequence of some cases having been lead by more engaged and successful actors?

An approach to this question has been formed through a consideration of three separate themes through which the many ways of producing creative space have been examined: the politics of space, Chinese and Taiwanese political economy, and the so-called 'creative city discourse'. This chapter introduces these three separate fields before arriving at a typology of creative spaces, which emerged from the theoretical inquiry as much as the fieldwork research, but which remains most visible at a middle level of analysis, in the space between macro-economic and political concerns, and the micro level of individual (or small group) practice. The first of the three themes, space, is a crucial concept in the political understanding of cities, refusing the take physical and abstract space for granted, but rather seeing it relationally as a *product* of human activity. The second theme is one that intersects with the other two, inquiring into the Taiwanese and Chinese developmental models and assumptions about whether path-dependencies shape urban space, all of which are pertinent to the comparative study of how creativity is used in urban redevelopment. Lastly, the globalised discourse of the creative city, itself a derivative of a neoliberal shift in urban planning, requires an interrogation based on whether such policies are *immutable* or *translated*. As already set out in the opening section, I argue that 'creativity' is used and operationalised in Taiwan and China in significantly differing ways, many of which are predicated upon the balance of power between the various constellations of the state (rather than levels) and those of 'society' – understood here as a loose term covering epistemic communities of planners, artists, architects and others who participate in the production of creative space without direct recourse to the resources of the state. While the Taiwanese state shows greater capacity in integrating societal pressure within its institutions (or creating hybrid institutions to this purpose, a capacity I call a 'socialised state'), this is also due to the existence of a more dependent artist/creative community. Conversely, although Beijing's case suggests a powerful yet non-socialised state (i.e. one which cannot always usefully integrate societal pressures), the resulting configurations of creative spaces in the city cannot be understood without taking into account the autonomous, economically independent artist elite active in the production of these spaces. The case of Kaohsiung in many ways exhibits the traits of both larger case cities, though its top-down statist approach is often tempered by public apathy. Kaohsiung's relatively small size

and accessible politics have however made it possible to explore and develop concepts that were later used in the research of Taipei and Beijing; the question of how globalised policy discourses are translated and implemented for example, brought into question the applicability of terms such as 'neoliberalism', 'gentrification' or even 'historical preservation' without critical pause. Simultaneously, one cannot ignore that the process of producing creative spaces in all three cities involves a *(re)integration of marginal space*, triggering questions about the equity and sustainability of such urban change. Another common trend was also apparent in all three case cities: a pluralisation of the urban planning process concerning creative spaces. The term should not be taken in a normative way and it suggests no necessary democratic opening in the mechanism of urban space production. Rather, it refers to a process that is equally a 'de-professionalization' of spatial production as much as it is 'community involvement', two sides of one coin that cannot be understood separately.

Although great care has been taken not to spread the theoretical grounding of the research too thin, much work remains to be done in order to move towards what Magnusson (2010) calls a 'politics of urbanism as a way of life' (Magnusson, 2010: 53). Such a politics of urbanism has in this case been constructed on the examination of a narrow urban category (creative space), and across politically and culturally related, yet distinct locations. Using the phenomenon of creative space as a focal point, the research has from the outset remained firmly outside a national-level conception of politics, while attempting not to be inadvertently limited to the city (or sub-city) scale. The policies and practices concerning creativity form a part of a globalised discourse in which actors as diverse as politicians, planners, architects, artists, corporate leaders and shopkeepers are all engaged in the remaking of *space*, which is where the initial thinking on the subject of this research also began.

Creativity in urban redevelopment furthermore touches upon areas of policy handled by several different traditional governmental bodies: national ministries of culture, of development, of economy; municipal cultural, economic and planning bureaux; national and municipal institutions such as museums, galleries or universities; public foundations and other new institutionalised

forms of cultural governance. Many of these have fundamentally different expectations and tasks regarding the function of creativity in the city, which was evident especially in the Chinese case study. Additionally, as an experimental and new field, creative and cultural policy remains relatively open to non-state actors, from professional associations, NGOs and pressure groups, opinion leaders, media and even residents. Due to this sprawling array of potential actors, the case selection was necessarily strict and limiting, painful as it was to leave fieldwork data unused<sup>1</sup>. Ultimately, the question of how creativity is used in urban redevelopment schemes was examined along the state-society spectrum using space, political economy of urban space and creative city discourse as the main three themes on which the research was constructed, resulting in a broad typology of how creative strategies are deployed within the conflictual field of urban redevelopment.

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<sup>1</sup> The research layout initially included a case study of Xiamen, aimed at exploring how spatial patterns and policy trends from Beijing are in the process of being adopted by second-tier cities in China. Although much interesting work emerged, the case study was ultimately excluded due to constraints on time as well as the length of the present research.

## 2.2 Space, a critical approach

Space, and urban space in particular, is unthinkable without human activity – this simple maxim lies at the core of this thesis. Heidegger’s *Raum* as ‘something that has been made room for’ (Heidegger, 1975: 154) or Michel de Certeau’s definition of space as *practiced place*, a location that has been transformed into space by virtue of mobile elements which operate in it (de Certeau, 2002: 117), both acknowledge that space is essentially coaxed into being by activity: be it thinking, moving or measuring. Yet for both of them, space remains more of an occurrence, an empty interval within which dwelling or everyday life occurs, an interval from which pure abstracted space can be achieved, or an interval that provides the theatre or stage for action (ibid. 124). Space is however, by virtue of also being *social* space, a space that is produced. Lefebvre (1991) expands on this initial notion to suggest that this has two main implications; firstly, that natural space is disappearing, becoming lost to thought; and secondly, that every society produces its own space, which cannot be understood simply as a collection of lives and things (a lived space), nor as a collection of works on space (a conceived level), but as a space that possesses a spatial practice with its own form, rhythm and centres (Lefebvre, 1991: 30-31).

Lefebvre is quick to point out that while space is amenable to ‘reading’, this is a descriptive and secondary activity, debunking thus the linguistic tradition of approaching space in a way in which everything is language and space reduced to a chain of signs (ibid.: 133). The relevance of such a position to this research is that while a semiotic reading of space is possible (and was indeed required in order to conceptualise the assumptions and norms guiding development), it cannot fully explain the ways in which space appears, changes, is used or contested without considering and analysing the political, economic and cultural processes which are linked to actors’ practices and beliefs. The present research, while being firmly grounded in the study of space (or more precisely, of urban spaces designated for creative activity), is essentially a critical study of the practices of individuals, groups and institutions - in short of the *ways of doing things*, of making space. Moreover, this practice cannot be divorced from the hard power relations which govern it.

It is precisely in this point that the research also diverges from the general, theoretical level of Lefebvre's observations, preferring instead to descend to the level of practical politics of space.

Once we accept that space is best experienced by living in it, be it in a sense of *dwelling*, the anthropological *everyday*, or by *participating* in the mode of production which secretes the space, we can successfully complete the move towards studying space not as a topography or through a strictly architectural or urban planning lens, nor as an abstract cognitive construct, but as a layered, and not at all static, space of meanings, assumptions and norms, as well as of political and quotidian action. Nowhere is this more necessary than in the study of creative space, a concept whose vagueness demands a heterodox approach to locate it as a political convenience, an industrial policy, a daily reality, and lofty ideal all at once. Furthermore, by virtue of being at once the primary locus of creative production (practiced by small groups or individuals), the focus of the state's attention (through its apparatus of planning and regulation) as well as a lucrative investment field for financial interests, the research has attempted throughout to analyse the interplay of these interests on the chosen fieldwork locations, using a political ethnography as the primary method of research.

### ***Taxonomy of space***

The present research proposes to use Lefebvre's 'spatial triad' as the basic taxonomic tool with which creative space is subjected to investigation. This triad, which exists in a dialectical tension, is conceived as three layers or forms of space: *representations of space* (maps, plans, etc.), *spatial practices* (flows, organizations, hierarchies) and the somewhat awkwardly called *spaces of representation* (which include imaginations, theories, mythologies) (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre is notoriously unclear on some of the finer details of these spaces and it is in any case not the intention of this research to expound upon their definition, but rather to use them as an analytical frame in the study of space, in order to construct a comprehensive analysis which treats urban plans, spatial patterns or resident's fears and hopes as parts which make up space as a whole.

Using this approach, the production of creative spaces can be understood as an imposition of the abstract representation of space (such as municipal plans and development imperatives) onto existing urban spaces, which may or may not welcome such a top-down operationalization of creative strategies. The opposition between such newly conceived spaces and those they seek to supplant is a recurring theme of the research. The new urban space invariably stems from the abstract, discursively constructed space of professionals and technocrats, while the existing urban spaces have long since become 'lived space' – the fluid and dynamic space of everyday life. Within this opposition, which can be concretised in the present case as the tension between state and non-state actors (although not always only along this line), the research has produced a typology of approaches towards the production of creative spaces: normative, corporative and entrepreneurial. In turn, these can be understood as different ways in which the plans, managerial practices, and technocratic control are transmitted to the level of the street.

Rather than being simply a function of a sliding scale of state-society relations, this typology stems from an interpretation of the researched spaces, based in turn on an immersive research method. As Schatz put it, such an immersion produces '*complex configurations of factors that combine and recombine in a striking variety of ways*' instead of simply testing '*elegant causal chains*' (Schatz, 2009: 11). As a taxonomy, it may therefore be considered by some as a futile, inelegant one, yet its use lies in the ability to distinguish between understandings of general, shared concepts such as *creativity, the value of art, or culture-led redevelopment* that are frequently found on both sides of the Taiwan Straits as well as further afield. Analogous to political ethnographic work on concepts such as democracy (Schaffer, 1998), the research interrogates these differing conceptions of creativity (and by extension, culture and art) in the urban setting of Taipei, Kaohsiung and Beijing. In all three cases, contested creative space, one where the conceptions of governmental planning bodies and the practices of extant communities clash, has been at the core of the research.

Using *space* as the basic object of inquiry has enabled an examination of the meeting of state and society even within the small case studies chosen for this

project, namely artist zones, cultural areas and other 'creative spaces'. Such urban phenomena have been the subject of many metropolitan-level inquiries (cf. Boontharm (2012) on Tokyo, Bangkok and Singapore, Colomb (2012) on Berlin, Grodach (2012) on Austin, Jayne (2004) on Stoke-on-Trent), though less effort has been devoted towards 'breaking out' of methodological constraints which have characterised the study of cities (and specific clusters or areas within them) in a radically more open and relational way that would also allow for the consideration of national-level politics, flows of power and ideas. Jacobs (2012) for example calls for 'diffusionist' models of the mobility (of policies, ideas etc.) with a 'Latoureaan concept of translation' – i.e. one that is able to detect and usefully analyse the nuances in the adoption of similar policies in the city. Such an approach would be able to integrate phenomena such as 'gentrification' or 'urban revanchism', or policies such as adaptive reuse or private-public partnerships without treating them as immutable over space and time, but rather seeing how similar phenomena transform through the practice of different power balances in the chosen cities.

While being essentially a study of policy transformation and variety, it is important to underline some existing debates regarding the *homogenization* of urban space. One relevant aspect identified in the literature on urban space is that of the assumed proliferation of what Augé (1995) calls 'non-places': automated, non-interactionary, air-conditioned, ordered spaces, their identity (if any) often reconstituted, reimagined and sterilised. This space, as an *end of space* to coincide with an *end of history*, is identified by Augé through a semiotic reading of space – precisely what Lefebvre presciently warned about. While all of us have probably wondered at the homogenised, repeatable experience of being at an airport, it is unlikely that all urban forms are as function-dependent, nor is their construction the result of some underlying 'sameness' that pervades the spirits of their planners and those who commission them. Recent arrivals onto the urban landscape, such as waterfront redevelopments, private-public partnerships, central business districts, gated residential communities, quasi-public spaces under private control etc., seem to be emerging not only across Greater China, but are indeed worldwide phenomena most often linked to a neoliberal reorganization of space (cf. Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Irazábal,

2006; Minton, 2009; Sorensen et al., 2010). The problem with an examination stemming from an assumption of homogeneity is however the unavoidable tendency to explain such phenomena through an increasingly parsimonious yet unsatisfying explanation, be it 'neoliberal urban policy', 'cultural globalization' or a combination of the two. In contrast to such a view, the present research has started from the intention to examine the *differences* within the apparent *sameness* of policy and spatial forms in regards to the use of creativity as one of the strategies for the economic development of cities under conditions of globalised competition.

### ***Situating creativity in the comparison of spaces***

The analysis of creative space strategies does not assume to treat cities as enclosed, self-limiting units. Indeed, in China and Taiwan, the position of the case cities in a global economic and cultural (ranking) system is often a question of national as well as municipal politics, suggesting a comparative study is well placed to answer questions about how urban policies spread. Earlier scholarly work focused on networks and nodes of cities in a global hierarchy, most notably by Castells in his seminal work on network society *The Rise of the Network Society* (1986) as well as Sassen's work on the global city (2001; 2002). Such an approach has also found practical application, most notably by Loughborough University's *Globalization and World Cities* centre, yet the quantitative network-based analysis of cities has in recent years come under considerable scrutiny; Robinson (2005) in particular identifies a lack of qualitative data to support assumptions about the flows and connections upon which a hierarchy of 'world cities' is constructed – a hierarchy which city officials in all three research locations often referred to. The present research subscribes to this view in the hope of contributing sound qualitative data: not to reinforce a simplified hierarchy of cities by adding more variables to the score-card, but rather to explore how one set of policies and beliefs, that of the *value* of creativity in urban (re)development, has been transformed across the three chosen fieldwork sites. Considering Jane M. Jacobs' call for research which locates 'failure, absence and mutations' rather than 'linear stories of neoliberal same-ing' (Jacobs, 2012: 419), the present research has endeavoured to chart precisely such changes through a study of the creative

spaces which resulted from creative strategies adopted by the cities' various actors.

Furthermore, a traditional approach of studying formally equivalent municipal institutions or 'levels' has been eschewed in favour of studying what Savitch calls 'functional equivalents' in his comparative study of post-industrial phenomena in New York, Paris and London (Savitch, 1988). The comparison of the case cities is implicitly a study of two political and social systems, with the definition of the 'political' expanded well beyond the organs of the state. In the maze of spatial politics, groups such as NGOs, business, even loose groups of artists or professional networks of architects etc. have to be treated as having a clearly political role, as engaging in urban space as its producers – an inherently political action. Equally, the state is here not treated as a neatly stratified unit, nor is the inquiry into its workings limited in any formal way. The state, be it local, national, village level or institutional (museums, state-owned enterprises) is distinguished from other actors mainly by its monopoly on regulation and by implication, violence (from demolition, relocation, financial penalties to the threat or use of physical force). Given that the operationalization of 'creativity' is both the concern of technocratic, managerial control by the state and of individual or small self-organised efforts, the intersections between state and society are many, and have typically been researched either as top-down planning (be it successful or not) or as grassroots, community-building. The present research emphasises that such a dichotomy must not go as far as to suggest a zero-sum game, or treat 'state' and 'society' as complete and independent entities. As fieldwork in all three research sites has shown, a more fluid understanding of both sides is necessary to be able to account for the interactive modes of producing creative space. The present research has identified two themes around which the analysis of creative spaces is structured: *the opposition between planned and spontaneous space*, and the *capacity of the state and of civil society* under competitive (neoliberal) urban space production. It is hoped the resulting typology (or the outline thereof) will contribute a critical geographic element to comparative studies of Taiwan and China, as well as expand on debates within the field of urban studies with a set of case studies from Greater China.

### ***Planning and spontaneity***

The dichotomy mentioned above stems from the opposition between planned and organic space, as well as between approaches to urban politics that emphasise the former or the latter quality of cities. Jane Jacobs (1961) stands out as the early voice of 'the street', bringing to light the first time the practices of self-government and self-organisation which sustain any successful neighbourhood or city in opposition to the rationalist, high-modernist planning practice personified in her 'arch-enemy', New York's chief planner and builder Robert Moses. What Jacobs perhaps neglects however is the role political and economic power play in the production of space; while her analysis of the social cost of New York's slum clearance programme is incredibly intuitive, it nevertheless skirts politely around issues of race and class, while also maintaining a certain naïve, almost Proudhonist view of a pre-modern, village-type society as the optimal distribution of space.

Another powerful voice against statist planning, one acutely aware of the role of power, has been the work of James C. Scott, whose *Seeing Like a State* details a string of planning failures, and the failures especially of 'schemes to improve the human condition' (Scott, 1998). In many ways, the identification of planning failures has encouraged a move away from high-modernist practices of planning and a focus on community and grassroots organization. This new planning and managing style has benefitted many marginal spaces by the increased openness of the planning process. Yet 'planning failure' has also been the driver of the move towards a neoliberal reconceptualization, not only on the national level but also within the city, town or village politics. A Hayekian reverence for a self-organising, self-perpetuating market as the optimal system for information dissemination between trading individuals remains the ideological basis of neoliberal reforms, even when it is increasingly obvious the current form of market economics requires heavy state involvement, particularly in the urban setting, and nowhere more so than in China. While the central business districts stand as monuments and markers of a new age, replacing Maoist smokestacks with skyscrapers, they are as much the product of free market entrepreneurialism as statist planning – and not only in China. As Lefebvre noted of monumental buildings, they '*...mask the will to power and*

*the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought.'* (Lefebvre, 1991: 143).

### **Capacity, power, neoliberalism**

While Jane Jacobs remains a crucial figure in the study of cities, the 'will to power' that Lefebvre mentions cannot remain unexamined. Critical geography, having moved from what Ward (2010) calls a 'cartographic scale', to one where metrics are not fixed, has built on Marxist conceptions of space, revealing power relations beneath the technocratic sheen of the planning profession and its functioning especially under conditions of globalised capitalism. While much excellent work has informed my thinking on the subject, David Harvey's work on neoliberalism and urban space (Harvey, 1989), Peter Marcuse on space and race (Marcuse, 1997), and Mike Davis on the conflicting effects of globalization on his native Los Angeles (Davis, 1990) have been particularly influential in setting the general thrust of the present research. In bringing together the 'planned' and 'lived' levels of analysis, both the formal, planned city as well as grassroots space-making initiatives are seen as the building blocks of creative spaces through an ethnography of space, that is, by analysing the results of policy implementation and negotiation in the built/lived environment. This is where the comparison of two nominally very different political systems across the Taiwan Strait comes into starker focus, as similar policy trends (such as pursuing creative city strategies) have resulted in very different spatial arrangements.

Taiwan and China, two late developers with similar cultural backgrounds are separated by several decades of life under divergent political systems – even though shared path-dependencies with roots before the 1949 division make their comparison highly rewarding. As both Taiwan and China enter a post-industrial stage (though this is not universal in the latter), the need to retain competitiveness has become a deeply engrained belief in urban policy-makers on both sides of the Taiwan Straits, causing friction between the traditionally statist, planning-heavy economic models of both countries, and the newly received wisdom on marketization as an optimal mechanism of resource allocation. Far from being an *actual* objectivity, this belief is deeply connected

to the implementation of a neoliberal reform programme which both countries have embarked upon, for different reasons, since the 1980s. From the field of macro-economic policy, elements of neoliberal policy trends have become part of an urban planning doxa and feature heavily in creative policy strategies, which for the most part can be traced to 1980s Britain and the United States<sup>2</sup>.

The issue of how (and if) neoliberalism is being adopted in Asia remains however a contested academic topic, though many conflicting views may be explained by the differing understanding of what 'neoliberalism' entails. The question surrounding neoliberalism in China has in particular been the subject of much academic debate, especially regarding the continued role of the state as a contradiction to neoliberal politics. Thus, Liew (2005) for example emphasises the legacy of state socialism as proof that China is not accepting neoliberalism, while Wang Hui and the Chinese New Left emphasise the inherently statist and anti-democratic nature of neoliberalism (Wang and Karl, 2004). In his assessment of the debate, Wu (2010) argues neoliberal economics should be seen as a fix to a set of problems that became apparent in the 1970s, while the deepening of free-market reform following Deng's 1992 Southern Tour was necessary to prevent another crisis (Wu, 2010: 628). On the other hand, debate over Taiwan's neoliberal reforms is made up mainly of self-examination wherein many societal transformations are branded as *neoliberal* as an all-encompassing expletive with scant analytical value. In such divergent situations, the present research has attempted to avoid the wholesale use of the term, preferring instead to draw a comparative analysis of *capacity*, both of the respective states and non-state groups involved in the production of creative space. While the term 'neoliberal' is often used, this is mainly in reference to its use by interviewees or relevant literature, rather than a subject of inquiry. Rather, this research adopts a Foucauldian understanding of neoliberalism as an art of government which '*...asks the economy how its freedom can have a state-creating function and role, in the sense that it will really make possible the state's legitimacy.*' (Foucault, 2008: 95). Understood

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<sup>2</sup> The re-examination of cultural industries as creative industries took place largely within the Greater London Council, which looked to new ways of measuring economic benefits of culture to make up a crucial part of proto-New Labour's move between the perceived ills of statist planning and the excesses neoliberal deregulation (O'Connor, 2007).

from this perspective, the research transcends a typology of 'neoliberalisms' and approaches the term as a set of processes that are subjecting to a market-based mechanism of legitimation those areas that were previously outside its influence. Although Wu may be completely correct in concluding market reform is a '*...societal modernization project and is consistent with the CCP's effort to modernise China...*' (Wu, 2010: 621), this does not determine the extent to which marketization (or as Foucault would have it, 'a market mechanism of veridiction') will influence China's future development or how, in the cases researched here, it influenced the legitimation strategies pursued by actors involved in creative space production.

On the other hand, a more state-centred approach has recently been bolstered by newfound concern for societal wellbeing among China's ruling elite, and much scholarship has been produced on the topic of understanding China through state-centred 'Leninist government' theory, as Chalmers Johnson puts it (Johnson, 1982). In his article on the paradigms of Chinese politics for example, Gilley argues forcefully in favour of 'kicking society back out' and approaching China from a comparative communist approach; far from being replaced by Asian developmentalism, Leninist rule and developmentalism are thought to usefully complement each other (Gilley, 2011: 531). The examination of creative space production may in many ways appear to be quite removed from the theory of the Chinese state, yet as spaces that are both *marginal* (and outside of state control) and *representative* (and of great value to the state), they occupy the liminal space of state and society and are subject to different interpretations and beliefs concerning the state's role. As cases examined in Chapter Six show, there is for example still significant tension between the more entrepreneurially minded local state and the more lofty concerns embodied in central state bodies such as the Ministry of Culture. As for the comparative angle, the research maintains the usefulness of a comparison between China and Taiwan, even considering Gilley's exhortation for comparative *communist* approaches. As heir to a Leninist KMT party state, the democratised Taiwanese state maintains a paternalistic and normative notion of governing in certain broad policy areas, especially those dealing with culture or art. What sets it apart from China is primarily its ability (and willingness) to

integrate societal pressures into its vision, as the case studies in Taipei and Kaohsiung have demonstrated.

Through the study of the interplay of state and societal actors in the limited confines of creative spaces, the reader may indeed identify recurrent themes of power, especially in the application of planned spaces onto the physical landscape of the case cities, an application that somewhat challenges notions both of democracy and authoritarianism in the urban field. Here perhaps is the place to address the 'Gramscian elephant in the room'. Bob Jessop in particular has brought a neo-Gramscian approach to the study of urban accumulation strategies, arguing for an approach which examines '*...how urban regimes operate through a strategically selective combination of political society and civil society, government and governance, 'parties' and partnerships.*' (Jessop, 1996: 64. emphases in original). Without a doubt, many of these analytical categories have been used in the present research; it may well be that it is only through a lack of theoretical rigour that it cannot truly be called a Gramscian piece of work, rather than any discord in the general thrust and objective of the approach. Perhaps future research on creative spaces in Asia will benefit from a more tightly focused theoretical foundation, but for the present research, a frugal use of neo-Gramscian terms is hopefully sufficient to develop a typology of spaces, though they might be equally usefully examined as different levels of hegemony or forms of political rule: the corporative mode of producing creative spaces in Taipei for example corresponds neatly with Gramsci's 'inclusive hegemony', while the Beijing and Kaohsiung cases are more akin to limited forms of political rule involving a narrower set of groups. The limited nature of the research, having focused on what are relatively small areas of the city, is one potential reason for the apprehensiveness regarding using a neo-Gramscian approach; nevertheless, the typology that emerged from the focused fieldwork on a selection of sites across three cities in Greater China suggests further research will benefit from the perspective on urban regimes as suggested by Jessop.

The comparative analysis stemming from interpretive fieldwork has produced a typology of approaches to the production of creative spaces; a typology which, while not exhaustive, nevertheless supports the original hypothesis on the role

of *capacity* in organizational patterns concerning the mix of state and technocratic control and/or reproduction of what has typically been considered organic, unplanned (unplannable?) practice of creativity. Ultimately, while the comparison between China and Taiwan has remained at the core of the research, the themes which the typology addresses are also universal ones, questioning the efficacy and efficiency of creative space in three cities with hugely differing capacity and style of governance: corporative, entrepreneurial and normative. These approaches are by no means absolute, yet they remain useful in distinguishing the variations or creative space strategies pursued in the case cities, variations whose historical context must first be examined in the following section.

## 2.3 Political economy of space in Taiwan and China

Taiwan's development and democratization have often been studied with the explicit or implicit intention of exploring China's futures; here however, Taiwan and China are examined not so much as 'alternative Chinas' but are seen mainly as having had a related history of producing urban space, one that was occasionally similar in intention and often dissimilar in its results. The Maoist state was for example able to enforce on China its vision of an industrializing socialist country, with strict controls on population movement, consumption and growth in the cities. This system, designed to extract surplus capital from the countryside to invest in urban industrial development, also resulted in the relatively low rate of urbanization, amassing decades' worth of pressure for urban growth. The cities of Taiwan in contrast were equally marked by the Guomindang's earlier attempts at building an ideologically-shaped, normative space, as well as their inability to enforce an orderly urban regime in the years after their escape to the island. The section therefore proposes to examine shared historical background before proceeding to look at the development of the two countries' urban spaces separately, through themes such as developmentalism, globalization and the retreat/resurgence of state power, all of which have significantly marked both China and Taiwan. To successfully understand what a demolition in Kaohsiung, a community project in Taipei, or an artist village in Beijing mean, it has been necessary to consider these spaces from such diverse aspects. Although the resulting work is not testing hypotheses of state-society relations in China or Taiwan, some of the qualitative data may well be used to advance our understanding of the state as an actor in the urban field of both countries, especially in terms of its capacity to address the demands of highly focused, specialised groups of actors.

### ***Chinese urban forms in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: heritage and visions***

Western colonial interests have by the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century created a varied and extensive urban fabric which interacted with local urban traditions either by supplanting or hybridizing it, and created the first cities which were truly *urban* in their juxtaposition with the rural: places without roots, diverse and changing, they were qualitatively different from villages, towns and even the imperial

metropolis of Beijing, where the basic building block, the courtyard house, still ruled the city. Though this period is influential for the continuation of the way in which urban forms developed in China, the present paper begins its review with the Republican period and the Nationalist project of building a new national capital in Nanjing – a project with great relevance to both Maoist China and the KMT regime on Taiwan. The Nanjing project is the first concerted effort at planning a new city, a new urban form, as well as a new ideal citizen to populate it. Musgrove (2000), Cody (2001) and Lipkin (2006) all deal with different aspects of the “high-modernist” project of national renovation in the urban context. The city became the focus of this social engineering effort, the comprehensive plan its hallmark. The state, while in effect weak and unable to support this gargantuan task financially, had a very clear idea of what the new Chinese city would look like, what kind of people would inhabit it and how power relations in society would be visible in physical space. Thus, foreign trees were imported, slums cleared, rickshaw drivers harassed and monuments to new found national fervour commissioned - the implications for codifying a language of modern urban space, where symbols of the ‘global city’ have become measuring sticks of success, are of course considerable. In this way we see how the abstract space of an ideology that dictated a drive towards ‘modernity’ was made very *material* by the actions of those in power, many of which were schooled in the West, or relied on Western architects and planners such as Henry K. Murphy (Cody, 2001).

Considerable parts of this modernizing zeal were inherited by the KMT’s Communist nemesis and thus carried on into the era of the People’s Republic. Other parts and forms were carried over with less thought or little agency. Yeh (Yeh, 1997) for example describes the republican origins of the *danwei*, the work unit which marked the urban landscape of Communist China so profoundly that its progeny still constitute one of the main actors in processes of urban redevelopment today, be it as the “socialist land masters” as Hsing (2010) would call them, or simply as a template for life behind walls and gates, still an important element of Chinese urban form (Lu, 2006; Huang and Low, 2008). In many ways however, the Maoist urban regime was far closer to traditional Chinese urban forms than its authors may have intended. Essentially ‘anti-urban’, it was designed not only to limit urban growth and consumption to

fund an increase in production instead, but favoured a disjointed, segmented space, which made the city *feel* less urban (Lu, 2006). The vertical integration through the work unit, rather than a horizontal provision of services (with the exception of work units which were too small to provide all services such as schools and hospitals), coupled with a lack of urban growth meant many Chinese cities remained almost unchanged; Beijing in the 1950s and 1960s differed far less from its imperial past than it does today, with life still going on behind walls, in compounds and self-sufficient work units and only imperial towers piercing the flat urban landscape.

On Taiwan meanwhile, the Nationalists' ambitions stunted by their ignominious defeat during the civil war, grand projects were abandoned in favour of smaller ones, many based on the garden city movement originating from the UK. While some success was achieved by planners and builders in the countryside (most notably at Jhong-Sing New Village, cf. (Wang and Heath, 2008; 2010)), the application of Garden City ideals such as low-rise buildings and wide pavements were mainly ignored in rapidly growing urban areas such as Yonghe, demonstrating how the ambitions of the KMT planning regime were tempered by its inability to impose regulations effectively. Nevertheless, Taiwan in many ways changed from a model colony of Japan to a model province of an exiled Chinese government, with many traditionalist and hybrid forms of architecture introduced by the KMT during the martial law period: the *chinoiserie* of the curved roofs and bright reds reminiscent of the Imperial Palace replaced the modernist forms of Nanjing's capital building project. Unable to impose its urban vision in the face of rapid urbanization, the normative elements found their expression especially in the construction of landmark buildings such as Martyrs' Tombs, government buildings, museums, even the re-building of original structures such as Taipei's city gates. The search for a suitable identity became one of the main concerns of urban planning and remains to this day a crucial question confronting Taiwan; in some ways, most of the cases examined in Chapters Three, Four, and Five fall under the rubric of this questioning of identity.

### ***China's urban landscape in the reform era***

Since the 1978 reforms were instigated, the city and the process of urbanization have been at the centre of China's developmental path. Starting with Special Economic Zones, an increasing autonomy of municipal authorities and the ensuing opening-up of China's coastal cities to foreign investment and influence, we can trace a legacy of government policy aimed at strengthening the urban at the expense of the rural (though this does not apply to peri-urban land, which has largely benefitted, economically, from urban expansion), and one which has created a clearly stratified structure of space ranging from first-tier, coastal cities (and Beijing), to the metropoli of the interior and down through to frontier cities and smaller towns (Chen, 2006).

What remains a more contentious question is how this process, once its general direction was formalised in policy terms, progressed from that point onwards. Certainly, the retreat of the state from successive areas of policy implementation cannot be ignored and it has indeed become one of the most commonly used approaches for the examination of urban China, but it cannot in itself be sufficient. When asking what drives urban development, one must confront the question of whether this is a gradual and harmonious process, or whether it is in fact driven by conflict and tension. Most of the literature mentioned below implies the presence of conflict; indeed some authors have come down square on the side of what Abramson (2007) would call a dialectical mode of development, one in which constant conflicts propel the process of development. This approach neatly ties in with an examination of the conflicts to control the most fundamental resource of urban China, land. An opposing, gradualist understanding of China's urban development tends to re-evaluate conflict as 'trial and error', in which old and new institutions coexist to create a reform without losers (Zhu, 2005). Tempting as it may be to side with the parsimony of this view, the proliferation of case studies and research on conflict over urban space makes it a somewhat problematic notion.

Ultimately, any inquiry into the production of urban space in China must deal with the changes in state control and provision of urban land, which can be understood as a retreat of central state control, a devolvement of power to the local level, as well as the introduction of the market as a mechanism for the

distribution of resources. Oi (1992) for example introduces the concept of 'local state corporatism', suggesting a weakening of central planning powers in favour of entrepreneurial local state actors. Although Oi was not concerned with how the local state is vertically incorporated vis-à-vis the central state and national developmental objectives, the idea of the municipal government as a (the?) land entrepreneur suggests a retreat of central state control over the particulars of urban development while simultaneously retaining control over the overall national developmental goal and the mechanisms governing its achievement. The notion of the local state as entrepreneur was further developed by Walder (1995), emphasising the role of local officialdom as agents of economic development. Municipal governments, as instigators of growth, landlords and agents of the central state (in terms of the broad developmental agenda) are thus in a strong position to remodel urban space according to their own terms and needs. This includes lucrative land lease deals, which incentivise municipal authorities toward certain types of development, an idea developed by Gaubatz (1999, 2005) in her work on central business districts. To a large extent, her work finds echoes in the work on Beijing's creative spaces, which similarly examine the local state's incentives to engage in creative strategies and the promotion of culture-led redevelopment.

The role of the local state is further elaborated by Fulong Wu, underlining the reinvention or consolidation of local-level institutions such as municipal and ward-level administration or even Residents' Committees, which serve both as buffers to absorb transitional shock, as well as important agents of development in their own right (Wu, 2002). The section on Caochangdi Village in Chapter Six neatly ties into these findings, showing how the local village authority has adopted the 'artist village' as its own project, resulting in a significant expansion of the village's creative space. Institutions such as these have entered into purely commercial transactions with both foreign and domestic business interests, which leads Wu (2002) to believe that they are instrumental in the process of land commodification; unable to extract taxes in efficient ways, the local state is forced to enter the real estate market, where its interests are aligned with those of developers and not necessarily those of city

residents, a state of affairs which has received both academic (Wank, 1999; Broudehoux, 2004; Huang, 2004; Friedmann, 2005) and media attention.

Hsing (2010) takes a similar approach to Wu's in looking at local government actors, underlining the role of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or 'socialist land-masters', as he calls them. Hsing sees the process of land commodification very much as one guided by central state legislation, but ultimately formed by the competition between municipal governments and non-municipal state actors such as SOEs, universities and other urban 'landowners'. In contrast to the 'growth coalitions' of the Western world (Logan and Molotch, 1987), urban development in China is characterised by *competition* between different state actors, all of which enter onto the land market. To gain an upper hand in their battle for control over lucrative city space, municipalities use strategies such as redevelopment of dilapidated areas, securing legal authority over land transfers or adopting what Hsing calls either a 'city rational' or 'city modern' strategy to legitimise their efforts, bringing into the fore the more abstract plain of the city (Hsing, 2010: 38-42). The present research suggest that 'city creative' narratives could be the latest in a string of precisely such strategies, presenting new ways of extracting surplus value from the urban space under their control – especially in conditions where wholesale redevelopment is impossible due to objective constraints such as heritage protection, which has in recent years become more of an 'obstacle' it was in the first reform decades.

What then is the role of the central state, how far has its influence been removed? While it may be true that during the first half of the reform decades, the central state effectively underwent an organised retreat from urban development and the creation of land markets, the permanency of this situation has since been called into question. Xu and Yeh (2009) in particular stand out in pointing out that while the state relinquished control in many policy areas, the ascent of local government has not been without a reaction, a reassertion in which the state has been re-centralising regulatory authority and intervening in the overheated land and property market by constraining demand and supply, by targeting and guiding FDI towards specific regions, and directly promoting development with 'enclaves' such as university or environmental

towns. Further research into the developing relationship between various strata of the Chinese state is no doubt required to assess whether the central state remains absent, repositions itself or re-enters the city. As far as the case of creative space is concerned, this research has tried to explore the relationship between various state actors and professional networks, and compare those with the experience of Taiwan. In this, a focus on state capacity - understood from both sides of the state-society ledger - has been useful in making sense of how and why similar policies are adopted, and how and why they result in a variety of different creative spaces and arrangements. In many ways, the research question deals with a facet of a globalizing discourse transmitted by epistemic networks, though with the added factor of the state as the ultimate arbiter.

### ***Globalization***

The power struggle between local and central government may determine the power relations inside Chinese cities and even conditions the urban form of the cities, yet the developmental teleology which is thus implied cannot fully be understood without considering the effect of what can best be termed 'globalization', as well as the way in which the market economy influences and produces urban space in its most general meaning. The fundamental question concerning globalization is whether it is some extraneous influence, or whether it is an influence only by the grace of domestic actors open to it; as Gilley argues, '*...central state leaders were already predisposed towards openness.*' (Gilley, 2011: 524). His argument leaves plentiful room for re-interpretation; while the trauma of the Cultural Revolution might be one explanation for the reformist leadership's experiments, each pushing them in a spiral of trial-and-error further towards globalised, market-led capitalism, the cultural, idea-side of a globalised urban world should not be discounted either. As Louisa Schein (2001) reports from her own fieldwork with the Miao in 1993, the 'urban' is not simply the physical world of the city; rather, it act as a locus of consumption, a coded language which imbibes objects with 'elite distinction'. Thus, a western-style cake eaten in the backwaters of Guizhou becomes a symbol of urban life, stark against the visual code of rurality and underdevelopment. This 'cake effect' is of course less visible in the modern Chinese city, but it exists nonetheless, and on a greater, more diffused scale. Similar implications

attesting to the symbolic and real value of the city are found in the work of Gaubatz (2005) and Gandelsonas (2002); the city in China has become the processing centre for globality in a visual and commoditised sense, transforming infrastructural projects into a quantifiable measure of success, as attested by Rudolph and Lu (2008) in their interviews with prominent Shanghainese. Morley (2009) defines the effect of globalization as an architectural articulation of modernity, a conscious mimicry of cities like Hong Kong and its vertiginous skyline that is perhaps better explored through approaches stemming from organizational theory such as mimetic isomorphism. Urban forms are converging not only visually (this is a symptom of sorts), but it is the producers of urban space who are increasingly dancing to the same tune, using the same jargon, and who form an epistemic community, not only of planners and professionals, but of commercial developers too.

What is striking about this process is its perceived universality in late developing countries; the homogenisation of space through mass produced infrastructure projects has previously altered both Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese urban landscapes, with a similar clamour of approval from local and central officials, the media and the business community (Sorensen, 2002; Jou, 2005). It is of course not surprising that the process of globalization and its effect on space is not unique to China; what is of discursive interest rather is the way in which this 'globality' is adapted and used in China and Taiwan, how meanings shift with developing economies of aspiration and consumption, whether they retain their original connotations or whether they are mere shells, filled with a substance of wholly local provenance. This question is to a large extent reflected in academic debate surrounding globalization; while early proponents such as Friedmann (1986) and Sassen (1991) introduced terms such as 'global city', explaining the way in which flows of capital, information, goods and labour are channelled through nodes (i.e. global cities), this research takes particular note of work emphasizing the importance of local factors which may be overlooked by a neat system such as Sassen's; Fujita's (2003) work on Tokyo's experience as a continued centre of manufacturing, or Chu's (2008) perspective on Hong Kong's changing configuration as 'global city' have shown the inadequacy of looking solely at a city's functions in global

system of capital accumulation and the need to consider both state and indeed the sub-municipal levels as a fluid, open space of political action.

Although arguments in favour of understanding the Chinese urban transformation through a state-focused lens continue to be persuasive, perhaps it is the theory of state which needs updating, examining the state not as a monolith of singular resolve, but rather a bloc of loose ideological and economic tendencies towards a 'strong China', a 'stable and harmonious society' etc. This research hopes to contribute precisely to such an understanding of state-society relations, albeit in the limited and specialised world of art and the creative economy. The variations in creative city strategies, which itself form a part of a globalised discourse on the urban economy with clear normative implications (with creativity, individuality, openness, tolerance given economic value in opposition to old industries, conformity, uniformity understood as economic hindrances), can largely be understood as the function of the state's capacity to integrate or transform this discourse, i.e. the translation that takes place. While the succeeding chapters on case studies in Taiwan and China interrogate the state's ability to control the production of creative spaces, one theme visible throughout is the need to understand the state through the examination of those affected by it and dealing with it, lest we assume the state to be impervious to outside influence. This research maintains that while the state in both China and Taiwan remains the key actor in producing, adopting and adapting globalised discourses such as the one on creativity, this autonomy of the state does not preclude its 'socialization', especially in the case of Taiwan.

### ***Taiwan, model developer?***

While most histories of Taiwan R.O.C. begin in 1949 with the final evacuation of the Nationalist government from the mainland, Taiwan was in many ways a model colony before it became a model developmental state. While the Japanese planners focused mainly on creating a modern agricultural sector, most of Taiwan's cities also received their first comprehensive plans and planning regulation in the same period. More importantly, Taiwan was a planning laboratory for the nascent colonial power, showcasing Japanese expertise and rational, 'modern' planning at its peak (Bristow, 2010).

The destruction of much of Taiwan's economy during WWII, as well as the uncertainty in which the newly installed rulers of Taiwan found themselves in, meant that the priority for the Guomindang was survival, something which would often depend on luck and circumstance, as well as farsighted policy. One of the latter is certainly land reform from 1949 onwards, which ensured a more equitable distribution of assets (itself an important pre-condition for the so-called East Asian model of development), weakened landed opposition to the regime and also eased migratory pressures on Taiwanese cities; while their growth was marked throughout the post-war period, the pattern of migration was dispersed among mid-size and larger cities and towns and the workforce absorbed in local industrial developments (Speare, 1974). The developmental model that eventually launched Taiwan into an economic boom has been the subject of much academic discussion and study (most notably Johnson, 1982; Kuznets, 1988; Lin 1988) and can be best described as a state-led development project which relies heavily on close contacts with industry leaders, as well as the approval of the working classes, which is achieved by rapid real increases in wages without major increases in income distribution inequality. In terms of the comparative perspective of the Taiwanese model vis-à-vis Korea or China, it differs from the Korean by the absence of large, family-run conglomerates (a point it shares with China's experience), while differing from the Chinese in the social equity of its developmental phase (Bourguignon et al., 2001).

In terms of the physical space that this project of development produces, its central characteristic is an intense industrialization resulting in Taiwan becoming the country with the highest density of factories, as well as the highest energy consumption density (Hua, 2010: 56). Additionally, as this industrial capacity is dispersed across the island, the entire eastern lowlands have been subjected to intensive development, urbanization, environmental degradation and rising land values. The dispersal of industrial capacity and urbanization patterns over the island is one point of Taiwan's developmental model which illustrates well the potential for comparison with present-day mainland China, where in-situ urbanization and the creation of small to medium enterprises has also left a mark on the vast swathes of the countryside, just as

it did in Taiwan. In villages as in the cities, fast economic development of the kind which Taiwan, Japan and now China have been experiencing comes of course at a considerable environmental cost, both in terms of degradation of natural habitats, as well as the destruction of cultural heritage and the creation of a sub-standard built environment in which considerations for aesthetics or humanist values are not part of the equation.

A further point of comparison can be found in that both China and Taiwan, though passing through different economic systems, have maintained a curious kinship when it comes to questions of national narratives; the Republic of China on Taiwan remained a paternalistic and (at least on paper) radical state of Sun Yatsen's design. Development on both sides of the Strait was not merely economic development for its own sake, but an exercise in rebuilding the Chinese nation or building a Taiwanese one – this influenced urban space in a number of ways, perhaps most obviously in an aesthetic sense (Kuo, 2010). In spite of this, practical concerns guided daily political action, which include the necessity to maintain a network of clientelistic relations in Taiwan's case, or the necessity to maintain social stability in the face of glaring inequality in China's. Thus, we find in Taiwan a curious combination of radical distributionist policies such as *land-to-the-tiller* (which simultaneously weakened large landholders opposing the regime) on one hand, and on the other the *laissez-faire* attitudes towards the provision of urban housing, which has been highly commodified as a result (La Grange et al., 2006).

The last point also touches upon a crucial shift in Taiwanese urban space towards a 'neoliberal' order; while the role of the state has famously been crucial in fostering the economic development of Taiwan, the accumulation of public debt in the 1980s, coupled with increased demands for democratization, meant that the retreat of the state from the production and control of urban space had begun in earnest. Additionally, due to the rising popularity of opposition movements, Taiwan was in a position where liberalizing reforms and deregulation were seen as *a part of the process of democratization*: as such, they were embraced by the opposition, but also pre-emptively adopted by the ruling Guomindang (Chen, 2005: 100-101), in a situation not dissimilar to the experience of Eastern Europe *and* China, where the ruling elite embraced

deeper economic liberalization as a fix to the crisis of the 1980s. In terms of what consequences this had on the physical space of Taiwanese cities, we must first emphasise that the deregulation of planning, coupled with a relaxation of the housing market and the sale of large tracts of state-owned land in urban centres almost immediately triggered a construction boom. Secondly, the increasing partnership between developers and the state, as well as the demographic change in urban centres meant a trajectory of urban redevelopment that served primarily the middle- to upper-income households – another point of comparison with China. Such an urban space released the potential value of land benefitting the developers and local politicians, but it also brought political dividends to local and national politicians, especially since the Taipei Mayor's office has become somewhat of a stepping-stone towards national leadership. In practical terms, the coalition of developers, politicians and the middle classes found its expression also in city beautification programmes, such as the construction of parks in city centres to replace degraded housing, known as the 'green bulldozer' (*lǜsè tuījǐ*) (Huang, 2012). As neighbourhoods such as Taipei's Yongkang Alley were developed, nearby slums and squatter housing were being cleared in an effort to produce a city of order, efficiency and cleanliness (Chen, 2005: 112). The same spirit marks two instances of culture-creative redevelopment analysed in Chapter Three and Five, namely Taipei's Treasure Hill and Kaohsiung's Gongyuan Road, as well as Beijing's hutong redevelopment initiatives explored in Chapter Seven, indicating the deployment of notions of culture and creativity must be examined from a critical perspective which takes into account tensions along class lines.

The creative spaces being constructed and planned constitute but one facet of urban development, yet are subject to the same power relations and developmental trajectories shaping urban space in general. The participation of the local state as an entrepreneurial entity in China for example stands as a principal example of the need to understand creative space production within the context of urban development. Similarly, the normative spaces-making of Kaohsiung's municipal creative spaces may be analysed through Taiwan's precarious status and the quest for its identity, but may equally be better understood given the long legacy of normative space-making of the Republic

of China, from Nanjing to Jhong-Sing New Village and the palatial Qing-dynasty style of many of the country's public edifices. What binds these disparate cases together to form a single field of inquiry is above all the adoption of an organised, coherent set of beliefs regarding the economic value of creativity, culture and art, which this research terms as the 'creative city discourse'.

## 2.4 The Creative City in Taiwan and China

With the intention of comparing the operationalization of creative strategies in the cities of Taiwan and China, this chapter will begin by tying an enquiry of space with current debates on urban political economy, where the discourse of 'creativity' has caused much ink to be spilt over the implications of commodifying culture in the context of urban (re)development. Creativity as a discourse of urban planning and politics is seen as a frame which allows the incorporation not only of marginal spaces, but also marginal practices and lives into a mainstream vision of urbanity, allowing the planning and political authority to bridge the gap between the statist, managerial conception of the urban and the small, 'organic' and putatively autonomous city it wishes to control. Simultaneously, the policies of supporting creativity can be seen as a consequence of an economic shift to a post-Fordist mode of production. Harvey (1989) in particular introduces the concept of the 'cultural fix' to analyse why 'culture' had become a major concern in urban development, and what this in turn says about the current phase of capitalism. It is certainly no coincidence that the discourse on creativity emerged out of a shift in the mode of production, i.e. an entry into a post-Fordist capitalism. It is also not unlikely that as a transformation towards rentier capitalism takes place, the practice of creativity will flourish, considering it is an economic activity producing new intellectual property as the bedrock of a rentier economy. Within this broad context, both Taiwan and China have clear developmental goals aimed at increasing their capacity to produce cultural goods and the discourse on creativity has been eagerly taken up by both countries.

Additionally, it has been observed in all three cases that a very small number of works dominate the official understanding of creativity in the city, namely Richard Florida's work on the creative class (Florida, 2002), as well as Charles Landry's work on creative cities, originally co-authored with Bianchini for the Demos think-tank (Landry and Bianchini, 1995). As well as having become by-words for creative city discourse, both authors have engaged in lucrative consulting, with Landry even having been commissioned by Taipei to provide recommendations on what creative strategies the city should take up (see Chapter Four). While their ideas, summarised as a belief that culture and

creativity can bring about economic success, have gained currency in the policy-making world, quite the opposite is true for the academic one; Florida in particular has been the target of harsh criticism. While Landry has limited himself to more general observations about bureaucracy, platform-work in urban policy and the importance of horizontal connections, Florida's work is predicated on an altogether wider assumption – that of the 'creative class'. This class, composed of a series of professions ranging from finance to design, management to painting, is said to be the driver of economic growth and the 'dominant class in society' (Florida, 2002: ix). Florida's recommendations to cities wishing to court this new 'class' are based on the needs of the 'creatives', which Florida, aware of policy-makers' fondness for acronymization, calls the 'Three Ts' – technology, talent and tolerance. Perhaps not altogether surprisingly, the sweeping approach of Florida's creative class has found clearer expression in China's own 'creative city' expert, Li Wuwei, who advocates China's ascension towards a 'creative society'; while eager to criticise the current obsession with GDP, what Li proposes instead is a creative society based on a new lifestyle which, confusing cause and effect, he says will rise from creative industry: *'Creative clusters are the physical carriers of the creative industries. Their unique form of industry clustering and spatial layout has given rise to new lifestyles, such as loft living and the bohemian settlements of SOHO.'* (Li, 2011: 121). Much like Florida, Li is guided with a preoccupation towards a supply-side economics of creativity which chimes well with the 'build it and they will come' approach to urban development characteristic of many large projects. Some of these may languish in apparent abandon (as the highly publicised cases of China's 'Ghost Cities' illustrates), but in economically dynamic cities like Shanghai, large cultural-creative developments are beginning to be a new favoured 'flagship' development, just as skyscrapers were in previous decades (Zheng, 2011).

Florida's brave assumptions about how 'creatives' deliver growth have been among the most harshly criticised aspects of his work; Marcuse (2003) points out the causal mechanisms are not specified, relying instead on assumed correlations. Others have attempted to verify these assumptions and provide the necessary empirical data; Markusen and Schrock (2006) have thus attempted to define 'the artistic dividend', though their findings suggest only

limited links between artistic strength and recent growth rates (Markusen and Schrock, 2006: 1682). Rather than challenge Florida on methodological grounds, this research treats his work not as a competing academic argument that requires debunking, but rather a symptom of a much deeper shift in the relationship between artistic production, the market, and urban space. As such, Florida's work and fame can be better understood as a consequence of a change in the mode of production, rather than a genuinely transformative idea. Even the term 'creative class', with its normative evocation of tolerance and individual entrepreneurship, the apparent lack of rootedness causing creative workers to leave town if it does not live up to their expectations, is reminiscent more of Calhoun's use of the term *cosmopolitan* as a 'class consciousness of frequent travellers' (Calhoun, 2002).

While Florida's work has been thoroughly examined in the case of the USA, where his consultancy is also most active, this research suggests a look at Asian cases provides a useful perspective from which to evaluate the emergence of the creative (class/city) discourse as a function of a late-capitalist mode of production, as already outlined by Harvey (1989). It is particularly the *transformation* of Florida's thought that is most illustrative, as the last of his 'Ts' – tolerance – is sometimes omitted by socially conservative governments unsure of why and how legalizing gay marriage or working against racial or religious prejudices could benefit their urban economies, though Pang suggests Singapore has been moving in an opposite, and equally oversimplified, direction, '*on the assumption that gayness equals creative talent*' (Pang, 2012: 60). More than any other feature however, the case cities all share the belief that the fostering of creativity is a relatively inexpensive yet efficient way to increase their competitiveness, or in the case of Kaohsiung, to actually enter the competition in the first place. From this perspective, it has been necessary to examine how the idea of creativity, of creative cities has been implemented, when it has been deployed and how the different actors involved in the processes of producing creative spaces have accepted it.

If Florida presents the supply-side of creative strategies, both Taiwan and China have no lack of demand-oriented initiatives, which aim to upgrade existing industrial chains with a qualitative shift towards more value-added

industrial production. Particularly on the national level, such an interpretation of creative city discourse has found its way into various national development plans. In Taiwan for example, the 2002 'Challenge 2008' plan lists ten major themes, six of which can be associated with the expected benefits/requirements of adopting a creative development strategy: cultivating 'e-talent', developing cultural creative industry, setting up bases for innovation, doubling tourist numbers and developing a 'digital Taiwan' (Executive Yuan, 2002). Chinese five-year plans (FYP) have similarly begun emphasising the importance of 'cultural exports', as is the case with the 12<sup>th</sup> national FYP, whereas municipal FYP go a step further in emphasising the importance of cultural and creative output for economic development (Beijing Municipality, 2011). One over-arching trend in the inclusion of creative and cultural economic development is certainly the belief that creative strategies can move the city (or country) up the value-added chain and increase its competitiveness. In smaller cities, this trend is particularly visible, as Kaohsiung's efforts to put itself 'on the map' clearly illustrate.

Lastly, the present research may be reproached for suffering from a case selection biased towards marginal or socially vulnerable spaces, which in turn over-emphasises the potential detrimental effects of creative city strategies. However, the focus on the use of creativity in the integration of marginal spaces faithfully represents the frequency with which these spaces are represented. Defunct industrial objects, illegal housing, dilapidated historical neighbourhoods all present sites where a significant 'rent gap' exists that can be exploited through redevelopment. The 'rent gap' theory, first introduced by Neil Smith in 1979, rests upon a distinction between 'actual' and 'potential' rent of a given area, explaining why poor neighbourhoods are also sites of rapid gentrification and redevelopment (Smith, 1979). Although the theory has received both criticism (most notably (Bourassa, 1993) and subsequent updating (Clark, 1995), the basic process at work has been observed at least since Engels wrote his treatise on the housing question, in which he observes how *'...growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this*

*value, instead of increasing it, because they no longer correspond to the changed circumstances.'* (Engels, 1935: 23).

While the rent gap theory can thus provide a political economic explanation for redevelopment in general, where it really provides added explanatory power is in its ability to incorporate symbolic value in the calculation. Only in this way can we then explain why Taipei city decided to redevelop Treasure Hill rather than raze it, why Kaohsiung is investing large amount of public money into abandoned warehouses, or why a project to upgrade deteriorating hutongs in Beijing could attract the interest of the local government. The appearance of a discourse of creativity enables a re-use of such spaces rather than their wholesale demolition, making seemingly less profitable investments attractive due to the value added by the cultural capital of the area. It is noteworthy that this capital need not be monetised, indeed this accounts for the variety of ways in which marginal space is being integrated across the selected case cities. In Taipei for example, the case of Treasure Hill shows the perceived benefit/profit was found in satisfying a need for memorializing or re-inventing common urban heritage; conversely, the hutong upgrading projects combine an external (and sometimes not entirely faithful) acknowledgment of historical value with the return on the profits of investors such as SOHO China, which has recently redeveloped a large tract of land in central Beijing. It is from this perspective that the examination of creative city discourse in urban redevelopment projects in Taiwan and China can produce the greatest contribution to the study of urban (re)development in general, as well as by nuancing the rent gap theory by emphasizing the commodified yet non-monetary value of the research locations, all of which are important distinctions contributing towards a more accurate typology of creative spaces in the two countries.

## 2.5 A typology of creative spaces in Taiwan and China

The typology developed in the chapter was not one planned from the outset of the research; nor was it a clear goal towards which the research led. Rather, the categorization into three types, three approaches of how creative city strategies are utilised in urban redevelopment arose quite organically from the fieldwork, first as a aid to the analysis of the data, later as a finding in its own right. As a heuristic device, it is not intended to act as a definitive, replicable rule that could be applied to any city with the view to categorise it, yet the broad arrangements of coalitions governing the use of creativity do have some explanatory value that can be applied to other cases. The presence of a strong integrating state in Singapore for example has produced not only similar spatial configurations, but has also spawned similar public discussion on the values of preservation versus museumification and discussion on the perils of commercialization, all against the backdrop of a debate on identity (cf. Henderson, 2001; Ooi, 2011; Boontharm, 2012). In Beijing, the template for creative redevelopment seems to correspond closer to New York, seen in the proliferation of the word ‘SOHO’ (sic) both in policy circles, public discourse, as well as various marketing schemes. Kaohsiung on the other hand seems to be looking towards Bilbao as a model city, yet its ability to integrate more than only superficial lessons is under significant doubt. Ultimately, these comparisons are beyond the remit of this study and serve to suggest potential further research using a similar set of criteria against which to evaluate urban redevelopment schemes that rely or incorporate the notion of creativity, culture, or art.

The typology is based on several themes and observations shared across the different research sites, as well as some categories that pertain to the research questions, such as those on style of governance, types of grassroots response, institutional frameworks deployed, as well as ways of integrating marginal space. Based on these criteria (examined in more detail below), it has been possible to carve out three broad approaches: the corporative approach of Taipei, the normative approach in Kaohsiung, and the entrepreneurial approach favoured in Beijing. It is however equally important to remember that the typology presents in effect a ‘snapshot’ of what is a dynamic and

unpredictable process of institution building and negotiation over what creative spaces in cities actually mean, or what their role should be vis-à-vis the state or various stakeholder groups. In this sense, the typology serves to underline some fault lines, along which the case cities can be separated; Taiwan and China are distinguishable by their style of governance, particularly in the (un)willingness to devolve power to groups outside immediate state control. That being said, the local state in Beijing has nevertheless arrived at similar methods of deploying targeted, small-scale creative redevelopment in its historic areas as Taipei, despite there being significant differences in the institutional and legal framework underpinning such work.

**Table 1 - Typology of approaches to creative space production**

	<b>Corporative</b>	<b>Normative</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial</b>
<b>Representative city</b>	<i>Taipei</i>	<i>Kaohsiung</i>	<i>Beijing</i>
<b>Templates and role models</b>	<i>Seoul, Singapore, Hong Kong</i>	<i>Bilbao, Yokohama</i>	<i>New York, London</i>
<b>Style of governance</b>	<i>Socialised state with capacity to incorporate non-state practices into hybrid institutions</i>	<i>Bureaucratic dirigiste state, engaging creative communities only as content creators</i>	<i>Market-based, competitive and disaggregated state with sporadic central state interventions</i>
<b>Grassroots-level practice</b>	<i>Professionalised, financially dependent, socially engaged</i>	<i>Dispersed, financially dependent</i>	<i>Entrepreneurial, financially autonomous, politically muted</i>
<b>Institutions of creative space production</b>	<i>Hybrid institutions, quasi-NGOs, professional associations, corporate foundations</i>	<i>Integrated directly into municipality</i>  <i>Small independent associations</i>	<i>Joint ventures involving municipal holding companies, SOEs; village corporations, small independent NGOs and enterprises</i>
<b>Processes of marginal space integration</b>	<i>Museumification</i>  <i>Institutionalised regeneration strategies</i>  <i>'Platform'-based regeneration</i>  <i>'Green Bulldozer'</i>	<i>Deproletarianization, Historicization</i>  <i>Normative community-building</i>  <i>'Green Bulldozer'</i>	<i>Gentrification</i>  <i>'Platform'-based regeneration</i>  <i>Large-scale redevelopment</i>

### ***Style of governance***

Although governance theories normally define ‘governance’ as patterns of rule in general, recent focus has been directed mainly at so-called ‘new governance’, which refers specifically to the changing role and scope of state activity considering the greater involvement of non-state actors such as corporations following neo-liberal reforms from the 1980s onwards (Bevir, 2007: 25). While touching on issues of neoliberal governance and the reforms associated with it (indeed the creative city discourse is to a large extent a product of this shift), the inquiry on governance in this research is largely in service of constructing a comparative analysis of the different ways in which creativity strategies have been incorporated in three selected case cities. Being as they are on two different sides of the Taiwan Straits, the cities have much in common in terms of their cultural background and broad geo-economic location, yet the vast difference between the nominally authoritarian mainland and the democratic island of Taiwan has meant a comparison of formally equivalent institutions would not have resulted in necessarily comparable data. The style of governance thus includes ways in which the state organises the managerial side of creative spaces: who controls day to day activities, where the funding comes from, what role is given to spatial professionals such as architects, planners, engaged artists etc. As the empirical chapters show, this style varies greatly even in Taiwan itself, where Taipei is characterised by a *socialised* state, i.e. one which is able to accommodate and integrate societal pressure and input, and as such possesses the tools of governance necessary to create hybrid institutions such as Urban Regenerations Stations examined in Chapter Three; in contrast, Kaohsiung’s city government maintains a hold on its nascent creative spaces, as well as using normative narratives to encourage citizen ‘edification’ and promote the value of creativity among the people. Beijing presents a radically different situation; while the Chinese state is often seen as strong, overbearing, and authoritarian, the case of creative space production is characterised by the presence of disaggregated state actors in competition with each other, and with non-state actors. The data for this level of analysis was gathered mainly through interviews with creative space managers and officials, the analysis of city publications (both professional and those aimed at the public), as well as an examination of relevant regulations, plans and other representations of space.

### ***Grassroots-level practice***

Facing the state we find a group of actors loosely identified as being producers of creative spaces, as well as having the distinction of falling into the category of cultural workers, creative workers, or some other hybrid designation. In this research, no one overarching term the like of Florida's 'creative class' is used; instead, these spatial practitioners are sometimes synonymous with groups of artists, architects, urban planners, academics: depending on the case in question. What they have in common however is that they are overwhelmingly the target 'users' of creative spaces. The data collection method in this case was based on interviews, participant observation and some discourse analysis, providing important insights into especially the different ways in which these groups deal with the influence of the state; in both Taiwanese cases, the higher interpenetration, as well as financial dependence on the state, means avoiding or ignoring the state is an option only for corporate foundations (such as the JUT Foundation for Arts and Architecture, see Chapter Four). Interestingly though, the case of Taipei underlines the importance not of financial, but professional autonomy. A comparison with Beijing then provides insight into how the ability of these groups to circumvent the state, as well as their ability to usefully interact with it, may be a crucial factor in the resulting spatial configurations. Whereas a financially autonomous, yet not always professionally autonomous artist elite has been adept at avoiding the state and building own creative spaces in Beijing, these have not enjoyed the same level of legitimacy and protection as their counterparts in Taipei, where financially dependent groups are nevertheless adept at pressuring, persuading, or guiding the state by virtue of their access to the state's planning and decision-making mechanisms.

### ***Institutions of creative space production***

In many ways, this level of analysis is the result of a dialectical process of negotiation between the aforementioned two levels; the institutions in this case being understood as 'agreed upon ways of doing things', they speak to the ability of both state and non-state actors to exert power and influence on each other, as well as the ability to circumvent this influence if necessary. Thus, the

negotiation between the integrating, socialised state in Taipei's case, and a professionally well-organised yet financially dependent community of spatial professionals and artists, resulted in a corporative arrangement, where new hybrid institutions were created, providing stable funding and positions to the various creative groups which the city was eager to include. The municipality was able to steer these projects to a far greater extent than Chaoyang District is for example able to influence the creative spaces of Caochangdi (Chapter Seven). Kaohsiung is on the other hand characterised by a more *dirigiste* approach by the municipality, which created institutions of creative space production and management directly under its control (Chapter Five). Institutions such as Pier-2 Art Center operate as redevelopment agencies, galleries, landlords, curators, and even as a local economic development agency attracting foreign investment. While the 798 Art Zone shares some of these traits (particularly as a landlord and local redevelopment agency), the normative undertones typical of Kaohsiung (for example in the selection of events, exhibitions, commissioning of public art) are not present, with the galleries, studios and other spaces judged merely by their ability to afford the rising rent.

### ***Integration of marginal spaces***

Apart from playing an increasingly prominent role as a method of increasing city competitiveness, creative city strategies have often been found alongside schemes to integrate marginal spaces into the urban fabric. Considering defunct industrial facilities, slums, squats, dilapidated housing often occupy premium land, claims on such desirable space often result in conflicting views regarding their (re)integration into the city's mainstream. In such cases, creativity strategies can mitigate some of the resulting conflict, making them attractive policy choices for municipalities as well as activists, which can broadly be divided into three contexts. Firstly, creative redevelopment can reduce the perceived social or conservational cost and achieve a compromise regarding the re-use of the marginal space. Treasure Hill in Taipei and Dashilar in Beijing are both examples of marginal spaces where both state and societal actors adopted the creative and culture-led redevelopment, albeit not always producing the same conclusions. Secondly, as a palliative measure, such redevelopments are better able to mask otherwise unpopular or inequitable

projects. The razing of Gongyuan Road in Kaohsiung is a case in point, where the emphasis on the public art and the contextualization of the area as a creative neighbourhood were among key arguments presented by the municipality, obscuring somewhat the underlying 'slum-clearing' slant of the demolition that resulted in clear demographic change in the area. Lastly, creative redevelopment also allows for a more profitable redevelopment of protected areas where large, wholesale redevelopment is not otherwise possible. Both the URS (Urban Regeneration Station) projects on Taipei's Dihua Street, as well as the Dashilar Platform in Beijing are examples of how an emphasis on creative space production (with its perceived preference for loft living, industrial or commercial architecture etc.) allows for new ways of incorporating historically protected yet financially untenable areas.

Somewhat apart from these strategies are other associated processes, which may or may not be a planned or desired consequence of creative redevelopment, yet nevertheless warrant our attention. The question of 'gentrification' is an especially interesting one due to its recurrence not only as a quantifiable economic process, but also as a lens through which the effects of creative strategies in redevelopment are understood by those involved. As such, the loaded term was emphatically used by activists working against the demolition of Treasure Hill in Taipei as an accusation of municipal plans to redevelop the illegal settlement; it was also often discussed by members and visitors at HomeShop in Beijing, with a special blog, the 'Gentrification Disco'<sup>3</sup>, dedicated to the subject. While the applicability of the term may be in question (commercialization or museumification often describe the changes more accurately), the underlying changes that evoke its use are not. As the following empirical chapters show, the deployment of creative redevelopment on Asian cities is no less prone to causing radical demographic change in its wake.

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<sup>3</sup> The various contributions to the blog, including the author's, are accessible at <http://www.homeshopbeijing.org/blog/?tag=gentrification>.

# Chapter Three: Making Municipal Practices of Creative Space in Taipei

## 3.1 Introduction: Developing tools of creative space production

*“A city’s vitality requires constant cultural and creative nourishing like running water. The height of modern skyscrapers, the level of economic development, as well as the city’s appearance may all age and wither with the years. But a city’s heart can only gain charm with the passage of time.”*

(Urban Regeneration Office, Taipei City Urban Development Department: *Village Taipei*, 2011: 4)

The opening sentence of the 2010 issue of *Village Taipei*, the yearly publication of Taipei’s Urban Regeneration Office, sets the scene for the exploration of culture/creative-led urban redevelopment in Taipei over the past couple of decades. Moreover, for a government department closely involved in the construction of Taipei 101, now the world’s 2<sup>nd</sup> tallest building, the dismissal of such outward signs of progress may seem almost heretical. The position Taipei finds itself in is not special, nor are the solutions adopted, which is precisely the justification behind a comparative project examining creative space and urban regeneration across Taiwan and China. Cities all over the region and further afield are investing in a rebalancing of their economies and obtaining the edge which, so the received wisdom goes, may mean the difference between prosperity and Detroit. Unlike Abu Dhabi however, Taipei is not constructing another Louvre or Guggenheim, nor is it relying solely on the

mechanism of the market to bring about a post-industrial creative economy. Rather, Taipei's creative spaces are being produced by a coalition of state and private actors not too dissimilar to the island's developmental model, emphasising co-operation between state, labour and business, with a large share of small to medium enterprises setting it apart from contemporary developers such as South Korea. Indeed many of the creative spaces examined in this chapter also adhere to this formula, are modest in size and often came about from the necessity of cooperation between three sets of actors: the municipal state, civil society (mainly professionals such as architects, artists and academics), and the business sector, where a rise in corporate charitable activity and novel ways of brand-building meant the entry of many firms directly into the field of culture-led urban redevelopment. In answering the fundamental research question about the ways in which creativity is operationalised, how it is incorporated, marginalised or favoured in the field of urban redevelopment, Taipei presents what I call a *corporative approach*, which may have notional relation to the developmental state yet also has a clear provenance rooted in a process of negotiation between the actors mentioned above, within the mix of neoliberal and statist management in Taipei's urban planning practice.

Taipei presents in many ways the most comprehensive of the four case studies which has in broad terms followed naturally from the work in Kaohsiung, where Taipei's lead has consistently been seen as a challenge and model, producing a somewhat related yet significantly more statist approach (see Chapter Five). With nearly 7 million inhabitants in the wider metropolitan area, Taipei may be smaller (though wealthier) than Seoul, Shanghai or Beijing, but in many ways these cities are seen as its main competitors in the region. Adding to this the ambiguous diplomatic status of Taiwan, the city as a political and economic unit plays a role in representing the whole island, while city to city links are also one of the few formal links the island nation can establish. This accounts for the eagerness of municipal officials for international cooperation, which was evident in many facets of the city's creative space production that emerged during fieldwork. The research aimed to locate Taipei within the wider interrogative field of the why and how of 'creative space' in Greater China. This entailed the development of an analytical approach based on the interpretation

of the space between discourse and daily practice, where the institutions of creative space production are built: actors such as planners and architects, relevant municipal and national regulatory and planning bodies, corporate actors such as construction and real-estate companies, art foundations, professional associations, as well as various local, non-affiliated residents whose voices are increasingly being heard against the backdrop of rapid urban redevelopment. The result of this segment of research suggests that Taipei has developed a highly co-dependent, co-operative mode of spatial production - the corporative approach - where state, business and civil society actors are increasingly interchanging roles in the field of urban redevelopment, especially culture-creative solutions. It is argued therefore that this mode of spatial production is dependent upon an organised and socialised<sup>1</sup> state, able to delegate and co-opt corporate and civil actors, nominating and delegating to them what is essentially understood as a developmental task of restructuring city space to better suit a post-industrial, regionally competitive environment. Equally however, the state is often unable to provide the content and professional links necessary for the success of nascent industries such as design, underlining the need for the inclusion of non-state actors in the process; the chapter argues the ability and willingness to integrate non-state inputs is a crucial element of a corporative style of governance.

In this corporative way of producing creative spaces, the state addresses relevant *communities* such as the business community, planning community, artist community etc., all of which also stand to gain influence by being addressed and co-opted; one example is the formalisation of artists' influence on decisions regarding aesthetic issues and selection of bodies tasked with operating culture venues. It was in this way that veteran activist and one time adversary of the city, Margaret Shiu, found herself sitting on planning committees, vetoing colour schemes and demanding clear rules on rewarding public and private investment into the arts in what was a direct integration of this community's demands into the political and planning process that was hitherto closed to outside influence (Interview, Margaret Shiu. 16 May 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> The term *socialised* is here used to denote a state that exhibits a greater capacity to incorporate societal pressures through daily consensus building, joint projects and other forms of non-electoral politics.

Taipei's answer to the question of how to operationalise creativity, or rather how to transcend the divide between the technocratic, statist management of urban planning and the individualist, organic practice of creativity was in effect to create *outgrowths* of the municipal state which are able to accommodate, employ, fund or otherwise support the small-scale work of 'creative individuals', without either side ever making the criteria for cooperation too clear, meaning the door is open for a wide range of interactions between the urban redevelopment bureaus and creative/culture workers. This goes a long way to accounting for the proliferation of different ways of employing creative strategies in Taipei, as the municipality provides a number of programmes which call for creative content to be developed or offered by non-state actors.

In practice, this approach first evolved at Treasure Hill, a former veterans' village whose transformation to artist village is analysed in this chapter. There, the role of the creative community transformed on the long journey from squatting (seen initially as an obstacle to the urban redevelopment), to being integrated in the process as the central motivation behind the preservation of the physical space of the village. To paraphrase, the creative community in Taipei is increasingly providing the abstract space (of creativity, of art, of new representations) which makes preservation of marginal physical spaces possible through a negotiation between involved groups of actors: municipal planners, residents, creative/cultural workers, spatial professionals and, in the case of more centrally located sites, the business community. By providing the content, these groups also provide the legitimation for the pursuit of creative city policies in urban redevelopment, as well as bolster the standing of dedicated municipal bureaus within the bureaucracy as a whole, as was seen in the second Taipei case study on the Urban Regeneration Stations (URS), analysed in Chapter Four. The involvement of the state however engenders a creeping institutionalisation of the production of creative spaces, bringing with it questions of authenticity, of the divide between 'real' and 'co-opted' art spaces, as well as subjecting creative spaces to a peculiar market/statist set of expectations, where market impulses towards more popular uses of these spaces are translated into the state's concern with providing such popular content to avoid the impression state funds are being used to fund marginal or niche art with little commercial value or popular appeal.

Through the analysis of the spaces in this chapter, it is argued that the corporative type of creative space production characteristic for Taipei is one which had initially been formed in the closed space of Treasure Hill, where through a long period of conflict and negotiation, new ideas about the (re)use of marginal spaces were introduced, sometimes forcefully, by the spatial professionals and artist communities, but which, owing also to these groups differing relations with the municipal state, resulted in a process of *museumification*. From the perspective of the research question, this way of operationalizing a creative space is indicative of the highly active and adaptive state, yet its isolation prevents it from developing a permanent and replicable process of institutionalisation of creative space production, no least due to Treasure Hill remaining under the control of the cultural department and not strictly an issue for urban planning bodies. On the other hand, the process of creating an abstract practice of urban creative space production has been taken further in URS programme (Chapter Four). While building on the practice negotiated at Treasure Hill (not always consciously but rather through a process of filtering out the unimaginable), the URS programme differs in the role that the private sector has played in its formation. The URS sprung from a field relatively more open than that of Treasure Hill, mixing influences from Treasure Hill with industrial policy of the developmental state (regarding culture-creative industries) with the more neoliberal approaches implicit in creative city discourses. The resulting *institutionalization* comprises not only the 'hardware' such as the galleries, studios or museums, but more crucially, the 'software' which underpins the programme, from content and network formation, to practices and shared beliefs, all of which tie it in with a wider and more dispersed effort at creating a creative city, which in turn is the comparative angle against which the experiences of Kaohsiung and Beijing are weighed.

### **3.2 Taipei's Urban Space - from developmental collateral to engine of development**

While literature on the Taiwanese/East Asian developmental model abounds, explaining it either as a triumph of free market economics (World Bank, 1993) or state-led development (Amsden 1985, Johnson, Wade 1990), it has less to say about the urban space such a socio-economic trajectory has created in its wake. While certainly geared towards export-oriented manufacturing, Taiwan's urban space was additionally formed by a host of specific conditions involving the political uncertainty and shifting legitimacy concerns of the ruling Guomindang (KMT) from reconquering the mainland (which presupposes the temporary nature of its stay on Taiwan) towards a model Nationalist party state built along state-led free market approach and finally as a state with a modern economy and a complicated legal status. The latter factor can be taken as reinforcing the city-based model of regional competition in the globalised economy, as Taiwanese cities are often able to participate on an equal footing, unlike the state.

Under the influence of US economic advisors, a new generation of KMT leaders began constructing a mixed model of state-led developmentalism, 'graduating' in effect in 1965 with the closing of the US aid office in Taipei (Cullather, 1996: 1). What this meant for Taipei's urban space is a mixed picture; while the successful land reform and strengthening state managed to avoid the rapid migration to urban centres typical of South-East Asia, the influx of refugees from the mainland nevertheless created the need for economical and quickly constructed housing, though planning bodies often struggled to accommodate and accurately predict population flows. While the state offered limited loans for the construction of tracts of residential housing known as 'gongyu' (walk-up apartment buildings usually between 2 and 5 storeys high), the effort lacked coordination and mostly provided accommodation for the middle ranks of the bureaucracy and military. The example of Yonghe, just across the Xindian river from Treasure Hill, exemplifies the failures of urban planning even where it was more comprehensively applied. Using the English 'garden city' as a grounding concept, the planning group had previously

designed Zhongxing (Jhong-Sing) New Village in Nantou county as an upmarket 'new town'. In Yonghe however, the application of winding lanes and lack of restrictions on the type and volume of buildings and serious miscalculations regarding population inflows soon resulted in a 'disorientating urban labyrinth' (Wang & Heath, 2010: 161), with tightly clustered low-rise buildings, haphazard infrastructure and a liberal interpretation of planning guidelines, with houses often built right at the edge of the plot to maximise floor space. The case of Yonghe is by no means an outlier; quite the opposite, it presents a typical picture of contemporary Taiwan where the developmental regime had little regard or time for the creation of a quality urban space, bar the highly symbolic space of state ritual such as the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall or various Martyrs' Shrines.

As the economy boomed and Taipei expanded eastward however, the capacity of the planning bodies increased with it, culminating in the vast new business district development in Xinyi, also home to the formerly tallest building in the world, Taipei 101. As urban spaces go, the contrast with overcrowded Yonghe or the atavistic architecture of CKS Memorial Hall could not be starker, yet similarities in the *intent* of the plan do exist: if Yonghe or Zhongxing New Village were meant to become a green and leafy Taiwanese version of the English garden city, and CKS Memorial Hall was reminiscent of the Forbidden City, so Xinyi was meant, in the words of its planners, to become Taipei's Manhattan (Lin Chin-Rong, 2006: 25). In light of city policies favouring high-rise construction and an emphasis on the creation of a new financial centre, Jou (2005) argues this 'Manhattanisation' was a key feature of policy, though also noting that it has become more of a 'globally synchronised fantasy city' rather than a working financial industry centre (Jou, 2005: 137). The wide pavements, pedestrian zones and seamlessly connected 'skywalks' facilitate a culture of strolling, shopping and consumption. They are emblematic of Taipei's ambition to become a 'global city' and also a response to contemporary worries about a 'disequilibrium' in the Taiwanese economy, which prompted the bureaucratic elites to stimulate domestic consumption - the local impetus for a deregulatory shift (Tsai, 2001: 365).

Somewhat counter-intuitively, the hybrid space of Treasure Hill can be placed firmly within this context; the process of museumification at Treasure Hill is not an independent, site-specific process, but represents another facet of Taipei's effort to enter into a regional competition with other global cities using 'cultural capital' - a concept which has proven indispensable to spatial professionals in persuading the municipal authority to switch from bulldozing the site to redeveloping it as an artists' village. At the same time, the case of Treasure Hill shows the extent to which competition-oriented planning policies have become ingrained in the professional planning community, as well as their appeal to policy-makers from both dominant political forces in Taiwan, albeit for different reasons.

### ***'Neoliberal' Space in Taipei***

While the theoretical dimensions of the neoliberal transformation of space, as well as the difficulties in applying the term without careful consideration have been discussed in Chapter Two, the discussion on neoliberalisation of space in Taiwan begins from one of the most contested points in the debate: what is neoliberal space and how is it made? Is it even appropriate to use the term in the case of Taiwan, which arguably still maintains an autonomous state? If planning orthodoxy maintains that planning is a balancing mechanism between the interests of the state and capital, then the neoliberalisation of planning can be seen as a move away from the seemingly impartial balancing, to what urban planning bodies refer to as a partnership, a collaborative planning model where deregulation and the retreat of the state as the sole arbiter and decision maker has opened avenues for participation to other stake-holders, be they businesses or civil society groups, though such a neutral description skirts around the issue of influence and power of the various stake-holders in influencing spatial planning, as was the case in Treasure Hill and other cases of participatory planning. Furthermore, the key point of difference between high-modernist and neo-liberal planning is in the scope of the plan; if comprehensive and putatively objective plans are the hallmark of the former, the latter conceives of planning as the result of bargains between private and public actors (Pinson, G: 2006: 1006).

In the case of Taipei, and especially Treasure Hill, neoliberalism refers to the emergence of participatory planning, the devolution of former state responsibilities to civil society or business actors, as well as the introduction of a new language of governance emphasising competition, community and creativity. Taipei's case is not so much one of a state giving way to the private sector, but a more comprehensive and subtle shift in urban governance, policy formation and implementation, as well as the language used to promote (and oppose) urban redevelopment. Neoliberalism in the urban field is not, as its economic precursor, only a drive towards deregulation and privatisation, but is a shift in the limits of the acceptable caused by an earlier economic and political (neo)liberalisation, even to the extent that what are imported policy solutions with strong neoliberal backgrounds (such as public-private partnerships, the sale of public land etc.) are understood as pragmatic solutions adopted by a rational technocracy (Wang, 2012). Seen within the context of a newly democratising state such as Taiwan, the democratic roll-back and disenfranchisement of urban population often levelled against neoliberal urban policy are however not as relevant in Taiwan and will not be considered here in length. Instead, further attention will be given to its practical implications, tracing how they relate to the case of Treasure Hill.

The policy changes, such as various build-operate-transfer (BOT) schemes, as well as tenders of public land, helped to accelerate the real-estate based growth of Taipei, which had already been stimulated by increased spending and higher wages throughout the late 1980s and 90s - itself a consequence of a post-developmental economic policy. The pent-up demand in the housing sector was then finally released by financial deregulation, since private housing construction was previously only allowed limited credit from state-owned banks, preventing large-scale commercial housing developments (La Grange et al., 2006: 64). As the price of real-estate continued to increase, so the question of previously underused or marginal space became relevant: from old industrial complexes such as the Huashan Brewery, Songshan Tobacco Factory, to the veterans' villages and illegal dwellings in today's Da'an Park or around Treasure Hill, these previously overlooked places would now have to negotiate between the needs of a growth coalition of state and real-estate developers, and the limited protection afforded to such space by the budding civil society

with a variety of sometimes conflicting agenda. These negotiations would take place within a field defined increasingly by transnational standards and a new language and praxis of urban planning, but also against the backdrop of an increasingly mobilised society prepared to make demands on the municipal authorities. A case in point is the Yongkang Community, where a community movement arose from an initial protest against the destruction of a local park, and eventually became a crucial actor in the planning practice of the area. Chuang (2005) sketches out the movement's and the community's evolution from a single issue advocacy group to a complex and often conflicted organisation. As a centrally located area, it attracted real-estate investment; lacking a coherent housing policy or any provisions for controlling the private production of housing stock however, most of the housing in this area of downtown Taipei was high-grade luxury housing, often built on formerly public land. As the demographic situation of the area changed further, elderly men playing chess in the park began to be seen as a nuisance and groups such as street vendors were eventually pushed out by shop-keepers despite the best efforts of the city planner in charge of the area (Chuang, 2005: 393). While Chuang does point out the limitations of middle-class mobilisation, he remains optimistic about the potential of community mobilisation in general. Indeed, the case of Yongkang is *one* of the possible outcomes of neoliberal planning, and grassroots mobilisation in the 1980s has brought about a more open planning practice in general. With the liberalisation of the political space, organisations such as OURs or the Tsui Mama Foundation emerged, both of which would later play a crucial role at Treasure Hill.

What an affluent and central example such as the Yongkang Community cannot sufficiently account for is the fate of marginal spaces in Taipei. These spaces, not available for (immediate) commercial redevelopment, and often hampered by either unfavourable locations or protection status, are nevertheless being incorporated into a comprehensive city vision - under the rubrics of beautification and culture. Both categories will be examined in succeeding chapters, but the notion is here introduced by looking at the creative city discourse as a tool with which marginalised spaces are brought into the fold; if Kaohsiung presents a case of brutal force masquerading as greenness and culture, Taipei's situation is more complex, no least due to a

highly active civil society and the greater involvement of foreign observers and professionals. Seeing both the use and exchange value of space in Treasure Hill and other marginal community spaces in Taipei, it is a study of the transformation of an informal space into a formal one, from a grey area to a feature on the city map. Lastly, the isolation from immediate pressures for commercial redevelopment which characterises many of these sites may have allowed the state and civil society actors the leeway to experiment with novel solutions – creative space production and adaptive reuse of heritage being chief among them.

***Integrating marginal spaces: dependants' villages and 'illegal' neighbourhoods***

While self-built and haphazard housing stock may be representative of Taiwan's fast developing urban centres in the 1950s and 60s, another form of housing stock also developed at the time, one which is emblematic more of the ROC's past than future. The so-called Dependants' Villages (眷村 juàn cūn) were initially built for families of military personnel or war veterans after the Guomindang's retreat to Taiwan. While many have been demolished or transformed over the years, some basic characteristics of dependants' villages are important to understand the cultural and social value of a neighbourhood such as Treasure Hill, which also developed from such a 'village'. While there were officially around 100,000 households living in dependants' villages by 1982, this figure greatly under-represents the extent to which these semi-planned neighbourhoods have marked Taiwan's urban landscape, since it excludes any illegal structures (and people living within them) from the official number. Because the official definition is limited to housing provided by the military and (loosely) managed by the Ministry of National Defence (MND), this ignores the spread of illegal, unregistered and unmanaged structures which sprang up around the sanctioned units, often seamlessly and without any visual or demographic break, effectively rendering official statistics useless in terms of ascertaining the size and population of the dependants' villages. Though initially not dissimilar in living standards to 'legal' housing of the time, plagued in general by over-crowdedness and poor quality, the villages were distinct places culturally and ethnically, and remained so up to the 1980s. Being organised along regimental and provincial lines, they often acted as

centres of a transplanted community life from whichever region or province of mainland China the troops hailed from. As such, the social life of these communities was both tightly knit and very isolated from its surroundings, accounting for a number of idiosyncratic cultures created within the dependants' villages, while at the same time underlining their marginality. The location of the villages, often built on public or unused land, is another one of their characteristics. Treasure Hill was for example built on the bank of the Xindian River at the time when the military concerns about a Chinese invasion effectively rendered most waterfronts in Taiwan inaccessible, separate places. Ironically, the demilitarization of space prompted the rediscovery of Taipei's waterfronts and set the plans for the demolition of Treasure Hill village in motion. Other villages were built around military bases, around disused infrastructure or on urban fringes, but even those built in city cores, such as the neighbourhood previously occupying what is now Da'an Forest Park in central Taipei, were isolated communities moving from marginality to locations of nostalgia as their space was valorised, often through the work of Taiwan's artists within the wider question of identity which still pervades the cultural discussion in Taiwan. Especially during the 1990s and into the 2000s, film crews often used extant dependants' villages as locations (Treasure Hill included), even to the extent where different crews would bump into each other as the selection of suitable locations shrank through demolition and redevelopment (Braester, 2007: 58). As the veterans' villages vanished from Taipei's cityscape, so the few remaining ones attracted the attention of civil society groups campaigning for social and aesthetic causes (the latter subsuming both conservationism as well as adaptive reuse).

As the extant villages show however, it was the aesthetic causes that better captured the attention of both the city and the professional community. The aforementioned 44<sup>th</sup> South Village is a prime example of the type of conservation effort aimed at preserving the material, rather than social heritage of the villages. Given the prime location of the village in the shadow of Taipei 101, the site attracted attention during plans for its demolishing and was subsequently preserved as a 'cultural garden', with some of the structures refurbished to display exhibitions on life in the dependants' villages, as well as housing the Xinyi neighbourhood meeting hall. The village was preserved,

albeit in a sanitised version, with standardised colours and materials used throughout, and the exhibition space presenting a rather rosy, nostalgic version of life in the village. The villagers in this particular case mounted no serious opposition to their rehousing and most had left by 1999 - a marked difference to Treasure Hill and one made significant by the division between the officially sanctioned villages and those that lay outside Ministry authority. Treasure Hill in fact also had a 'legal' dependants village which was removed in 1993 by the MND with residents rehoused elsewhere and the site changed into a basketball and tennis court - it was never this part that caused controversy, but rather the 'illegal' settlement sitting beside it.

### 3.3 Treasure Hill: From Taipei's favela to a living museum

*The unique location of Treasure Hill with its narrow alleys and stairways traversing the hillside, gives THAV a European rural village feel. Over the years, various groups settled the hillside with their own lifestyles and needs creating a tribal-like organic scene. With the existing residents, together with the urban policy of preservation and revitalization, the Artist-in-Residence program and Youth Hostel it is hoped that the parties will collaborate in the spirit of "paragenesis" to create a better future of the entire community. (Taipei Culture Foundation website: Treasure Hill Artist Village)*

The eradication of ill-fitting neighbourhoods in the 'creative city' is by all means not the only option available to city authorities; if the case of Hardware Street in Kaohsiung is one of demolition and the subsequent historicisation of the remains, the present chapter will contrast this with an altogether different approach, one which is the result of a protracted negotiation between key groups interested in the site. It is argued that Taipei's Treasure Hill (寶藏巖 Bǎozàngyán) has been subjected to a process of *museumification* through a combination of top-down redevelopment efforts and a higher level of involvement from NGO actors (both those sympathetic and hostile to municipal policy); the resulting space maintains and reproduces a delicate community of the original residents, combining it with 'creative forces' within a controlled environment. As such, the case of Treasure Hill is a transition from an illegal, marginal neighbourhood replete with the sort of Lefebvrian 'lived space' which sprouts concealed from the planners' gaze, to a key point in Taipei's cultural and art infrastructure, an artist village and outdoor museum, as well as a home for the now diminished group of original residents. While their presence may be preserving, on paper at least, the organic quality of a self-organizing community, it is this quality which the present research questions throughout, seeking to answer why and how this marginal area populated by vulnerable groups was transformed into a 'artist village' and social housing project. While the area itself is small, as is the number of residents, the case was both slow-burning and high-profile, involving a full cross-section of Taipei society and

politics over a period of three key decades (1980-2007) in which Taiwan as a whole transitioned from an authoritarian developmental state into a democratic consumer society. Moreover, it is argued that the practices formed at Treasure Hill have contributed towards the formation of a corporative approach to the production of creative spaces as explored further in the following chapter.

As a case study of a creative space in Taipei and the ways it was produced, it is therefore also a study of the adaptive strategies of the (municipal) state, as well as the dynamics of cooperation/conflict with key groups such as planning professionals, architects, academia, artists and creative communities, as well as social activists (the latter category often includes varying combinations of the aforementioned groups). By examining the process, this chapter puts forward the notion that the discourse of the creative city was used by the state and planning professionals to incorporate areas which were previously beyond the remit of the modernist planning city, areas which could hitherto be 'incorporated' only through wholesale demolition. The involvement of the epistemic communities of planners, architects and other professionals which previously opposed demolition projects constitutes a distinct change in the way of governance and planning of urban space - be it creative or lived or, as is the case in Treasure Hill, both. Spatial professionals played the role of mediators, involving civil society groups where necessary and answering the pressure for commercial success and justification of its investments from the local state. By influencing urban spatial policy, a precedent for wider societal involvement was created, yet the final result of the long process of conflict, consultation and compromise also hints at a continuation of the state's autonomy in managing urban space, especially where business interests are weaker due to objective constraints (political controversy, conservation issues, etc.). Ultimately, the professional groups' policy input was incorporated into the city's wider vision, simultaneously exhibiting both a neoliberal planning mentality (with comprehensive planning giving way to a urban planning as strategy) as well as the pragmatism characteristic for developmental regimes - something which is picked up in the following chapter on the institutionalisation of creative space production in Taipei. In the case of Treasure Hill, several new ways of thinking about urban space in Taiwan are already present and form the

core of new ways of dealing with the urban environment, especially so-called creative spaces:

- a) space as the central means of production in a post-Fordist economy
- b) neoliberal participatory planning, with an emphasis on accommodating influential groups as well as stifling non-commodified uses of space (favouring its exchange value over use value)
- c) incorporation of marginal spaces into the city using creative city discourse propagated by both civil society members and key policy-makers as a widely acceptable compromise

Each of these strands has already been examined in the previous chapter, but are here revisited separately to construct a specific context within which the analysis of the Treasure Hill case is located. Based on fieldwork conducted on site between December 2012 and July 2013, as well as a chronological study of writings on and about the site, it is argued that Treasure Hill in its present form exists as a synecdoche of the wider settlement on urban spaces, particularly creative spaces in Taipei where the role of civil society actors as policy-prompts complements an adaptive state seeking to extract value from the inclusion of marginal spaces under its formal control. While the arrangement allows for significant advancement in complexity from previous high-modernist models of space production, as well as from the autonomous and alternative spaces, it is also beholden to a shift in governance and the role of the city as the primary locus of economic production and is thus inseparable from processes such as globalisation (and its local variants), the entrepreneurialization of public services, and in Taiwan's case, the continued pragmatic autonomy of the state. In this aspect, the case of Treasure Hill also reveals similarities between it and the 'green bulldozer', as a spate of demolitions to make way for parks came to be known (Huang, 2012). Just as the environment (and green politics) was used widely by the Chen Shui-bian city administration to gloss over the less savoury aspects of wholesale demolition, art and culture come to play a similar role in Treasure Hill to the extent of being called the 'culture bulldozer' by the Treasure Hill Commune, a radical left-wing group fervently opposed to the institutionalization of Treasure Hill as an artist village.

### ***Treasure Hill 1: from demolition to preservation***

My first encounter with Treasure Hill came just around the time that its status was being formalised by the city's cultural bureau in 2004 - not in any professional capacity, but to attend a party of dubious legality within the then still existing artist squat. The area occupies roughly 6 acres between Xindian river and a small hill separating it from Gongguan, the bustling student neighbourhood of south-eastern Taipei. A temple has been standing on this site since the Qing dynasty, though the area was developed into a munitions depot by the Japanese army, and subsequently into an air defence post by the Republican Chinese troops who also built dormitories on the site, from which the current settlement sprang. The history of Treasure Hill is one of immigration and marginalisation, a place where waves of newcomers to the city settled; indeed its diversity (多元性 duōyuánxìng) is still held up as the area's main attraction by the many official publications and pamphlets which the city, through its cultural bureau, publishes about Treasure Hill.

The community of war veterans and others living in the shadow of Guanyin hill had shrunk considerably in the recent past, both through a natural process of emigration, as well as a series of demolition and resettlement initiatives by the city authorities from 1980 onwards. While many residents left, newly arrived artists began arriving and changing the area considerably, especially after 2003, when the city-sanctioned Global Artist Participation Project (GAPP) attracted numerous international and domestic artists. While I was not aware of this at the time of my first visit in 2003, Treasure Hill was on the cusp of the most significant change in its status since the first proposals to demolish it some 23 years earlier - it was to become managed by the city's cultural department as a formally established international artist village. The change would see all of the households and artists residing there at the time uprooted, although some were allowed to return to their houses after a two-year stint in temporary housing while the village was being renovated according to city-approved plans. While the current arrangement at Treasure Hill may mimic an organically grown space, it is a carefully planned and tended one, more akin to a garden than a meadow. The arrangement, as a result of a series of compromises between the four key groups (residents, formal civil society groups, squatter activists, and city authorities), was the starting point from

which the field-work was structured. The effort to capture the daily, repeated and constant flow of the space was used to evaluate the present characteristics of the artist village and use those to analyse the evolution of the institutional arrangement at Treasure Hill against the background of the three ways of thinking about Taipei's post-industrial urban space, namely space as productive means, the neoliberalisation of space and city management, as well as the question of the integration of marginal spaces. All three aspects are present in the space of the artist village, and all three have shaped decision-making regarding the transition of an illegal settlement to a legal creative space, via the involvement of civil society actors and a final resolution of the conflict through both violent means and negotiation.

Using long(er) term observation and repeated visits to the site, semi-structured interviews with several members of staff and resident artists (both international and domestic), as well as more casual conversations with the area's many visitors, the field work at this site aimed to provide a basis against which the archival research could be evaluated (mainly consisting of emotionally charged news reports and broadcasts, articles, blogs, pamphlets, petitions). In contrast to other sites, the longer duration of fieldwork, covering eight months of periodic visits from December 2012 to July 2013, allowed for a more detailed ethnography of space to emerge, which was valuable in constructing the argument of this chapter. During this time, I visited the site both on weekdays and weekends, as well as in different weather conditions/seasons to establish a clearer image of how the site works as an outdoor attraction, who visits it, what the relations between different users are, and how the artist village operates on a daily basis. From the outset, it was indicated by the managing team that the artist village, the scene of so much controversy, was wary of the research and permission to talk to any resident or artist has to first be obtained from them - unusual for a "village", perhaps less unusual for a government body. While outwardly retaining the look of a hillside village, Treasure Hill is more akin to a cultural centre, with a unified managerial structure overseeing the many component parts: studios, exhibition spaces, cafes, shops, a youth hostel, offices and 21 'original households' (當地居民 *dāngdì jūmín*), which retained the right to inhabit the houses they (illegally) built based on their welfare status and previous decisions - some households accepted earlier

compensation and lost the right to return regardless of their income situation. Currently, the households are renting the refurbished houses on a 12-year tenancy agreement with the Department of Cultural Affairs (via another non-governmental organisation, Tsui Mama Social Housing), the renewal of which will be decided at a later date following negotiations between the community and the city (Interview with TH manager, 2013/04/04). In addition to the households, the village hosts one or two international and a similar number of domestic artists-in-residence at any time, who also live on site for periods ranging from two to seven months. Most of the remaining space is let out for affordable rent (TWD3000-7000 pcm) under the 'Loft Space' programme which currently hosts 15 small ventures from studios, workshops, to cafes and shops). Separate from these subcontracted areas, Treasure Hill Artist Village (THAV) also runs a youth hostel, as well as some peripheral tourist amenities and information points. Below the village, a number of lawns, allotments and open spaces link it with the riverside path from Guting Riverside Park, popular with strollers and cyclists alike.

The production of this creative space spanned three decades; a complete chronological reconstruction is not necessary and instead, I will try to construct a general narrative of how the Treasure Hill issue evolved from the perspective of the interplay between civil society, residents and municipal authorities. From the outset, when Mayor Lee Deng-hui announced that illegal settlements were a blight on Taipei's urban facade, the community was primarily faced with the problem of where to relocate the (mainly elderly) residents. Certain sections of the settlement were 'legal' army residences and were thus removed and resettled according to the defence ministry guidelines in 1993, but most of the village presented a problem which quickly attracted the attention of civil society groups such as the "Wúké guāniú yùndòng" (無殼蝸牛運動), a housing advocacy group whose name literally translates as 'Snails without Shells' (i.e. slugs). By the second half of the 1990s, these civil society groups had been honing their skills during various demolition conflicts, many involving dependants' villages and other marginal spaces: a well-publicised case at the time was Mayor Chen Shui-bian's demolition of Kangleli, where the mayor broke his promise to resettle the residents before demolition began to great furore from the professional community and residents (Zhang, 2005). The

subsequent administration, led by Ma Ying-jiu, exhibited a higher degree of understanding for the requests of residents and urban planning professionals, compensating residents more fully and, more importantly, adopting a more conciliatory tone especially towards the demands of the planning and academic community, as was the case in the already mentioned 44<sup>th</sup> South Village in Xinyi, where the redevelopment was billed primarily as an effort in historic preservation, rather than just the clearance of illegally built shanties. By the time Treasure Hill was considered by a special working group established by Ma, the practice of incorporating historical-preservationist concerns into demolition and redevelopment projects was therefore already firmly established by a city administration keen to defuse social conflict and legitimise urban redevelopment with the integration of professional and social groups (cf. Zhang, 2012).

From the onset of organised resistance and negotiation over the fate of Treasure Hill, keywords such as ‘memory’, ‘history’, ‘community’ were introduced; in a statement dated February 18 1999, the housing association Tsui Mama for example emphasises: “To demolish Treasure Hill would be to demolish 40-odd years of community and neighbour relations, but would also mean destroying a piece of Taipei’s history of urban development.” (Tsui Mama: Statement. 18 February 1999). By holding up Treasure Hill as a generalizable, generic past of Taipei, these same keywords formed the basis of the plan to create a co-habitational art village presented by the ‘Organization of Urban Re-s’ (OURs, 專業者都市改革組織 *Zhuānyè zhě dūshì gǎigé zǔzhī*). Their plan underlined the importance of the community as a relatable piece of ‘our’ past and in effect grafting the welfarist, social aspect of co-habitation onto the idea of what a creative space in Taipei should do, that is publicly memorialise the past and allow its integration into modernity. In the case of Treasure Hill, the idea of using art and creativity within an urban redevelopment project was introduced by the professionals enlisted by Ma Ying-jiu to produce a report on the demolition and resettlement plans in 1999. The head of the Department of Cultural Affairs at the time, Taiwanese writer Long Yingtai was especially instrumental in adopting the concept of the ‘poor art village’ as an optic through which Treasure Hill was viewed. Originating from her circle at the Department, the concept stems from the ‘arte povera’ movement in Italian art.

Stripped of its radicalism, it became one of the foundations on which the approach to the spatial restructuring at Treasure Hill would be based (Lin Hongzhang, 2006; Lin Hongzhang, personal communication, 9 October 2013).

**Table 6 - Chronology of major events at Treasure Hill, 1980-2010**

<b>July 1980</b>	Mayor Lee Teng-hui proposes construction of Park no. 297 to remove the 'landscape mess'
<b>June 1994</b>	Ministry of National Defence demolishes military dormitories (the 'legal' section of Treasure Hill comprising of 46 households)
<b>November 1995</b>	Mayor Chen Shui-bian constructs basketball courts and stair access to riverfront; first protests by residents take place
<b>June 1997</b>	Mayor Chen postpones demolition pending completion of relocation plans
<b>March 1999</b>	Mayor Ma Ying-jiu establishes working group on the demolition and resettlement of Treasure Hill, subsequently headed by NTU Urban
<b>October 2001</b>	Ma Ying-jiu approves plan to transform Treasure Hill into a 'Village/Art Exhibition and Performance Area'
<b>April 2002</b>	Taipei's Parks and Street Lights Department demolishes 38 houses by the riverside as part of 'flood protection' project
<b>2003 - 2004</b>	'Global Artist Participation Project' (GAPP) takes place over the winter
<b>June 2003</b>	Taipei City Department of Cultural Affairs commissions OURs to produce a report on feasibility of an art village
<b>April 2004</b>	Remaining structures are legalised as Taipei's first "historic community"
<b>February 2006</b>	New York Times praises Treasure Hill in a reportage on Taipei
<b>May-June 2006</b>	Applications for interim resettlement and return to Treasure Hill open for those current residents deemed to be vulnerable social groups
<b>December 2006 - January 2007</b>	Police clash with artists, clearing the way for a 2-year transformation to a formalised artist village; peak of conflict within civil society groups
<b>February 2007</b>	Taipei City formalises Treasure Hill status as 'protected heritage area'
<b>October 2010</b>	Taipei Treasure Hill Artist Village officially opens under the management of the Taipei Arts Foundation

Following the approval in 2001 by Mayor Ma of the plan to transform Treasure Hill into an art and performance village, Treasure Hill departs from the trajectory of previous contested marginal spaces undergoing similar redevelopment. The invocation of 'art' and 'creativity' as a tool and indeed justification for a hybrid solution to both the social issue (resettlement of residents) and the aesthetic one (the preservation of vernacular architecture) is a novelty particular to Treasure Hill. From this point onwards, Treasure Hill becomes a study in the production of a hybrid creative space. Although the residents' welfare issues remain a key stated concern of the village, the residents' input remains limited with the main actors being the city government and formal civil society groups (OURs, Tsui Mama, NTU Institute of Building and Architecture), with a more informal group of artists and students, the Treasure Hill Commune, emerging after 2004, well after the concept of 'art village' has already become policy.

### ***Treasure Hill 2: Contesting creativity***

The first official, city-sponsored art event to take place at Treasure Hill was a small film festival in 2002, as part of the 2002 Taipei International Arts Festival. In the year that followed, the Global Artist Participation Project (GAPP) introduced the first batch of resident artists from Taiwan and abroad; this is most usefully thought of as the beginning of Treasure Hill's life as a place of art, the beginning of its journey towards becoming a formal arts venue. Organised with the support of the OURs, GAPP had the tacit mission of raising the profile of the area in conjunction with what one of its organisers, Kang Minjie, calls the 'highly political and calculated tactics of conservation' (Kang, 2005:155). Aimed at persuading the city not only to preserve some of the buildings (this had in any effect already been decided), but to gather support for the idea of 'cohabitation', the OURs emphasised the inseparability of the cultural value of the place as recognised by the city from the presence of the original community. The solution to the double questions of preservation and veterans' housing problems was to construct a hybrid space which could cater and protect both. The GAPP's selection of 'art interventions' are best represented by Finnish architect-artist Marco Casagrande, whose performances and activities introduced the idea of Treasure Hill as Taipei's 'attic', a place where obsolete and forgotten things are stored, and to which

one may return when searching for answers from the past. (Casagrande, 2006: 91) The concept proved popular with the city, remaining the quintessential art intervention ten years on, used in anything from the village's official website to also providing the name for the youth hostel that forms part of the village. The Department of Cultural Affairs integrated the topics and ways to see space into its vision of the village, which remaining visible today as reproduced on official tours offered at the village to visiting tourists. On one such tour, the guide often stopped to point out where and what Casagrande was collecting and exhibiting (mainly old trinkets, photos, abandoned items...), while emphasising throughout the reaction of the residents, who from being bewildered at first later realised the importance of old, forgotten objects via the artist's intervention. (Field notes, 21 March 2013) The lack of agency ascribed to the voiceless residents aside, what is being replicated is the idea of art, or in wider use creativity/culture, resuscitating a dying neighbourhood within the (semi)official narrative of the art village long after its integration into the city administration.

The tactics used by the civil society groups proved themselves to be successful and lasting, lending more evidence to the efficacy of Taiwan's civil society groups in lobbying municipal governments using cultural-creative narratives: similar to the case of Kaohsiung's Pier-2 Art Centre (see Chapter Five), these sites had been 'discovered' by a community of architects and urban planners who also introduced the notion of re-use for cultural purposes. The working links between these professional communities and the city (mainly through various reports commissioned by authorities) may be a reason for their success, lending authority to their words. Yet the city authorities also viewed small culture-led reuse projects across Taipei as essentially innocuous, allowing groups to experiment and waiting to see what results might present itself, though not always without dismissing their potential. (Margaret Shiu, director at Bamboocurtain art space, interview May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In the case of Treasure Hill, the combination of a receptive Department of Culture and an active civil society, led by erstwhile organisers, resulted in a deceptively simple solution to the quagmire of zoning and legalization issues by conferring on the area protected status and transferring overall responsibility for its development to the Department of Culture, though ultimate ownership rests with the

National Property Bureau of the Ministry of Finance.

The village was thus spared wholesale physical destruction, but the status of the residents (both the 'original' ones, and the 'newcomer' artists) was initially left unresolved, providing the seed for subsequent conflicts within the civil society movement. After the formal, organised groups (OURs, Tsui Mama, NTU architecture and urbanism department) threw their weight behind a solution within the framework of the city, the question was not whether the residents would stay or go; the question was under what conditions and terms. Here, significant divisions appeared between the aforementioned groups and the group of artists and activists living and working in Treasure Hill, the latter organising themselves as the Treasure Hill Commune (寶藏巖公社 Bǎozàngyán gōngshè). While many of them had previously received the support of the formal groups (no least through projects such as GAPP), they found themselves increasingly isolated from the decision-making process in a manner similar to the residents. Once OURs produced a series of reports commissioned by the city government, these revealed the extent to which the existing ad-hoc co-habitational space would be altered. The minute details and hearsay included in the reports, identifying unacceptable behaviour of 'bad tenants' such as drinking, noise, lack of hygiene and even sexual harassment (OURs, 2004) incited the first altercations between some residents and OURs when an angry resident heckled Kang Minjay during an international public art symposium held at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in May 2005. Beyond the anger of the residents, the report reveals the normative language used by OURs when discussing the future of the village, suggesting the future co-habitational village will not tolerate unsuitable tenants, be they artists or original households. With the power to decide on the makeup of the village now in the hands of the city, questions of residents' rights increasingly overshadowed the flowery language of art-resident cohabitation.

In the late spring of 2006, the city finalised the resettlement options available to the residents: they could either receive full compensation of NTD720,000 (app. £12,000 at 2006 exchange rate) and lose the right of abode at Treasure Hill, receive partial compensation of NTD360,000 but would have to arrange their living arrangements during renovation on their own or rent government

temporary housing, or they could forgo compensation, but would be put up in temporary housing for free by the city during the renovation. (Source: Taipei City Treasure Hill Area Temporary Housing Usage Fee Table; Taipei City, November 2006). Many residents felt becoming tenants would mean a loss of ownership over the structures they built. In a heated exchange of accusation and counter-accusation, the Treasure Hill Commune accused OURs of colluding in property theft led by the city and 'corporate interests'. OURs replied with an equally vitriolic statement accusing the Commune of harassing elderly residents, stirring up dissent, of disrupting public order with lewd behaviour and not having the interest of the residents at heart. Moreover, OURs added that since the buildings are illegal, all previous ownership rights are invalid and the structures now all belong to the city as a protected historical landmark. As a historical protection order was the only way to avoid demolition, any rights that the residents had on their houses would be reflected only in the payment of compensation. Whatever the truth behind this exchange, the residents had effectively lost any ownership over their homes - they would now be tenants living in a landmark, paying rent to the city in return for their right to return to their houses following renovation, which had been entrusted to the architecture firm owned by the head of OURs, Liu Keqiang.

**Figure 1 - Eviction of the Treasure Hill Commune. Photograph courtesy of Treasure Hill Commune.**



Looking at the relations between the main groups of actors on Treasure Hill, the residents are predictably split, with some supporting the formalisation of their status, and others hanging on to their claims of ownership over their houses. Before the heated exchange of statements between the Commune and OURs, it was the residents who expressed such fears at a round table organised by the Treasure Hill Commune a few months before the village was finally cleared (Yu and Xiao, 2006). The Treasure Hill Commune was at the time very active in collecting evidence of resident opposition to the plans accepted by the city and implemented by OURs, showing the extent to which the 'artists' were opposing the proposed artist village. They used residents' concerns as the justification for their increasingly radical stance, culminating in the occupation and protests which followed the city's decision to clear out the village by the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2006 - which incidentally was also a few weeks *after* the 2006 municipal elections, thereby avoiding any fallout from the clearing of the village. The issue of ownership and residence ultimately ended in a violent confrontation between the recalcitrant residents and artists on one side, and OURs and the city on the other, resulting in riot police being called in to clear the remaining 'squatters' out of their homes on the morning of January 30, 2007, when Treasure Hill entered a three year hibernation, emerging finally as the Treasure Hill Art Village. The formation of the artist village is thus a moment where the city and the spatial professionals aligned against the wishes of those the village was ultimately meant to service; the difficult task of dealing with unyielding residents and artists was in effect 'outsourced' to OURs, with the city remaining quiet throughout, in the end only communicating by sending a strong police force.

The increasing severity of the conflict surrounding the creation of the artist village casts a shadow of doubt on the ideas meant to be informing the new co-habitational village, while simultaneously reinforcing the relations between the city and the professional groups that proposed the plan. The issue of Treasure Hill is a watershed in the relations between these organised groups and the municipal authorities, breaking the historical precedent of confrontation and establishing a collaborative model firmly in its stead. The economic and political importance of spatial production which can be traced to both a transnational and domestic shift thus translates itself into a closer

relation between 'spatial professionals' and the local state, which in this case represents both traditional state authority, as well as introduces the drive towards valorisation of space typical of business groups. The spatial professionals are, due to their control of policy innovation and urban space solutions such as art villages, cohabitation, creative city discourse etc., able to position themselves as the key actors which can provide what the municipal authority desires: value for money, a competitive edge in the region, control over a previously extra-legal area of the city in return for concessions on issues of social justice and aesthetic/historical concerns. The relative lack of concern for the demands of the resident artist community however, as well as the normative approach to the selection of residents both underline the exclusion of these constituents from the decision-making process, especially during the final stages, when vague ideas of cohabitation gave way to the minute details which were finally codified as the Taipei City Treasure Hill Settlement Conservation and Development Autonomy Statute, the fundamental piece of municipal regulation ruling the village presently. The well-known demolition controversies of Kangleli (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> City Park) and Da'an Park pitted the spatial professionals against the city, yet Treasure Hill is a case of their collaboration, one which has established a pattern also visible in other localised redevelopment projects around Taipei as a new form of governance.

### ***Treasure Hill 3: Living museum, dead village?***

If the space of the Treasure Hill Artist Village is a consequence of a collaborative effort between the city and the spatial professionals borne out of a shifting role of space in the urban economy and politics, what does the space of Treasure Hill say about this collaboration? If indeed the outcome represents the best possible compromise, as the OURs often emphasised, the careful reading of the space indicates its priorities and uses. Based on a longitudinal observation over a period of eight months, the ethnography of the space mainly concerned itself with questions such as who the space is for, how it is used, who uses it, how it is made attractive and to whom, all of which overwhelmingly suggest that tourism, or rather tourists/visitors are the overarching concern of the management as well as the institutional mission. Furthermore, an analysis of the currently running art/creative residencies, as well as interviews with the residents artists, visitors and managerial staff

confirmed that while cohabitation, creativity, cultural production are the basis on which the site operates, the mandatory openness to visitors is a big motivation in both the selection process, as well as the daily routines of the successful applicants. It is argued here that Treasure Hill is a *museum*, subject to similar double pressures that museums face - to reproduce an acceptable aesthetic, and to provide a normative, even didactic role. Parallel to the shopping and entertainment spaces of Xinyi, Treasure Hill as a quasi-public space is also a spatial representation of the shift in the role of the city and its space, ultimately seen as having a link to Taipei's competitiveness and cosmopolitan feel.

Treasure Hill currently runs three art and creative based programmes in addition to the youth hostel and the social housing/original resident role. Due to the fast turnover and great variety of the foreign and domestic residencies, the third and most stable part of the art village, The MicroLoft programme, was examined in more detail in order to outline the arrangements pertaining to the artist community at Treasure Hill. By visiting the spaces under The MicroLoft programme, which provides reduced rent studios and spaces, the general impression is that it has especially been developing in the direction of providing a commercial element to the visitor's' experience. Since its inception in 2010, when the first eight spaces were allocated, the number of cafes alone has increased from one to a total of five out of the out of fourteen in 2013; the other MicroLoft spaces are also required to open their doors for visitors on the official open days, selling products such as artisanal paper, jewellery, offering workshops or simply tours of the artists' studios. More than the residencies, which allow participating artists leeway in their work (as long as it can be linked broadly to the cohabitation/memory/nostalgia themes), the MicroLoft programme has become tasked with providing the consumable content for the large number of visitors. While sales contribute importantly to the young artists' income, the presence of a constant stream of visitors can also be distracting. Several of the current residents went so far as to complain about the number of visitors at all times, even during 'closed' days, resulting in them having to draw the blinds on their studio to avert prying eyes, photographs being taken or visitors simply barging in. (Li Mengshu, resident MicroLoft artist. Interview, 17 March 2013). While providing a welcome and relatively inexpensive place to

work, many of the artists I interviewed also clearly indicated they over-emphasised the ‘social’ aspect of their work during the application process to improve their chances, but later on found opportunities for interaction with the elderly residents were few and far between; workshops were mainly attended by children, whereas some of the older men were often hostile to their presence. While certain community traditions, such as sharing meals, were re-introduced in a formalised form after the transformation into an artist village, both the reduced number of residents (currently 21 households from over 70 before eviction and renovation in 2007) and the relatively fast turn-over of young artists precludes the establishment of lasting and spontaneous links characteristic of a lived, organic community. Instead, such activities are now outsourced by the Department of Culture to Xuri Cultural Enterprises Ltd. (旭日文化事業有限公司, Xùrì wénhuà shìyè yǒuxiàn gōngsī), which is also headquartered at Treasure Hill and manages the interaction of residents and artists for the purposes of cohabitation. While the intent may have been to ease communication between the constituent groups in the village, it nevertheless presents a rerouting of informal links via a formal framework, subjecting it to potential reframing in order to fit the pre-existing narrative the village is postulated on.

The ritualisation of spontaneous social gatherings within a systematic schedule is mere re-enactment organised by an outside group hired by the city to foster ‘symbiosis’. The tools which were developed to manage the area pay homage to pre-existing ties and rituals of community examined and praised by OURs and the planning community, but remain uplinked to the city bureaucracy - an arrangement which would be reproduced in other cases around Taipei, such as the Urban Regeneration Stations (URS) examined in Chapter Four. This outsourcing model, though rooted in neoliberal policy, indicates the continuing autonomy of the Taiwanese local state within the cultural-creative sphere where external pressures were in effect co-opted and brought within the municipal governance structure. The practice of outsourcing within Treasure Hill is not limited to the management of quotidian affairs. Treasure Hill operates as a policy laboratory for the involvement in and outsourcing to of a number of non-governmental or quasi non-governmental bodies, a practice which continues in the programmes examined in the following chapter, suggesting a

formation of 'best practice' at Treasure Hill as already having significant impact on other instances of regeneration using the creative city discourse. Treasure Hill for example houses the Tsui Mama Foundation that handled the transition and relocation of residents, while City Yeast (都市酵母 Dūshì jiàomǔ), another NGO based at Treasure Hill, operates as a 'think-tank' whose stated mission is to 'make people fall in love with Taiwan's urban approach'<sup>2</sup>. Even the organisation with overall responsibility for Treasure Hill, the Taipei Culture Foundation, is a quasi non-governmental organisation originally set up in 1985 that has since 2007 taken on the responsibility of running a variety of venues and events in Taipei on behalf of the Department of Culture, combining private and public funding. In effect, the city showed substantial adaptive capacity by first 'outsourcing' many of the problematic stages of the transition to NGOs and private firms such as OURs, Tsui Mama and now City Yeast and Xuri, and then integrating the space into the city's bureaucracy under the Taipei Culture Foundation. Though it remains a site of policy experimentation, Treasure Hill is also firmly placed in the same administrative structure as the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art, the Red House in Ximen, Taipei Puppet Theatre and the Songshan Creative Industry Area, all of which represent high-profile spaces constituting what a city urban planner called 'new Taipei urbanism' (Hsu Yanhsing, Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office deputy head. Interview, 30 April 2013).

While internally Treasure Hill operates as a government-run institution, its external face is markedly different. The presence of cafes, cake shops, tourists and art suggests a middle-class aesthetic reminiscent of gentrified areas such as New York's Brooklyn, London's Hackney, San Telmo in Buenos Aires or El Raval in Barcelona. Indeed, critical voices in Taiwan's academic and art community have long discussed whether Treasure Hill presents a case of 'gentrification'. (Most notably (Lin H., 2006) and (Zhang, 2011)) Due to the strong involvement of the municipal authorities and professional associations however, the term 'museumification' is favoured here. Simultaneously covering some of the aspects of gentrification, especially the middle-class aesthetics seen as the defining visual prompt, museumification accounts for the

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<sup>2</sup> CityYeast website, Q&A section. Accessible on: <http://www.cityyeast.com/about.php>. Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013

institutionalisation of the space, as well as for the lack of overt commercial pressures, which are exhibited rather within the overall practice of the municipality itself. Thus, it is not a process led by commercial pressures exploiting the so-called rent gap (Ley, 1986), but a state-led commodification informed by a neoliberal shift urging the measuring stick of competitiveness onto municipal (cultural) policy, Treasure Hill included. Taken in this way, it is a space more akin to that of Salzburg, a curated space meant to preserve and offer to the public a sanitised, consumable alternative to the reality of daily life in the big city. (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2004) Moreover, the example of amusement parks, which Sorkin (1992) calls a “jolly regulated vision of pleasure as a substitute for the democratic public space” (ibid: p. Xv), is consonant with the transition from the conflicted space of Treasure Hill village to the calm and pleasant atmosphere of the Treasure Hill Artist Village. Precedents in Asia, including Taiwan, in the construction of ‘aboriginal’ or ‘cultural’ villages offer a further comparative frame in approaching the space of Treasure Hill. These spaces mimic villages of different themes and backgrounds but are fastened together and given a new role by a process of museumification:

*“...these disparate strands are held together by the 'village' motif and by the methodology of museumification. Cultural villages are, quintessentially, sites of a museum nature. Some are classified as 'living museums' or 'eco-museums'; some were initiated by museums; others house museums within their reconstructed village confines or replicate museum display techniques.”*

(Dellios, 2002: 3)

Treasure Hill, as a hybrid space that is both a working artist colony, a social housing project and a cultural tourism site presents a less obvious, if nevertheless museological site; just as the working and conservation parts of a museum are off-limits, so signs stating “Treasure Hill Homeland, please DO NOT come in without invitation“ (寶藏家園：居民住所，請勿進入 Bǎozàng jiāyuán: Jūmín zhùsuǒ, qǐng wù jìnrù), protect the remaining households from the unwelcome intrusions of the visitors, although the signs themselves have taken on the life of an exhibit, with visitors taking photographs in front of the signs on several occasions during my visits. On one occasion, when I asked why they were doing this, a young couple replied they felt it gave place

authenticity - literally, that the signs 'make you feel it really is a village' (Field notes, 21 March 2013). The residents of Treasure Hill have, together with the residents artists, found themselves in the role of exhibits/exhibitors, their vegetable patch as much an object of the tourists' gaze as the art installation next to it. Moreover, the level of control and management of their lives and daily affairs within the institutionalised village presents yet another facet of *governance*; though the size of the museum-village is small, the scope of the city's governing is not. It is not possible to overlook the seemingly conflicted use of both modernist and neoliberal approaches, both the normative and intrusive micromanagement by the city, and the outsourcing of this micromanagement to private bodies.

**Figure 2 - Tourists posing in front of the remaining buildings of Treasure Hill Village. Photograph by author.**



### 3.4 Conclusion

Treasure Hill stands out in the city-wide conflict between the modernist vision of Taipei as a city of glass and steel, and the more nativist, historicist vision of a laid-back colonial town with a rich tradition of vernacular construction, its illegality notwithstanding. Borne out of a decade-long conflict between civil society actors and several municipal bureaus, most notably the Parks and Street Lights Department and the Department of Cultural Affairs, the current space of Treasure Hill is both a novel institutional arrangement, as well as material consequence of the idea of 'art as tool for social action' gaining traction among both civil society and municipal policymakers. To the city, it presented an attractive and relatively inexpensive experiment, which has since become embedded within a wider policy network, and successfully slotted into various schemes: as an international artist village, as a tourist attraction, as proof of Taipei's diversity presented to visiting officials (which becomes important as the city gears up to become World Design Capital in 2016 in an attempt to replicate Seoul's economic success after its successful hosting in 2010).

Meanwhile however, and perhaps because of the stated success of the arrangement, the village operates chiefly as a living museum, a repository of memory and nostalgia for Taiwan's rural past and a favourite past-time destination for young couples, amateur photographers and larger groups of elderly Taiwanese reminiscing about their own poorer upbringings. Essentially living their lives within this museum, the position of the remaining residents hints the novel institutional arrangement may not be stable at all, with no instruments in place to replenish the population and the artist village expanding steadily into vacated homes. Despite the intention to preserve, maintain and build upon a sense of community, the barrage of art-based initiatives hoping to involve the community seems to have exhausted the willingness of the residents to participate in yet another re-visioning of their space well before the inauguration of the village in 2010. The most likely outcome now seems to be a spatialization of an official version of Taipei's history, complete with cafés, galleries and shops servicing the weekend flâneurs of modern Taipei. This

outcome may take on the external guise of gentrification (cf. (Zhang, 2005), (Lin H., 2006)), but remains also firmly rooted in the organisation of a government-run village devoid of clear or unobstructed market stimuli. Gentrification, in this case, may turn out to be an all too convenient lens with which to evaluate the changes that took place, prompting the present research to maintain that a process of museumification describes the situation more accurately. The remaining residents, now effectively tenants/exhibits of the museum, may be protected from the vagaries of the real-estate market, but their position remains nevertheless mired in a neoliberal logic viewing their lives (i.e. the culture they have created) as a resource fuelling the 'creativity' of the place itself, which in turn is thought of a resource of the post-industrial economy. The appealing narrative of culture and art provides the outer casing of the museum, yet the village as a whole is subjected to a commodifying logic of the neoliberal city.

As far as the role of civil society groups that protested its demolition is concerned, the formal groups around OURs view it as a victory for their brand of action, which throughout emphasised engagement with the city. If it is a victory however, it is one symptomatic of the widening rift between those espousing aims of radical social justice and others with more mainstream concerns of preserving landscape and memory, as the bitter conflicts between the formalised and the squatter movements reveal. Nevertheless, it may be argued that it is precisely the invocation of the aesthetic and the nostalgic that enabled the achievement of (albeit limited) social justice, as it is the cultural/art village that found acceptance in the municipal state's mentality of governing, as well as provided the contextual link for policy-makers at the time, notably Long Ying-tai. Once the compromise between the formal social movement as represented by the OURs and the city was achieved however, the case of Treasure Hill becomes not one of civic society activation, but of a state-run experiment in creating a hybrid urban space following the recommendations of the epistemic community of urban planners and architects, who introduced the concepts of 'village', 'arte povera', 'cohabitation'. Yet despite the lofty and vague principles on which it is conceived, the space nevertheless adheres to the requirements and rules of a city bureaucracy, indeed it is its integral part. Thus, the quantifying urge subsumes everything, even the residents and artists,

while stringent vetting techniques ensure that both the residents and the artists (both on residency and those doing daytime work) fit in with the pre-established norms for this village-as-institution. The unusual arrangement governing the village owes its existence to the specific circumstances of the case (a tightly knit community, an activist network, the support of academics and professionals and ultimately, good political timing), yet the use a 'culture-creative' approach to solving a question that started off as one of social justice is responsible for it becoming a question of municipal cultural policy. It is a case that shows the appeal of culture-creative policies when dealing with intractable conflicts regarding the use of urban space, and at the same time revealing their weakness in resisting institutionalisation as they are included in the pre-existing structure of cultural policy and, as the following chapter shows, urban planning policy as well. A case in point is the routing of pre-existing avenues for interaction between the different constituent communities through the official channels by the rules governing life in the artist village. Those most free to interact outside these channels - the international artists in residence - often lack the language ability to interact with locals, as several interviewees indicated. On the other hand, the local artists/shopkeepers in various programmes have all been through a thorough selection process, with the required submission of reports and mid-year reviews ensuring their compatibility with the village: their willingness to participate in the outdoor museum experience by essentially serving the role of the museum shop/cafe. In terms of the tools of governance, it shows how the introduction of the creative city discourse made the Department of Culture an important player and adjudicator in producing and managing novel urban space, just as long as the site remained open to the public as a tourist attraction.

The institutionalising process however, essentially a negotiation about *ways of doing things*, has also meant the municipal authorities had to adapt to accommodate the running of a space such as Treasure Hill - the Department of Culture was soon no longer the only new 'creative space landlord', with the Urban Regeneration Office also taking over several historically protected or derelict sites for use as creative spaces, using similar criteria for selection as well as monitoring tools such as requiring reports, although none of its sites are inhabited by original residents. By addressing the demands of the formalised

civil society groups and adopting their parlance, the city has internalised some civil society groups' demands into a city-wide effort of institutionalising marginal spaces under the banner of creativity to 'create' or 'conserve' culture (most notably through the URS programme, see following chapter), often also engaging prominent members of civil society groups for paid work as architects, consultants and designers of the emerging creative spaces, further emphasising their role as spatial producers. The calls to express Taipei's creativeness through its space, through the leisure time of its citizens have since become common-place in the vocabulary of urban planning and taken up enthusiastically by the KMT administrations which have led the city since 1998. Examined critically, this may represent a mere 'artwash', where the culture-creative narrative plays a palliative role, securing backing from key constituents while ensuring municipal control over what are no longer authentic, lived spaces, though the institutions tasked with implementing creative city policies have shown considerable resilience and capacity to engage art and business groups.

# **Chapter Four: Institutionalizing Creative Space Production in Taipei**

## **4.1 Introduction: Building institutions of corporative space production**

On November 18 2013, Taipei was chosen as the next World Design Capital (WDC), the fifth to receive this title since the biennial event was first held in Turin in 2008. Seoul, chosen as host for the 2010 WDC, is widely seen as one of Taipei's main competitors as well as sources of inspiration when it comes to the establishment of the culture-creative industry (and city), and it is therefore not surprising that Taipei city approached the bid seriously as a cross-departmental effort. Apart from raising the city's profile, the event served as an exercise for the various departments and branches of municipal government, a shift acknowledged by Deputy Mayor Chen as 'embedding design into governance' during his acceptance speech in Montreal (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design Press Release, 18 November 2013). Examining this statement is a useful spring-board from which the chapter will trace the process of institutionalising the production of creative spaces in Taipei, a process which also serves as a gauge of state capacity and its authority over the street-level production of creative spaces. In analysing this process, the chapter aims to challenge notions of neoliberal urban governance which equate it with a retreat of the state, highlighting instead the involvement of

state actors in a project of standardising small-scale urban interventions in the 'Urban Renewal Station' programme (hereafter URS; 都市再生前進基地, Dūshì zàishēng qiánjìn jīdì). Seen within the wider theme of operationalizing creativity with which this research is attempting to grapple, the case of the URS is one example of state actors' *locating* creativity within a pre-existing framework of city bureaucracy, with an explicit aim of influencing the image of Taipei as a creative city - both in the run-up to the WDC competition, as well as beyond this short-term goal. Additionally, as the URS programme is operated by the city's Urban Regeneration Office, it is set apart from purely sectoral efforts such as the recently opened Songshan Cultural and Creative Park. Although the latter is Taipei's largest investment into creative and cultural industries, it is better understood within the realm of cultural or economic policy and in any case does not differ substantially from similar efforts in the region and globally. Nevertheless, Songshan Cultural and Creative Park must be seen within the same municipal effort of 'creating a creative city' and shares with examples such as Huashan Creative Park a significant set of beliefs and accepted frames of activity. As it will also host the majority of exhibitions during Taipei's time as World Design Capital, its omission in this work is perhaps unusual, yet the selection of the (smaller) URS programme is based primarily on the relatively larger variety of actors and policy inputs, making it a good candidate for the observation of the negotiations regarding the *ways of doing creativity*, especially within the field of urban regeneration, which has seen a global move towards adopting creative city policies aimed at coupling regeneration of physical space with efforts to support a creative economy.

From initial ad-hoc efforts by a small group of Taipei's art and architecture community, which focused on the adaptive reuse of abandoned industrial spaces such as the Huashan distillery, the reuse of various under-used urban locales has attained the role of stimulating growth in the creative industry section - it's no coincidence that the programme is often referred to as 'urban acupuncture'<sup>1</sup>, a series of targeted mini-interventions aimed at releasing the creative potential of the city. While these may be seen against a wider backdrop of creating the right conditions for (creative) business, reducing them

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<sup>1</sup> The term is attributed to Finnish architect Marco Casagrande, who had been involved in the regeneration of Treasure Hill.

simply to their macro-economic function misses the point of the process: the building of institutions with roots in the state, the commercial world and the civil society. Rather than being a simple commercialisation of public space (many of the buildings and areas involved were in fact never public but were rather acquired by the city and opened to the public), the URS stations represent a production of a specific (quasi)public creative space with a defined goal of regenerating neighbourhoods and stoking creativity, however vague that may be.

Moreover, the comparison of municipal and private sector efforts towards the building of a creative city (be they for profit or not) reveals an advancing homogeneity of the programmes in terms of the practice of producing creative space, from the underpinning beliefs to the spatial and organizational outcomes of such practices. Recalling debates on institutional isomorphism (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), the need for legitimation through isomorphism<sup>2</sup> is a plausible explanation: the case of Taipei's URS is one of a municipal actors' emulation of informal work introduced to Taipei by a group of artists, architects and civil society activists on one hand, and the work of corporate arts and culture foundations on the other, suggesting that the perceived legitimacy towards which the URS programme gravitates in fact lies outside the state and carries within it the accepted understandings of its mission beholden to earlier work by non-state actors. Put simply, the city institutions have been integrating and assimilating lessons from the non-state sector while also conferring on some of the non-state actors the role of 'go-to authorities' for questions of culture-led urban regeneration. As such, the situation lends itself to an ethnography aimed at unravelling the assumed and shared understandings on which the URS and related institutions are based, which in turn are spread and shaped by *negotiations* between state and non-state actors over the period of several

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<sup>2</sup> DiMaggio and Powell suggest a typology of institutional isomorphism, wherein a *coercive* process of isomorphism refers to organizations adopting "ritualised controls of credentials and group solidarity" (1983: 151) in order to confer legitimacy on their activity, while the *mimetic* process entails the self-modelling of organizations on what are perceived to be legitimate or successful examples from the field (ibid. 152). Lastly, the *normative* process guided by professionalization also applies in Taipei's case, where networks of experts have contributed to the quick spread of certain models of operationalizing creativity.

decades. Rather than being imposed top-down, the URS programme, as well as similar private attempts, has been created through a series of such negotiations between the municipal and national state, the artist and creative community, and business groups. The first of such negotiations may well be found at Treasure Hill, and this chapter will build on comparisons with Treasure Hill Artist Village, not least due to the involvement of several of the same actors, both organisations and individuals. However, with its complicated history of conflict, compromise, and, most crucially, its isolation from the real-estate market, Treasure Hill was never going to become the ideal template for arts-led urban regeneration. Nevertheless, it belongs within the same underlying narrative, namely that arts-led redevelopment coupled with policies supporting creative industries is desirable both in local terms (the effect within the neighbourhood), as well as on a city-wide basis in increasing competitiveness. Seen as a belief formed of traditions and dilemmas (Bevir, 1999), it has arisen as a response to new ideas about urban space creation, the reuse of defunct space, and the new urban economy, all of which had been entering Taiwan since the 1980s. A key term within this narrative is the 'adaptive reuse' of abandoned, disused or underused buildings, especially those which do not fall into the foremost categories of architectural heritage; this term often subsumes all three ideas mentioned above. Returning to the case of Treasure Hill, it was akin to a new problem which the city's planning and art community faced and which forced into the public discourse questions of equitable redevelopment, the value of art in public space and the discussion on what public space in fact is. The difference between the case of Treasure Hill and the cases described here is therefore in the *intention* to develop a city-wide 'institution' which we can observe in subsequent cases of arts-led redevelopment, but which had not yet lent itself as the obvious policy choice in Treasure Hill.

## 4.2 Institutionalizing the production of creative spaces in Taipei

Understood in ways as different as industrial policy, urban planning or arts and heritage preservation, the insertion of creative spaces into the city is not by any means a uniform process. Ad-hoc coalitions such as those which formed at Treasure Hill, raising the banners of preservation, identity and social welfare may well have been suited for that particular case, but the city-wide adoption of creative or arts-led (re)development in Taipei has taken on a more stable form. Strictly speaking, the actors can be divided into state/municipal, civil society and business sectors, yet a rigid division such as this may obscure the cross-group activities of many actors responsible for the spreading and adoption of the idea of arts-led urban interventions. In a similar vein, a rigid distinction cannot account for the proliferation of approaches and initiatives regarding creative space production (and space in more general sense), which have been identified not only in Taipei, but also within individual research sites. Thus, the construction of a typology of approaches to creative space has had to interpret and appreciate the differences, failures and variations in related policies across various cities<sup>3</sup>, which in turn has meant it was necessary to unravel the web of negotiation and persuasion, institutional drift and isomorphism, agency and constraints. In short, to analyse the way in which a consensus about how and why creative space production is important for Taipei. The author subscribes to the view that a useful way to get at an answer to these questions is with an interpretive focus on the beliefs of the actors involved while creating a comprehensive picture of the process of institutionalisation discussed in this chapter. Leaving aside discussions of ideology (understood either as a false consciousness or distorted communication), the aim of the research was instead to look at the construction of new institutions out of the often contingent case studies.

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<sup>3</sup> Jane M. Jacobs calls these 'mutations' (2011) which should be traced to construct a truly alternative geography, rather than one which finds the sameness it has set out to search for.

While traditionally conceived as formal norms and structures, institutions are understood in this case as ‘shared understandings’ (Bevir, 2007), or ‘commonly accepted ways of doing things’ (Abers and Keck, 2006; 2013). In this light, the chapter examines the institutionalisation of creative space production, i.e. the transition into a shared and agreed way of using, organising and placing creative spaces in Taipei, wherein the shared assumptions regarding such institutions extend to the expectations of their efficacy. Instead of examining the *faits accomplis* of institutionalization however, the ethnographic research conducted in Taipei in spring of 2013 aimed to analyse the ‘institutional work’ (Lawrence et al, 2009) that has been put in: the institutionalising effort rather than the institutionalised outcome, locating the effort within the middle level of analysis, the interspace between discourse and practice. It is by no means certain that the institutionalising effort will result in long-lasting and resilient institutions - in any case many of the URS projects had a time limit of three or four years attached to them from the outset, unlike the arrangement at Treasure Hill, which is intended to run indefinitely (though in what form remains a moot point). Rather, the ‘institution’ discussed in the present chapter is understood as a process of integrating beliefs about redevelopment and arts into a wider framework of ideas, many of which have been implicitly connected with processes such as globalization or neoliberalization, ideas about the competitiveness of cities which include a macro-economic dimension, a form of demographic engineering (in the form of attracting and retaining ‘talent’) as well as particular concerns over Taipei’s past and future urban space.

The three groups of actors mentioned above - state, civil and business - all entered the process of institutionalising creative space production with particular demands and expectations, ranging from pressures perceived by actors as ‘external’ or ‘objective’ (such as the need for working spaces amid rising rents, to raise the city’s profile, or to achieve better business results), and those which are seen as being inherent to the actors’ needs or stated beliefs (such as creating and preserving the city’s culture, civic responsibility to create better living environments or corporate philanthropy). Adopting an interpretive approach to the beliefs held by actors however does not necessarily distinguish between these self-reported categories, instead treating all of them

as guiding their action and consequently contributing to the formation of the institutions tasked with creating or up-keeping the city's creative spaces. Thus, the case of the old Huashan distillery, discussed in the first subsection of this chapter, reveals how the ideas of the city's artists and architect community came into contact (not always devoid of conflict) with the state's initially rigid understanding of the artists' efforts as trespassing, the tension ultimately resulting in the adoption by the state of some of the artists' ideas. Similarly, the creation of corporate art foundations, modelled on similar movements in Japan opened the door for (elite) members of Taiwan's art community to guide the work of these foundations toward the production of permanent spatial interventions. And lastly, the third subsection examines in a similar vein the intersection of all three sets of actors in the URS programme, combining artistic intervention with the need for standardisation and accountability, and insights from marketing and branding stemming from the corporate foundations. The resulting mix is not entirely different from analogous efforts in other cities, nor is the intention of this research to gauge Taipei against a normative benchmark of some sort.

### ***Huashan 1914 - 'patient zero' of Taiwanese creative spaces***

Built in 1914, as the current name of the area suggests, the Huashan<sup>4</sup> distillery (華山酒廠, Huàshān jiǔchǎng) was an example of Japanese industrial colonial architecture set on nearly 8 hectares of land in what was then the eastern fringe of Taipei. As the city spread eastward however, the erstwhile distillery, known especially for its various types of *baijiu*, found itself surrounded by a dense urban landscape. Though real-estate prices are often cited as the reason for the distillery's relocation, the land on which it stands was owned by the national government; rather, the immediate impetus for the plant's move was the introduction of stringent environmental rules which meant continuing operation in downtown Taipei was no longer feasible. After its closure in 1987, the factory briefly served as the "Ba-de Road Car-park", though its legal status was never

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<sup>4</sup> Initially named after the Japanese colonial governor Kabayama Sukenori (樺山資紀), the distillery was renamed by the nationalist government to a more acceptable Huashan (華山), which literally means 'flower mountain', in what is a The character 華 (huà) also denotes Chinese ethnicity and is in any case very similar to Kabayama's (樺 huà, meaning birch), being a homonym and only distinguished by the tree radical (木).

formalised due to the complicated relation between the land owners (National Property Administration of the Ministry of Finance and the Taiwan Provincial Government), as well as different operators (the Bureau of Labor Insurance and the Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly, respectively). The same problem also meant the city was not able to intervene in the area through its 1997 Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (地區環境改造計畫 Dìqū huánjìng gǎizào jì huà), which urged local authorities to take charge of improving the environment and the site remained underused for much of the decade following the distillery's relocation.

It was this administrative logjam that the members of the Golden Bough Theatre Group (金枝演社, Jīnzhī Yǎnshè) burst into with their 'discovery' of large abandoned warehouses perfect for their dance and theatre performances. The symbolism of this act for the ensuing process of institutionalisation cannot be understated, considering the administrative quagmire the old factory had found itself since production was relocated to Linkou. By-passing official planning, ownership issues and inter-governmental tugs of war, the theatre company introduced the idea of adaptive reuse into the public realm within a matter of months, aided also by publicity generated when its founder and director Wang Rong-yu was arrested for trespassing on government property. The speed with which the state subsequently took up the artists' idea is impressive considering the number of conflicting claims on the area during the period in question. Taipei's Urban Development Department was for example working on a study of using the site for the new Legislative Yuan building, though proposals were ultimately dropped due to local opposition, as well as the Department head's opinions on the heritage value of industrial architecture. Huashan was clearly a valuable plot of centrally located land ripe for redevelopment, with conflicting claims revealing macro-political cleavages between the DPP-run municipality and KMT-run central state, between different government departments, between the Development Department and the local citizenry. The artists' own claims on the space were thus hardly uncontested, and the Huashan case illustrates the apparent attractiveness, and perception of, arts-led redevelopment in Taipei (even though, strictly speaking, Huashan was an issue for the central state as the ultimate owner of the land and the buildings on the site.)

The Golden Bough company first started using the space in the summer of 1997 and in July of the same year, the 'Society for the Promotion of Huashan Special Arts Area' was established, addressing its first petition for the preservation of the distillery as an art centre to the Legislative Yuan in September, somewhat ironic considering the site had nearly become the Yuan's new home. In December however, the experimental occupation of the space resulted in a clash with the property's owners, as Wang Rong-yu was arrested during a performance that involved him riding a motorcycle through Huashan. Wang's arrest turned out to be a galvanizing moment for the tight-knit community of artists in Taipei. As Margaret Shiu, who later became director of the association running Huashan Special Creative Zone, recalls: *"The whole arts and culture community came out ... and that's when Lin Huai-min, the most important person in the arts in Taiwan came up and said if you can put a theatre director in jail just because he's using somewhere that's derelict and under-used, then there is something very wrong with society. Oh God! Immediately, the next day, the guy was released and this hot potato immediately transferred to the culture ministry and they said, please, if they want to use it, let them have fun with it. Let them use it, we're gonna demolish it anyway."* (Margaret Shiu, Bamboospace Director. Interview, May 16 2013)

As reluctant as the government may have been initially to deal with the 'hot potato' of Huashan, the gathering momentum of the movement soon made it impossible to ignore. Not only the art community, but also architects, urban planners and crucially, the business community all subtly influenced thinking about the value of art in a valuable and central location such as Huashan. The architect community had for example been exposed to new approaches in urbanism via epistemic networks from the 1980s on, yet lacked the initial impetus, provided in this case by the 'trouble-makers', as Margaret Shiu describes the group of artists working at Huashan. The business community on the other hand was at the time already concerned about Taiwan's competitiveness and innovation, and with the creative industries seen as a close relation of the arts (rightly or not) threw their weight behind the project of adaptive reuse of Huashan. This may be the crucial difference to a case such as Treasure Hill; related as the artists' claims or the state response may be, the

case of Huashan was the first major instance of the meeting of the arts, the state as well as the professional and business community and has established many of the mores, constraints, expectations and path-dependencies that have shaped the formation of the URS initiative and other art/culture-led projects of redevelopment. By observing and analysing the maturing of this particular creative space then, we will be able to construct a more detailed view of two significant tendencies in creative space production at Huashan which have been taken-up in subsequent projects of the same or similar type and scale. These are then, together with in-depth interviews and observation, taken to construct a clearer image of what the beliefs shaping the process of institutionalisation may be.

### *1. Public-private partnerships*

After an initial flurry of activity resulting in the transferral of responsibility over Huashan to the Council for Cultural Affairs (Taiwan's central government ministerial-level body), the area was entrusted to the Huashan Special Art Zone (HSAZ), the civil society organisation stemming from the 1997 movement. The NGO ran the former distillery until November 2003, during which time the group organised around 3500 different events at Huashan, repaired many of the decaying buildings and entrusted many of the derelict spaces to artists who set up studios and workshops, providing content but also creating a community of people with deep professional links to the space itself. During this period however, the new DPP government (the city had meanwhile returned under KMT rule) was preparing its own creative industry policy, which marks the beginning of direct government involvement at Huashan, with creative industries conflated with the arts under the 'creative-cultural' rubric (the same terminology is interestingly used in the People's Republic of China). The so-called "New Taiwan Art Star" policy called for substantial investments into Huashan amounting to NTD8.2 billion (around £160 million), including a 28-storey art and culture centre, a pop music centre and the creation of an island-wide network of creative industry centres situated in old warehouses in Taichung, Tainan, Chiayi and Hualien<sup>5</sup>. While the plan triggered uproar in the

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<sup>5</sup> The policy was launched in July 2004 by Council for Cultural Affairs to dovetail with President Chen Shui-bian's new cultural policy. (Executive Yuan Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004).

professional community over plans to construct a 28-storey tower in the middle of the protected area, as well as a clear shift towards a commercial understanding of creative-cultural parks, the responsibility to run Huashan was eventually given up by the HSAZ in a close vote of its assembly. Faced with the cost of running the venue without state support, the entire venue was then outsourced to a private business venture, the Taiwan Cultural and Creative Development Co., Ltd (台灣文創發展股份有限公司 *Táiwān wén chuàng fāzhǎn gǔfèn yǒuxiàn gōngsī*). Founded by a publishing company, a hotel and a venture capital group, the company was in 2008 re-awarded operating rights over the majority of Huashan for a further 15 years at a rent of NTD 15million per annum (roughly £300,000) (Liberty Times, 16 June 2008).

Though the re-awarding of operating rights was criticised by the artist community due to the perceived lack of oversight over the company's decisions, the commitment of the government to a public-private partnership underlines the extent to which the notions of outsourcing to a profit-making business entity have entered a consensus on the production of creative spaces in Taipei (and Taiwan more widely), even among the professional community whose radical actions forced these spaces to be considered as a public good in the first place. The resulting mixed-use space, with an emphasis on commercially viability, became both an administrative template for other efforts such as Pier-2 in Kaohsiung (see Chapter Five), and in a more general sense, set the tone for the aesthetic and organizational structure of many arts centres in Taiwan. Seen from the perspective of the arts community, the public-private partnership formula also meant the formalization of their influence to the role of selection committee members, or members of various municipal boards. In the case of Huashan's public-private partnership, the selection of the operator was decided upon by a selection committee where at least half of the members were required to be 'specialists or scholars', though their selection was still left to the authority in charge, in this case the Council for Cultural Affairs. (Executive Yuan Council for Cultural Affairs, 2001). Outside of this arena however, the influence of the arts community in running new spaces appears to have waned as the municipal and central state have developed administrative devices for developing and managing creative spaces, often with the involvement of private-sector enterprises. As seen in Kaohsiung, as

well as other locations in Taipei (Treasure Hill included), the governance structures of creative spaces have converged towards a model where day-to-day management is outsourced to a private body, or such a body is 'created' by the state in case of a lack of genuine private interest. The institutional isomorphism observed is in this case characterised by the application of existing governance practices such as selection committees with newer ones such as public-private partnerships. While it may be explained by a need for accountability and the subordinate position of these organizations in the state bureaucracy, it also confers on new cultural-creative institutions a legitimating appearance that is legible to policy-makers and other government actors and spreads in accordance to expectations of organizations mimicking successful precedents (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), not necessarily with an eye towards increased efficiency or cost-effectiveness.

## *2. Mass appeal*

As mentioned in the section above, the outsourcing of creative spaces to profit-making enterprises has direct effects on the range and type of offer at the cultural venue due to concerns over the profitability of investment. From the early days of serving as the hub for Taipei's avant-garde and fringe art, Huashan 1914, as the centre is presently called, has become an undoubtedly more mainstream affair, where spaces and exhibitions are allocated to tried and trusted sub-tenants<sup>6</sup>. Thus, Taipei Spot opened its new cinema there, Alleycat's Pizza, a popular chain of restaurants, also set up shop in the one of the abandoned warehouses, as has a yoga workshop and an Italian-style osteria. Huashan 1914 even has its own branded credit card. Alongside a list of amenities at Huashan 1914, the trend towards providing popular content is noticeable in the dominance of exhibitions and events of decidedly popular or commercial appeal (computer game launches, candy exhibitions and

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<sup>6</sup> This is well illustrated with the controversy surrounding a Taiwanese graffiti artist Zhang Shuo Yin, know as Ting Tong Chang, who was arrested for vandalism for graffitiing a building that had at the time hosted an exhibition on street art in New York. As a statement on the ambivalent stance of the centre towards Taiwanese street art, it gathered support among Taiwan's already disgruntled artist community, and the artist later achieved recognition and a pardon by the Executive Yuan's Council for Cultural Affairs (now the Ministry of Culture) in return for an apology. Ironically, he was later prevented from taking photographs of his own work by the Huashan's operator, as the work had since become a protected part of the site. (Zhang Shuo Yin, graffiti artist. Interview, 13 February 2014; You, 2006)

“luminous 3D art” featuring comic-book style images of scantily clad girls tortured by an array of monsters being just three recent examples). While informative in an anecdotal way, this list would amount to a mere observation were it not also clearly stated as policy, with the trend being in fact sanctioned by policy papers on Huashan. While this direction is consistent with the transformation of Huashan from a fringe art centre to a creative industry cluster, the conflating of industrial policy with vaguer notions of creativity produces a wider effect on all spaces categorised as creative, as the example of the URS programme illustrates. Moreover, similar trends have also been observed at Treasure Hill, ostensibly a ‘purely’ cultural/art venue that has in recent years began to embrace a more commercial approach *even* in the absence of clear market pressures. In an interview about the curatorial choices at Huashan and other cultural-creative venues within the national programme, the chairman of the Taiwan Art Development Association (a civil society group working with government in the promotion of the arts) explained the state bodies’ choices were often influenced by the need to provide popular service with which they can justify the public investment, especially in a climate where popular media outlets have taken to criticising government profligacy. (Interview, Jiang Yao-xian, Taiwan Art Development Association (Chairman). 23 November 2012) The trend towards the selection of ‘tried and tested’ choices is especially visible in the arts and culture, where results are often not easily quantifiable beyond visitor numbers, meaning a successful Dali exhibition in Taipei is quickly invited to Kaohsiung, or a yellow duck from Hong Kong to no less than three Taiwanese ports. The bias towards popular content builds upon the trend of outsourcing and seeking private sector partners in that it attempts to minimise risk for public bodies, while allowing them significant input in the selection and operation of these venues, as selections are often taken at the highest (political) levels.

### 4.3 Corporate art foundations

From the late 1990s onward, a new set of spatial actors appeared in Taipei - corporate art foundations. While their parent companies, often big conglomerates including both financial and construction companies, have been actively involved in shaping urban space and policy, the arrival of dedicated non-profit operations heralded a new level of engagement specifically with the production of creative spaces in the city. It is argued further that their engagement has not only provided 'yet another' set of actors or interest groups, but that the activities and structure of the foundations have contributed to the way in which the municipal state has designed its own targeted spatial interventions such as the URS programme. From organisational and curatorial approaches down to the choice of media with which to communicate to target audiences and even the 'look and feel' of the newer municipal publications, the experience of the corporate art foundations has profoundly influenced the city government by providing a platform and template which would be adopted by state actors. The isomorphic process was further facilitated by a host of spatial professionals who, acting as a legitimizing authority, transmitted the experiences and built up collaborative projects between municipal and corporate actors throughout the 2000s, culminating in what I argue is a corporative (not *corporate*) approach in creating and managing creative spaces in Taipei.

While one foundation, the JUT Foundation for Arts and Architecture (JFAA; 忠泰建築文化藝術基金會 Zhōngtài jiànzhú wénhuà yìshù jījīn huì) is the key case studied here, the process of introducing the notion of corporate art foundations into the field of public space, and especially creative spaces, began in earnest with the Fubon Group, Taiwan's financial services giant. In 1997, the Group established the Fubon Art Foundation<sup>7</sup>, which has been run since its inception

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<sup>7</sup> The group's first foray into culture-related charitable work was in 1990, when the Fubon Cultural & Education Foundation was founded, though this was, as the foundation's website states, in reaction to: "...degrading social value, moral standard and along with the rising juvenile delinquency..." (Fubon Cultural and Education Foundation website, Who We Are section;

by Maggie Tsai, the daughter-in-law to the group's founder and chairman, Tsai Wan-tsai. This genealogical fact is not entirely without significance: many of Taiwan's larger corporate foundations are headed by family members who often also sit on the boards of public arts and culture institutions in what can be described as a 'classic' case of corporate and public arts governance. The present chapter strives to take a further step not by describing the elite world of arts funding and governance, but rather examine the institutional interplay at hand; nevertheless, the reoccurring appearance of a short list of names on the boards of several of Taipei's most prestigious institutions (Taipei City Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Contemporary Art Foundation to name a few) serves to illustrate how relatively small and close-knit the world of corporate philanthropy, the arts and public arts and culture institutions actually is, with Taiwan being no exception.

A broader comparative look at the role which corporate art foundations and sponsorships played in the western context is useful at this point. The political restructuring along a free-market doctrine in the United States and Britain for example, not only forced the logic of market competition on the art world, but also ostensibly relied on and supported corporate funding of the arts, with President Reagan regularly hosting galas to support this or that fundraising drive for the arts (Wu, 2003: 51). This shift, most visible in the United States and to a lesser extent Britain, is however not entirely applicable to the Taiwanese experience, where private funding and engagement with the arts was not so much relied upon as it was integrated into a complex web of public-private collaborations, the case of Taipei's Museum of Contemporary Art being a case in point.<sup>8</sup> A more comparable situation can be found closer to Taiwan, in the proliferation of corporate/family art foundations that have become a mainstay in Japan. Rita Chang, former curator and board member at the Fubon Art Foundation recalls how Fubon's Tsai family took the setting up

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<http://international.fubonedu.org.tw/who.asp>

<sup>8</sup> Taipei's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) was run from its inception in 2001 until 2007 by the Contemporary Art Foundation (Dāngdài yìshù jījīn huì), a non-profit foundation established by TSMC Education and Culture Foundation, Quanta Computer Education Foundation, Acer Computer Co., Ltd., Sheng Daily Co., Ltd., Taiwan Microsoft Corporation and other five companies in order to run the MOCA for the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, which finally took the museum over in December 2007.

of the Watari family's Watarium Museum of Contemporary Art as an example of good practice. (Rita Chang, Director, Asian Cultural Council Taipei. Interview, 24 June 2013). The Mori Art Museum meanwhile, founded by real-estate tycoon Minoru Mori, actively cooperates with the aforementioned JFAA, founded by fellow real-estate Li family. Apart from the prestige and adherence to notions of corporate social responsibility, the cases in point are set apart by their engagement in the politics of urban space, especially in introducing art into public and private space within the framework of the creative city discourse. Thus, Fubon Art Foundation's annual art show 'Very Fun Park' (粉樂園 Funleyuan) was instrumental not only in opening up both public and corporate spaces in Taipei's eastern business district to art interventions, but also in cementing the notions of creativity within the political community, with Rita Chang guiding then Mayor Ma Ying-jiu around the area, pointing out the potential for art-led urban redevelopment in the Xinyi area, an effort for which the Foundation has received awards from the city in 2007 and 2012. The Foundation was instrumental in shaping the way in which corporate art foundations operate and intervene in urban space by pioneering not only the use of land-plots slated for development to stage temporary art projects, but also by using advertising budgets to fund such endeavours, which were beginning to be understood as more than charity or philanthropy and took the form of brand-building with an explicit didactic element, i.e. nurturing the public's appreciation of the arts. It is especially the latter effort that dovetails with the municipal creative and cultural policies, with current Mayor Hau Lung-bin summing up the Foundation's efforts to put 'art into life and life into art' as cornerstones of Taipei's cultural and creative policy.<sup>9</sup> The target audience, form and curatorial decisions which shaped Very Fun Park (young Taiwanese artists with wide popular appeal, unconventional locations meant to revitalise urban areas, tie-ups with tourist attractions and urban lifestyle) are furthermore the very elements which are mirrored not only in the work of other arts foundations, but the city's own efforts at introducing art and creativity into

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<sup>9</sup> Taipei City Government, Secretariat Media Services Section. (2012) 15<sup>th</sup> Taipei Culture Award: Li Ganlang, Kang Wenhua, Fubon Art Foundation receive awards (第十五屆臺北文化獎, 李乾朗、唐文華、富邦藝術基金會獲獎, Dì shíwǔ jiè táiběi wénhuà jiǎng, li gānlǎng, táng wénhuá, fù bāng yìshù jījīn huì huòjiǎng) [press release]. Retrieved from: <http://www.wsdotaipei.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=13538306&ctNode=36376&mp=104021>

public urban space, and have all featured prominently in Taipei's bid to become World Design Capital in 2016.

### **JFAA - JUT Foundation for Art and Architecture**

The Fubon Art Foundation may be the first to have engaged with the production of creative spaces within the creative city discourse, yet the JFAA, attached to high-end construction firm JUT or Zhongtai (忠泰), is the corporate foundation closely involved in the process of institutionalizing creative space production through the URS programme, which bears many similarities to the JFAA's own work. Founded in 2007, the JFAA was financed using the construction business's advertising budget and quickly began selecting and providing content for the construction firm's empty building sites. A particularly noteworthy installation was *Rice for Thoughts*<sup>10</sup> where a large rice paddy was constructed on a future building site in Dazhi, and where New York-based artist Aaron Lee lived for a season while exploring issues of Taiwanese identity in the transition from rural to urban - and growing rice. The Foundation quickly expanded to cover not only a narrow definition of 'Art', but more importantly tied a more dispersed notion of creativity with lifestyle: the design one consumes, the art one appreciates, the food one savours and, naturally, the kind of home one inhabits. This tendency is visible in the Foundation's early platform, the "Museum of Tomorrow (MOT)", which operated as a temporary private museum and from which sprang an online culture and style magazine (the MOT Times), cafe (MOT/KITCHEN), flower shop (MOT/FLOWER), as well as a furniture and design shop (MOT/CASA and MOT/ARTS). The issue here is not which organization, group or even individual first established this connection; rather, the research suggests that it was the JFAA which managed, using a platform-based approach, to transmit this link into the city's own creative space production, which closely follows the basic themes of JFAA's own spatial production.

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<sup>10</sup> The original name of the installation is Qíng gēng yǔ dú (晴耕雨讀), loosely translating as 'farming when it's sunny, reading when it rains'. Bearing a striking resemblance to Agnes Denes' *Wheatfield – A Confrontation*, in which two acres of wheat were sown and harvested in downtown Manhattan, the work similarly explores contradictions between urban and rural land use, though the Taiwanese version's attachment to a real-estate developer presents an interesting case of critical corporate art.

In exploring the influence of the JFAA on municipal creative space production, notions of 'lifestyle' are a reoccurring theme, not only as an aspirational trajectory, but also leading to the organizing principle defining the population that such policies and spaces target - the concept of the 'village'. A platform-like approach, the village in the incongruous context of modern urban space is a surprisingly resilient concept related to the post-modernist pushback against high-modernist visions of mass society. In invoking images of a self-organising, organic, independent group, it resonates with neo-liberal notions of an enterprise society as well. Lastly, the concept carries an additional image in Taiwan, one which the Foundation had already been exploring with the *Rice for Thought* project and which can loosely be described as an atavistic longing for a pre-urban life specific to the construction of Taiwanese identity. The village was first used during a 3-year collaborative project with Dutch architecture and urbanism studio MVRDV, which came to Taiwan to study the wealth of illegal, vernacular architectural forms which had developed alongside (or in opposition to) the official modernist vision of Taipei. In focusing on Taipei's hitherto unappreciated urban forms, the collaboration between JFAA and MVRDV resulted in several publications and exhibitions which were often at odds with the accepted notions of urbanity on which Taipei's Urban Regeneration Office (URO) was founded - according to the foundation's chief of operations, what the city saw as ugly and chaotic, the MVRDV/JFAA project celebrated with great success. Ultimately, the project secured city-backing for a tour in Hong Kong as well as more recently to Hamburg's prestigious urban development fair IBA, although the URO's motivation was essentially to establish professional links with Hamburg's corresponding department - such sub-national links with foreign municipalities are especially important considering Taiwan's ambiguous diplomatic status.

The village as an organizing principle of creative communities was first put into practice by the JFAA at what later became the Foundation's most controversial site - UrbanCore, a block of old residential housing between Chunghwa Rd. and Yanping South Rd. in the south-western corner of central Taipei. The block had been intended for redevelopment, yet the Foundation's parent company was unable to obtain the rights to every single property and the vacant buildings were then used by the JFAA to house a total of 15 diverse "teams",

as they were called, all of whom can be grouped in a loose conception of creative and cultural groups. Among them, the municipal URO also opened the URS 89/6 (Urban regeneration station) in the first formal collaboration between the city and the JFAA. Although this particular URS was in fact subsumed within the JFAA's UrbanCore scheme, the city also included the entire space in its network of urban regeneration stations. One salient detail about this particular space is however the negative attention it attracted in the press, as well as from the remaining tenants in the street block, which accused the 'artists' (as a seemingly catch-all term for UrbanCore teams) of attempting to drive them out by playing loud music, organizing parties and generally disturbing the peace of the old block. The media attention on the other hand presented the development as a real-estate ploy to inflate land prices, much to the Foundation's frustration as it was cast as mere a tool of the construction business (Lea Lin, JFAA Secretary General. Interview, 13 June 2013). The brewing controversy around UrbanCore negatively affected not only the foundation, but on a more general level, brought into question the idea of using artists to bring about meaningful and equitable urban regeneration. Margaret Shiu, a Huashan veteran and first director of the Association of the Visual Arts in Taiwan, recalls the controversy as a conflict between real-estate developers and local tenants in which the artists became scapegoats for furious tenants: *"That's when the problem came up and the local citizens were upset and we as artists became scapegoats. These were tenants, so if their landlord is holding out and asking for a high price, they will get kicked out. So they think that because of artists coming in, they are even more likely to get kicked out. ... They don't see their landlord, they don't see Zhongtai, they only see the artists, who are there. And you want me to participate in your [Zhongtai's] dialog? What dialog, so we decided to all leave.* (Margaret Shiu, Bamboocurtain Space, Director. Interview, May 16 2013)

The difficulty in negotiating transitional spaces' is one of the reasons why the JFAA closed UrbanCore in March 2012, after it had negotiated with the city's redevelopment office the conditions to take over, this time entirely within the URS programme as URS21, a large state-owned warehouse in the Zhongshan area. The lessons learnt at UrbanCore were not lost on the foundation: the difficulty in managing neighbourhood relations and press were certainly at the

top, though the JFAA Secretary General also underlines the creative atmosphere of the old space, comparing it with the organised yet somewhat more controlled environment of URS21. What is relevant for the present project however is the way in which the beliefs about art/culture-led regeneration, and more particularly the organisational framework required (physical space, “village” as organising principle, publications, lifestyle spinoffs), filtered through to the municipally run URS21, and by extension to the institutionalisation of art-led urban redevelopment in Taipei. Seen from the perspective of the JFAA, the collaboration with the city is both a necessity and hindrance, wherein the city can offer a legitimising framework for their work, yet also imposes on the space its visions and ways of doing things, from biannual reports, the need to participate in public tenders, to minor issues such as maintenance contracts and ensuing delays. While the Foundation is committed to stay at the Zhongshan space for a total of three years, with the city strongly hinting they would favour an extension, the JFAA is also planning its own museum/creative space in Dazhi in northern Taipei. The potential difficulties in creating permanent relations between corporate foundations participating in the production of creative spaces do not however detract from the general trend, i.e. the integration of private-sector inputs into the city-led regenerative effort within the creative city discourse, quite the opposite: the relation between the municipality and the corporate sector is complex, dynamic and in many ways exhibits the reliance of the municipal state on non-state actors in the process of producing creative spaces in Taipei and by extension, in re-envisaging Taipei as a creative city.

As the following section will show, the involvement of business actors has been complemented with civil society input into the city bureaucracy in a manner that is reminiscent both of corporatist developmental efforts (the designation by the state of semi-official partners such as trade unions, professional groups etc.), as well as ‘post-modern’ small-scale interventions aimed at stimulating market-led change favoured by the neoliberal planning paradigm, in which questions of lifestyle (i.e. the shaping of consumer habits), the plan as strategy (outlining broad outcomes) and participative planning (though favouring certain groups over others) play a prominent role. Unlike the case of Kaohsiung however, the Taipei municipality relies and factors in private

actors, be they corporate sponsored or civil society groupings. Apart from the collaborative projects discussed in the present research, the city is also beginning to use planning/development rights to stimulate 'creative' projects, following the template used in the run-up to the Taipei International Flora Exhibition of 2010.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> As part of the city's effort to make Taipei a verdant metropolis, developers were granted an increase in development rights if they constructed and maintained, for a year, small gardens or parks on their lots. Needless to say, many of these gardens were left to wilt once the increased development rights were granted. The city is currently looking into quantifying a similar increase for 'creative spaces', which currently count towards a qualitative bonus for developers but have not been formalised into a percentage.

## **4.4 Urban Regeneration Stations (URS) - a corporative approach to creative city production**

Taipei's Urban Regeneration Office, occupying the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of an unassuming building near Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, would seem like another neon-lit government office were it not for the stacks of magazine-style booklets, promotional material, books, and posters of various events, all designed with a modern aesthetic and more akin to the headquarters of an architecture and design magazine rather than a part of the city's bureaucracy. This attention to design is unusual for a government department, which any intermittent connoisseur of Taipei's government publications (especially English language ones) can confirm. Indeed, among the staff who welcomed me, Section Chief Lin Yu-Hsiu pointed out there has been a conscious choice to produce visually appealing material as the office was tasked with bringing about a change in Taipei's urban space as well as the city's presence in international and domestic discourse. (Lin Yu-Hsiu, URO Section Chief. Interview: 16 April 2013).

Founded in 2004, the URO operates as an 'office' (處 chu) level organization within the city's Urban Development Department (formerly The Office of Urban Planning); headed by an architect (rather than an urban planner), its mission is to promote smaller urban regeneration projects, public-private partnerships and coordinate community engagement and outreach programmes. In practice, the URO has focused on several economically and demographically weaker areas of Taipei such as the old western commercial area around Dihua Street, as well as several previously industrial facilities, which had become derelict in the past decades.

At a cursory glance, a similarity with other cases of culture-led regeneration or redevelopment in Taipei is prominent, especially with the case of Treasure Hill as well as of Bopiliao, another old commercial area turned cultural-heritage site with strong creative industry links (Wang, 2013). The latter two cases were however ultimately handled by the cultural department within a heritage preservation discourse, often

**Table 7 - URS locations in Taipei**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Range of activities</b>
<b>URS 13</b>	Reviewed Vanguard	Nangang Bottle cap Factory, Nangang district	Electronic music venue, digital art workshop, filming set
<b>URS 21</b>	Chung Shan Creative Hub	Minsheng E. Rd, Zhongshan District	Creative industry hub, café and restaurant, JFAA head office
<b>URS 27</b>	The Grand Green	Huashan Park, Zhongshan District	Outdoor exhibition and concert venue
<b>URS 44</b>	Story House	Dihua Street, Datong District	Tourist information office, Historical Resources Management Institute
<b>URS 85/6</b>	Urban Core URS	Zhonghwa Rd., Wanhua District	(defunct) URS office (JFAA run creative industry hub)
<b>URS 127</b>	Design Gallery	Dihua Street, Datong District	Architect/design studio and exhibition space
<b>URS 155</b>	Cooking Together	Dihua Street, Datong District	Shared workspace / food culture hub
<b>URS 27W</b>	Film Range	Yanping N. Rd., Datong District	Film set

resulting in solutions which satisfy preservation demands at the cost of the communities that first contested the areas' planned demolition. The case of URS is significantly different not in its stated commitment to engage with the local community (which other projects share in any case), but in that it is a repeatable, longer term scheme which is designed to accommodate civil society and private sector actors within its structure from the outset. As such, it incorporates both experiences from other departments, most notably the Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as those of civil society organisers such as Margaret Shiu and corporate art and urban culture foundations. The present research argues that the way in which this framework has been set up is an example of institution-building, more specifically a corporative effort where the state actor designates and leads a handful of associations and organisations. As such, the study of the URS programme falls within the perspective of state-

society relations which has often been adopted in the study of urban redevelopment and regeneration programmes (Wang 2013; Kuo 2010; Paulsen 2007; Henderson 2001; Jessop 1997). The study of the URS programme is thus set here as a case study of the municipal state's ability and methods of aligning relevant actors within a wider policy framework of 'creating the creative city'. The following analysis will focus on four distinct areas, each of which will develop in turn what is here termed an institutionalisation of creative city discourse, comprising concept development, participant selection, dissemination of creative city narratives and the use of global expertise as an isomorphic, legitimising tool.

### ***Urban acupuncture to soft urbanism - development of a concept for urban intervention***

The URS programme centres around two interlinked concepts: urban acupuncture, developed by Finnish architect Marco Casagrande and the Taipei-based Ruin Academy at Treasure Hill, and soft urbanism, a somewhat vaguer term which had been gaining cache in place-branding and urban planning in the 2000s (cf. Ind and Holm, 2012; Füller and Marquard, 2012; Sikiaridi and Vogelaar, 2003) as an alternative to the master-plan (perceived as 'hard' urbanism) and heavily indebted to neoliberal concepts which had by then become an often unseen foundation of planning doxa: market-led, with decentralised decision-making and stakeholder involvement, often business-oriented and based on assumptions of creating the right conditions for growth, rather than producing growth directly through planning. The former approach, urban acupuncture, serves as an example of a home-grown policy which travelled from the professional community into the city's planning department, while the latter may be understood within a more global trend of adapting and complementing planning practice as a response to the perceived need to increase Taipei's competitiveness and attractiveness in a post-industrial, regionally competitive set of cities such as Seoul, Yokohama, Singapore, which are also explicitly referenced in the URS literature as examples of good practice (Urban Regeneration Office, Taipei City Urban Development Department, 2011; 2012) Both are however crucial to understanding how and why the institutionalisation of creative space production in Taipei has been driven by a *socialised* state, a state which mimics and involves non-state

actors while ultimately regaining control over the regeneration format: creating the institutions (an institution) within the city bureaucracy that could be tasked with a broad spatial realignment of the city: both in terms of the physical space, as well as the abstract, social and everyday spaces of the city.

For this endeavour to be successful, such an institution must act both as catalyst and platform, ultimately being able to influence the diverse array of actors, from residents, spatial professionals, corporate interests as well as other parts of the state. A useful concept encompassing this wide range of tasks and competencies is *practical authority*, an ability to influence the behaviour of other actors, which was developed by Abers and Keck in their study of Brazilian water politics (Abers and Keck, 2013). As Hsu Yen-Hsing, URO's deputy Chief Engineer in charge of the operational side of the project explains, the question in the 1990s was whether to follow the example of cities like London and establish a large, semi-autonomous body such as a development corporation, or whether to incorporate redevelopment authority within the existing bureaucratic structure. The latter choice prevailed, leading to the elevation of the Office for Urban Planning to department status and the establishment of the URO within it. Initially, the review of other cities' solutions focused only on planning regulation, not organizational issues. It was not until the URO was established that the emphasis shifted from planning in the classic sense to 'thinking about institutions' (Hsu Yen-Hsing, URO Deputy Chief Engineer. Interview, April 30 2013). With this change came an openness to policy recommendations from the professional and academic circles, opening the way also to the establishment of an experimental programme such as the URS. The 'mission objective' of the URS demonstrates well the need to work between the formal demands of urban planning (which is an articulation of state-led, technocratic control) and the fluid processes of creative city redevelopment (which are typically led by dispersed, non-state actors):

*"Urban redevelopment requires a blue ocean strategy while facing the challenges of globalization, city competition and new economy. A catalyst or an innovative hub is essential in a rigid urban development framework to expand regeneration vision, which is termed as "urban regeneration station (URS)". URS is mission oriented, open-defined and society concerned regeneration strategy. URS is homonymic to "Yours" referring to yours, the public and free*

*and pre-defined subject and framework. URS is conceptually understood as a platform, a network or a movement. It is an urban peaceful revolution sparked by urban regeneration sectors. Each URS space is Named by its door number, URS function can be recognised as a workstation, community space, information hub, lounge for coterie, exhibition hall, experience action, shelter for city flâneur, as you define.”* (Urban Regeneration Office, Taipei City Urban Development Department, 2012: 4)

The URS programme is thus not a ‘hard’ regulatory or planning body able to impose by fiat its designs on the city’s creative and other communities; rather, it attempts to bridge the gap between the planning tools and practices of the state, and the changeable patchwork of interested actors participating in urban redevelopment, particularly in areas where the municipality is unable to enforce a comprehensive plan: while mega-projects such as the Songshan Cultural and Creative Park are cases of a closed state-led project, the URS is by design a participant in the field of state-society relations. Despite this objective however, the URS should not be seen merely as a passive platform where societal inputs freely shape urban planning policy and practice. The following sections show the city remains able to influence actors’ behaviour through a variety of means: from the selection of participants and distribution of funds, to the imposition of its own vision onto the framing of the programme as a whole, as well as deciding how it is included into the wider municipal efforts and endeavours.

### ***Urban Regeneration Stations at Dihua Street: creative preservation***

The project’s basic idea is ‘the revitalization of old and derelict buildings/sites’, but the URS sites can further be subdivided into those housed in public buildings and spread around Taipei, and those housed in private (or at least previously private) locations, most of which are on or around Dihua Street, an old commercial street which had been the subject of a protracted and sporadic effort of historic preservation that finally developed into Taipei’s most significant and complete historical preservation project through a combination of civil society and regulatory frameworks (cf. Huang, 2008). The URS thus deals both with other government departments (mainly the central Ministry of Finance which owns many previously state-owned enterprises’ properties), as well as smaller private property owners, and neither of these two partners are

guaranteed to have views which align with the wishes and plans of the Urban Regeneration Office. Dealing with other government bodies requires the URO to successfully frame the need for culture/creative-led regeneration of state-owned property, an approach discussed in the following subsection. Dealing with unresponsive private owners however was rather a matter of selecting a mechanism of compensation, the 'transfer of development rights' or TDR. The Transfer of Development Rights system has traditionally been understood as a way to use the land market to fund planning and avoid conflicts arising from traditional zoning practices. The idea behind the TDR is that the municipality may step in and 'swap' development rights in two areas of the city, that is to take the assumed value of a potential development from one site and 'credit' the beneficiary with development rights elsewhere; the municipality in a way acts as a 'central bank', being able to influence the value of development rights by withholding or selling them to developers. While criticised as cumbersome, inefficient and inequitable, TDR is increasingly used around the world, especially around historical preservation issues (cf. Pruetz, 1997; Johnston and Madison, 1997; Micelli, 2002; Watson, 2009).

Taipei's system was adapted from similar practice in the United States, but their approach to TDR hints at the intentions of the URO: by taking over historical houses in key locations along Dihua Street, the mechanism is used specifically to complement preservation efforts (seeing how simple zoning of conservation has often led to neglect of properties by owners) in a way which also provides content and opens the spaces to the general public; in fact, the one unchanging requirement of all URS sites is that they remain/become open to visitors. Additionally, another organisation, the Taipei Urban Redevelopment Center (TURC, which operates as a foundation, rather than a governmental body) has emerged from the URO in 2012, after the preparatory group of URO employees handed over the running of the centre to the foundation. The foundation was established through a government donation, meaning it operates as a nominally independent entity tasked with facilitating the work of the URO, especially when faced with resistance from property-owners who often view government agencies with suspicion. The TURC is not strictly committed to creative space production, yet it can be seen within the proliferating activity of the URO (and of the municipal state) in creating

government-organised NGOs to complement the regulatory tools available to the office.

The TDR is in Taipei's case used as a compensation formula able to 'remove' locals which do not want to become part of the city's vision for the area as a whole (or are unable to maintain and use their properties to the appropriate standard). In their place, the URO has set up three URS sites, one of which is run entirely by the city (URS44, which acts as a shop/visitor centre), while URS127 and URS155 are run by Tamkang University's Architecture Department and Campobag design studio, respectively. The street has been the focus of a preservation movement dedicated to preserving the formal architectural heritage of what in Taiwan is called 'baroque architecture', yet the URS programme added a specific content, one which aims to make the street a hub of a creative community - URS155 is a characteristic example, described as a "creative lifestyle base", where "creative workers share space and creativity" and "take inspiration from neighbouring streets by interacting closely with local residents and businesses" (Urban Regeneration Office, n.d.). All three locations are geared toward inducing a culture/creative led regeneration and present a corporative effort by the city and selected non-state participants; the reaction of the local residents is as yet unclear, talk of community notwithstanding. During field visits to the sites in question, the URS operated mainly in isolation from the many traditional medicine shops for which the street is famous. URO section chief Lin Yu-hsiu admitted URS127 was used by locals mainly as a shortcut to get from Dihua Street to Minle Street, though many have since taken to sit in the space and chat, taking that as a sign of moderate success. By acting as a landlord of sorts, the URO has been able to 'seed' small creative groups around Dihua Street, offering rent-free space in exchange for 'rebranding' the area with their presence and activities, countering the trend of an ageing population and waning commercial success of the street, which is fairly quiet apart from the period before Chinese New Year, when it hosts a popular bazaar attracting thousands of visitors. The youthful, creative shops introduced by the URO have thus complemented older efforts such as the Chinese New Year's Bazaar, which most visitors assume is a century-old tradition, although it actually dates to the 1990s. While the bazaar and the small design galleries and creative spaces seem worlds apart,

both belong to sustained place-making activity on part of the city and with the help of civil society groups. The emphasis has shifted from a detailed master-plan approach to creating a 'creative milieu', a concept introduced to Taiwan by Charles Landry (see following subsection), yet very importantly, the work remains within the bounds of municipal urban planning, wherein the role in selecting and managing creative spaces, previously played exclusively by civil society actors (such as in the case of Huashan's early period) or dedicated cultural government bodies (such as Treasure Hill Artist Village or Huashan nowadays) has also become the domain of urban redevelopment and planning. The planner, sitting at the core of the state's approach to urbanism, literally and figuratively descends onto the level of the street, attesting to the capacity of the Taiwanese state (be it municipal or local) to absorb and mimic the *ways of doing things* (i.e. the institutions and authority) from non-state actors.

***Charles Landry and the 'Creative Imperative' - legitimising role of global professional actors***

If the URO can rely on a mixture of regulatory incentives to guide the process of producing creative spaces on Dihua Street, it requires a different kind of authority vis-à-vis the various actors in the state hierarchy. Since the URO does not technically own any of the locations at which the URS programme is being rolled out, securing the cooperation of the state is crucial. A further complication is that while the URO is an office of the municipal state, many of the disused industrial facilities formerly owned by state-owned enterprises and monopolies (such as the tobacco or liquor monopolies) have reverted to central state ownership, meaning that the URO is separated by several degrees, both vertically and laterally, from the decision-makers it needs to address. The question it thus faces is finding ways to exert a professional or expert authority - ways which often rely on either creating narratives or successfully embedding itself within already existing ones. The creative city discourse, itself a wide and contested field of policy guidelines, consultancy reports and academic work, is one such narrative which the URO has successfully helped shape; a related if slightly less professional one is the competitiveness narrative, which has been resonating with Taiwanese elites as the island moves toward less intensive, more value-added ways of manufacturing - the latter being evident in the mixture of state guidance and private entrepreneurialism in the setting up of

Taiwan's high-tech sector (Lin, 2012; 2014; Mathews, 1997), which has often been understood as a sector closely related to Taiwan's creative and cultural industries.

Charles Landry, author of several volumes on the creative city who has previously acted as consultant to cities as far afield as Bilbao, Canberra, Ghent, Paris, Penang or Seville was hired by Taipei city at the behest of the URO and in the organisation of Bamboo Curtain Space (headed by Margaret Shiu of Huashan fame). Landry has since produced a series of reports, talks and workshops in Taipei in the run-up to the city's candidature to become the World Design Capital in 2016, adding a legitimising cache to both the 'creative' and 'competitive' narratives within which the URO's work largely rests. Seen as a globally-known expert, Landry has been very warmly received by city and national officials eager to participate in a photo-opportunity with the visiting 'Godfather of the creative city' (創意城市的教父), or as Margaret Shiu put it, *'...they really want to use him for political purposes, show that they have sought the advice of the Godfather of the Creative City, but they never really apply his concept fully...'* (Interview with Margaret Shiu, 16 May 2013). Adding to this a candid remark by a city official admitting they would perhaps have preferred Richard Florida, who's 'more famous' but turned out to be too expensive, it becomes apparent that Landry's role in Taipei is not solely to produce reports and recommendations, but rather to add a patina of respectability to already existing policies. Nevertheless, active groups within the city bureaucracy, such as the URO, can also use such exogenous legitimacy to bolster their authority within the larger bureaucratic apparatus, as the publishing of Landry's report has shown. Landry's work, centred around a creative index mixing both exhortations towards competitiveness (as any index inherently does) and advice on how to create creative cities, culminated in the publishing of *Talented Taipei & Creative Imperative*, a 2012 publication commissioned by the URO (Landry, 2012), in which Landry sets out a case for a creative Taipei able to mobilise its talents through changes which are both administrative and regulatory, as well as grassroots-based and organic. The methodology in producing the index is essentially a compilation of the responses of four questionnaire groups: private and community stake-holders; younger professionals and officials; senior officials, and Charles Landry

himself. The exact numbers which a report of this nature produces gives weight to the recommendations Landry later gives, mainly to do with the lack of a 'creative bureaucracy' in Taipei, as well as the need to create platforms promoting creative growth, explicitly mentioning the URO and its potential role in this:

*"Identifying catalytic projects is vital to help generate critical mass and visibility. Here, the role of URO can be important. Developing a series of creative hotspots as part of a creative quarter strategy can change perceptions of Taipei and the mood of the city and help provide a focal point."* (Landry, 2012: 87)

Indeed, since work on the report began, the URO has, through its URS project constructed such as platform, complete with its own strategy, community-outreach programmes and a host of publications aimed at creating a virtual space where a creative city can be produced in Taipei. With its strong links to Taipei's arts and culture community, the URO has become an advocate of their interests within the city bureaucracy, while simultaneously integrating their professional authority into the municipal state's capacity to organise and manage urban space in line with globally transmitted ideas about the creative city, creative economy and ultimately, the 'creative class' as Florida (2002) called it. With the selection of Taipei as the 2016 World Design Capital, such activities seem to have been vindicated, though the URO is set to continue wrangling with more sceptical parts of civil society, which regard the URS programme as little more than a neoliberal programme gentrification or at best, 'just talk' (Marco Casagrande, personal communication, March 18 2014). More perilous perhaps is the URO's influence regarding the central state, as at least one of the URS locations is set for closure amid a sell-off of state assets, showing not all parts of the state apparatus are as convinced about the fiscal feasibility of creative spaces. The URS21, the largest of all the locations and run by the JFAA foundation is as of this March the site of an increasingly pitted disagreement between the city and the central state's Ministry of Finance, in which Su Yaohua, the national Minister of Culture has also cautiously pitched in in an interview conducted by *Village Taipei*, the URO's own online magazine. Whatever the fate of this particular site may be (speculation abounds, from imminent demolition, preservation until the 2016 WDC, etc.), the URS continues to produce not only physical space but shapes an abstract idea

about Taipei as a creative city, namely through talks, workshops, brochures, as well as *Village Taipei*, which acts as an events guide, opinion forum and, as was seen in the recent interviews and articles surrounding URS21, an advocate for the URO's work and projects.

### ***Village Taipei - spreading the narrative of the creative city***

The last subsection looks more closely at the publicist and discursive work of the URO, which is understood as an important part of the process of institutionalising the production of creative spaces in Taipei by the municipal state and relevant societal actors. The basic concept of the publication, the *village*, suggests a relation stretching back to the village of Treasure Hill, the village of Taiwan's pre-modern past, as well as other village-themed events in Taipei such as the MVRDV 'Vertical Village' exhibition held at URS21 - the village is of course also a crucial concept in creative city discourse, positing the organic, human-sized structure of the village over a the master-planned, dehumanising city of Le Corbusier.

Village Taipei (臺北村落之聲 or "Taipei Village Voice" in the original) has, since 2010, also published a yearly 'book' alongside the current information published on its website, with the yearly book presenting a compilation of articles on creative industries, heritage preservation, opinion pieces by domestic and global planning specialists, as well as some lighter content highlighting the year's most successful projects. If the yearly booklet is aimed at the professional audience of architects, planners and academics, the monthly newsletter and website are aimed at all the residents and visitors of Taipei. Although operating as an independent section within the URO, Village Taipei has in essence become an urban magazine/publication in its own right, one that is consistently dedicated to promoting Taipei not only as a creative city, but a city where its citizens can and should also become creative themselves. The perspective of a government-run publication is especially instructive in the assumption that it's audience are both *readers* and *citizens*, simultaneously presenting themselves as the hard, modernist subject of state rule and the softer, neoliberal consumer. In organizing photographic exhibitions

for example, when Village Taipei asks reader-citizens to take lomography<sup>12</sup> photos of old Taipei (the newsletter is also sponsored by Polaroid), or to submit their walking itineraries and ideas for urban strolls, it is with a curious mixture of an instructive state and an entrepreneurial magazine that this audience is addressed. The content emphasising leisure-time activities (workshops for children, seminars, exhibitions, guided tours, etc.) seems geared towards the younger generation of citizens eager to explore the city beyond the air-conditioned halls of Xinyi's shopping malls, while at the same time using the raw authenticity of West Taipei as the material from which this leisure activity is constructed.

Here, insights from the anthropology of tourism (Urry and Larsen, 2011) as well as critical urban geography (Zukin, 2010) are useful analytical approaches to understand the 'authenticating' activities of Village Taipei both as local place-making strategies hinging on culture-led regeneration, as well as a part of a Taiwan-wide vogue for 'heritage nostalgia' and the appropriation of vernacular history for commercial use (cf. Wang 2013 on similar processes underway in Bopiliao, another neighbourhood redeveloped/preserved in part with the URO's involvement). A walking suggestion along Dihua street, where the largest cluster of URS locations is to be found, incorporates small print-shops reproducing 1920s postcards, a vintage arts and crafts shop, an art gallery, a shop selling Japanese-era merchandise as well as a handful of traditional workshops and medicine stores. Another tour focuses on ageing shop-signs, yet another on a veterans' village. While non-locals may conceivably be interested in such tours, the "creative streets" promoted through the URO's official publication are aimed at local tourists or shoppers. The streets remain living neighbourhoods where the city's different inhabitants coexist, but the sense of direction is clear from the municipal side: complementing traditional content with culture-creative one has been adopted as a reliable approach and one in which the municipality has successfully involved artists, spatial professionals, corporate foundations, younger citizens and to some extent

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<sup>12</sup> Although lomography or 'lomo' originally refers to photographs taken with an analogue lomographic camera, the nostalgic aesthetic of saturated colours and square formatting of photos has since spread to social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or Weibo. Criticised widely for producing instant nostalgia and confected authenticity, the popularity of the medium nevertheless persists.

marginal groups such as the elderly. Beyond thinking merely about the *content* of the URS sites, they show the extent to which Taipei's municipal state is socialised, i.e. able to insert itself in *and* be influenced by street-level activities. The underlying beliefs of creative city theory on how to stimulate (or produce) creative spaces traditionally separate between consumption and production oriented stimuli, yet the municipal planning bodies (and especially the URO) seem to be addressing both by providing the infrastructure (with experience stemming from previous economic development models) as well as the lifestyle and amenities which the 'creative class' is said to be attracted. Using a hybrid of Florida's creative class approach and an industrial policy approach, the city is both a facilitator and instigator in defining the field within which the process of urban redevelopment is to take place. The production of an abstract space by publications such as Village Taipei is as critical as the construction of the physical space of the city when both are done by an institution which spans industrial policy and entrepreneurial drive, creative force and preservation, business and society, all the while remaining part of the municipal bureaucracy.

## **4.5 Conclusion: Corporative space production in a post-developmental city**

To call the mode of spatial production in Taipei 'corporatist' first of all requires a return to the proposition made at the beginning of the chapter: that the municipal state is able to organise and arrange societal and business actors in a cohesive way and to a pre-defined purpose, in this case the production of so-called creative spaces. The preceding chapters have shown that the institutionalising tendency in urban space production in Taipei is precisely such a corporatist effort, though one in which state-organised institutions are just as permeable to the input of societal and business groups as the latter are susceptible to the prestige and safety of working within a state-led framework. Reacting to pressures for social equity, historical preservation, and a greater role for culture and creative sectors, the city turned to several key groups (preservation societies such as the OURs, social enterprises such as TsuiMama, or corporate foundations such as the JFAA) to design the institutions tasked with addressing what is understood here as culture-led urban regeneration. While several projects were ultimately brought back under municipal control or outsourced to selected operators, the general trend has been to construct practices/institutions spanning state and non-state sectors.

The results must however be seen within the chosen area of research: small-scale urban interventions at the intersection of heritage preservation, creative city discourse, civil society formation and the debate about Taiwanese identity, all areas where the interaction of state and society in space is complicated by the role of professional gate-keepers, expert communities and radical activists; the caution here would be against inferring from this field a total model of the (municipal) state. Nevertheless, two decades of democratization coupled with an increasingly adaptive local state, as well as a strong and socially active business sector, have produced a corporative approach to the production of creative spaces in Taipei. This type of creative space production can first be seen at Treasure Hill, where the state (in the guise of the Cultural Bureau) steps into a contested field to impose a social and spatial restructuring; supported by the epistemic community of experts, the site is legitimised not only through

local imaginaries (Taiwanese identity, nostalgia for village life etc.), but is coupled into a wider creative city discourse emphasising the valorisation of space. Other marginal spaces soon follow in the pattern wherein activist groups (largely made up of artists, architects and students) are able to force the issue onto the wider stage, but are ultimately unable to manage the space without the intervention of the state - municipal or national. While this is a source of disappointment to many participants, others have equally accepted the impossibility of running a completely autonomous space in central Taipei, as was the case with Huashan. The influence of such actors must however not be under-estimated; the struggles over public spaces in the 1990s have enabled them to eke out a space in the political arena, with some even joining professional politics, while others remain influential members of committees setting selection criteria and formalising the mode of reproducing creative spaces around the city. The inclusion of the private sector further points at a convergence in practice between all three actors to the point where a municipal government body publishes an opinion magazine for spatial professionals and a lifestyle newsletter for the 'creatives' of Taipei, while private foundations run urban redevelopment projects beyond the narrow interest of pushing up real-estate values.

As for the evaluation of the resulting space, Treasure Hill again provides a cautionary tale. A closed and early case, I argue that the inclusion of the village into the city's formal cultural frame has meant this former welfare and social justice issue is now subject to the same expectations and performance benchmarks as most cultural institutions in the city - 'value for money'. It was not exposed to the dictate of the real-estate or art market, it was exposed rather to a market logic which had already been integrated into the municipal administration and the spatial professionals, both of which saw in Treasure Hill an opportunity to develop Taipei's creative competitiveness. The village, though originating from a place- and time-specific arrangement, has served as a template and precedent for several later municipal endeavours (though none were as large), as well as a negative example for advocacy groups opposing relocation and demolition activities elsewhere (though they ironically often use Treasure Hill to hold their events and meetings). As this arrangement continues, the original inhabitants of the area are faced with a persistent doubt

surrounding their residency rights; their presence, hitherto a source of 'creativity' for the artist community, is being replaced by a more calculable resource aimed at local tourists, problematizing the use of creative-cultural approaches to solve issues of social justice or to markedly improve the lives of slum-dwellers or other marginalised groups. Equally, the URS programme may yet fail to reach its lofty objective of preserving historical spaces, stoking creativity and involving the community, with the largest URS site currently scheduled to close in the before the end of 2014, while the cluster at Dihua street is looking increasingly more like a place-making exercise aimed at nostalgia tourism.

In the absence of a clear definition both of what 'creativity' and 'community' mean, these terms present a tempting target for inclusion into the argot of not only the planning profession, but into political speech as well. This may be especially true in Taiwan, where the politics of identity have become absorbed into a political discourse on Taiwan(-eseness), meaning culture carries considerable cache on both sides of the political divide; if Treasure Hill is cultural preservation led by a Guomintang administration, so the cases in Kaohsiung point at the DPP's equally enthusiastic use of culture-creative narratives in pushing through project of city beautification and redevelopment. While evaluating the projects' success on their own merits is instrumental in developing tools of urban regeneration which transcend the issues often associated with culture-led schemes (authenticity erosion, gentrification, the extremes of elite and popular taste), the cases were analysed here from the standpoint of how and why creative space policies present variations across the selected cities; in the case of Taipei, the prevailing trend of a corporatist approach attests to the resilience of developmental approaches to social, economic and spatial questions while confirming the role of civil society actors in the institutionalization of this approach.

# Chapter Five: Normative Creative Space in Deindustrialising Kaohsiung

## 5.1 Introduction: Art, beautification and conflict in a port city

*“A yellow duckling hailing from overseas has generated a lot of concern recently, but I am naturally not talking about the H7N9 avian flu against which Taiwan is currently preparing itself. Rather, everyone is very interested in whether the “Rubber Duck”, designed by famous Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman and currently in Hong Kong harbour, will come to Taiwan or even Kaohsiung itself for all of you to see. Listening to all the news and rumours pointing at numerous possibilities, I know that everyone has very high expectations and the relevant city bureaus are also evaluating the proposals. Whatever helps the promotion of Kaohsiung and its tourist industry, we agree to take into serious consideration and will actively discuss the proposals sent in a flood of letters addressed to Huama [the Mayor’s nickname]. Huama understands everyone’s expectations and needs some time for both sides to come in contact and conclude the evaluation [of the proposal], while thanking everyone for their proposals! Kaohsiung is changing more and more because of your participation!”*

(Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu’s message on Facebook, 10 May 2013)

Only a decade or two ago, it would have hardly been imaginable to hear the mayor of Taiwan’s second city personally expressing interest in a giant rubber duck, an artwork by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, which has been sailing

around the world since 2007. Mayor Chen Chu was not alone in her interest for floating fowl; representatives of New Taipei City, Keelung and Beijing also expressed their intention to host the duck, and the inflatable installation has now indeed been hosted by these cities as well. The Mayor's own message on the social network Facebook earned her two or three times more 'shares' and 'likes' than her pronouncements usually do, which might serve at least as a broad indicator of the interests of a significant part of her city's population. The motivation seems clear enough, as media attention focusing on the art installation brings with it the promise of tourist revenue and international recognition, both sought-after results for leaders of less known cities attempting to re-brand their city's image and reshape their urban fabric and rhythm. Art, and in a wider sense culture, far from being an add-on, an afterthought, or a matter for knowing elites, is increasingly becoming a central idea in urban planning in Kaohsiung. Aside from the its nominal role in adding value to projects large and small, it has become relevant in questions of preservation, demolition, and re-use of older neighbourhoods in the city. In doing so, it is fundamentally re-evaluating the ways in which urban space is produced, by whom, and to what purpose. The present chapter will evaluate three recent examples of significant incursion into an old urban area with three different outcomes: the demolition of a mile-long tract of 'Hardware Street' to create a new urban park, the culture-led regeneration around Pier-2 Art Zone, and the failed demolition of a block of historical housing intended to produce a parking lot, which resulted in community-led urban regeneration. Focusing specifically on the role of art, artists, creative-cultural workers and culture in urban space production, these three cases are set both within a larger global context of culture-led redevelopment, as well a narrative of city rebranding specific to Kaohsiung.

The emphasis on creativity, art and culture as a crucial component of successful post-industrial city transformations often conjures up images of Bilbao, with Kaohsiung's planning and policy-setting actors being no exception in their praise for the Basque port, and mayor Chen Chu visiting the city on 19 April 2013 with the expressed purpose of studying its urban renewal policies, reiterating once more that Bilbao serves as a model for Kaohsiung. (Kaohsiung City Government Information Bureau, 23 May 2013). Not only confined to high-

level exchanges, Bilbao was often cited by interviewees from different municipal bodies as the example that Kaohsiung is actively following. To a certain extent, one can understand their enthusiasm based on the similarities between the two cities: both being relatively small, de-industrializing ports, Bilbao, and its shiny Guggenheim gallery, are therefore seen (and often misinterpreted) as the perfect blueprint for a successful urban transformation, forgetting that the construction of the Guggenheim was preceded by a decade-long process of deindustrialization, heavy government and EU convergence fund investment, as well as specific institutional arrangements in the city itself (Ponzini, 2010). The Guggenheim is better seen as a culmination of a long process, rather than its instigator or even precondition. However, the increasing currency that the narrative of the 'Bilbao Effect' holds, as well as the drive towards service-sector or especially creative industries, continue to make a high-profile cultural turn an appealing set of solutions for policy-makers in lacklustre cities. In Taiwan, the most obvious attempt to replicate this perceived effect was in Taichung, where another star architect, Zaha Hadid, was commissioned to construct a new Guggenheim museum in the city; although the project was dropped in the end, Taichung is continuing with its policy of becoming a cultural city, and similar smaller investments are going ahead in other major Taiwanese cities. Kaohsiung hosts the largest of such projects at the time of writing, the Wei-Wu-Ying Center for the Arts, designed by a boutique Dutch architecture firm and valued at around 300 million USD (Preparatory Office for the Wei-Wu-Ying Center for the Arts, 2012). The role Bilbao plays in many cases is not only as an example to follow in terms of policy exchange, but as a *successful* example validating already negotiated and planned decisions; the visit by Kaohsiung's mayor to Bilbao comes years after the \$1 billion USD project of developing a new cultural area in Kaohsiung had already been agreed upon; the putative 'lessons' which the mayor talked about on her visit had, to a large extent, already been integrated into Kaohsiung's overall development plan as a blueprint of a de-industrializing port city. The drive towards culture-led regeneration, the emphasis on large infrastructural projects, the rebranding efforts, all of these can be traced to neoliberal urban transformations of the 1980s and 1990s, which combined heavy state investment with business-friendly urban reform, within which the discourse of the creative city can also be located. Kaohsiung has embarked on

a process of urban transformation guided by the experiences of neoliberal urban planning, including the contradiction between massive state involvement on one side and the exhortation of entrepreneurialism on the other; the goal of such as transformation of urban space is no less than to change the lived, daily space of the city through the manipulation of demographic trends, the allocation of space to certain groups and communities over others, and the establishment of a better environment for the preferred, ideal new citizen.

Kaohsiung's own process of de-industrialisation, though painful for those who may lose employment, is often portrayed as an opportunity for the city to live a greener and more pleasant life in line with the modern neoliberal tendency to frame social changes in entrepreneurial terms. Certainly, Kaohsiung's image as one of Taiwan's most polluted cities has changed for the better in recent years. The government (both central and municipal), answering to an increasingly vocal and now enfranchised population (Hsiao, 1999; Kim, 2000) has been trying to ameliorate the worst excesses of Taiwan's rapid development with a raft of large infrastructural projects, as well as 'city-beautiful' initiatives. In Kaohsiung's case, these culminated in the cleaning up of Kaohsiung's main waterway, the Love River (the cleaning up also included a strong marketing campaign to promote the name Love River, originally a Japanese-built transport canal, who only got the romantic name after a boat rental company bearing the name Love River, as well as a spate of lovers' double-suicides which got national coverage at the time), as well as the construction of a metropolitan rail system and several new parks, though the largest, Metropolitan Park, is both remote and built atop a disused landfill. Apart from 'turf and trees' projects, at the level of the city authorities' communication with its citizens, certain telling keywords such as 'green', 'creativity', 'diversity', 'lifestyle', 'culture' and most importantly, 'community' entered the vocabulary. While the notion of community had been present in the Taiwanese political discourse on culture at least since Lee Teng-hui's notion of 'one community' as a model for the Taiwanese nation, these national-level efforts aimed at creating a new Taiwanese identity fell short of a new way of governance, especially in terms of physical interventions, with many headline policies and projects scrapped after elections, as was the case in 2004 (Chang, 2006). Taken within the context of urban planning however, these point towards a

distinct way of governing, where the political authority no longer addresses a monolithic society, but rather a web of communities and individuals which may or may not share the municipality's vision for Kaohsiung as a sustainable, maritime, green city of culture. It is therefore within the municipality's way of exerting power within the micro-locales of a deindustrialising city that we can observe an approach to producing creative space that is *normative* in its adherence to a paternalistic idea of changing the citizen to fit an idea, i.e. the abstract space of the planned city.

While headline projects occupy the media limelight and preoccupy politicians' ambitions, Kaohsiung's 'cultural turn' is, much like Bilbao's, a complex, slow and on-going process of changing attitudes, evolving institutional arrangements and most importantly, new ways of governance. It implies a transformation of the city and its citizens; a transition from drab industrial port to Taiwan's second city and maritime capital, which requires not only the hard infrastructure of concert halls, museums and galleries, but crucially, an audience to fill them. It is a policy that is both a result of a post-modernist consensus on the consequences of globalisation and the need to catch the tertiary sector train, as much as it is heir to high-modernist notions of shaping the citizen through the physical and 'spiritual' environment. Within this contradiction lie the particular ways in which the question of urban regeneration and deindustrialisation has become an issue of culture, of the role of art, and of the city's identity and future. Perhaps the most salient characteristic present in Kaohsiung is the normative nature of the municipal project of building a creative city; while communities are indeed addressed, they are also being *created* by the city through a raft of projects and initiatives outlined in the continuation of this chapter. Some are brutish and direct, such as the demolition of a traditional metalworking community and its replacement with an art-themed park. Others, such as the Asia New Harbour project, are large infrastructural projects modelled on public-private partnerships such as the Bilbao Guggenheim, the redevelopment of the London Docklands or the substantial investment into Northern England's cultural infrastructure and industry (cf. Minton, 2012; Jayne, 2004). All however carry within them a fundamental belief in the economic and cultural viability of 'creativity' which, treated as a resource, can be grown out of a designated cultural base and then

branded and exported. Herein lies the reason for the selection of Kaohsiung as a key case study: being a relatively new city, devoid either of the traditional Fujianese culture of Tainan or the émigré culture of Taipei, Kaohsiung has long suffered a perceived lack of 'culture'. This notion is naturally itself a normative statement that ignores the rich vernacular traditions of a working class port city, preferring instead to leap from such humble beginnings to a vision of a cosmopolitan cultural and economic centre for Taiwan's south, as well as a regionally relevant creative harbour. Needless to say, this view is in many ways counter-intuitive to the notions of creativity, which carry within them a expectation of spontaneity and organic association, yet the municipality has, through the Pier-2 Art Center, embarked on emulating precisely such spontaneity, raising the question of how an operationalization of creativity without significant input from the 'creatives' is possible and what underpins it. Lastly, the case of Hamasen's self-organised heritage protection group shows there exists of late an alternative seeing of Kaohsiung's cultural worth, one which simultaneously exposes the shallowness of the municipal vision as well as the potential for real community-led production of creative space by exploiting the narrative of redevelopment by culture used by the city.

## 5.2 The origins and formation of Kaohsiung's 'Cultural Turn'

With heavy industry and manufacturing increasingly moving to China, Kaohsiung had by the late 90s reached a developmental dilemma similar to one North America and Europe had seen a decade or two earlier. Not surprisingly, many policies aimed at combatting urban blight and reversing the city's fortune are also similar, although their origin cannot be understood outside of the local context of Kaohsiung's reputation as a 'cultural desert' and the party-political opposition between north and south Taiwan, which saw the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) consistently seeking to reinforce it vis-à-vis Taipei. Though Kaohsiung's last appointed and first elected mayor, Wu Den-yih, introduced a host of policies aimed at reversing the city's environmental and cultural degradation, a permanent turn in Kaohsiung's developmental trajectory was achieved with Frank Hsieh's term in office as mayor. The city's first DPP mayor, Hsieh ran on a platform of five pre-election promises, which included a commitment to improving Kaohsiung's cultural standing (Wang, 2006). His term also coincided with the DPP's first national government, which looked favourably on major infrastructural projects in its southern bastion, such as the Kaohsiung Mass Rapid Transport system, allowing him to access resources unavailable to his predecessor. Indeed, the party-political background is a powerful source of policy thrust in Kaohsiung, as well as a complicating factor for planners. Kaohsiung is a policy laboratory for the DPP, as well as its retreat after losing national power in 2008; current mayor Chen Chu is one of the more powerful elected officials in the country and certainly within the DPP. This party-political component to Kaohsiung's cultural turn is marked predominately by identity politics and a (unilateral) one-upmanship with Taipei. The need to compete not only with an abstract 'global environment', but rather a very present brain-drain to Taiwan's wealthier north were often cited by respondents as important factors in their motivations to improve Kaohsiung's urban environment, which is often perceived as drab, lacking activities, or too 'working class' for young urban professionals, even two decades after the city began to improve its urban living environment.

The party-political pressures can also account for Kaohsiung's emphasis on large, politically expedient, demand-side projects constructed using the build-operate-transfer (BOT) formula: athletic arenas, the Kaohsiung mass rapid transit (KMRT) system, large outdoor public spaces, bike lanes and city-bike rental stations, waterfront promenades and cultural centres offering a range of (popular) cultural content have all been constructed in Kaohsiung in recent years, with the bulk of construction still scheduled for completion in the next few years as the various projects comprising the 'Kaohsiung 2014' plan break ground. In urban planning terms, the city's main spatial policy is the so-called 'joining of port and city' (市, 港合一 Shì, gǎng hé yī), which has seen the city take control of the Port Authority and the transferal of large tracts of brownfield waterfront sites under municipal control - a fact of great relevance to the development of creative urban spaces in a city where the port was administered under a separate provincial administration in an exercise of bureaucratic inefficiency and departmental conflict, all of which reflected itself very visibly in Kaohsiung's cityscape (Williams, 2003). The institutional underpinnings and the flow of power, enabling Kaohsiung's cultural turn and the implementation of creative city policies associated with it, are based on a centralisation and expansion of the municipality's competences; this contrasts with the case of Taipei (where the city government has engaged in a corporative approach of engaging non-state bodies and devolving its responsibilities to newly-created quasi-NGOs), as well as the instances analysed in China, where creative city policies are propagated by a wide array of independent actors that are often in competition or even conflict with each other.

The centralisation of power and expansion of the city's ambition has meant that although larger projects are funded nationally, the municipality has in recent years taken on unprecedented levels of debt, reaching \$7.5 billion USD or almost double the city's annual budget in 2011 (Kaohsiung City Government Bureau of Finance, 2012). Additionally, a spate of allegations regarding mismanagement of public funds and unsuccessful BOT partnerships (such as in the case of the KMRT) can be taken as a context against which to evaluate the city's recent shift towards lower-cost, high-impact cultural and urban renewal projects, such as festivals, smaller culture-led regeneration such as

the 2001 “Urban Light” project or the Pier-2 area, lobbying for national celebrations to be held in Kaohsiung (such as National Day fireworks), as well as inviting famous international stars such as Jose Carreras to perform in the city. While large infrastructural projects are set to continue with funding earmarked by the central government, the municipality has increasingly turned towards a policy of generating cultural demand by providing both capacity as well as content amid a generally weak (or even non-existent) art and cultural market in the private sphere. In such circumstances, it is not therefore surprising to detect a normative, almost didactic approach in the production of creative spaces, which need both the physical infrastructure and the content provided by ‘creative citizens’ – be they producers or consumers.

Although such a market-economical view accounts for the mechanics of managing supply and demand, it cannot account for the motivation behind it. A closer look at city-generated ‘content’ will serve better, starting with the way in which public art has come into the city planners’ and politicians’ view. While Kaohsiung and other Taiwanese cities, especially Taipei, have established key cultural institutions such as galleries or museums in the period preceding the cultural turn, these were for the most part enclaves of elite or educational culture, and their effect on the surrounding urban space was minimal, if felt at all. Similarly, municipal authorities did not even have a dedicated cultural bureau<sup>1</sup>, relying instead on the central Ministry of Culture or the autonomous cultural institutions. As such, Kaohsiung lacked not only the capacity, but also an awareness of the added value of culture. It was not until the central government, following years of fierce debate in the artistic community (Ni, 1997), promulgated the Regulations for the Sponsorship of Art and Culture (1992), in which the use of art and cultural value in public projects is mandated by way of commissioning public art at a value of at least 1% of the investment’s total worth. While this was often seen as an afterthought, especially in the first decade, every public investment suddenly required substantial spending on works of art, which in turn needed to be selected and their selection justified, precipitating thus the establishment of both ad-hoc and permanent committees, as well as private consultants and agents which would

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<sup>1</sup> Taipei was first in 1999, Kaohsiung followed in 2003; the latter had formally established a bureau in 1995, but started operating *de facto* only in 2003.

offer lists of worthy artists to the responsible departments or other government bodies. Apart from establishing a thriving market for commissioning works of art (which mainly benefitted established, traditional artists), public art evolved from an expense enforced by the central state to an opportunity for local politicians to impress their (or their party's) stamp on the physical environment through the selection of *appropriate* pieces of art<sup>2</sup>. While examples in Kaohsiung are numerous, from large and small sculptures, complicated water-installations and murals, many of the works tend to deal with local identity issues of Kaohsiung, especially its industrial and maritime heritage. An illustration of this thematic tendency is one of Kaohsiung's largest infrastructural projects, the KMRT, which boasts the world's largest stained glass dome at its central Formosa Boulevard (美麗島站 Měilidǎo zhàn) interchange station, at an estimated cost of over \$2.5 million (Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Corporation, 2012). The political decisions involved in choosing both the station's name, as well as the artwork (meant to symbolise the birth of Taiwanese democracy), fall squarely within the mayoral mandates of the DPP and also coincide with the DPP's rise to national power between 2000 and 2008.

If the so-called '1% for Taiwanese Art' law affected attitudes among the professional and political producers of urban space, changing the previously casual and hand-off approach to culture and bringing art to the very core of policy-making, it also helped form a new counterpart for the municipal authorities, the 'art and cultural community'. Self-organization by 'cultural workers' in Kaohsiung started in the 1980s with various initiatives such as the still privately controlled Sin Pin Pier gallery and the associations for the regeneration of the Pier-2 art area and Qiaotou sugar refinery, both of which are now under municipal control. The foundation of the city's creative community lies in the post-martial law proliferation of civil society groupings characteristic of all of Taiwan, while also coinciding with the 'localisation'

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<sup>2</sup> Available artwork is most commonly advertised through a 'market price index' in the back pages of "Artist Magazine", listing the author, their age, the work's medium, price, and place of first exhibition. According to a local curator, these serve as an important source from which public art is selected, especially in minor projects, or when a quota has to be met last minute. (Interview with Yang Yao-jun, curator at SPP Absolutely Art Space gallery, 9 Nov 2012).

(Běntǔ huà 本土化) movement, devolving in a sense both political power as well as cultural clout to provincial cities such as Kaohsiung. Although local artists and activists have established some successful and lasting spaces (most notably the SPP gallery, the Baiwu (White House) gallery at Qiaotou Sugar Refinery, as well as the Dogpig Café), the present research focuses on instances of state-society intersections, i.e. those spaces which have seen substantial state involvement and remain under direct municipal control. Of the ones mentioned above, only Qiaotou Sugar Refinery's Baiwu comes close to the criteria; while I have spent substantial time at the space as a resident researcher, the decision to exclude that site from the selection of cases is a consequence of the remoteness and isolation of the space, both in terms of its geographic location as well as its management – while interesting in terms of local heritage preservation issues, the Qiaotou Sugar Refinery remains a landmark in itself with limited influence on the surrounding peri-urban landscape.

The newly democratising Taiwanese society was left facing questions of identity, as well having as new opportunities for association and political action. One area of contention stemming from the intersection of these two new conditions was historical preservation, an issue where the artist and creative community became involved relatively early. Historical preservation was initially concerned with outstanding examples of cultural and historical heritage, remaining antiquarian in nature and without reach into wider urban space; only when questions of identity, memory and community surfaced, did it take on a wider appeal, particularly in the rapidly changing city centres such as Danshui (Lu, 2002), or certain areas in Taipei (Kuo, 2010). Additionally, the withdrawal of industry from central urban areas provided a new dimension, as disused brownfield sites and decaying relics of Taiwan's old industries suddenly opened up large tracts of land, sometimes in very desirable areas. Being neither strictly cultural relics, nor bearers of a rural identity like many preserved farmhouses, the old industrial places of work were not initially seen to have any value past the land they occupied and would have been demolished without the interventions of squatting groups of artists, the most well-known case of which is the Huashan Distillery (now the Huashan 1914 Creative Park) in Taipei. Kaohsiung's industrial heritage sites were mainly

connected to the sugar industry and are as such were divided into suburban plants and refineries, extensive transport infrastructure, as well as port-side warehouses and other buildings, meaning most of the premier industrial sites such as the Qiaotou sugar refinery or the warehouses in Kaohsiung's old port were owned by the state sugar monopoly, Taisugar. This in no small part helped the artists' interventions aimed at converting them into cultural heritage sites, as the company proved open to a reuse which would also preserve Taiwan's history of sugar production, especially as the plant celebrated its centenary (Jiang Yaoxian, Head of Baiwu Art Gallery at Qiaotou; interview, 23 November 2012). Starting with the refinery area from 1994 onwards, and continuing downtown after 2000 with the efforts to regenerate the Pier-2 area, small, organised groups of artists and other cultural workers trod paths ranging from conflict with city authorities (as was the case with at the sugar refinery, where Jiang Yaoxian went as far as occupying trees within the refinery grounds to prevent their removal by the city, gaining national media coverage as one of Taiwan's first tree-sitting incidents), to gradual acceptance of their ideas, as was the case in Pier-2, which has since become a feather in the city's cultural cap and a regular stop on visiting officials' tours since 2007. Whatever the specific case by case outcome (there are many failures too, with isolated or smaller historical buildings being demolished regularly), the artist community made its debut in the field of urban planning, partly out of an interest in aesthetics, a need for studio space, a wish to preserve local or national identity, but ended up also as the 'designated experts' on culture-led regeneration, sporadically invited by municipal authorities keen to rebrand their city. Unlike their counterparts in Taipei however, this early push had not led to a lasting cooperation with the city, but resulted instead in the city taking most of the locations over and integrating them to a far more ambitious and globalised vision of Kaohsiung as a creative harbour. Again, perhaps the only exception is the Baiwu gallery, isolated as it is from the fray by its almost suburban location in the disused sugar refinery.

Apart from strictly political considerations, the case of the Kaohsiung Container Art Biennale illustrates well the underlying mentality, as well as the tools and organisation of the city's early cultural turn, that is the municipalities interpretation of what the cultural turn could and should mean for the city.

Started in 2001, the festival attempted to fuse Kaohsiung's maritime heritage with the nascent artistic and creative spirit that the municipality was trying to encourage in the city. Centred around the re-use of shipping containers as the name suggests, the festival sets biannual themes and regularly features around 20-30 participating artists from Taiwan and abroad. The very first festival, themed simply as "101 Approaches to Containers", produced works on cargo shipping, contraband, human trafficking and other unsavoury topics, so subsequent festivals have had their themes set more precisely and have in recent years included 'Gamebox: Containers of Childhood Memory' in 2005, 'Sustainable Cosmopolis' in 2007, 'Ideas for an Ideal City' in 2009, 'Arbitat' in 2011 and finally 'The Inhabitables' in 2013. The tendency towards themes of living, inhabiting and thinking about the city and its space is relevant considering the festival is organised by the city's Cultural Affairs Bureau in cooperation with the city's Museum of Fine Arts and Urban Development Bureau, making it wholly a part of municipal cultural and spatial policy and one of the first hybrid, cross-departmental efforts sitting squarely within the canon of creative city policies. By choosing containers as the main underlying theme of the festival, the organisers are providing an example of building a cultural event on the city's longstanding policy of merging port and city, as well as using it to introduce vogueish concepts characteristic of post-industrial thinking, underlining the importance of aesthetics, individual creativity and responsibility to the community:

*"Each work of container bears witness to the role of shipping in the advance of civilisation in Kaohsiung over the most recent decade. Thanks to the artists' versatile talents, each empty container is transformed from nothing to something, and the rust-filled, warped waste containers are neatened up and reused as unimaginably creative art. Apart from promoting the real environmental benefit of recycling, the use of scrap cargo containers as an artistic medium also invokes an even more important idea: That people can pursue spiritual fulfilment even in real, everyday life." (Kaohsiung International Container Art Festival, 2009)*

As the festival moves increasingly towards its new role as a tourist, carnival-like event, involving larger numbers of visitors, questions about the intended

outcome become increasingly relevant. As the number of festivals world-wide increases exponentially, cities have come to rely on festivals as a simple solution to urban blight and image-making, resulting in efforts of varying quality (Quinn, 2005). The festival in Kaohsiung is at least a success in becoming a regular and popular occurrence in Kaohsiung's cultural calendar, this being all the more reason to underline its normative message: aimed at the citizens, it is an exercise in public art appreciation and closely tied to municipal policy-speak on sustainability, creativity, the virtues of recycling and the value of culture in society. Viewed from this perspective, the festival is also a novel way of governance - addressing and inviting the creative individual to become part of an urban community, as well as a new *locus* for the articulation of the authorities' exigencies - occupying and often creating public space.

Beyond party political optics and the municipality's policies, what is crucial here is to see the cultural turn both as the city's *power* to assemble and align actors with its agenda - building municipal projects of culture-led redevelopment and regeneration, as well as the shift itself - a change in the way culture is perceived, valued and used within the context of space production. This point also served as a departure point for the following three case studies, each of which examines an aspect of the spatiality of the city's cultural turn. Building on the ideas of a typology of approaches as the meeting point and consequence of state-society relations, the chapter will build an argument to view Kaohsiung's production of creative space as predominately a statist, normative project. From the targeted removal of 'the old' analysed in the first case study to the targeted, thought-out insertion of 'the new', the spaces that represent Kaohsiung's new self-image are made to order and share with their putative role-models (Soho, Shoreditch, etc.) only the vaguest of cultural references. Interestingly however, a truer expression of Lefebvre's 'counter-space' has appeared only some hundred meters away from the city's cultural ground zero - the Hamasen historical street preservation project, which serves as the third case study and a 'control sample' against which to evaluate the spatial practice of the municipality.

### 5.3 Out with the old: Gongyuan Road<sup>3</sup>

In 2005, Kaohsiung was awarded the role of hosting the 2009 World Games, an international sporting event for non-Olympic disciplines, and one of great diplomatic importance for Taiwan as it struggled to assert itself in a more independent way during the DPP-led premiership of Chen Shui-bian. The World Games, usually a fairly small event for which little in the way of new infrastructure is normally built, was taken very seriously, olympically even, in Kaohsiung. Apart from big construction projects such as the Toyo Ito designed stadium and the new metropolitan rail network, the city embarked on a massive beautification effort in preparation for the foreign visitors and domestic dignitaries. While the scale is certainly smaller, a comparison with Beijing's frenzied pre-Olympic clean up is instructive; as a large, city-wide event in the administrative sense, the preparation for the World Games focused the attention of the city's many offices and bureaus on a narrowly defined task subject to external deadlines, with emphasis given to quick cleaning up, rather than slow-moving neighbourhood or community improvements. Among the beautification efforts in Kaohsiung, a new landmark bridge over the first wharf, and another cyclist/pedestrian one over the mouth of the Love River flanked the old Yancheng neighbourhood. Between them, a single line of over 400 hardware and metalwork shops, with living quarters attached, was demolished along the northern side of Gongyuan Road, the central spatial axis running through the old harbour neighbourhood. The area, over 4 hectares in size, has since become a mile-long park heavily adorned with public art commemorating the industrial past of Kaohsiung and its many hardware and metalwork shops - which the park displaced. The four-year demolition and resettlement plan by the municipality was not officially part of the World Games spending, though the connection between the two is far from tenuous, with the city recruiting 4,652 local volunteers to serve as historical guides, translating the city's industrial and maritime heritage to the visiting athletes and guests, as well as on official tours organised by the World Games committee, all of which passed

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<sup>3</sup> 'Gongyuan' means 'park', therefore the street name could also be translated as Park Road.

along the new park on their way to Pier-2 and the former British consulate building above Sizihwan Bay (Liu, 2012).

While a recent visit to the area, not far from the new art and design shops of Pier-2, will still offer the visitor a glimpse into the dark workshop areas of the remaining few hardware stores, until 2008 the shopkeepers on 'Wǔjīnjiē' (五金街), or Hardware Street as it was known in the vernacular, occupied almost the entire stretch of Gongyuan Road. As occupiers of illegal structures built on public land however, they have been excluded almost entirely from the new vision for the area and the 4 year-long demolition and resettlement plan. In a demolition and park construction project stacked in 4 one-year tranches (see Figure 3), the Public Works Bureau has achieved a remarkable transformation of the space in question, with only a fraction of the businesses still operating in the area. While their resettlement was not a direct consequence of World Games, Pier-2 or Cultural Bureau policies, it is characterised by the prolific use of public art and city beautification infrastructure by the municipality, as well as an identical effort against 'messiness', which is analysed further in section 5.4. It sits squarely within the same area set aside for Kaohsiung's new harbour front and as such, it is argued here that it belongs to the same new spatial practice of the (creative) city, emphasising city values through the expectation of spatial use.

Before the park however, Gongyuan Road was the largest centre for family-owned second hand hardware shops in Taiwan, selling and repairing small and medium machinery such as industrial grade pumps, winches, and hoists; a by-product of the polluting if lucrative ship-dismantling industry that Kaohsiung was once known for. The space, which had once served as a wartime airfield, was built up during the first wave of industrialisation and settled by immigrants from Chiayi county - a fact relevant during the demolition as neighbours still saw the metalworkers as out-of-town immigrants, creating an additional obstacle in the metalworkers' efforts to protect their homes. With their cluttered shop floors, oil slicks and loud noise of clunking metal, the street was earmarked for 'beautification' in the run up to the World Games in 2009 in order to create a tourist corridor towards Pier-2 and to complete a bicycle lane network across the Yancheng neighbourhood.

## 高雄市政府工務局養護工程處

### 鹽埕綠8綠地開闢期程

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**Figure 3 Yancheng 'Green 8' green corridor development plan. Source: Kaohsiung City Public Works Department**

The demolition was divided in four stages (Figure 3), with the first one beginning in 2007 and the last one completed in 2011. (Kaohsiung Yancheng Green Corridor (*Gāoxióng Yánchéng Lǚkuò*). Kaohsiung Public Works Bureau, 2011). Though the land is publicly owned and a park had been loosely envisaged in the area for decades, the issue here is not so much of legality – in any case the 1998 Urban Renewal Act grants municipal authorities ample powers to reconstruct urban areas, especially on publicly owned land. Nor is this a question of whether the city plan was legitimate or appropriate. Rather, the motivation for the decision is key to understanding the way in which a 'creative Kaohsiung' is being constructed, not only as a physical space, but as a space of identity and a new authenticity for Kaohsiung, which includes some aspects of the city at the expense of others, as the government publications on the project emphasised: *"Do you still remember when both sides of Park Road in Yancheng District were lined with metal scraps and hardware stores? With the change of times though, the old businesses no longer prospered and the illegal buildings were holding back the city's development."*

*However, since 2009, Yancheng's appearance has changed dramatically: the illegal buildings were gradually pulled down and removed, replaced by an open green space with blooming flowers and lush greenery. This space, which will grow in years to come, gives both residents and visitors the elements of a new culture of living – this is Kaohsiung's "Yancheng Green Corridor"*  
(Kaohsiung Public Works Bureau, 2011)

Historicization was an effective tool used by the authorities, emphasising the demise the industry has undergone and consigning it to a bygone era, a sentiment reflected in media reporting at the time. However, anecdotal evidence suggests hardware repair remained (and remains to this day) a lucrative business, with new shops opening in the area right until the demolition plans were announced (and even after!). Although some of the relocated shops are flourishing in their new locations, all the interviewed shopkeepers complained of a lack of clustering effects and, most importantly, a change in their way of life, which judging from the pamphlet cited above, was the city's intention. In any case, the city's interpretation of history obscures the real picture, prompting questions as to why it was deemed necessary to accompany a straight-forward city beautification project with a floral yet normative narrative. When an association to preserve the unique character of the area was created in March 2007 (Historic Hardware Street Preservation Association, 老五金街保存協會 *Lǎo Wǔjīnjiē Bǎocún Xiéhuì*), their slogans addressed what they saw as the city's misrepresentation and underlined the metalworkers' right to a livelihood as much as the specificity of their trade in Kaohsiung's history, urging the city to reconsider the blanket demolition plan and involve them in a community-led beautification they felt would ultimately benefit the area. The municipality paid scant attention to such loosely conveyed ideas, with the frenetic atmosphere of the upcoming World Games possibly spurring the city into rapid action.

Interestingly, when asked about the reasons for their failure, many of the leading members blamed their inability to sufficiently galvanise all the hardware stores (due to the sectioning of the project in four stages, some shop-owners were reluctant to take part in protests supporting the areas demolished first, hoping for a settlement with the city government), as much as in their inability to translate their demands for livelihood into a wider social movement. Unlike

the environmental protests, or those to protect a historic block of houses discussed in section 5.4 of this chapter, the hardware stores in fact never attracted the attention of the middle class, students or even the artists commissioned to replace the stores with art commemorating their soon-to-be extinct way of life. What media coverage they gained was not necessarily flattering and the movement struggled even with conveying their message to immediate neighbours, who calculated the removal of the shops might raise the value of their homes and businesses. As a chuffed neighbour interviewed in a documentary dealing with the demolition says upon seeing the levelled expanse of rubble, *“Kaohsiung has to overtake Taipei. We can’t have Taipei saying they are number one. With the clean up in Kaohsiung now, it’s even prettier than Taipei.”* (Wu [video], 2007).

According to a city councillor at the time, neither the city administration nor the council were prepared to back down unless they would be faced with ‘extreme opposition’, suggesting this is not so much a case study of the efficacy of social groupings, but rather of the determination which the city authorities showed throughout the drawn-out process of the demolition. A determination which, I suggest, was successfully translated into power through a process of framing the debate as a question of modernization and development, with the intention of *‘making Yanchengpu magnificent again’*, as councilman An Pinglang put it during the second reading of the proposed demolition order (Kaohsiung City Council, Gongyuan Road Demolition Budget 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, 23 Jan 2008). Under this banner, the municipality assembled key actors from businesses, neighbours, later even including the artist community that filled the slowly expanding park with over 50 different pieces of art, all of which reference the historical heritage of the area (Figure 4).

But if the question of who was replaced by the park is easier to answer, the question that remains is *who* this park is for, a question also central to two recent documentary films dealing first with the shopkeepers’ efforts to preserve their lived space (Wu Xinyu’s 2008 *“Whose is the Park Road?”*) and their lives after resettlement (Lu Yurui’s 2012 *“A New Park”*). The park, with its flowers, bicycle lane, a miniature ‘public event’ amphitheatre and variety of benches, is not out of the ordinary, but the few remaining metalworkers view it with suspicion, with some consciously avoiding it, and many denigrating it as

merely a place where dogs can relieve themselves. This mixture of frustration and lack of understanding for the new spatial form – a green park/avenue - is perhaps best expressed by an elderly resident interviewed in “*Whose is the Park Road?*”:

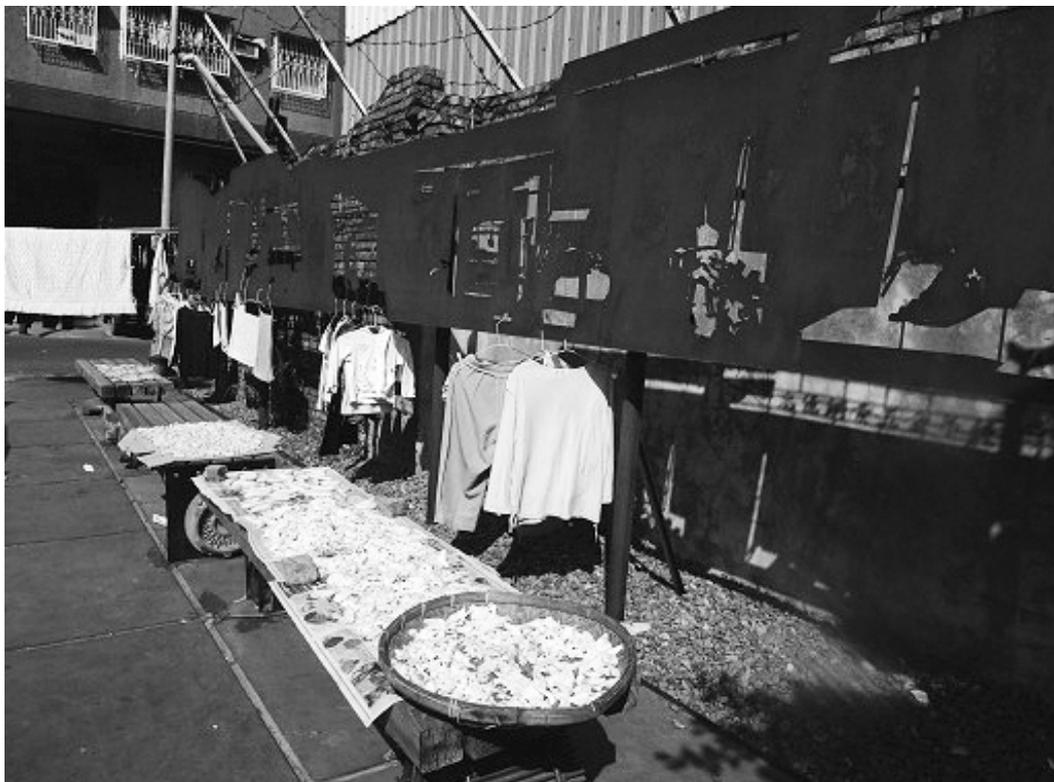
*“...the planning bosses, they planned a flower garden, lots of different plants... What they planned is all good to build a park for dogs to shit in. Going to the park: like it’s a matter of life and death. Who goes to the park, who has that kind of time on their hands, we’re all busy working, looking for work. Going to the park, only rich people do that, if your stomach’s full then it’s no problem.”* (Wu [video], 2007).

**Figure 4 Benches constructed out of old machine parts. Photograph by author.**



Faced with questions of identity and the allocation of space, the ‘authenticity’ of the area also remains problematic, as Sharon Zukin has shown on the case of New York’s gentrifying neighbourhoods (Zukin, 2010). In this case, the lived authenticity of the chaotic metalworking shops and the illegible network of lanes and gaps in the organically (illegally) grown neighbourhood is substituted by a planned authenticity of a different kind. The industrial character of the area is translated through the instrument of public art into a dizzying array of street furniture and installations, all of which explicitly reference the *history* of the area and the city. The irony is not lost on the remaining shopkeepers: ‘*They took the things that kept us alive and made them dead*’ (Mr Bai, hardware shop owner. Interview, 3 January 2013).

Though not explicitly set out in city planning documents, the notion of authenticity is crucial to this neighbourhood from an economic standpoint. Not only is the city government promoting mass tourism in the area, but a planned creative industry park also relies on the area's authenticity to attract investment - most recently a large Hollywood digital effect firm. The firm, Rhythm&Hues, was initially being groomed by the municipal economic development office to occupy a suburban software industry park, but decided to base itself in an old warehouse instead, embracing the 'industrial feel' of the old port, which was inaugurated by Ang Lee in November 2012 (Mike Yang, Rhythm&Hues Taiwan Co. Manager. Personal communication, 17 November 2012). With similar firms occupying old industrial spaces from around the world, it is not unusual the company preferred and understood the potential of disused industrial buildings in this way. The area thus gained a new role as a creative park and tourist attraction, though the many older residents are cool towards the weekend crowds and have found alternative uses for some of the artwork as chairs or even clothes-lines (Figure 5) in an entertaining display of life appropriating new spaces in unexpected ways. Nevertheless, the transformation is complete as far as the city is concerned and major reconstruction in the area has now given way to a slower place-making effort analysed in the following section.



**Figure 5 Laser-cut art installation used to dry clothes. Photograph by author.**

Taking a wider look beyond the micro-politics of spatial use in a neighbourhood in Kaohsiung, the research problematizes the equity of major urban redevelopment in a unique socio-economic environment. The issue here is not one of forced relocation, of laws and due procedure being ignored. The Public Works Bureau remained within its authority to push the decision through, until it was finally confirmed by a vote in the city council. Quite the opposite, the issue here is the precision with which one social group had been extirpated – while the relocation meant a sizeable blow to the local economy, it was narrowly targeted at a very specific group of people, self-described in interviews as *lǎobáixìng* (老百姓 ‘common folk’), but specifically working in the hardware business. The destruction of this dominant local industry has caused a knock-on effect on shops in the area, especially those servicing the hardware shops: cheap street eateries, betel nut sellers, small sundry shops: those who have already not seen any trickle-down benefits from increased tourist footfall in the area were also the ones most affected by the renewal of Gongyuan Road. While city brochures are replete with references to social inclusion, these often concern access ramps for the elderly or the disabled, rather than premium space for the undesirable or incompatible, categories eluding easy definition. On the other hand, the city’s updated urban plan for the area is quite unequivocal in its desire to transform (or as the jargon goes, *regenerate*) the area to become predominately high-grade residential housing with peripheral tourist industries using the ‘cultural resources’ of nearby Pier-2 and thus promote “*Soho-style artistic spaces*” (Kaohsiung City Government: *Change to Kaohsiung Urban Plan (Yancheng District), Detailed Urban Plan (Third General Review Plan)*, February 2008). The image of New York’s “Soho” is thus introduced and formalised into the language of the plan, brought home like a souvenir which found practical use and reminiscent of Taipei’s drive to construct a ‘Manhattan’ in Xinyi District (Jou, 2005). Echoes of competition with Taipei, as well as a desire to see Yancheng District rise from its current doldrums (incidentally caused by decades of city policy promoting sprawl and an eastward expansion) frame the debate in local terms, while the language of creative city discourse provides the professional planning expertise necessary to secure funds and political backing.

While the research expectation of finding political power in new notions and uses of cultural themes was satisfied to a certain extent, certain paradoxes also presented itself, as well as questions about the applicability of terms such as gentrification, especially concerning the balance between the role of artists, the municipal state and (real-estate) entrepreneurs. Contrary to a long tradition of posing the connection between artists and gentrification as one where the surplus 'meaning' created by resident artists becomes the symbolic capital on which a real-estate gentrification can occur (Zukin, 1982, 2010; Ley, 2003; Cameron and Coaffee, 2005; Smith 2012), the research suggests what has occurred in Kaohsiung is more usefully explained as a concerted *municipal* effort to alter urban space, not a real-estate price led process of the influx of ever-richer newcomers who end up displacing the old. Though many of the results and even mechanics are identical, the presented case could better be described as a top-down deproletarianization<sup>4</sup> of the waterfront neighbourhood within a narrowly understood concept of culture and urban beautification. While a classic process of gentrification may occur, the change to the character of the neighbourhood attested by the relocation of long-term residents suggests that this was not collateral damage of the unavoidable, evolutionary changes that any city experiences, but rather, a planned and firmly executed redevelopment project, and was in fact correctly recognised as such by those directly affected. The subsequent rise in real-estate prices, estimated to be around 30%-40%, is well above the city average (You, 26 March 2012), though it remains a consequence of the city's actions rather than the impetus for regeneration, setting it apart from market-led gentrification. The rising value of real estate however can accelerates the regeneration drive, involving big private enterprises, mainly construction companies, as well as the establishment of public monopolies on tourist infrastructure. This certainly applied to the case of Gongyuan Road, but the same dynamics are visible in nearby Pier no.1, where a somewhat 'messy' fleet of private sampan operators from to Qijin Island was pushed out by a city-operated ferry service during another project of beautification, (Jerome Lanche. Interview, 12 November 2012), suggesting that beautification on Kaohsiung's waterfront is likely to

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<sup>4</sup>The working class character of the neighbourhood was best epitomised by the hardware shops, and while many areas of Yancheng remain untouched by the bulldozers, a wider effort to rebrand it has been underway since 2006, when the city took over nearby Pier-2 Art Center; see following section.

harm certain established local businesses at the expense of larger entities able to provide the standardised services the city authorities are eager to introduce. Looking at the question from the aspect of 'authenticity' and the plan to create a 'creative' Kaohsiung, it becomes apparent that both categories can be socially exclusive of groups and practices which do not conform to the visions delineated by the planning bodies and city politicians. While major industrial infrastructure projects of national importance continue being built with little opposition from the city, the family-owned industrial heritage is to be just that – heritage, with businesses pushed out of sight of tourists, while their remains take the role of relics that imbue the newly created spaces with an authentic 'Kaohsiung' feel, the cultural capital on which the creative city of Kaohsiung is being produced.

The last point to be underlined from the 4-year long process of contestation, demolition and finally art-led beautification is that the municipality, the hardware shopkeepers and the artist community all engaged in discussing art, local culture, and deindustrialisation, all of which became political topics in the city. Understood within the harsh terms of an economic world-view, where culture can be calculated as capital, creativity is a resource, and the ultimate objective measure is the city's GDP, the concern over public art and aesthetics has irreversibly entered city politics. I argue this is an important reason for the emergence of communities around issues of culture and urban renewal as 'counterparts' to the municipality's vision of the city: as was observed in the UK by Miller and Rose, such imagined communities can become the site of new contestations and demands on the political authority (Miller and Rose, 2008: 94). A recent conflict over a block of Kaohsiung not far from Park Road shows that Kaohsiung city's culture-led redevelopment efforts have indeed spawned culture-led resistance to redevelopment, frustrating the municipality's effort at obtaining a monopoly on spatial production in the area.

## 5.4 In with the new: New Asia Harbour and the Pier-2 Art Center

### ***New Asia Harbour***

Although the scale of destruction and the mode of art-led redevelopment of Gongyuan Road were new to Kaohsiung, the following years have seen a steady increase in the size, cost and ambition of the city's new cultural infrastructure. Many of these projects have been linked together by a harbour-wide redevelopment project called 'New Asia Harbour', which in turn is part of the 'Kaohsiung 2014' vision proposed by Mayor Chu.

The goals of the mega-project are clear enough: *"Kaohsiung's future plans, under the new framework of cooperation between the port and the city, will transform the north part of the harbour using 'Metropolitan Harbour Reconstruction', based on the creative Pier-2 Art Zone, the multifunctional trade park, and the Kaohsiung Software Technology Park; together, these will form the basis on which to develop four main aspects of the new harbour zone: financial services, culture and creativity, tourism, and industry, thereby developing the harbour city's soft power."* (Chu, 2012: 4)

The area in question comprises most of Kaohsiung urbanised waterfront around the mouth of the Love River, connecting the older neighbourhoods of Hamasen with the newer developments in the South-east of the city, around Kaohsiung's tallest building and biggest shopping malls. The aim, as outlined above by the mayor, is a text-book application of the type of large, public infrastructural projects which have characterised the neo-liberal turn in city planning since the 1980s onwards. While only parts of the proposed construction could be designated as 'creative spaces', they together occupy the majority of the land set aside, especially if we include tourist facilities (which the city categorises as a creative industry). Apart from the aforementioned Pier-2, which is already operating, the project also includes a 80,000 sq.m. 'Kaohsiung Cruise-ship Terminal', a 75,000 sq.m. 'Marine Cultural and Popular Music Center', the Kaohsiung World Trade Centre (already constructed), a new city library and 23km of a light-rail system

connecting the area at a total estimated cost of over 20 billion NTD (£400 million), most of which will be financed by the central government. The result, according to the Urban Development Bureau's deputy chief, will be to *"...transform Kaohsiung into a world city, and also to show Kaohsiung to the world and then to attract foreign investment."* (Wang Chichuan, Kaohsiung City Government Urban Development Bureau Deputy Director General. Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012). Significantly, New Asia Harbour is a hybrid project encompassing both the cultural-creative as well as the active port, suggesting a new level of parity between these very different spaces which testifies to the central as well as local state's resolve in bringing about a cultural turn. The mention of 'soft power' moreover ties the municipal effort with central government's new-found panache for cultural exports as an important counter-balance to Taiwan's declining industrial base, as well as the stagnation of its hard power vis-à-vis the mainland. At this level, the de-industrialising, creative harbour of Kaohsiung is a function and metaphor of the island's development and is in no way immune to the considerations of cross-strait issues which permeate Taiwanese politics.

A closer examination of the particular projects comprising the development further emphasises the impression that Kaohsiung has chosen to emulate the path trodden by Bilbao and other cities seen as successful 'redevelopers'; both the pop music centre and the cruise-ship terminal have been designed by famous global architectural firms, a fact which city officials often point out. Moreover, the first round of the competition for the pop music centre was cancelled a day after the final date for submission - rumour in the small world of international architectural offices has it that it was because nobody famous enough applied, although the official explanation cited difficulties in jury selection (Ciento, 2010). Furthermore, expensive public tenders and competitions need not lead to any actual construction. Although the Kaohsiung city government has so far made ample use of the various rendered architectural drawings and animations in its promotional material (from videos, websites, brochures...), most of the area is still under construction and I have not been able to verify whether they are being constructed in the same scope and design as the winning proposals. Despite that, the enthusiasm for the costly projects is evident: the pop music centre only recently broke ground (in

March 2014), but is already being compared by the government to Sydney's Opera House (Executive Yuan Office of Information Services, March 17 2014).

The lack of physical construction so far has been offset by the plentiful production of an abstract, conceived space in Lefebvrian terms - the city's vision already exists and is therefore amenable to an analysis of the ways in which this city, with its spaces, has been constructed. While the 2014 vision builds on an existing project of linking the port and the city, symbolically tearing down the barriers that made Kaohsiung a port but not a harbour-front city along the lines of Sydney or Hong Kong, a fact often lamented upon during interviews with planning officials. Apart from this spatial reconfiguration however, the most conspicuous tool for achieving a shift in Kaohsiung's image (and consequently, economic success) is a drive towards the elusive goal of creating a creative city, of transforming Kaohsiung in Bilbao's image. As outlined in the beginning of this chapter, the cultural turn has local, identity driven roots, as much as it is also a policy mimesis by planning officials desperate to provide the economic and cultural boost that a city such as Kaohsiung allegedly needs. Faced with a consistent brain-drain to Taipei and the leeching of heavy industry to mainland China, creative industries and arts appear as a panacea, providing both the jobs and culture required to stop the emigration of Kaohsiung's young and talented, as well as replacing a dwindling industrial base. Following the logic of what policy consultants call 'blue sky thinking' (referring to the creation of a new niche or specialisation in which one can then be the market leader), Kaohsiung has somewhat awkwardly combined its marine heritage with a desire to become a production site of pop music for the wider Chinese-speaking market, with the Maritime Cultural and Popular Music Center being the first and most obvious spatial manifestation of this goal. The function of creativity is here brought down to a bare economic dimension, a new industrial complex to replace the old, forging rhymes instead of steel. Once such a logic has taken hold, the municipality's approach towards the production of creative spaces can be further analysed from this point of view; art education, the fostering of 'Soho-style' living as seen in the case of Gongyuan Road all serve to change or enhance the 'human capital' of the city from one appropriate for heavy industry (conformist, low wages, low

skills) to one which is more attuned to a perception of the 'new economy' - free-thinking, well-paid and abundantly skilled.

In itself, this decision is not novel or particular to Kaohsiung; rather, what is of interest here is the way in which the city proceeded (and is proceeding) in a hugely expensive effort at 'culturing' the city and the enthusiasm with which the municipality has took it upon itself to construct creative spaces in the hope of re-educating the population. This question, which essentially is one of governance and of being governed, is examined on the case of Pier-2 Art District, the only link in the chain of creative spaces within the New Asia Harbour which has already been operating for over a decade, and thus presents a workable case study from which we can infer the governance approach of the Kaohsiung municipality, as well the extent to which other relevant groups participate in the process of creative space production.

### ***Pier-2 Art Center***

In 2000, during national celebrations which feature a fireworks display rotating from city to city (as part of an attempt to break Taipei's monopoly on national celebrations), a site in Yancheng District, belonging to the Taiwan Sugar Corporation, was first brought to public attention as the location from which the fireworks were fired into the air above the city's harbour. In following years, an independent organization, the *Pier-2 Art Development Association*, used the area as a platform for local artists as well as visiting exhibitions and events, helped by the nearby Sin Pin Pier Absolutely Art Space (SPP), a network node for 'creatives' in Kaohsiung since the late 1990s; many of its founders were involved in setting up the Pier-2 association as well, so it is possible to consider this space alongside Taipei's Huashan or Beijing's 798 art zones, both of which are dealt with in this research. What sets Pier-2 apart however is the way in which it passed under direct municipal control, unlike Taipei's Huashan which has been outsourced to a private company, or Beijing's 798 which is run by a state-owned enterprise. While similarities exist with Treasure Hill and the URS programme, both of which have been analysed at length in the previous chapter, what sets these apart is the vertical integration of Pier-2 into the city's bureaucracy as well as its crucial place in the city's developmental vision. While both of Taipei's case studies are institutionalised

manifestations of the corporative approach typical of that city's approach to the production of creative space (integrating both statist and civil society, as well as private sector efforts), Pier-2 is on the other hand a top-down effort which attempts to 'play the roles' of all of the actors or groups described in the chapter on Taipei. More crucially, Taipei's Treasure Hill, similarly run by the municipal cultural bureau, is dedicated to the preservation of heritage – one designated by the city – to an almost exaggerated degree in the inclusion of living households within its bounds. Pier-2 on the other hand, strives to alter the built and lived space of the neighbourhood.

From being a grassroots, artist-led space, Pier-2's first transformation happened when it was handed over to Shude University. During this time, a more ambitious, but also more commercial use of space was introduced as the University was attempting to launch a creative industry zone while renting out the large, unused warehouses. After this brief stint, the centre became part of the city government in 2006, when the area was reconstituted as the Pier-2 Art District (駁二藝術特區 Bó èr yìshù tèqū), operated by a dedicated centre within the Bureau of Cultural Affairs. In the next few years, the city acted mainly as custodian, letting outside actors provide content for the centre, as well as set the broad goals for its development. It was not until 2009 that a decision to develop the brand of Pier-2 was taken, meaning a more involved, direct approach was taken in terms of the centre's content, style and its relations to the city. We can therefore say that at least since 2009, the space of Pier-2 is a direct manifestation of the municipality's designs on the waterfront of Kaohsiung using the received notions of redevelopment by creativity, which were also applied not far away at Gongyuan Road. The two areas are linked not only by their physical proximity, but by their role both in the narrative (an informal side) as well as the urban plan (a more formal side) of Kaohsiung's effort to become a creative city.

Arriving for the first time at Pier-2 on a balmy Sunday evening, the area seemed more than anything extremely lively, and very loud. While the surrounding neighbourhood is dark and quiet, the Taiwanese metal concert happening that evening did not appear to bother the scores of couples, families with three generations, and other 'tourists' who invariably took pictures

in front of various pieces of art which dot the entire area. The art itself is curiously chosen - a photorealistic mural of a train-station reminiscent of Maoist iconography; a shiny metal sculpture that most elderly visitors interpret as a bench; several tall figures representing the workers of Kaohsiung. What they have in common is their age, having all been chosen, paid for and placed by the city in the space of a few years. Here, the art quite literally makes the place, taking references from municipal reports, politicians' sentiments and building upon a consensus about the need to memorialise Kaohsiung's industrial 'past' – something that had also been a theme at Gongyuan Road. The selection of art in Pier-2 is particularly amenable to such a reading, being neither a gallery nor an artist colony, but a municipal project administered by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs directly and very tightly knit into the city's narrative about its rebirth, from industrial port to creative harbour. While mega-developments such as the pop music centre or cruise-ship terminal set the context and illustrate the lengths to which the city may go in its ambition to become Asia's new creative harbour, the present research has endeavoured instead to analyse the mundane, daily activities of the Pier-2 staff and management, the events that take place there, as well as observing the space with its visitors. To this end, I visited Pier-2 on fifteen different occasions, during different seasons and days of the week, to compile as accurate a set of field-notes as possible. From the material published by the art zone to the selection of the works exhibited, several tendencies emerge: first and foremost is the necessity of popular appeal, dovetailing also with the political narrative which has made it clear 'cultural education' of the city's inhabitants to be of utmost importance. Second is the ubiquity of industrial themes: old machinery, recycled metal fittings and parts, the large worker statues symbolising hardy southern Taiwanese folk, balanced only by pop-culture references and matching the developmental narrative about an industrial city maturing to a post-industrial economy and culture. Remembering how actual industrial heritage is treated (and deleted as it was in Gongyuan Road), this again suggests a conscious effort to produce a post-industrial, art district by fiat and following the examples of not only Western cities (London being the go-to example because of the large and clear governmental input), but also neighbouring examples of which Yokohama's 'Minato Mirai' is probably the most often cited. Thirdly, the space of Pier-2 also extends beyond its

boundaries by design, being a crucial and, for now at least, the only realised part of the creative-cultural harbour city. This linkage reflects itself in Pier-2's connectedness into two ways. As a physical space, it is part of a new cycling network, a must-see stop on tourist bus-tours, a place showcasing government policy regarding creative industry etc. As a social space, it is a place of cultural edification, a space where art and culture are made available for mass consumption, a space where art/culture consumption is linked with consumerist leisure activities - such as eating an expensive stone-baked pizza, enjoying German-style bread or shopping in one of the many design stores both within and outside the actual Art Zone.

Its expansion into the surrounding neighbourhood is therefore a good example on which to observe the first effects of municipal planning policy when it comes to creative spaces in Kaohsiung, an example which leaves little doubt as to the nature of the city's cultural turn - or at least this spatial manifestation of it. The space of Pier-2 is distinctly *normative* in its stated creativity - there is no doubt what creativity in Kaohsiung should look like, nor is there any doubt that the city is serious about transforming the city through the changes in space. Being normative, the space requires an audience; it requires a practice to be created from it. Being normative, it also contains a clear set of role-models from which norms are extrapolated - the whole area around and between the warehouses is replete, almost saturated, with works of art designed to appear spontaneous (commissioned murals take the place of illegal graffiti and street art, sculptures are first designed into the lay-out and then commissioned...), yet this is not some organically grown, arty neighbourhood; it is simply a city-mandated 'art zone' where a handful of artists have been selected to create works fitting the pre-ordained vision - one which is incidentally almost identical to that used at Gongyuan Road: industrial port now reborn as creative harbour.

Not as independent or closed as the city's museums and galleries, Pier-2 is also a good case to study the preferences of the city authorities in terms of not only the exhibitions or shows it attracts, but the practice of using and creating space beyond the narrow understanding of art and culture. As the centre expanded, the running of many warehouses was outsourced (to a small

museum, a commercial music venue, a design shop, an upscale restaurant and bakery and two digital content producers), while the centre's management focused on creating the brand of Pier-2 – not least because of the need to attract visitors/tourists and justify public spending on the site. The branding exercise, combined with a pursuit of a popular programme and an emphasis on making the space approachable to the general public has paid off in terms of visitor numbers, which stood at 2.3 million by November 2012 according to preliminary numbers provided by Pier-2 (Sun Meiling, Pier-2 Manager. Personal communication, 13 Dec 2012). While such numbers include non-ticket paying visitors and thus place Pier-2 somewhat implausibly alongside New York's MoMA or the Uffizi in Florence, they nevertheless represent a huge increase from the 160,000 visitors in 2008, before the branding effort began in 2009. The changes were not only quantitative, but qualitative as well – while early visitors were mainly artists and youngsters, the average visitor profile has changed considerably to include families of tourists. The art centre presently relies on its tourist appeal, a fact which management readily admit (Sun Meiling. Interview, 21 November 2012). The reliance on numbers (of visitors, of exhibits, of warehouses converted) illustrates how the municipality evaluates this creative space. Rather than profit, which is the guiding principle of Beijing's creative spaces, or the adherence to the details of the public tenders for Taipei's public creative spaces, Kaohsiung's creative spaces are seen as a public service provided by the city and subject to the same norms as the provision of public infrastructure.

Apart from a quantitative increase in events, visitors and square footage, Pier-2 has also begun with an informal effort to improve the 'messy'<sup>5</sup> (luàn 亂) streetscape that is a characteristic of this neighbourhood (and Taiwan in general) by engaging the community, helping them clean up the area around their houses, lay down turf, place flower pots and for example even change or remove the ubiquitous iron grates on windows. To this end, Pier-2 sends out groups of volunteers to approach neighbours with suggestions on what to do with their front gardens/patios, offer to paint their facades with murals, take

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<sup>5</sup> The term "luan", while often translated as messy or chaotic, denotes a specific type of Taiwanese streetscape, littered with incongruous shop-signs, illegal architecture, air-conditioning units, tangled wires and iron grates on nearly every window.

away bulk waste, or sometimes liaise to set up more permanent art installations selected by Pier-2 in line with their concept for the wider area: *“Contemporary, experimental, avant-garde, pluralistic, open, fun, welcoming, old warehouse new ideas, sky is blue, cooling sea breeze, easy to enlarge resident artists’ creative works.”* (Pier-2 Art Center, 2012)

Although ‘creativity’ is often connected to a messy, unorganised yet inspiring surroundings (cf. Törnqvist, 1983), the managers of Pier-2 leave no doubt as to their position on ‘messiness’ of their neighbours’ houses, which is not the acceptable ‘open and fun’ messiness of art:

*“They can look really messy. So this streetscape can seem, especially to people who’ve only recently come here, it can seem very bad. So we can coordinate with them, and replace [iron grates], or make them look nicer and so on. So in this respect, we deal with the locals directly. And they’re all pretty happy too.”* (Pier-2 manager, interview. 21 November 2012)

The attention that municipal authorities devote to the control of chaotic streetscapes was in no way first documented at Pier-2; in his study of Kaohsiung’s New Kujiang shopping area, Hsu (2010) similarly notes the authorities felt the messy streetscape held back the area’s development (Hsu, 2010). Such opposition is not without meaning, indicative as it is of the values attached to spatial forms imported from overseas: pedestrianized streets, shoppers leisurely strolling, uniform façades are not merely attractive images, but clash significantly with the existing streetscape typical of Kaohsiung (and other Taiwanese cities) as much as Hausmannian Paris clashed with the twisting lanes of ‘pre-modern’ Paris, to allude to Harvey’s work on the ‘capital of modernity’ (Harvey, 2003). Taking the comparison further, the normative approach typical both of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kaohsiung may on the surface differ, considering Harvey demonstrates on the example of Paris the centrality of capital in the creation of the modern city, while Kaohsiung’s own redevelopment is planned and funded by the state. Yet beneath this crude distinction lies the unifying belief in the necessity of spatial transformation for economic goals, a belief justifying the destruction of unwanted communities or at least their assimilation, one iron grate at a time.

The staff at Pier-2 report largely positive experiences with locals, a few noise and parking space complaints apart. One reason why the urban space created by this reconstruction remains popular with local residents is its effect on real-estate values, which have gone bucked the trend of languishing house prices and rose between 30-40% according to agencies operating in the area. (You, 26 March 2012). Apart from laying down turf or tidying and beautifying the area, Pier-2 has extensively used public art installations to change the surrounding space, linking it with beautification efforts around the old Kaohsiung Port Station in the west, and True Love Pier in the east. While operating within the city's Cultural Bureau, Pier-2 has evolved into a key actor of spatial production in the wider area of the old city. Pulling in tourists, 'seeding' art into the neighbourhood, it has done more than beautified the area, it has bent it to a new vision, rewarded and advised those who are willing to fit in, while bringing into stark contrast those spatial practices which do not conform with the new vision for the area.

This is especially important since Pier-2 is at the centre of a planned creative industry cluster, as well as the mayor's new vision for the entire 'old port' area of Kaohsiung. (Chu, 2012; Wang and Wu, 2012; Wu, 2012). The first major player was Sony PlayStation with an incubation centre within Pier-2, while 2012 saw a Pier-2 (inadvertently) attracting a Hollywood digital effects company, Rhythm&Hues (You, 2012). The company had been negotiating with the city economic development department and was expected to move into a purpose built facility outside the city centre, when a delegation visiting the city on a tourist bus tour saw Pier-2, and decided to open a studio in an empty warehouse instead (Amber Lin, Pier-2 Spokesperson. Interview, 21 November 2012). With the upgrading of the area from a tourist attraction to a creative industry site, the city is pushing ahead with its vision of wider change in the neighbourhood's economic and demographic make-up. Digital companies are lured to the area using direct or indirect subsidies as traditional industries are being uprooted through beautification projects or redevelopment. While the tourist narrative emphasises the role of Kaohsiung's industrial heritage as a base from which creative industries will spring, there is little empirical evidence to support this. Quite the opposite, the two world seem very far apart, a

sentiment confirmed in informal conversations both with those working in the creative industry (such as Lu Luming, a record label start-up) as well as the remaining hardware shopkeepers that I spoke to about the demolition of Gongyuan Road. In true Taiwanese fashion, perhaps only street eateries have any sort of chance to transcend both socio-economic fields although some anecdotal evidence suggests many have closed since the neighbourhood started being redeveloped. The arrival of creative industries to the area is not built on its industrial heritage; it quite literally supplants it according to the design set out by the city.

Another topic that changes in Yancheng District often bring up is that of gentrification, which is indeed a theme that has surfaced repeatedly throughout the various research sites, although what exactly respondents meant by gentrification also varied greatly. In Kaohsiung, gentrification is however perhaps not the best word, unless one includes 'gentrification by fiat' as already discussed in the section on Gongyuan Road. The standard markers of gentrification however, such as a large influx of resident newcomers with better economic and social standing, are not yet present. Nor has the area seen an influx of convenience stores such as 7-11, which is the Taiwanese equivalent of the 'gourmet deli', usually considered a classic sign of gentrification in the west. Gentrification in Kaohsiung does not look like gentrification in Brooklyn or Hackney, nor is it entirely comparable in terms of the market-led dynamic of demographic change typical of gentrification. It remains however a firmly rooted idea around which municipal policy is constructed. While the city cannot legislate to increase the number of convenience stores, the arrival of a 7-11 or Family Mart is greeted as a success and seen as proof of amelioration of a neighbourhood's environment. At the time of writing, the area around Pier-2 was still a dark spot on the map as far as major convenience stores are concerned, though a spate of construction of new residential buildings along the fringes of what is now the long park beside Gongyuan Road may yet change that.

The evaluation of Pier-2 is by no means a verdict on the role it plays, nor is this research intended to pass a verdict or recommendation of policy. Quite simply, Pier-2 Art Zone is a government-run creative zone emulating more

spontaneous predecessors (including its own predecessor, the Pier-2 Art Development Association) with a clearly stated intent of transforming the urban space of old Kaohsiung. While many of the centre's activities mentioned here may seem banal or quotidian (choice of shops, fighting 'messiness') and others are expected (branding, insertion of new industries), it is precisely in such slow yet unyielding effort that this research locates the crux of Kaohsiung's approach towards the use of 'creativity' in urban redevelopment - as a slow, concerted, top-down effort, the city aims to educate, reshape and remake the citizen and the city. Creative spaces in Kaohsiung may share with their Taipei or Beijing counterparts the underlying assumptions about the value of art and culture, yet differ in the explicitly high-modernist approach to their production. If the creative spaces of Taipei are characterised by negotiation and slow inter-stitching of state, expert, artist and resident groups, which ultimately led to an institutionalised approach, Kaohsiung's high modernism is evident in the short path from the abstract space of plans to the physical space of the city. Moreover, the ability of the city to impose its vision is evident in the undiluted messages attached to the physical representations of its creative city plan. This is not to say that the ability of the city to impose plans on urban landscapes is a sign of its strength or capacity, but rather testifies to the lack of an ability to co-opt different interests, as well as the inability (or lack of desire) on the part of civil society groups to engage with the city, an inability which was only recently being addressed by small, professional groups dedicated to questioning the underlying notions of culture, development and creativity on which the city's cultural turn rests.

## 5.4 Hamasen – Community-led Preservation

Only a few hundred meters west of Pier-2 and Gongyuan Road lies a block of nearly 30 houses dating to the Japanese colonial period. In varying states of disrepair, they are nonetheless sterling examples of a hybrid Japanese-Western architectural style, which Imperial Japan favoured in its colonial possession. The area, now considered outside the modern city centre, is in fact the original site from which the city of Kaohsiung expanded, the site of its first port and (then) main train station. The block of houses was formerly filled with businesses such as a hotel, a shipping company, the Kaohsiung bureau of Tainan Times, as well as several smaller shops and dwellings. As the Japanese-owned businesses closed and the city centre shifted ever eastwards over the Love River, the area was largely forgotten, its ‘Japanese baroque’ houses left to decay. Then, in late March 2012, the residents of the area, which is built on publicly owned land like Hardware Street, were informed by way of notices pasted to their doors that they have three months until their homes are demolished to make way for a ‘multi-functional’ parking lot meant to facilitate tourist access to Sizihwan (西子灣/Xiziwan), a small sandy bay which is being developed into another compulsory stop on tours of the city and has seen substantial city investment over the past decade.

An important distinction with Hardware Street/Gongyuan Road is that one of the houses in the area was already occupied by a group of young architects, while another served as a teahouse and gallery. When I first visited the headquarters of the Takao Renaissance Association<sup>6</sup> (TRA; original name Dagou Historical Cultural Renaissance Society - Dǎgǒu wénshǐ zàixīng shèhuì 打狗文史再興社會), I was met by a small group of its founding members, many of whom have been working in the office on the second floor. The space was immediately reminiscent of various arty squats and loft conversions, which have become somewhat synonymous with art and culture-led redevelopment. Although remaining quite undeveloped, the area has a socially diverse population, something which proved key in its capacity to mount a successful

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<sup>6</sup> The name Takao Renaissance Association has been chosen at the request of the organizers.

resistance. Despite the residents having been taken off guard by the city's sudden decision, the group have hinted the city may have felt its hand forced after initial inquiries were made by Jerome Lanche, a Kaohsiung-based architect and founding member of the TRA, regarding plans for the area, suggesting the city was not anticipating any community involvement from such an early stage. (Lin Weihe, Takao Renaissance Association. Interview, 8 November 2012). After this initial inquiry, the local authorities moved with great speed, which, according to TRA members, had to do with election promises given by the local DPP councilwoman, Li Qiaoru. The congestion and parking issues plaguing Hamasen were to be solved by the construction of a large multi-storey car park, yet local opinion was anyhow divided as to whether this would benefit them or only the operators of tours for mainland Chinese tourists. Although faced with imminent demolition, the pre-existing channels of communication, especially a tea-house which Lin used to own, proved invaluable in the TRA's initial drive to create momentum. In effect, their efforts had to 'discover' a community that had always existed in connection to the space, but had never been conceptualised as such until the decision of the city authorities to level the entire block. The contrast with Gongyuan Road, which had always existed as a tight-knit community of immigrant, working-class shops, could not be greater. The teahouse in particular was popular with locals as well as people from around Kaohsiung, creating an adaptable social space; being diverse in its clientele, it also broke through the constraints which hampered the metalworkers' efforts and tapped into a pool of volunteering talent willing to fight for the preservation of the city's history. Local filmmakers, university students and faculty, environmentalists stopping to enjoy tea after a trek on Chai Mountain, all these became important links in the formation of the neighbourhood movement. Among the people who frequented the teahouse and later helped with the formation of the movement was Yang Pingyu, head of the Kaohsiung's *Chaishan* environmental movement, who was able to assist the fledgling activists with years of experience 'battling' the city:

*"Unlike environmentalists, people working in culture are not often in conflict with politics, they are more used to just asking for money. They had no experience, so we exchanged our experience with them, taught them about networking, about fighting with the city, about things like having to know when*

*every single small election is held.*” (Yang Pingyu. Interview, 20 December 2012)

By March 27<sup>th</sup> 2012, the fledgling Takao Renaissance Association managed to mount a public protest with local residents and attracted significant support from students at Zhongshan University, as well as the attention of local media. National media exposure followed, both in print and broadcasting media, and the group also made ample use of social networking sites, attracting a following of nearly 13,000 people over a few main websites (current as of May 2014). Only a few days later, the city government put demolition plans on hold, pending a full evaluation of the historic value of the neighbourhood by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, which in turn tasked a group of architects from Zhongshan University to evaluate the area, including some with ties to the movement itself. According to Lin, a crucial factor in the speedy success has been a similar case in Taipei’s Shilin District, which had been demolished among public outrage a few days before; fearing loss of support, the local Democratic Progressive Party wanted to “differentiate itself” from the Guomintang-run Taipei (Lin Weihe; interview, 8 November 2012). While the case of the Takao Renaissance Association reveals the importance of pre-existing networks which allowed the activists to quickly organise and raise the public profile of their actions, their actions were also legible to the city authorities and vice versa - something which sets this case aside from the previous one, where the hardware shops were unable to present a vision of themselves fitting in the new design of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, association members managed to frame the debate surrounding the demolition in terms favourable to them. The city plan was equated with ‘destroying culture’, and the group went as far as to compare the city’s plan with US firebombing of the area during World War II; the group also managed to ride on the back of a renewed appreciation of the island’s Japanese heritage, which had until recently been subject to mandated erasure or slow decay (Johnson, 1994; Hsia, 2002). More importantly perhaps, the unanimity with which the 26 households in the area supported the TRA’s work meant that a legitimate alternative plan for the area could be drawn up quickly while a preservation survey by the city’s Culture Bureau was being held.

In contrast to the decision on Gongyuan Road, a city councillor interviewed on the subject noted the city simply 'didn't have the power or will to get involved with this sort of resistance' (Wu Yizheng, [Kaohsiung City Councillor]. Interview, 8 November 2012), suggesting that the resolve for demolition was lower to begin with, and that the elderly residents carrying portraits of the city's mayor emblazoned with slogans such as 'culture-killer' broadcast across Taiwan had an especially acute effect on city hall. Indeed, subsequent inquiry revealed that the parking lot was most likely a personal political project of councilwoman Li Qiaoru, rather than a city-level one, easing the way to consider alternative ways of redeveloping this valuable plot of public land, albeit at the expense of a local party member's election promise. Nevertheless, the councilwoman provides an example of a dismissive and politically expedient attitude among Kaohsiung's policy-makers towards old neighbourhoods, which are often targeted with either demolition, as the example of Gongyuan Road demonstrated, and as the on-going case of the Ljavek aboriginal tribe living in the shadow of Ikea and CostCo and currently facing resettlement also shows (Ljavek Tribal Self-help Organization, press release, 19 March 2013). At the other end of the policy frame of the imaginable we find mandated transformation into a tourist area, as is the case with Hongmaogang, an old fishing village at the southern entrance to the harbour. While some form of conservation is almost certainly to be adopted, models range from a house-by-house to a block approach, with the possibility of resettling the inhabitants in any case still hanging over the whole community, and wider developments along the waterfront regarding the city's Kaohsiung 2014 vision placing the old houses right on the edge of the proposed new waterfront redevelopment. Ironically, the ability of the Takao Renaissance Association to place itself convincingly within the municipal vision may yet prove to be the undoing of their efforts to keep the neighbourhood intact in a physical as well as lived sense. As the city has increasingly warmed to the idea of a 'Japanese commercial street' theme, the fear of the wrecking ball has been replaced with a fear of a city-led museumification of the area, a trajectory reminiscent of Taipei's Treasure Hill, analysed in Chapter Three.

Whatever the ultimate reason for the city's decision, the case is an example of successful, micro-level social mobilisation which is opposed to the modernising vision presented by the municipality while simultaneously using the notion of culture and creativity to claim a stake on the space in questions;

where local DPP elected officials may see worthless houses occupying valuable land, the association has created a cultural hub dedicated to questions of historical preservation, local and city identity, staging events and organizing guided tours around the area. The very name and logo of the society emphasise the historical aspect, embracing Japanese colonial legacy rather than suppressing or ignoring it<sup>7</sup>. In Taiwan's highly politicised identity discourse, the emphasis on Japanese heritage also serves to differentiate from the more Sino-centric outlook of Taipei, providing an additional point of reference for the municipal authorities. Another salient feature of the association is its reliance of small, local funding, with donations (both cash and services) accounting for almost 95% of its funding, with business and public grants sharing the remaining 5% (Zheng Yaoxiang, Interview. 8 October 2012). Upon visiting their headquarters in an old Japanese-style house, the amount of effort put into the restoration of the almost decrepit buildings was immediately obvious. Toiling over a new toilet and bathroom that they were installing in the back garden, Jerome and Lin both confirmed curious neighbours had been contacting them about perhaps restoring their houses too. While the outcome of the government survey was not yet known at the time of writing, the association's activities had already managed to lay claim to the lived space of the neighbourhood. By repairing decaying houses, installing infrastructure such as septic tanks and toilets, organising a 'bazaar' to raise the profile of the area, the association has managed to lay the foundations from which they are now expanding beyond their immediate surroundings, both by protesting demolitions of historical buildings across Kaohsiung, as well as collecting material and know-how from the sites consigned to demolition and even running courses in wooden architectural repair (Figure 4). In a city that has reduced the notion of heritage to a handful of landmarks, their work runs against the grain, but from being dismissed as a nuisance, they have grown into a permanent fixture.

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<sup>7</sup> While the Chinese name is Dǎgǒu wénshǐ zàixīng shèhuì (打狗文史再興會社), the group uses the Japanese reading of the first and last two characters, Takao Kaisha. The logo of the society is then composed of stylised characters "ta" and "ka" from the Japanese katakana syllabary.



**Figure 6 One of the woodworking workshops organised by the TRA to promote traditional architecture. Source: Takao Renaissance Association**

All of these are examples of small, but accumulating spatial action which de Certeau (2002) would call a *tactic*, but seen in light of the city's cultural turn, it is also a tactic that has become more influential by addressing and using the language of the municipality. The association for example produced a map of the entire Hamasen area, linking their activity into a wider revival of Kaohsiung's oldest parts and framing their demands upon the authorities within the tourist industry which the city is keen to develop; as the area becomes an attraction in its current state, the initiative remains with the association and the local residents in what is a rare example of non-governmental production of space in Taiwan<sup>8</sup>. Another example of producing space in a Lefebvrian sense are the workshops and competitions for local residents, inviting them to photograph the neighbourhood for a competition, or to participate in a exhibition of old photographs; as the everyday spaces are reimagined and reinterpreted, they become dense with new and old meaning, the practical consequence of which is the support which the association receives from the local inhabitants. As newcomers, the association's founders

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<sup>8</sup> Similar examples can be found in Tainan, where an NGO consisting of academics, shopkeepers and residents guided the regeneration of the area around Shennong Street - a contrasting example is the restoration of Bopiliao or Dihua Street in Taipei, see Chapters Three and Four.

are aware of the 'danger' of themselves being instigators of gentrification (anathema to any social activist), yet they reiterate their aim to preserve not only the physical heritage of the area, but to also allow current residents to remain in their houses: many fear the city might exchange demolition for city-led preservation and ultimately be unable to resist the temptation to develop the area as a tourist attraction at the expense of the tenants. Despite this fear, their actions continue being framed in 'historical preservationist' terms with special attention to cultural tourism, making it politically costly to ignore: a mayor bent on creating a culturally rich Kaohsiung can ill-afford to bulldoze a block of historical housing, especially when a troupe of local grandmothers are brandishing signs proclaiming her to be a 'culture-killer' with national media watching overhead.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The political decision to change Kaohsiung into a hub of creativity coincides with the emergence of a globalised body of policy and theory on the role of 'creativity', as a fusion of traditional culture and art with the sometimes intangible new economy, holding out the promise of sustainable, clean economic development and supported by a planning discourse including of (semi)academic, policy and media writing. The decision taken in Kaohsiung is as much a part of this transnational policy shift, introduced via academic and political channels, through exchanges, visits and translated into urban plans which have come to integrate the (economic) value of creativity into the city's abstract and physical space. In terms of the underlying argument on the importance of examining the 'inter-space' between overarching discourse of policy and the contingent ways of making creative spaces, the normative approach to producing creative space in Kaohsiung may seem to be characterised by overwhelmingly by municipal practices, yet considering the recent organization of stakeholders, it compels us to consider the potential for future development in the port city. Alongside the evolution of the city's institutions, chiefly within the planning bureau and the cultural bureau, the creative communities which the city's economy is to be built upon have begun emerging, not only as passive and grateful participants of the city's advancement, but as critical and often adversarial actors who contest the vague policy goals of the municipality. While their involvement remains tied to site-specific conflict over the value of preservation, recent events in Hamasen point towards a wider engagement with the city's comprehensive reworking of urban space, which to date remains decidedly modernist and exclusive in its praise for large, Bilbao Guggenheim-like projects and homogenous spaces, peppered only with a filtered version of Kaohsiung's authentic character.

To summarise the characteristics of Kaohsiung's transition from industrial to creative city, this cultural turn is firstly sustained both by new institutional arrangements as well as the professional and political position in identifying culture as a key resource in the city's development, backed up by international comparisons, city rankings and validating examples. These do not so much

measure Kaohsiung's success or failure, but rather testify to the political and professional reliance on objective measures, as well the shared assumptions about urban space that this entails. Whatever the improvements in liveability or the city's position on Mercer's *Quality of Living* ranking may suggest, it is the reliance and credence accorded to international rankings which illustrates how local politicians and planners have come to depend on ostensibly objective and quantifiable results in their decision-making process, and the effects which this exertion of power has on the city's space. Seen from this perspective, the decision to significantly upgrade the city's cultural infrastructure, to redevelop the waterfront are both examples of following best practice, as well as an attempt to redefine what Kaohsiung is through a rebranding of the city. While many spaces such as Pier-2 or the Qiaotou Sugar Refinery were in effect 'discovered' by the local artist community, their subsequent development differs significantly from the case of Taipei by having been incorporated into a grand vision for the city, whereas Taipei's creative spaces operate in a looser arrangement.

Secondly, the new mode of governing the city emphasises community involvement and a concern for diversity, sustainability and a culturally rich and healthy lifestyle as seen in city government publications and plans. While this may again be understood as policy diffusion fuelled by professional exchanges, Kaohsiung's own brand of community politics remains for the time being a top-down flow of power. While initially enforced from the national level with regulations for the commissioning of public art, it has since become an embedded municipal policy spanning town planning, economic development, as well as cultural affairs. This new approach has seen the construction not only of public art projects and the establishment of festivals, but also of amenities targeted at specific demographic groups: from big concert halls, art centres, harbour-front cafes and bars, cycling lanes, parks etc. In practice, this has meant Kaohsiung city began to address the concerns of certain specific groups in the city, be they middle class professionals, artists, cyclists, tourists and so on, but the division of the users of urban space between those that are seen as desirable and those which now constitute 'the city's past' hints at the normative undertone of the creative city in Kaohsiung and questions the creative city policies' assumed neutrality and objectiveness - not only in Kaohsiung, but on a general level as well.

Thirdly, the newfound importance of creativity (and by extension, a wider interpretation of culture) has secured a role for cultural producers within the process of urban space production. Moreover, it has of late opened up political space to groups using cultural themes as a strategy to oppose city plans alongside already established issues such as the environment. Indeed, the cooperation between heritage and culture oriented groups such as the Takao Renaissance Association and established environmental groups is by no means a coincidence, as the two groups share strategies and know-how on influencing city politics. Conversely, the fate of Gongyuan Road shows that not all communities are able to extract concessions from the city; quite the opposite, the *messiness* of which the director of Pier-2 spoke can be interpreted as a euphemism for the spatial manifestation of the working-class character of the neighbourhood, though admittedly it does stretch beyond a purely class-based division. Messiness as a category or marker of space is nevertheless contrasted with the clean, bright, creative spaces constructed around the old waterfront – the success of the Takao Renaissance Association can thus be seen as having happened because of a cultural turn in the city’s politics, rather than despite it.

While lack of funds may ultimately prove to be the biggest obstacle to Kaohsiung’s comprehensive makeover, the adaptation of creative city policies looks set to continue in localised forms. Following the initial burst of non-state activity in the production of space, the vision of a creative Kaohsiung seems firmly under municipal control. Building on the classic tools of statist management such as planning, the municipality went further by subsuming processes such as gentrification, adaptive reuse, seeding art, even going as far as fashioning cultural actors such as Pier-2, which have taken on the role of community or civil society organisations. Examined from the perspective of governance as well as being governed, the port city presents a curious case of a municipality attempting to simultaneously play several roles, from planning authority to art curator and community regeneration group. The mix of large infrastructural projects, citizen edification and neighbourhood self-help furthermore transcends the demand vs. supply discussion present within the creative city discourse. While the city is apparently leading by example and clearing the scene for the arrival of a ‘creative class’, as Richard Florida would term it, it is providing infrastructure as well as content, performers as well as

audiences, all the while reinforcing a utilitarian understanding of culture and art as an economic category, a resource that can be sold to visiting tourists.

# Chapter Six: Entrepreneurial Creative Space in Beijing

## 6.1 Introduction: Culture and capital in the capital

*"The more they get involved, the worse it gets. The less they are involved, the better."*

(Ai Weiwei, asked about state efforts to support creative spaces in Beijing. Interview, June 5, 2014)

When I visited China's premier artist and 'troublemaker' Ai Weiwei for a short interview in June 2014, my intention was primarily to speak about his experience of transforming Caochangdi, a migrant village just outside the 5<sup>th</sup> Ring Road, into one of Beijing's most acclaimed creative neighbourhoods. Instead, we ended up talking mainly about the thorny issue of the relationship between art and state in China. However brief, the conversation in many ways frames the central issue facing creative spaces in Beijing: how to avoid the state without aggravating it, how to achieve commercial success without selling out, and finally, how to accept that such spaces are, in Beijing at least, often transient, unstable and fragile in the face of the city's rapid redevelopment and growth. Not only Beijing, cities around China have in recent years seen a phenomenal growth in areas claiming to be cultural, creative or most often, 'culture-creative', the latter term corresponding to the official designation for that particular economic category (文化创意产业, wénhuà chuàngyì chǎnyè, 'Cultural and Creative Industries' or CCI). Far from being a product of top-down industrial policy however, many such spaces have a provenance that can be traced to the artist areas of early reform-period Beijing,

and have only later become associated with an urban planning approach based CCI clustering. The core question with which this chapter deals could thus be described as an inquiry into how and why the state has become invested in the production of creative spaces in Beijing; although many early creative spaces were non-state in origin, through their commercial success and increasing relevance of 'soft power' narratives, they have increasingly become a matter of state policy and intervention, as well as greater involvement by business actors as well. This chapter will argue that an examination of the re-articulation of art by the state is crucial in understanding the ways in which creative spaces in Beijing are produced: the state, from having been intimately involved in the arts during the Maoist period, had lost the grip on 'unofficial artists' during the reform period, only to re-enter the field of creative production as an entrepreneurial actor in its own right, as well as being a sort of 'regulator of last resort', keeping a watchful eye over China's burgeoning art scene. Simultaneously, the astounding rise of Chinese art (not least in financial terms) has enabled the community of artists and other stakeholders to participate in the formation of new policies regarding creative spaces; unlike the case of Taipei however, the defining quality of these groups lies not so much in their ability to influence the state, but also in their ability to circumvent it.

Such an approach is defined here as an *entrepreneurial* approach, i.e. one in which the roles played by various actors coalesce within the market-led, commodified field of 'culture-led (re)development'. At the peril of terminological confusion with the concept of the 'entrepreneurial city' (Jessop, 1998; Jessop and Sum, 2000), defined through the presence of specific entrepreneurial behaviour of a city as unit (strategy, discourse and promotion of entrepreneurial images), the term nevertheless usefully captures the mode of production of creative spaces in Beijing in relation to the comparative cases of Taipei and Kaohsiung. Thus, the term *entrepreneurial* is taken here to denote the mode in which state and societal actors interact: as entrepreneurial entities or enterprises engaging in competitive spatial production regulated by market-based mechanisms. Lastly, the term does not exclude or in any way deny the actuality of continued state involvement or the importance of the state project of developing cultural power through the establishment of creative zones as

primary loci of production. In turn, what the present chapter attempts to analyse are the ways in which the operationalization of creative strategies in China differs from those in Taiwan, suggesting that historical trajectories of state-society relations, state and societal capacity and governmental style have played a crucial role in adapting creative city strategies as a part of the national developmental project in China.

The history of Beijing's creative spaces is therefore one of the developing relations between the state, the local municipality and what is often termed 'civil society', though caution must be applied when using the term in the Chinese context. In this case, 'civil society' corresponds best to the groups of non-state actors involved in the production of creative spaces, predominantly composed of 'unofficial' artists without formal state recognition, as well as a significant portion of collectors, gallerists and entrepreneurs, many of them foreign. The study of the formation of creative space in China, and especially Beijing, is thus a study of the evolving attitude and style of governing the arts, the creative industry, and urban space both from the perspective of the state as well as the fluid and self-defined 'creatives', 'artists' and 'cultural workers', who form an epistemic community of spatial professionals (when it comes to creative spaces).

The main trait of this relationship is characterised by a shift from the late reform era towards a regime wherein legitimacy - understood here as a stable claim on urban space - is conferred through a market-based mechanism. This is not to say that legitimacy is conferred by the private sector, or by an art market; rather, it is, to borrow Foucault's term, a *market 'regime of veridiction'*<sup>1</sup>, which has supplanted the previous, Maoist one. Whereas legitimacy was once conferred by official status and ideological concerns, the artists' claim on space is now a function of their ability to operate in a commodified land and art market. Thus, the position of art and creativity is neither Maoist (art in the service of society), neither could it be characterised by what Terry Eagleton calls an 'aesthetic ideology of the bourgeoisie' (Eagleton, 1988), which places

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault's use of the concept emphasises a move from a history of the true or false to a history of veridiction, examining how it was possible in a given time to assert things as truths (Foucault, 2004: 36).

art on an ethereal pedestal separate from daily utility. The position of creative spaces in Beijing shows an altogether different situation, one where art and culture have become commodified in line with the moves seen in the west since the 1980s, but have also regained their position as a crucial element of a national developmental project – as a component of ‘soft power’.

While the new double utility of art and culture as creativity does not necessarily herald closer interaction or co-operation between the state and the arts (being merely a basis of negotiation), the commercial success of many creative zones around China has also significantly influenced national and local policy towards the cultural and creative industries, which are now seen as a key element of China’s economic development. As the approach of producing new creative spaces (or legitimizing existing ones) moved in line with a market-based mechanism, so the understanding of what creative spaces are has moved with it, transforming once marginal (yet autonomous) spaces into central (yet dependent) ones. As creativity and its products became understood as a commodity, they began to fit neatly into the policy-makers’ understanding, accounting for the almost viral spread of various creative zones, clusters, areas, districts or even cities, which have spread from the metropolitan centres of China to the remotest provinces.

The chapter first embarks on a historical analysis of the formation of Beijing’s creative zones within the changing relationship between (contemporary) art and the state, proceeding with the examination of Cultural-Creative Industries as a vehicle for the reintegration of a ‘creative agenda’ into national and municipal policy. These two themes are central to understanding the evolution of creative spaces in Beijing through their contribution to a *resetting* of state-art relations along entrepreneurial lines, wherein the legitimation mechanism moved from an ideological one to a one based on a market for commodified space and art. This resetting is subsequently examined on two case studies, one concerning the now defunct art zones of Yuanmingyuan and Beijing East Village, and the other regarding the 798 Art Zone, all of which set the scene for the more ethnographic work in Chapter Seven.

## 6.2 Art and state in early reform China

*“The first problem is: literature and art for whom?”*

Mao Zedong, Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art (Mao, 1965: 77)

The utility of literature and art as tools of the revolution was a primary concern in Maoist China, as Mao himself underlines at the Yan’an talks. Throughout the civil war and up to the reform period, art had a clearly defined place in Chinese society, a utility that certainly constrained its expression and autonomy. With the setting up of an expansive bureaucratic system of control and support, the artist was transformed into an employee of the state, which became virtually the only patron of the arts. The art world in Maoist China was thus materially secure, yet creatively controlled to serve the Party. As sweeping economic reforms of the Deng era advanced however, the link of patronage was loosened: artists were suddenly expected to rely on the market for their upkeep as well, although the state remains the largest patron of the arts to this day. What has certainly changed however is the conception of art’s utility; as polite amnesia among the country’s leadership removed Maoist fervour, it was the utility and role of art that was now open to question, just as ‘official’ art was also challenged by a new generation of unofficial artists. The link between art and state, typical not only of Maoist but Imperial China, had been temporarily broken to allow for a re-evaluation of art as an economic and cultural activity.

The de-linking of art and state, traumatic as it was for artists in 1980s and 1990s, has opened the way for a new ‘contract’ or relation between art and state to be established, upon which creative spaces *in general* are being produced in Beijing. Whether they are officially sanctioned, commercial, artistic or artisanal, such spaces are primarily valued on their economic performance as a primary criterion of their legitimacy, although the aforementioned concern with ‘soft power’ remains an important basis for cultural policy. In many ways, this move mirrors the processes of commodification in the west in the 1980s, when cultural industries overcame the contradiction between the use and exchange value of their products, allowing them to be integrated fully into the economy via intellectual property (Lash and Urry, 1993), and becoming

increasingly reliant on corporate funding (Kidd, 2011; Sholette, 2011). While similar, the native context must however be understood within the evolving relation between the state and the arts, which underwent a transformation from ideological tool of the Maoist state to a somewhat unreliable ally in the pursuit of China's soft power and cultural prowess.

Behind this change we find the transformation of artists' and other cultural and spatial professionals' position in society, which can broadly be understood as a commodifying process: the product of the artist's work is sublimated into a commodity. This has two important consequences: the introduction of a market-based mechanism of legitimation, as well as a diversification of patronage links. While more conventional narratives posit this change as a shift from state totalitarianism to the dictate of the market, the present research will strive to look beyond this narrow explanation, borrowing primary concepts such as *professionalism*<sup>2</sup> and *patronage*<sup>3</sup> from Richard Kurt Kraus's *The Party and the Arty* (2004) to better understand how the commodifying pressure impacts on the production of creative spaces in Beijing. It is important to understand artists not as passive recipients of either statist or commercial pressure, but rather as actors struggling not only for freedom, but for their professional status as well (Kraus, 2004: 4). By examining professionalism and patronage against the field of creative space, we can further elaborate on the underlying question of how creativity is operationalised through the activity of state and non-state actors, many of whom are 'unofficial' artists. Salmenkari for example defines unofficial art as one "*...which relies on horizontal cooperation and networking while trying to avoid vertical dependency on the state and its resources*" (Salmenkari, 2004: 236). This struggle for professionalism, which includes both freedom of expression as well a diversification of patronage links, has found expression in the spatial forms typical of Beijing's creative zones: from the squalor and isolation of early-reform communities, they have become wealthy, even ostentatiously so. At the same time, an acute sense of isolation has been preserved in the spatial form

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<sup>2</sup> Professionalism understood as an 'autonomy to make decisions about one's work' (Kraus 2004: 4)

<sup>3</sup> Patronage understood as 'the institutional forms by which artists are employed to produce their work' (Kraus: op.cit.: 5).

of the ‘art compound’, surrounded by walls and separating the world of art from the bustle of the street.<sup>4</sup>

A prime example of this is the now globally famous 798 Art Zone in Dashanzi, NE Beijing. The old factory complex avoided redevelopment into a high-tech park through a campaign underlining the commercial value of the arts district. The campaign was aimed at the Beijing municipal government and against the designs of the state-owned enterprise that intended to redevelop the area. Benefitting from the support of eminent institutions and individuals, the 798 Art Zone avoided demolition, yet instead found itself facing intensive development and commercialisation, both through rising rents and official interventions. The 798 Art Zone survived because of its commercial success, which in turn marked its transition from a space of cultural production to cultural consumption.

**Table 8 - Control and legitimacy mechanisms in Beijing’s art scene**

	<b>Legitimacy</b>	<b>Control mechanism</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Maoist</b>	Hard ideological	Campaigns / state resource distribution	Official artists	State-funded
<b>Early reform</b>	Soft ideological	Distribution of state resources / periodic campaigns (post-’89)	Official and unofficial artists	Decline of state funding DIY art First commercial art
<b>Mature reform</b>	Commercial success	Regulation Market-based	Unofficial artists ‘Creatives’	Dynamic art market funding core spaces Self-funded or foreign-funded marginal spaces

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<sup>4</sup> Duanfang Lu points out the ‘vicissitude of walls’ in his work on Chinese urban forms, emphasizing the historical ‘latency’ of this particular architectural feature (Lu, 2006).

Nevertheless, this example also reminds us of the role the Chinese state has kept in pronouncing value-laden judgments on artistic production well into the reform era - and perhaps to this day, though such intervention is sometimes presented as a legal matter, with alleged tax offences being the weapon of choice against unruly artists such as Ai Weiwei (Wee, 2011). Direct interventions into artistic production remain rare, and even in Ai's case these have not been directed against the artist village he largely created, with the concept of 'artist village' having been adopted by the village leadership and the Chaoyang council. This suggests the fate of creative spaces in Beijing is not strictly a question of political conformity, but is rather subject to a different mechanism of legitimation – that of the market – which has become the dominant one through a double process of commodification: of urban space and of art itself.

Firstly, the commodification of urban space can be understood as an outlet to absorb surplus capital, provide a growth engine and thus avoid a crisis of over-accumulation (Wu, 2003: 1333), but this process is also connected to the local state in a reinforcing loop, underlining the importance municipal bodies play in creative strategies. Indeed, field work conducted in Beijing in the spring of 2013 revealed many of the important agents of culture-led regeneration have close links to municipal or other state institutions, ranging from villages, townships, municipal districts, holding companies, joint ventures and GONGOs: Caochangdi village and the Dashila(b) project are both such cases explored in the following chapter. Neither is such entrepreneurialism limited to the field of creative strategies; what Duckett (1996) called the 'entrepreneurial state', that is the emergence of entrepreneurial strategies pursued by local government bureaux, certainly precedes the current trend for creative space production, which appears as yet another in a string of schemes to extract value from urban space: unable to extract taxes in efficient ways, the local state is enticed to enter the highly lucrative real estate market, where its interests can become aligned with those of developers and not necessarily those of city residents, a state of affairs which has received both academic ((Wank, 1999); (Broudehoux, 2004); (Huang, 2004); (Friedmann, 2005)) and media attention. The example of 798 Art Zone explored below clearly shows that creative spaces have joined the ranks of other types of redevelopment in

filling the local state's budget. As the local state also entered the production or management of increasingly prominent creative spaces however, the relations between state and societal actors were re-established, underlining the need to for artists to build links with officials holding administrative monopolies on building permissions, redevelopment or decisions on demolition. All of these present a far greater hindrance to the artists' work than ideological control; to avoid demolition and redevelopment of their spaces, an economic rather than ideological strategy is often most successful.

This brings us to the question of how the commodification of the artists' output has changed the mechanisms of control over their practice. As 'unofficial' art has flourished commercially, so its presence in the urban space of the city has become increasingly marked. When the 'Stars', China's first group of unofficial artists, pinned their work on the wall outside the National Gallery building, they were perhaps unwittingly carving out a new physical space for their work, but it was not until their commercial success that new generations of unofficial artists could stake more permanent claims on urban space. The rise of Chinese art on the international auction circuit has been nothing but phenomenal; the first dedicated auction at Sotheby's in Hong Kong was held in October 2004 and totalled just under \$3million; the next over \$5million, yet another in October 2006 over \$9million. By the time the famous Ullens Collection was put up for auction in 2011, it was sold for over \$71million. The exponential growth of the prices some Chinese artists could command was followed by an increasing internationalisation of the market for art within China itself; after it joined the WTO in 2001, foreign auction houses soon entered its market, with Christie's setting up shop in Beijing in 2005 and Sotheby's following suit in 2007. The Chinese artist elite has since the early 2000s become wealthier and worldlier, expanding its network of patronage well beyond China.

While the state remains the chief patron of the arts in China (as an aggregate 'sector' which includes traditional visual arts, performance troupes, national institutions...), this dominance has waned in contemporary art, and in the production of smaller new creative spaces catering to an expanded definition of 'creativity' - including design, architecture, animation. Here the role of the central state often seems to be that of an overseer of a nation-wide

developmental project that relies on entrepreneurial cities, districts, towns and villages; both Oi (1992) and Walder (1995) for example argue local governments have become the most active proponents of local growth through the incentives posed by hardening budget constraints. According to expectations stemming from this argument, municipal and other para-state actors have become involved into the commercialised market for art and creative output, often as partners in joint ventures and various culture-creative enterprises that have sprung up in the years following Hu's exhortations to establish a competitive national industry. In many ways, the recent proliferation of municipally-backed creative zones and other spaces reflects the way in which policy trickles down; after Songzhuang township, Caochangdi village is now also pursuing the goal of becoming a creative zone. This process of emulation and policy spread continues further down the pecking order of cities, with Zhangzhou in Fujian Province for example emulating nearby Xiamen's efforts, which in turn were based on Beijing's (Huang Liangcai, 798 Times Space Planning Director. Interview, 24 February 2013).

Successful creative spaces such as 798 or Caochangdi have of late received official approval, setting off a slew of imitation projects across the country. While the approval of the state brings with it limits to autonomy, these are in most instances not severe since it is overzealous landlords, rather than the central or municipal authorities, who conduct most of the censorship. In this vein, several exhibitions in the 798 Art Zone have been interfered with by the Seven Star Group which manages the space, with interventions such as removing works with depictions of Chairman Mao, although the works were still available for private views (Van Elzen, 2009: 136). It seems the landlord, ultimately responsible in the vertical hierarchy of the state, felt compelled to err on the side of caution. Rather than ideological control, the intervention of the state often intensifies the processes of commercialisation and the inexorable drift towards satisfying popular taste - creative spaces are being made to 'earn their keep' by either establishing and maintaining a broad appeal (as happened in 798), or by approximating an industrial cluster. The state is back in the art business, but on revised terms, as both an entrepreneurial actor in its own right, as well as regulator-of-last-resort.

## 6.3 Cultural-Creative Industries: Culture and state meet again

When former General Secretary Hu Jintao delivered his keynote speech at the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), remarking on culture and creativity as important factors ‘in the competition in overall national strength’ (Hu, 2007), the discourse on the value of creativity in China had achieved its ultimate recognition in the central government. The wider context of his remarks, marked by an increasing attention to ‘soft power’, has by that time become a topic of academic discussion, though understood mainly from an international relations perspective (cf. (Paradise, 2009); (Wang, 2008); (Kurlantzick, 2007); (Nye: 2004, 2005). A somewhat vogueish concept, ‘soft-power’ encompasses both high and low expression, both elite art and popular creative production, yet the tangible, measurable and economically more quantifiable element of soft power (number of pop music hits exported, Confucius Institutes founded, etc.) has found a clearer expression in governmental policy, conflating artistic expression with cultural mass-production in the drive to bolster the value-added share of cultural and creative industry. Moreover, the term soft power, now favoured by policy-makers on both sides of the Taiwan Straits, obscures the rather more ‘hard’ power relations at work in the production of creative space in China, which are most usefully understood within the context of the commodification of space, a topic explored in the second chapter.

It is argued here that the notions of soft power and the re-valorisation of creative expression a profitable activity has enabled the unlikely return of state interest into the world of the arts, and by extension, into the production of creative spaces. This in turn sets the scene for the exploration of the research question in Beijing’s case, looking at the meeting of state and non-state practices, which can to a large extent be understood as a consequence of a turn towards creative industries in policy-making circles. Repackaged as *cultural-creative industry* (CCI), the arts became a respectable industrial sector, encouraging already highly entrepreneurial municipal authorities to become

invested in the success of creative spaces as the primary loci of cultural and creative production.

The currently favoured term 'cultural and creative industries' itself has a rather short history, having been introduced to Beijing around 2005, when a symposium on the subject was held as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Chaoyang Business Festival; a report commissioned by the Chaoyang District government initially had the word 'creative' removed on the behest of senior officials, only for it to be reintroduced in the final publication (Hui, 2006: 320). This event is not without importance, indicating that a merging of cultural and industrial policies was first considered by a *municipal* authority. The resulting shift in the understanding of cultural and creative practice is to a great extent responsible for Chaoyang becoming the home of several of Beijing's key creative zones or clusters: 798 Art Zone, Caochangdi, Heiqiaocun Art District and Huantie Art City. Moreover, Keane emphasises the reluctance and occasional hostility that the national Ministry of Culture has shown towards a mongrelisation of cultural industry with notions of creativity, which remain suspect in the Ministry's more conservative circles (Keane, 2009: 433), suggesting the importance of analysing sub-national actors in any comparison of creative space production.

That being said, some facet of cultural and creative industries has featured prominently in the last three National Five-Year Plans (2001-5, 2006-10 and the current plan for 2011-15), with the recent plan devoting three chapters to the promotion of cultural innovation, undertakings and industry (State Council, 2011). Similarly, Beijing's own Five-Year plan for the same period emphasises the need for, and benefits of, developing creative and cultural industry in conjunction with a renewed focus on redeveloping historical areas of Beijing (Beijing Municipality, 2011), providing the basis on which an exploration of creative space and heritage protection is undertaken in the next chapter. Beijing and Shanghai, and to a lesser extent Guangzhou and Shenzhen, had by the time Hu made his speech already become centres of a flourishing array CCI projects, with the category including everything from design and architecture, contemporary art to mass-produced reproductions of classical art, and is typically realised through the construction of creative and cultural clusters. With more than 20 such clusters in Beijing, and more than 75 in

Shanghai (Ren, 2013: 189), their presence in China's urban space is increasingly prominent and it seems beyond doubt that China's leaders have bought into the culture-creative discourse. While some culture-creative areas are genuine clusters of cultural and artistic production, many are on the other hand purely industrial in character, reflecting what Keane (2009) calls the 'planned marriage' of culture and innovation, the latter understood mainly as scientific progress (Keane, 2009: 9). Creative spaces in Beijing are, by virtue of the permeability between the national and local levels of government in the capital, especially susceptible to a top-down understanding of their role in the development of the national economy, meaning their analysis covers not only the area of local, but also national politics.

The drive towards the establishment of culture-creative industries is, as already mentioned, not without complications due to differing conceptions of the field by state actors such as the Ministry of Culture, municipal or district governments, or state-owned enterprises. A shared vision nevertheless exists; as Li Wuwei, the chief theoretician and proponent of 'creativity' in China has summarised it, China must move from the model of 'Made in China' to 'Created in China' (Li, 2011). Li's book on the subject, *How Creativity is Changing China*, represents a clear overview of how the concept of creativity is being promoted in China, with attention paid not only to the economic side of creative development, but is replete with allusions to national policy preferences such as 'harmonious society' by suggesting creativity promotes social cohesion and might upgrade China's development model (Li, op.cit.: 11).

As Grodach (2012) has demonstrated on the case of Austin (Texas) however, the adoption of larger policy trends such as creativity strategies produces policy outcomes mediated by specific contextual factors, such as the relation between municipal and non-governmental actors or a city's cultural economy (Grodach, 2012: 81). This example chimes in with the general spirit of the present work, and In a similar spirit, this research has endeavoured to explore the production of Chinese creative zones and spaces given the recognised multi-polarity of the Chinese state.

Interestingly, the support for cultural and creative industries and related spatial strategies comes chiefly from the sub-national level, particularly municipal and district governments with close ties to the epistemic community of 'creativity' experts and consultants, which had, as already mentioned, introduced the idea in Beijing in the mid 2000s. This argument however ignores the spatial precursors which had existed in Beijing far before talk of 'creativity' ever hit the boardrooms of the Central Business District; the question thus remains in what ways (if any), the existing creative spaces have influenced or been influenced by the adoption of the creativity discourse. To this end, the research in Beijing has focused on both spontaneously organised artist villages of the 1980s, 90s and early 2000s, as well as top-down clustering policies, with the extant spaces forming the main subject of ethnographic examination. If a spontaneous formation of culture-creative clusters in China originated from without the state, and these were only recognised as such by the state in the mid 2000s, a crucial question that must be posed is how the spontaneous spatial patterns are being integrated into the official creative strategies: how are the loci of such cultural creative production built? When did the informal artist clusters and the industrial clusters 'merge'? What is the role of the state in the production of these spaces and their legitimation/success? Such questions present the departure point from which the present chapter analyses the trends and approaches to the production of creative spaces in Beijing. An analysis of top-level policy announcements does not sufficiently explain how 'creativity' is operationalised on the ground, beginning from the question of how creative spaces in Beijing are validated or legitimised; the entrepreneurial approach to the production of creative space is the consequence of a meeting of grassroots and top-down initiatives.

## 6.4 From Yuanmingyuan Artist Village to Beijing East Village: creativity as marginal practice

From its beginnings in the artist community in Beijing's Yuanmingyuan, the relation between independent creative spaces and the state has not been a simple one. Implicated in the 1989 Tiananmen protests, the capital's first artist village has long since been cleared, with its veteran contemporary artists scattered across the city and overseas. Yet the idea of a remote, village-like community of artistic producers<sup>1</sup> remains very much the norm in Beijing, with places such as Songzhuang, Caochangdi, Huantie Art City, even the now famous 798 Art Zone all conforming to the trend of clustering in the city's periphery. While many of these new zones have gradually achieved some level of official recognition (ranging from full endorsement to tacit tolerance), many other smaller ones have recently been slated for demolition as the city expands beyond yet another ring road (Liu et al., 2013). The proliferation also hides an increasing diversity of purpose, with some spaces becoming commercial exhibition and tourist destinations, others remaining spaces of creative production, and some moving in the direction of hosting creative industries. Even those that remain loci of artistic production are highly diverse, with some being seen as alternative or cutting edge, others still merely sites of artisan-style reproduction.

These categories are deeply engrained in the art community's own views on these spaces - a view often ignored in literature on the topic due to the subjective nature any such taxonomy entails. Crucially, the distinctions also begin to blur in the field of policy, making any negotiation between the top-down planning perspective and the bottom-up perspective of the space's user very dependent on the framing, timing and mutual understanding of the two sides: what constitutes creativity, what makes a good creative space are

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<sup>1</sup> Such villages are called Yìshù cūn (艺术村, art village) or huàjiā cūn (画家村, painters' village).

always difficult questions, so much more so when the actors on both sides seldom engage in collaborative work, and when the state is not faced with a single, coherent community, but rather an atomised network of divergent interests.

**Table 9 - Beijing's art and space in the reform period**

<b>1979</b>	The Stars, a group of artists outside the official circle including now famous artists such as Ai Weiwei and Huang Rui and Ma Desheng hang up their work on the fence of the National Gallery building
<b>1985</b>	Fine Arts in China magazine founded
<b>Feb 1989</b>	China/Avant-Garde exhibition opens and is promptly shut down by authorities
<b>Jun 1989</b>	Tiananmen massacre takes place with implications for contemporary art and marginal spaces from subsequent crackdown on non-official art and expression
<b>May 1990</b>	Purge of 'bourgeois liberalization tendencies' in art begins, with regime artists heavily criticising the avant-garde movement. Final severing of links between the state and the art world. Many prominent artists leave China.
<b>Early 1990s</b>	"Apartment art" movement as a reaction to the lack of open public space
<b>1995</b>	First artist activity at Dashanzi (later known as 798 Art District) with Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) faculty setting up studios in the abandoned factory
<b>2000</b>	Beijing Tokyo Art Projects opens at 798 Art District, marking the beginning of large galleries setting up spaces in the area and subsequent commercial success  Ai Weiwei and score of other artists move into Caochangdi village
<b>Spring 2002</b>	First officially condoned 'unofficial' artist exhibition takes place
<b>Oct 2004</b>	Sotheby's Hong Kong organises first dedicated Chinese contemporary art auction
<b>Dec 2005</b>	Last attempt to clear 798 Art District by SOE landlord (Seven-Star Group)
<b>2005 ~</b>	Central Beijing's hutongs begin attracting art/creative industry
<b>2007</b>	798 Art District formally recognised by Chaoyang District Government

To better understand the reasons behind this dearth of collaboration, a focus exclusively on the planning, policy-making, top-down perspective is insufficient. It was thus necessary to take on board the experience and practice

of the various artists and creative communities in Beijing. Their experiences and impressions, disjointed as they may seem, have been instrumental in imbibing a chronological, historical narrative of the development of creative spaces in Beijing with a richer texture in order to better observe the ways in which different creative spaces have fared in their negotiation with the state, how their spatial forms were settled, how and when they became the pattern from which numerous new creative zones are now being planned and constructed. Such a timeline of the development of creative spaces in Beijing enables an analysis of the relation between the state and such spaces (and how they are produced): namely, how after the links between the authorities and the art/creative world were first severed following end of Maoism and the rise of unofficial art in China, and then re-established following a new mechanism of legitimation, that of commercial success (or promise thereof) conforming to the newly commodified relations between the creative communities' work and the role of the state as the overseer of the national developmental project. While these links have been explored in general terms (most notably by (Gao, 2011); (Salmenkari, 2004); (Lu, 1997) and (Clark, 1992)), the present research maintains the process of restructuring state-art links has been equally important for the way creative spaces are formed in Beijing. From self-organised, autonomous enclaves viewed with suspicion by the authorities, several variants have developed, each an expression of the relationship between the state, capital and art in contemporary China.

The creative zones in Beijing are furthermore at the heart of an urban development that has seen Chinese metropoli consolidated administratively by absorbing the surrounding countryside (Hsing, 2010). The 798 Art Zone has become urbanised as the city expands outwards, while Caochangdi and Songzhuang still stand out as an examples of village entrepreneurialism, though the former is currently in a process of urbanization. The latter, due to its administrative divide with Beijing municipality, present a case of in-situ urbanization as the once poor rural township has transformed to the home of about 100,000 people, 40% of whom are 'artists' (Ren and Sun, 2012: 512). While Songzhuang has a high concentration of artists as well as studios (many of which have been constructed by villagers eager to attract rent-paying artists), and several layers of Beijing's government have recently become

involved in planning a culture-creative industry cluster in the township (op.cit.: 513), the area's reputation as a site of art production is somewhat lacklustre, with many interviewees from other prominent spaces quietly dismissing it as provincial or naive - "more artisanry than art" ("Ms. Fang", FAKE studios. Interview, 4 June 2013). Be that as it may, Songzhuang presents an interesting offshoot of Beijing's first artist village, Yuanmingyuan (or Summer Palace), blending village politics and municipal efforts to first control and then support the construction of a creative cluster, though recent central government policy on preserving agricultural land has complicated the construction of studios, with some being demolished as a consequence (Li, 2014). Songzhuang has not been included in the case selection due to material and time constraints and no fieldwork has been conducted at the village; nevertheless, many of the characteristics of interaction seen in Beijing proper are also at work in Songzhuang and vice-versa. In both locales, art has moved from marginal activity to lucrative business, with Songzhuang's studio construction rush presenting a particularly obvious example of village entrepreneurs trying to get on the creativity bandwagon.

### ***Yuanmingyuan Artist Village***

The first artist village in Beijing sprang up around the ruins of the Old Summer Palace, burnt down by the Anglo-French expeditionary force in 1860 as retaliation for the capture and execution of their envoys. Seen as a powerful reminder of China's fate at the hands of Western powers, no attempts have been made to rebuild the palace, with the ruins slowly being surrounded by an expanding city. During the end of the 1980s, local farmers built the first structures, which later came to house artists escaping the tense atmosphere in central Beijing following the Tiananmen massacre. Their decision was also practical: many of the unofficial artists, not belonging to a work unit or institution, did not qualify for state housing. Visiting the village in 1993, New York Times Magazine writer Andrew Solomon describes the village as: "...rows of one-story houses, each with a small courtyard and a tiled roof. There is one toilet shed and one telephone for everyone. Vines grow on some of the houses and screen doors are always slamming. Nearby there are farms and a park. In one direction are the vast grounds of the Beijing University and in the other, the Summer Palace itself." (Solomon, 1993: 48).

The almost bucolic village may have seen the first artists moving in in the mid-1980s, when so-called *mangliu* (migrant) artists appeared in several villages in the area. The term itself was apparently coined by videographer Wen Pulin and introduced in Chen Weihe's 1988 article "*Impressions of Beijing's migrant artists*" published in *Zhongguo Meishubao*, an avant-garde magazine shut down in late 1989 following the crackdown against 'bourgeois liberal' art. The term itself should most certainly not be taken literally; while some were indeed migrants from the provinces, many were graduates of Beijing's elite art schools (Chen, 1988: 2). Defining artists as reform China's freest and least stable group however, speaks volumes about the artists' own views on their place in society: removed, perhaps aloof, certainly unappreciated by the authorities. In the years after June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989, the number of such migrant artists swelled as Beijing's art scene reeled from the crackdown on contemporary art. Beginning in May 1990, a purge against artists believed to have taken part in or contributed to the June 4<sup>th</sup> movement was ordered. Apart from removing undesirable elements from the official art world, Party stalwarts were brought out to rehash Maoist-Dengist lines on literature and art, on the basis of which guidelines for the approval of future art-works were clarified (Clark, 1992).

Interpreted from the perspective of the relation between state and art, the move had two important consequences: the clustering and withdrawal of contemporary artists from the mainstream public sphere to closed, private spaces, and the shattering of any final ideological links between the Chinese state and the contemporary art world. The way to produce art was to withdraw from society, to pursue strategies of evasion reminiscent of Ai Weiwei's quote at the beginning of this chapter, strategies still pursued by many of China's most prominent artists. The stage was thus set for the unofficial artists to regroup and re-establish the contemporary art scene; while many left China for the United States and Europe, others retreated to Yuanmingyuan and Beijing East Village. Those remaining in China pursued less public forms of expressions, with the artists' living quarters playing a big role - what Gao Minglu calls 'apartment art' (Gao, 2011) - further reinforcing the tendency towards 'art behind walls' still evident in creative spaces such as Caochangdi or even the courtyards of central Beijing. The final denial of state support and recognition meant the art world in Beijing began to rely on foreign benefactors,

from embassy staff to increasingly frequent visitors, as well as returning Chinese artists such as Ai Weiwei, infusing into the movement a new aesthetic, with some works produced specifically for the foreign art market (most notably the cynic realist and pop movements), while others experimented with forms previously not present in China, all of which contributed significantly to the development of Beijing's creative scene and consequently on the landscape of the city, as young artists from the provinces began to form the first 'creative clusters' - though the often gritty conditions in which they lived are a far cry from today's creative spaces.

### ***Beijing East Village***

One such unofficial cluster, Beijing East Village (Běijīng dōng cūn, 北京东村), was the first artist village in the Chaoyang district (now the home of glitzy galleries and sprawling CCI clusters) and more importantly, the first creative area where traditional boundaries of art were transcended to create a more varied space. East Village, in whose name we find both an invocation of New York's famous arty neighbourhood as well as an opposition to Yuanmingyuan (also known as West Village), was where the notion of 'the creative' first emerged, years before district officials began using the term. Photographers, musicians and performers worked together and achieved a radical shift in their practice and thinking: the very definition of what the creative city discourse might call 'synergy'. As Rong Rong, now a well-known photographer and head of China's premier photography gallery located in Caochangdi says in a letter to his sister: *"Sis, you know, an art village has existed near Yuanmingyuan for years. They call it the "West Village" where most of the artists are painters. But in the East Village of ours, we use all kinds of media. Curse plays rock and roll and writes poems. Kong Bu is an art critic and curates exhibitions. Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming are performance artists ... I'm the only photographer here. We're such a diverse but united community. I believe we can do something meaningful."* (Rong Rong's letter to Yali, May 4 1994. In Hung, 2003: 59)

While many of the group went on to become successful artists, creating some of the most iconic works of Chinese contemporary art as well as being key members of the Caochangdi cluster, the village itself was finally shut down in

June 1994, when police arrested two prominent members on obscenity charges and forced the others to leave (Hung, 2003). Yuanmingyuan or West Village suffered a similar fate, with members also experiencing harassment and outright violence by the police. Significantly, many other migrant villages were also cleared in the mid 1990s (cf. Jeong, 2002), with Salmenkari (2004) suggesting the authorities may have viewed unofficial artist villages in the same light as migrant villages: as disturbances of a *social* kind, rather than *political* ones (Salmenkari, 2004). Their end also reflects this reality, as both Yuanmingyuan and East Village were removed not so much because of the authorities' objection to the artists' political role, but because of a combination of urban redevelopment and social control policies more akin to slum clearance; the role of art and creativity in urban change had not yet entered the vocabulary of urban planning or cultural policy and any early commercial success the artists may have had was in any case not noticed by the city authorities - for better or worse. Their practice was not understood either as a political challenge, nor as useful economic activity, yet the personal career trajectories of the village's founders, as well as the subsequent development of creative spaces in Chaoyang underline the precedent set by East Village as a self-organised, ad-hoc space integrating ideas about creative spaces years before they made it into the planning language of the local or even national state. Both spaces have long since been eaten up by the city, but many more followed nearby as direct descendants of these early self-organised artist communities. Among them, the 798 Art Zone illustrates best the radically different role creative spaces play in late reform China, having achieved both commercial success as well as the recognition of the state.

## 6.5 798 Art Zone – mainstreaming creative space

The first action to establish the half-abandoned 798 Factory as an artist zone took place not long after the clearing of Yuanmingyuan and East Village; in contrast to the previous two artists villages however, the development of 798 already reflects the changes in the mechanism of legitimation and by extension, the role of the state in the production of creative spaces in Beijing. Firstly, 798 was from the very beginning a space with a certain amount of institutional protection, having first been ‘discovered’ by the faculty and students of the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA). At the time, the sprawling industrial plant in Dashanzi was abandoned following the plant’s closure during the early reform era. Once one of the most modern electronics plants in Maoist China, built in a ‘Bauhaus’<sup>2</sup> style by East German engineers in the 1950s, the area was now owned by the Seven Star Group, a state-owned enterprise formed out of the old factory and tasked with redeveloping the area. The Seven Star Group, which remains in the field of electronics, intended to develop the area into a high-tech industrial cluster and marketplace along the lines of Zhongguancun, Beijing’s largest electronics neighbourhood. Their plans however, were foiled by an increasingly vocal and well-connected group of artist-tenants who not only secured the sprawling complex for use as a creative/arts zone, but practically affirmed the idea of ‘creativity as business’ in policy-making circles, setting off a slew of imitations and variations on the 798 Art Zone across China<sup>3</sup>.

The factory complex, originally called Complex 718, was a military factory producing electronic radio components. The time of its construction holds many curious stories of disputes between Soviet and German advisors, as well as the attitudes of the Soviets towards the Chinese, foretelling the dispute

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<sup>2</sup> Although the industrial architecture of the 718 Complex, as it was originally formed, owes its aesthetic to the East German planners, it could not strictly be considered an example of Bauhaus architecture. Nevertheless, this understanding of the industrial halls has become a mainstay of official presentation and brochures emphasising the international character of 798.

<sup>3</sup> Many of these spaces also use a numerical designation as a marker of their function, for example the ‘M50’ in Shanghai, the ‘1912’ in Nanjing or the ‘7801’ group in Xiamen.

between the two socialist countries. Upon its completion however, the factory was a model of Maoist urban space. An industrial facility and city rolled into one, the 718 Factory was considered the finest *danwei* in China, with state-of-the-art medical equipment, theatres, schools, even an internal militia armed with anti-aircraft guns. The self-contained, compound nature of the complex is still evident in the area, indeed it has fused successfully with the self-isolating tendencies of Beijing's artist communities, and later with the planning doctrine of clustering, which has found expression not only in creative clusters, but other spatial types characteristic for China: high-tech clusters, export zone clusters, industry incubators - the policy of industrial agglomeration has been used extensively in China's planning circles and it is no surprise to have it applied to the emerging creative field.

The transformation of the industrial complex in the reform era also makes it symbolically important, and indeed this symbolism has not been lost on the factory's new tenants, emphasising the area's history through selective preservation of Maoist slogans, machines and other equipment, and also with the use of the few remaining working industrial units and their workers in art projects focusing on the life of the declining *danwei*. While the move from industrial to post-industrial space with a stint as an artist area is by no means exceptional to Beijing or China (cf. Zukin (1982) on New York's experience), the details of this transition are highly relevant to the research question at hand; what is queried is not the appearance of art-led regeneration, but rather the institutional framework employed, the operationalization of the concept by the various actors involved, which in this case include the Chaoyang District administration, the Seven Star Group SOE, and the loose community of artists, gallerists and shop-owners - in other words, the tenants. The key to understanding the transition of this space from industrial relic to a flagship creative space of Beijing lies in the aforementioned re-establishment of links between the state and the arts based on a commodified, market-based mechanism of legitimation, which also has significant consequences for this particular space.

The artist-tenants first started moving into the cheap, abandoned production halls from the mid 1990s onwards. With the mediation and support of CAFA,

faculty and students of the academy set up the first studios, followed in 2000 by the Dean of the Department of Sculpture, and in 2001 by the area's first foreign tenant, Robert Barnell and his publishing company/bookstore. The first gallery opened in 2002, when one of the area's principal artists, Huang Rui, asked his friend and Japanese gallerist Yukio Tabata to open a gallery at Dashanzi instead of Shanghai (Wang: 2012). What distinguishes the 798 area from Yuanmingyuan and East Village is certainly the professional level and embeddedness into the global arts scene; while the previous two were essentially retreats for unofficial artists to create unnoticed by the state, 798 was developing in the opposite direction, claiming more attention, drawing in more returning artists as well as foreign galleries and businesses on the back of already existing networks and entirely outside of the purvey of either the municipal state or the area's owners, the Seven Star Group. Once the inevitable conflict with the Seven Star Group arose, it was not a conflict over the value of artistic production, but would be better characterised as a conflict over resources - in this case plentiful space in what was rapidly becoming a more expensive neighbourhood lying directly on the important traffic corridor to Beijing's new airport. When Seven Stars refused to extend the artists' leases at the end of 2004 to expand its high-tech production area, the artist/creative community resorted to appeals to the central and municipal government. This marks a crucial moment in the development of state-art relations in Beijing, not only in terms of physical space, but also the space afforded to contemporary art and creative practices/industries in the realm of policy and planning, or what we may call the abstract urban space. Faced with an uncertain future, the artist-tenants organised a series of acclaimed art festivals, with foreign dignitaries attending some of the events amid great media attention, including two French Ministers of Culture, the EU culture commissioner and former German Chancellor Schröder. Ironically, the success of the area was what spurred the Seven Star Group to try and evict the artists amid fears of losing control (Wang and Li, 2011: 878). Apart from generating foreign and media attention, the artist community crucially intervened with the municipal government through Li Xiangqun, a distinguished professor and Committee member at the Beijing Municipal People's Congress (the municipal organ of the state). In 2004, Li put forward a proposal to protect the area not only for its architectural and heritage value, but for its potential to develop into a centre for

Chinese art akin to a central business district, just like Soho has become the art centre of New York. It was on these terms and using the 'SOHO concept' (a term which carries great symbolic value in China) that the Municipality accepted the proposal, including the area in its creative industry development plan within the 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan; the Dashanzi area was still managed by the Seven Star Group, but they were now tasked with developing a hotbed of creativity and art *in lieu* of an IT one. This marks an important point in the analysis of creative space in Beijing; from being (self-)exiled to the fringes of society, the artist community had returned, *rebranded as a creative one*, to the domain of policy-making. No longer subject to ideological veridiction, Beijing's creative spaces were now part of an economic horizon of policy which was implemented through the commodification of the artists' (or creatives') work as either objects of consumption by the public or goods for export abroad, with the added value of boosting China's image on the world stage. The state remains involved as the ultimate arbiter of creative spaces' survival through administrative means, as well as retaining the capacity for 'extraordinary intervention' against any threats to its legitimacy and power, as Ai Weiwei has witnessed following his criticism of the Communist Party's handling of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake (The Economist, 5 May 2012). While the artist and his design studio have been the subject of a tax evasion investigation, the neighbourhood that he largely created has in fact achieved recognition by the authorities, demonstrating how the mechanism of legitimizing creative spaces can operate even amidst conflictual relations between the planning state and the practicing actors on the ground, and explored in further detail in the following chapter.

The governance of the arts and of creative space is of course no exception to a legacy of what Liu (1992) called 'sporadic totalitarianism', i.e. a state with strong despotic power and weak infrastructural power, evidenced in the way in which the authorities handled the post-Tiananmen purge of the arts, but also in the lack of infrastructural power to engage with subsequent generations of unofficial artists. Only as the infrastructural power of the Chinese (local) state increased, so the mechanisms governing and overseeing creative spaces in Beijing have moved towards an administrative-regulatory model, though one which still retains some 'campaign' characteristics visible in occasional bursts

of policy enforcement. The 798 Art Zone as such has become a template for creative districts around the country despite its own creative output diminishing amid rent inflation and rampant commercialisation of space to suit the needs of tourists. The commercial success of the 798 Art Zone may have spurred imitation in other Chinese cities as a positive 'judgement' on the viability of creative, yet its success has not had beneficial effects on surrounding creative spaces, as the Chaoyang District government now has less interest in their preservation, preferring instead to redevelop their land for other uses (Ren and Sun, 2012: 511).

798 has survived attempts to demolish or relocate it precisely because of the artists' skilful navigation between the Scylla of the Seven Star Group and Charybdis of the Chaoyang District Government. Similar to Taipei's Huashan 1913 and Kaohsiung's Pier-2, it presented too large and too coveted a plot of land to survive in any form which would not be conducive to commercial development; unlike Taipei's case, where the decision to commercialise was taken by a joint body of government and civil society (see Chapter Four), or that of Kaohsiung, where the municipality completely absorbed the area as a vertically integrated part of the city bureaucracy (Chapter Five), Beijing's case is one of civil society relying on one state body - the district government, to resist the predation of another - the Seven Star SOE. By presenting itself as a reliable source of income in the first place, and international landmark in the second instance, the artist community at 798 has succeeded in creating China's foremost 'art zone', derailing the plans of the Seven Star Group to exploit the area as a high-tech cluster. This was only possible by invoking the (central and municipal) government's priorities through official channels, framing their activity as part of the national developmental project, a high-profile display of soft power. Ironically, it was precisely by invoking these priorities that they have subjected themselves to a process of commercialisation that will ultimately remove all but the largest of players. Thus, the market-based mechanism of legitimation is not merely a lever in negotiation with the state, but has also transformed the essence of what 798 Art Zone is: by favouring larger established groups, galleries over studios, by the move towards large mainstream events which further bolster the reputation of the space, further pushing it into the direction of an exclusive exhibition

space/tourist attraction. While this may seem an obvious statement, it carries significant analytical value for interpreting how *ways of doing things* transform space; the invocation of commodified value led to the adoption of a market-based mechanism of legitimation, which finally exceeded the original scope and intent of the artist-tenants.

## 6.6 Conclusion

The production of creative space in Beijing confronts us with the need to look into the black box of spatial restructuring in China; while macroeconomic explanations such as commodification go a long way to account for the dynamic land market in which state, local state, private and joint ventures are all competing for a share of wealth, the same processes are also affecting the production of art, as well as the understanding of what 'creativity' actually is. No longer merely understood as artistic output, its debut as an economic and national category of utmost importance has joined entrenched tendencies towards self-imposed isolation and reliance on commercial benefactors and endeavours (domestic and foreign), rather than state support of creative output. At the same time, the blurring of boundaries between art and creative industries (typical not only for China, but within the creative city discourse as a whole) has further emphasised the links creative spaces maintain with industry, as well as opened a new line of approach for state intervention and control, though within the bounds of a dynamic market for the 'products' of the creatives' work. The central state's role on the other hand seems limited to the broad setting of the 'rules of the game'. Creative spaces in Beijing can therefore best be understood within a market-led dynamic which does not *exclude* the influence of the state, but rather subjects its style of governance to a commodifying logic: whereas Taipei's municipality developed non-commercial public institutions of creative space production, this same role is taken up by the municipal state as *one of* the commercial actors alongside non-state actors such as artist collectives, galleries or real-estate developers, SOHO China being the most notorious.

This process is further nuanced by the large variety of state actors and bodies involved in processes of urban redevelopment: townships, villages, districts, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), various *danwei* of public institutions such as schools or museums, municipal bodies' holding companies. Hsing for example points out how SOEs have been engaging in competition with each other, as well as the municipal and central state and other institutions such as universities and schools (Hsing, 2010). In fact, the formation of the 798 Art Zone presents such a case where competing (para)state agents with conflicting

views on how the derelict factory should be used clashed, finally resulting in the municipal government siding with the artist community which had been using the space (though the artists eventually lost the “struggle” against the commercialisation of the area). The central state meanwhile remains present as an overseer and ultimate arbiter, maintaining a hands-off stance with the exception of events which relate directly to its rule: either in a positive way, as was the case during the Beijing Olympics when the 798 Art Zone was elevated to a symbolic status matching Beijing’s other great attractions, or negatively, as the crackdown after Ai Weiwei’s challenge to Party rule and legitimacy has shown.

Apart from the roles different state actors and poles play, a common problem one faces when attempting to analyse creative spaces in China is how to distinguish between the roles *art/culture* and *creative industries* play in the setting up of creative spaces. While it is argued here that the artist community in Beijing has often been at the forefront of such spatial development (798 Art Zone being one well-known example), government support and private funding has been directed more towards *creative industries*, which may ultimately be credited with achieving official recognition of the sector as a whole, no longer seen only as artist “opt-outs” and troublemakers, but productive contributors to China’s peaceful rise. This corresponds to the move in the west towards an economic re-evaluation of cultural activities in the 1980s, as the added value of ‘symbolic consumption’ (cf. Chapter One) made culture a marketable commodity. Hu’s remarks on culture and creativity can thus be taken both as a recognition of the field of creative production, while simultaneously reinforcing the understanding of art, culture and creative industries as a single economic sector, though much opacity remains regarding interpretations by various Ministries and city-level institutions.

As for the role, capacity and style of state intervention in creative spaces, the chapter argues that while the state is heavily invested in the culture-creative discourse as an urban development strategy and source of ‘soft power’, the approach on the ground to the production of creative space in Beijing is driven by a process of commodification and shaped by path-dependencies particular to the art scene in Beijing. Effectively, the practice of making creative spaces

(be they zones, clusters, villages) subjects the creative and cultural field (and the actors within it, be they state or non-state) to a *logic* of the marketplace and the *form* of the cluster/compound. While the existence of such an approach is not surprising considering well-documented cases of spatial commodification in the reform era (Wu, 2002, 2003; Hsing, 2010;), the dynamic, market-led production of creative space nevertheless also indicates the limitations of state capacity resulting in a particular style of governance, which allows openings for non-state actors to become directly involved in what has become a spatial transformation of large proportions, of which 798 Art Zone is the most obvious example. Simultaneously, the ideological restrictions and challenges to the setting up of creative spaces and practices that have existed in the pre-reform era have largely become regulations rather than value judgements applied *post festum*. Lastly, the trend of clustering/compounds, with roots in both historical conceptions of Chinese space ranging from the imperial to the Maoist (cf. Lu, 2006; Knapp et al., 2005; Xu, 2000; Chan, 1994), has facilitated a fusion of industrial policies (which have long favoured clustering) with the organically grown artist clusters. Thus, latent notions of the benefits of clustering were transferred seamlessly to art zones, notwithstanding that such zones emerged out of the spatial forms of the *danwei* work unit, as well as the influence of a history of self-imposed seclusion in the art and creative communities of Beijing.

A comparative perspective with Taiwan may serve at this point to underline the significant variation in the operationalization of creative strategies. Firstly and in regards to the style and capacity of governing, Taiwan's case is set apart by the presence of an adaptive, integrating state vis-à-vis small groups of activists, experts and artists, especially in Taipei's case. There, a corporative project managed by the state has developed institutions of creative space production which link artists, planners, corporate interests and academics under a coherent, state-led body. In comparison, China's creativity strategies are characterised by a multi-layered state composed of national, provincial and municipal authorities, state-owned enterprises, joint ventures and holding companies, and organisations such as elite universities and schools (and their associated work-units), all of which are often *in competition* with each other over their right to use urban space. Such a 'disaggregated' state presents

several obstacles and opportunities in the production of creative space; legitimization of creative spaces may thus occur as a result of actors exploiting the competitive relations between different (para-)state institutions, as happened in the case of 798 Art Zone. On the other hand, the often-obscure relations between influential and unaccountable state actors result in the transient, unstable nature of many creative spaces in China.

Secondly, on the other end of the state-society spectrum, we find internationally acclaimed and financially hugely successful artists such as Ai Weiwei, Xu Bing or Huang Rui, whose autonomy cannot be exaggerated in comparison to Taiwan's relatively isolated and overlooked art scene, dependent almost entirely on the benevolence of the state and its institutions. While the production of creative zones and spaces has in recent years become the purvey of planning departments, this research maintains that crucial differences between Taiwan and China can be traced to these spaces' formative years and usefully explained by looking at not only governing patterns, but also the ways in which relevant groups respond to downward pressure, i.e. *their capacity to ignore, circumvent or even challenge the state's efforts*. Unlike Kaohsiung therefore, the state in China is not as able to impose freely its vision of what creativity means due to a lack of vertical, direct power flows, with national plans being diluted and reinterpreted before the shovel hits the ground. Analogous to the problems and solutions deployed to control China's officialdom, relying on normative appeals and mechanisms rather than direct control, so the national policies on soft power can often result in a mere 'artwash' of what are essentially urban redevelopment projects filling the coffers of the local state.

Moreover, in Beijing and Shanghai at least, the understanding of creativity and its spatial manifestation was often framed by non-state actors able to steer the development of such spaces to the point where local authorities have begun copying their solutions - sometimes brick by brick, as is the case of Caochangdi, examined in the following chapter. On the other hand, the central state in China is also unable (or unwilling at any rate) to significantly integrate the expertise and demands of the epistemic community of artists, experts and academia - what I have called 'spatial professionals' in the work on Taipei.

Thus, the situation remains characterised by distrust and avoidance of the state's influence by the creative communities, though one which is increasingly being challenged by para-state actors and lower levels of the state (such as villages and townships), able to engage directly in the emulation and reproduction of successful creative spaces such as the 798 Art Zone or the Caochangdi and Songzhuang artists villages.

# Chapter Seven: Beijing's Creative Spaces in Flux

## 7.1 Introduction

The experience of Beijing's newest (semi) official creative neighbourhoods has clear implications for the exploration of state-art relations within the larger topic of creative space production in China and Taiwan. Firstly, open support by the state, while often unwelcomed by the artists themselves, suggests a high level of priority is being attached by policy-makers to the creation, nurturing and export of China's nascent 'culture-creative' sector. Just as Caochangdi village has embraced its artists, so Xicheng and Dongcheng districts are attempting to reinvent its old neighbourhoods as hotbeds of creativity and cultural production, while the central state has also lent its support and legitimation to the role of art and culture as a cornerstone of national development. Although the tools used may be crude and reminiscent of industrial chains of production, the very vagueness and vogueishness of 'creativity' as a concept also allows artist spaces to operate under the assumption of being productive members of an economic and cultural drive from the national level. Creative zones such as Caochangdi or innovative community-oriented projects like Dashila(b) thus profit from the trickling down of national policies called for by the leadership: not necessarily translating into direct support (which is in any case not always welcomed), the policies allow for a legitimation of artist communities such as Caochangdi in spite of the formally illegal nature of many of the physical aspects of the space. Put simply, it is the abstract space of their activity, of their practice, that has been legitimised rather than the physical spaces of the studios they inhabit.

Secondly, the transformation of the relationship between the state and the arts, from one fraught with ideological obstacles to one regulated largely via market-based mechanisms, has brought fresh instability and opportunity. Creative zones, villages, districts, or neighbourhoods have been appearing with great speed and vigour all across Beijing, spurred on by huge international and domestic demand for Chinese art, as well as an increasingly liberal environment permissive of minor transgressions against Party doxa. While red lines remain, these do not interfere as acutely with the process of creative space production, which remains firmly rooted in the logic of art-led redevelopment, followed by local government acceptance (as was the case in 798 as well as Songzhuang and Caochangdi) and commercial development, a pattern described in detail by Zukin in the case of New York (Zukin: 1982; 2010). Indeed, the local state and its SOEs have begun participating in art-led redevelopment in terms of planning and policy, as examples from Dongcheng and Xicheng show, indicating that the state is aware of, and understands art-led redevelopment as a form of urban restructuring aimed at creating the 'right kind' of authenticity. The example of *laozihao*, or old brands, clearly marks the understanding of cultural capital as an economic category, subject to a market logic of expansion. The commodification of culture should not have a strictly negative connotation either; as ideas about the value of culture and heritage gain momentum, it has become possible for a project such as Dashila(b)/Dashilar Platform to attract state investment in previously neglected aspects of community development through art and culture development. As the low-hanging fruit of wholesale redevelopment becomes less attainable, so we should not be surprised that the local state, in its many guises, is becoming more enthusiastic about smaller art/culture-led redevelopment which can nonetheless provide a significant return on what are usually relatively small investments. Adding to this the cadre management system rewarding success with career advancement (cf. Landry, 2008; Edin, 2003), the involvement in high-profile projects such as the Venice Biennale also highlights the personal value which art and culture-led redevelopment can hold for Beijing's municipal cadres. To summarize, it is against these incentives and conditions that this chapter aims to examine the contemporary situation, locating a site in the periphery and two in central Beijing as key creative spaces from which further trends are emerging.

## **7.2 Caochangdi: from one artist's village to one village's art zone**

If the 798 Art Zone presents a case of the creative community engaging directly with the state to secure concessions and space, neighbouring Caochangdi is rooted firmly in the tactics of avoidance. Two main findings come from the work on Caochangdi: firstly, the reinterpretation of social control as market regulation (explored in the previous chapter) has been reaffirmed on the ground. Secondly, the emulation by the village cadres of spontaneous creative spaces produced by artists demonstrates the possibilities for the uptake of such strategies and practices by the local state, its small scale notwithstanding. Whether this may result in increased control of artist practice or provide some institutional cover owing to the incorporation of the village as an International Artist Village is at the moment unclear, yet the value of having an artist community has been clearly recognised by the village.

Having served first as an Imperial hunting ground, Caochangdi was found to have good feng-shui and subsequently converted into a grave-site and garden, around which a village sprang, marking the beginning of Caochangdi as a specific locale in Beijing's then rural surroundings. The gardens having been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, the village was transformed into an agricultural commune; interestingly, it was considered so remote from Beijing it received youth sent down to the countryside during the '*Shangshan Xiexiang*' campaign (Mangurian and Ray, 2009: 425). As the Chinese economy opened up and Beijing spread beyond the confines of the old imperial city, Caochangdi remained a rural village, though increasingly also following the trend of village enterprises and in-situ urbanisation caused by a rapid influx of population, as well as demand for industrial spaces in the vicinity of the capital. As the 798 Art Zone in nearby Dashanzi was taking-off in the early 2000s with visits from foreign dignitaries and famous artists, Caochangdi was nevertheless still firmly off the map until an ever increasing amount of attention was drawn to the village by its first artist-resident, Ai Weiwei, who together with Frank

Uytterhaegen established the 'China Art Archive Warehouse'<sup>1</sup> in Caochangdi in 1999. Ai Weiwei, who has remained in the village since, has also acted as its unofficial urban planner, designer and architect, setting off a slew of imitations of his trademark grey-brick architecture. So much so, he has recently switched to red bricks to elude the copy-cats of the village (op.cit, 432). The growth in the creative and cultural sectors of Caochangdi has been nothing short of remarkable, especially considering that virtually no support or plan existed to facilitate the clustering of galleries, studios and cultural enterprises in an area as remote as Caochangdi. While the relative vicinity of 798 Art Zone does account for the general flow of art and culture organizations to Northeast Beijing, Caochangdi was borne primarily out of Ai Weiwei's relocation, with around 50 arts and cultural organizations based there so far.

Despite this fast growth, many artists and galleries, as well as other inhabitants of the area, were served demolition and resettlement notices on 14 April 2010 as part of a wider plan to redevelop the 14 villages which make up Cuigezhuang Township under the rubric of 'city and town integration' (城乡一体化 *chéngxiāng yītǐhuà*). After further inquiry and pressure organised by the villages art studios and galleries, the township authorities later denied that Caochangdi would be included, adding to the confusion regarding its future (Li, 23 April 2010). Previously, only one other township in the district, Dawangjing, has been integrated in the same way in a pilot project, which has had a significant effect on Caochangdi as well. Widely seen as a model resettlement plan, it covered nearly 1700 households and was completed 43 days ahead of schedule, prompting Beijing Party Secretary Liu Qi to go as far as calling it 'a miracle' (Li, 2009 August 24). One reason for the relative ease with which the villagers were relocated is the markedly improved system of compensation piloted at Dawangjing, which saw villagers receiving an urban *hukou*, compensation, as well as a collective 50,000 square meter share of the future development from which former villagers will receive rental income (Li, 2009 17 April). According to data gathered by Ray and Mangurian, around 600

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, Ai called his operation a 'warehouse' to avoid raising doubts about whether this was a studio or gallery; a warehouse being an industrial building the likes of which cover China's industrial landscape, it was likely to remain unnoticed, while also avoiding the legal barriers to registering a gallery, which are subject to a specific set of registration rules (Mangurian and Ray, 2009: 444).

compensated villagers bought new cars following their resettlement, bringing attention to the often less-research side of urban village demolitions: the incentive to leave. In Caochangdi, rumours of a similarly generous resettlement programme set off a construction frenzy in which almost 80% of the existing residential stock was upgraded to 3-storey buildings (Mangurian and Ray, Lecture, October 2009). Clearly, the demolition of the creative spaces of Caochangdi could bring financial benefits to the villagers, so it is especially interesting that the village authorities have stuck steadfast to the promotion of the International Art Village as a way to forestall demolition or at least increase its cost. While the loss of personal position is one reason for the village leadership to avoid integration (village level organisations are absorbed or disbanded according to the urban-rural integration plan), the present research also argues that the village authorities independently recognised the economic potential of supporting the transformation of Caochangdi into an International Art Village.

### ***New Socialist Countryside, New International Art Village***

The village, apart from being distinguished by the large and ever rising number of galleries, artist studios and creative companies, has also been designated a Socialist New Countryside Village as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, which promoted the construction of a New Socialist Countryside (NSC), a policy spearheaded by Premier Wen. Constituting a separate entity of local government, the village was an especially conspicuous testing ground for a mix of self-organised creative enterprise, Maoist-style campaigning, as well as the organic growth of the village to service the spree of construction related to the setting up of creative spaces. The village entrepreneurialism fostered by the policy may go a long way towards explaining why Caochangdi seems to have become an exception in Cuigezhuang Township, having been excluded from demolition. Moreover, it is important to underline that the growth of creative spaces in the village was not expected or planned, meaning any involvement by the local cadres can be seen as a reaction to outside conditions within the confines of their mandate as a model village, as well as their own entrepreneurial agency. Bearing this in mind, it is essential to draw attention to the conclusions of Schubert and Ahlers' study of the NSC policies, which found the setting up of model villages is both an element of 'strategic agency'

for local cadres eager to escape top-down control, as well as being embedded in ‘...development strategies that concretise XNCJS [NSC] guidelines passed down from higher levels, often based on a local “thinking” that gives special legitimation to modelling strategies by functioning as an ideological “unifier” among the local bureaucracy.’ (Schubert and Ahlers, 2013: 846-7).

Applying this approach to Caochangdi’s creative spaces, the support of the local village leadership to the activities of the artist community serves both as a tool to profile their village (and their leadership), as well as allowing an integration of the village into a national, top-down scheme of constructing a national cultural industry without the village being administratively and physically integrated (or rather, demolished). In short, the creative space strategy allowed the village to capitalise both in terms of *state support* and *increased autonomy* as the success of the village economy legitimates their stance towards the creative communities in the village. While demolition and integration into the city remain a possibility, newer plans and business investment material issued by the Chaoyang District suggest Caochangdi is to remain a cultural-creative zone in some way or another, having been included in the ‘Dahuan Tourist Cultural Area’, one of the district’s priority areas of creative and cultural development<sup>2</sup>. By betting on the creative spaces’ success, the village leadership has clearly taken on board the importance of the sector to their village’s development, affording the galleries and studios a level of local protection and entering the market as a creative space producer in its own right, with the construction of the “East End Art Zone” complete and further construction underway. The village is even looking beyond brick and mortar projects towards collaborative projects with London, Dubai and New York to cement its legitimacy as a creative zone with international credentials.

The village’s promotional video<sup>3</sup> makes the entrepreneurial stance of the leadership abundantly clear. Set to a karaoke version of John Lennon’s *Imagine*, the short film first clarifies the value of culture in today’s global economy as well as for China’s national aspirations and development. Intended

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<sup>2</sup> Chaoyang District Government website: Cultural and Creative Industry. Accessible at <http://www.bjchy.gov.cn/business/zhdchy/whchychy/>. Accessed 7 May 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Accessible at <http://www.caochangdi.com.cn/>. Accessed 15 May 2013.

to showcase the developmental niche that Caochangdi has been so good at exploiting, the film introduces local cadres and their efforts to promote and set up the Caochangdi International Art Village (草场地国际艺术村 Cǎochǎngdì guójì yìshù cūn) under the slogan of the New Socialist Countryside policy. While the video does not go as far as to say the development of the village's culture-creative industry was entirely planned to coincide with the NSC, other local Party publications are not so reserved. An article on Village Party Branch Secretary Zhang Gengqi for example suggests the village's success is down to Secretary Zhang's 'deep understanding and acknowledgment of culture-creativity' (Wang, 2009). The integration of the pre-existing 'creative capital' into the village's own entrepreneurial strategy emphasises the mode of production typical of Beijing's creative spaces. Seen within this context, the presence of a creative zone was a serendipitous find for the village leaders, allowing them to use it as bargaining chip and avoid the fate of Dawangjing village just across the Airport Expressway. Based on a twin discourse of national cultural development and economic success, creative spaces such as those constructed in Caochangdi by Ai Weiwei are *legible* as such to multiple levels of municipal government, despite their original designer certainly not being a desirable character. The uptake of creative strategies at the grassroots level is facilitated by the incentive for place-making and entrepreneurialism, both of which are features of Chinese governance patterns. While Treasure Hill, Taipei's own illegally built village was only integrated through a process of museumification over which the residents had little say, Caochangdi avoided wholesale demolition through a successful place-making process which has secured its survival for the time being. Importantly, with the village surviving, so do the positions occupied by the current village leadership.

Songzhuang, Beijing's largest and most remote creative cluster, presents a similar case (cf. Ren and Sun, 2012). Caochangdi shares with Songzhuang another characteristic in that both have set up village shareholding enterprises, an instrument of wealth distribution that remains relatively rare in northern China, though frequently found in the south of the country. Hsing (2010), referring to this system as 'village corporatism', points out the relative autonomy afforded to the village by virtue of shareholding companies and real estate operations; as collective owners of the land, villages can engage in

negotiation with urban governments, with the shareholding enterprise representing a method of distributing wealth, as well as participating in lucrative land-deals (Hsing, 2010: 123-5). What sets Caochangdi or Songzhuang apart however is that these villages have zealously taken up a model that originates from the private sector (specifically art-led construction), re-establishing a tentative link between state and art via the local village. Seen from the analytical framework informing this chapter, the village serves as an example of a low-level contact between the arts and the local state, just as 798 was an example of a higher-level one. While Caochangdi does not command nearly as much attention or resources as the 798 Art Zone, it has nonetheless managed to escape the fate of many other creative spaces in the Chaoyang District by virtue of the village's more independent status, while many other areas have been razed or slated for demolition by the Chaoyang District government; thus, protection of the immediate level of local state remains important and may yet lead to closer collaboration between the state and the artist communities engaged in the production of creative spaces.

### ***Avoiding state approval***

For the time being, the tactic of avoiding the state that had served Chinese artists since the late 1980s remains visible in the private walled compounds scattered around Caochangdi, protected both from prying eyes and secure in the administrative grey zone of the village. Having brought a great deal of economic gain to the village, as well as enabling the village to re-brand itself as an art village, local cadres in Caochangdi remain welcoming of the artists' presence. The artist community presents mainly an economic opportunity and is understood almost entirely within the narrow scope of China's developmentalist thought: culture is a commodity and is treated as such by the village's new policy of "One institute, one product; One house, one product" (一宅一品, 一院一品), meant to diversify and specialise the numerous culture-creative organizations in the village. How an artist community that is both financially independent and globalised will react to such a simplified view of their work is however not entirely clear, though the expectation is that such a policy will be used mainly to regulate and promote the village's own cultural-creative endeavours as a branding, place-profiling strategy, rather than a curatorial or control mechanism over the artists' output. Ultimately, the

incorporation of the village and its new life as an artist village may yet spell the end of a more free-wheeling version of Caochangdi, as official recognition seldom comes without increased interference, as Ren and Sun have also pointed out on the case of Songzhuang (Ren and Sun, 2012).

Despite the endorsement for the existence of a creative cluster in the village by the local cadres, it remains to be seen what *form* that this would take place, reopening the question of the autonomy of creative spaces in Beijing. The physical structures of the village's creative spaces are mostly illegally built, providing a stark contrast between the official endorsement of the village as a space of creative production, and the continuing illegality of what are arguably Beijing's most avant-garde and world-famous spaces: Ai Weiwei's FAKE Design studios, Galerie Urs Meile Beijing, and Rong Rong's Three Shadows photography gallery (the latter being a veteran of Beijing East Village). A map compiled by Mangurian and Ray (Figure 5) clearly shows that the vast majority of the village is illegally built. The formal illegality of much of the creative spaces in the village therefore retains its role as the Sword of Damocles hanging over the artists' heads, ready to be used to regain the space should the local or central government feel the need to do so - demolitions of this sort are not at all uncommon, especially considering conflicts between policies on urbanization versus agricultural land preservation. While certainty with regards to official support for the creative spaces of Caochangdi is impossible to arrive at (indeed many respondents during interviews conducted in April 2013 felt the municipal government may yet go on a demolishing/redeveloping spree), two American architects working in the village are convinced the observation of physical space may offer a satisfactory answer: taking the example of a planned on-ramp for the 5<sup>th</sup> Ring Road as an example, they point out its construction would have wiped out most of the village, yet the ramp was not built according to plan, sparing the 'illegal' creative spaces of the village and allowing the spontaneous growth to continue (Mangurian and Ray, 2009: 426).



**Figure 7 - Illegal structures are shown in black. Source: BASEBeijing Caochangdi, 2012**

Caochangdi escaped wholesale demolition for the time being, yet the uncertainty attests to the continuing oppositional relationship between the state (even at the level of the village) and the creative community (in Caochangdi's case a motley mix of Chinese artists, foreign architects, international galleries and farmer-landlord imitators). Although activist-artists such as Ai often emphasise the totalitarian nature of the Chinese authorities in interviews with foreign media, state control over creative spaces is not purely political; most demolitions and resettlement of artists' studios in eastern Beijing happen for economic reasons, underlining the extent to which the relation between state and art has been depoliticised in terms of ideological struggles. The political having become the economic, state-art relations have also been subsumed within the mechanism of the market in most cases, leaving only

outright brazen protest as the truly risky business for Chinese artist-activists. In 2010, Wu Yuren, the head of the now defunct 008 Art Zone, was arrested following a protest on Chang'an Boulevard past Tiananmen Square earlier in the year. Similarly, Ai has faced tax evasion charges and house arrest. While modern art and the practice of living as an artist is no longer seen as a social ill per se, the authorities have evidently drawn the line at being directly challenged, with most Chinese artists and communities also refraining from irking the state, preferring instead tactics of avoidance and isolation.

Meanwhile in the village, while his presence is tolerated, Ai Weiwei is clearly seen by the village leadership as a troublemaker. The village publications and official histories are careful to avoid any mention of the rogue artists' presence or role in the establishment of the International Art Village, emphasising instead their own cultural acumen, safer modes of expression, and especially the commercial and developmental value of art and creativity for their village. The ironic result of this replication is that municipal creative zones are based on the self-made, isolated communities constructed by China's contemporary artists, yet are devoid of the content which made those spaces attractive to emulate in the first place. With overwhelming attention being directed at the economic consequence of creativity, they are also likely to continue operating as for-hire units for small start-ups and companies in the creative sectors, though rent increases may out-price all but the most successful.

Caochangdi remains a complex and varied village, with haphazard migrant housing only metres away from the quiet gardens of the galleries, many hidden behind high walls or obscured from the busy streets by virtue of their design. The layout of the village is somewhat telling of the way in which creative spaces in Beijing are produced: the art-world newcomers work behind walls, among manicured lawns and tended flowerbeds, rather than the ever-present Beijing dust and smell of construction. Seemingly closer to the international art circuit than a Chinese streetscape, they are nevertheless not isolated, existing instead in a hybrid, transient space. In a Lefebvrian sense, the 'gatedness' of the Maoist urban space persists in these configurations as much as the courtyard form of imperial China has crept into the form of the *danwei* work unit. In Lu Duanfang's words, we are dealing with the 'vicissitude of walls' (Lu:

2006), which quite literally limit and shape the creative spaces in Beijing, contributing also to the replication of closed art compounds in other Chinese cities. Such walls could be interpreted as a physical manifestation of the divide between the concerns of the globalised elite and the daily grind of the migrant worker, but they are equally a testament to the autonomy and outright disdain that many artists feel towards the state. Ultimately, through its control over land and the systemic collusion between political and business elites, the decision about the death or survival of creative zones such as Caochangdi remains with the state. As a four-letter obscenity pasted on the inside of the wall of Ai Weiwei's compound shows however, the creative community in China may not be as malleable as the state desires.

### **7.3 Back to the Hutong – creative space, preservation and ‘gentrification’ in Beijing’s historical neighbourhoods**

798 Art Zone, Caochangdi, even Songzhuang and the former clusters at Yuanmingyuan or Beijing East Village were all characterised by a tendency towards isolation in the form of a compound or cluster. As explored in previous sections, this tendency was borne out of several historical trajectories: the traditional courtyard form of classic architecture, a historical break between the state and the arts, the hybridization of space within the ‘culture-creative’ cluster favoured by the Chinese state, as well as by the continued distrust of artist communities towards the intentions of the authorities. In central Beijing however, recent years have seen an increasingly open model of ‘creative space’, one which takes cues from adaptive reuse of older structures, favours tie-ins with tourism and historical preservation, and invites comparisons with similar projects/processes in Taiwan, as well as further afield. Unlike Taiwan however, the locations examined in Beijing are set apart by the ways in which different actors, especially the state (more specifically in its planning authority) and the creative communities (as the predominant producers and users of the spaces) engage in collaborative projects (as was the case in Dashilar) or operate parallel to each other (as is the case in the Gulou area). Aside from continuing the theme of state-arts relationship explored already in previous case studies, the present segment of the research retains a more forward-looking, perhaps even speculative gaze in attempting to identify potential new meeting points between the actors involved - be they conflictual or collaborative - within the overlapping fields of historical preservation and creative space production.

Two findings stem from the field research in central Beijing; firstly, the spatial limitations (a combination of historical preservation rules, small plots for development, high developing costs) have allowed for a more dispersed conception of ‘creative space’, one which is proving to be fertile ground for a novel way of collaboration between non-governmental actors and the municipality, especially its investment companies. As such projects gather momentum however, a crucial question becomes the increased administrative

intervention in accordance to the top-down flow of policies on cultural and creative industries, cultural capital and the development of soft power. Secondly, and stemming from the first point, the way in which the (local) state has integrated non-governmental inputs, as demonstrated on the case of Dashilar, presents an interesting point of comparison with Taipei's URS programme; while the increase in the Chinese state's capacity to accommodate social movements is significant, the underlying incentive structure stemming from the entrepreneurial imperative and cadre management system nevertheless means the Chinese municipal state is more likely to encroach on, rather than integrate non-governmental efforts in creative space production. With the exception of smaller, dispersed projects, any (commercially) successful project or initiative can potentially become the target either of a take-over, of emulation, or outright predation.

### ***Authenticity and development***

Beijing's hutongs are in many ways the one urban landscape that continues to be seen as an *authentic space* specific to the city. Authenticity as defined by Zukin (2010), i.e. a space saturated with cultural capital, yet also one whose very authenticity is being re-examined and transformed, is a key analytical concept for understanding the changes in Beijing's old neighbourhoods. Especially in the context of creative space development and creative city discourse, authenticity is understood as a *manifestation of power* when state and business interests (often two aspects of the same group) take it upon themselves to transform urban space using culture-creative approaches. Authenticity, being a claim to a normative, primary state, can therefore be seen as an exercise of cultural, economic and political power, by which "...a group that imposes its own tastes on urban space—on the look of a street, say, or the feeling of a neighborhood—can make a claim to that space that displaces longtime residents" (Zukin, 2010: 3-4).

Zukin was writing about her home city of New York and while the concept is certainly applicable in Beijing, fieldwork data also suggests a more nuanced view of 'displacement' is essential; living conditions in the hutongs being what they are, displacement is often a goal for many long-time residents, tenants and landlords alike. The question rather is under what conditions and with what

compensation, as well as what is to replace the current residents: shops, galleries, hotels? Displacement is not limited to the 'long-time' residents; many new-comers in central Beijing are arguably more at risk: small cafes, galleries and alternative concert venues which sprang up throughout the 1990s and 2000s are being overwhelmed in places by confected, mass-produced 'cultural' industry shops or chased out by landlords eager to increase rent. Many lamentations on hutong living are directed equally at, or written by, the foreign and Chinese urbanites, which were in retrospect responsible for popularising the idea of 'hutong chic' - a seemingly clear cut case of gentrification, though one 'with Chinese characteristics'. While many old hutongs have been demolished and replaced with high-density, high-rise buildings, these cases are not the subject of the present research. Rather, the cases and the scope of fieldwork was based on extant hutongs: some have been refurbished, ranging from socially inclusive early experiments in the Ju'er Hutong (cf. Wu, 1994) to more outlandish luxury units with underground garages and swimming pools around Nanluoguxiang, where many hutong houses have also been converted to luxury hotels. Others still have been developed to cater for tourist-oriented consumption (most notably areas close to the Forbidden City such as Shichahai, as well as 'cultural industry clusters' such as Liulichang which specialise in (re)producing Beijing's authenticity for domestic tourists), while some in the North East of the city have become production sites for a host of creative industries, most notable music production and design (Keane, 2009).

The most notorious redevelopment project in the old city core, and one symptomatic of the real-estate frenzy gripping the capital, is the proposed redevelopment of Qianmen, an area south of Tiananmen Square and the Qianmen gates, which was historically one of the busiest and liveliest parts of Imperial Beijing. In contrast to the orderly rows of courtyard houses in the Inner City, the area outside of the old city walls was a bustling commercial hub to which Han Chinese elites were expelled from the Inner City by the Manchu newcomers, adding another social layer to the already complex area. Apart from legal commerce (the area is still home to many traditional stores and workshops), Qianmen was famous for its iniquitous establishments ranging from opium dens to brothels. As the Communist forces took Beijing, Qianmen

changed forever; during the big clean-up in 1949, most brothels were closed and the prostitutes sent off to be re-educated - an early sign of things yet to come (Smith, 2013). The relative poverty of the area also meant it was one of the most preserved, if dilapidated, parts of old Beijing, but by the mature reform era it had also become Beijing's most apparent slum. Overcrowded and marred by poor hygiene, hazardous construction and a thriving business of renting tiny rooms to 'illegal' migrants from the countryside, Qianmen has been the target of several redevelopment programmes.

SOHO China, one of Beijing's premium developers known for hiring foreign 'starchitects' such as Zaha Hadid, has been hoping to acquire over 130,000 square meters of land in 33 parcels to be redeveloped into a commercial area with a mix of preservation and faux-Qing style architecture (Toh, 2009). The project, which was squarely within the area designated for heritage conservation in 2004, was criticised heavily by heritage advocacy groups for the apparent destruction of heritage and its replacement with a sanitised space '*which completes the state vision for Beijing, that of a modern city with a past*' (Layton, 2007). SOHO was ultimately awarded less than half of the initial redevelopment rights, although it remains unclear whether this was due to heritage concerns or a tightening of national policy on the overheating real-estate market (Johnson and Leow, 2008). Even in its reduced scope, the redevelopment of Qianmen became a 'negative example' for the historical preservationist movement, as the old commercial street was finally reconstructed in faux-Qing architecture, and populated with brands such as Zara, H&M, Häagen-Dazs, in time for the 2008 Olympic Games. Moreover, the area as a whole is still being redeveloped at a considerable pace. Although certainly reminiscent of Kaohsiung's own effort at historicising space through demolition and reconstruction, the crucial difference remains in the intertwining of state and business interest in Beijing's case, which has supplanted the previous model of state-led redevelopment used at nearby Liulichang. There, a central government led renovation occurred during the 1980s, when over eighteen million RMB was invested in the area to recreate the Qing-dynasty storefronts (Sun, 2010).

### ***Hutongs as a space of micro-politics***

Beijing's other 'up and coming' creative neighbourhood, Gulou, suggests the local municipalities are still often unwilling to work closely with non-state actors other than large developers. Thus, although a high degree of imitation and incorporation of general notions about the value of culture and preservation in redevelopment is taking place, this happens without the costly and time-consuming legwork that has been the hallmark of successful redevelopment or regeneration projects. An example of this is the 'Time Cultural City' project, commissioned by Dongcheng District and entrusted to a Sino-American designer group, the Boston International Design Group. According to the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (BJCHP), an NGO based in the neighbourhood, the proposed plan was in danger of repeating the destruction wrought on Qianmen, resulting in a marginal upgrade of living standards alongside irreversible damage to the area's historical, environmental and commercial value, not to mention that the chosen contractor had no experience in historic preservation (Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center: 2010).

At the other end of the scape, the Gulou area has also seen a grassroots revitalization effort, mainly in the form of small NGOs, studios and other spaces which have contributed to a kind of burgeoning of culture-creative spaces closer to Brooklyn's Williamsburg or London's Shoreditch, where a steady flow of creative industry-related offices has changed the once economically depressed neighbourhoods into by-words for creative or culture-led renewal. While the Gulou area is peppered with design studios, clothing stores, architecture offices and alternative venues such as the Zajia Lab, housed in a disused Taoist Temple, one particular project space encapsulates the potential for community-led redevelopment and reflection on Beijing's hutongs. HomeShop, a 'storefront residence and artist initiative' as their online presentation states, was opened in 2008 in an old hutong alleyway not far from the old Gulou towers. HomeShop was established with an explicit intention of fostering private/public collaboration as an exploration of the 'micropolitical' life of the neighbourhood. In practice, HomeShop engaged both with the local residents as well as acted as an entry point for newcomers from the creative industries and art. Stemming from ethnographic fieldwork conducted during

my two-week stay there, HomeShop can be described as a *node*, connecting disparate actors and creating a practice-based community. While their actions are dwarfed by big redevelopment projects, an example of their work is the organisation of the *Games 2008* project, which invited neighbouring residents to participate in a Wii console games projected on a screen in the street. Such small interventions into the 'lived space' of Beijing's neighbourhoods may have a limited effect; HomeShop ultimately closed in 2014 after the landlord of its second location increased the rent threefold after the expiration of their lease, somewhat ironic considering part of the increase can be attributed to rising demand for hutong living. What remains however are the connections and networks emerging from such spaces; the presence of epistemic communities of spatial professionals is a crucial element in the corporative spatial production in Taipei for example, and the case of the Takao Renaissance Association in Kaohsiung equally demonstrates the potential mobilizational power stemming from innocuous-looking shared community spaces.

Simultaneously, the Beijing government has also adopted policies aimed at creating a culture-creative cluster in the old part of the city, or 'culture service function zones', as the language of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year plan puts it. Apart from exhortations to build a 'spiritual compass' for the citizens, the plan is remarkably clear cut in its approach: the marketization of cultural institutions into enterprises, experimental zones for painting, art and fashion, the creation of an art market and the development of cultural and creative tourism all attest to the entrepreneurial approach the municipal government is taking in its efforts to transform the old city into a culture-creative zone. (The Twelfth Five-Year Plan for the National Economic and Social Development of Beijing, 2011). Speaking with HomeShop's Michael Eddy (one of the its organisers) however, evidence of this on the ground seemed to have been sparse at the time:

*"We knew it was amiss, but the larger examples kind of seemed like pork-barrel projects rather than viable initiatives. But it was also 'natural' gentrification to some degree, as many architecture firms and creative offices really preferred such spaces in which to work."* (Michael Eddy, HomeShop organiser. Personal communication, 28 April 2014)

Eddy's remarks highlight the recurring theme of *gentrification*, which has become closely associated with market-led demographic changes in creative or 'arty' neighbourhoods. In many ways, Beijing's central areas are simultaneously exhibiting many features associated with gentrification (or different 'stages' of it), although the term must be used carefully here. Gentrification in the hutongs is both extremely uneven, as well as not always market-led in Beijing, prompting observers to talk of redevelopment instead. Indeed the question of what may or may not constitute gentrification in the field of historic preservation is not a simple one; just as Herzfeld (2010) insists on links between gentrification and historic preservation on the cases of Greece, Italy, and Thailand, so Potuoglu-Cook (2006) sees gentrification in the neoliberalization of night-time space in Istanbul. The loose definition of gentrification which has been applied to processes as varied as those mentioned above may rather be described as forms of biopolitics, intervening in the demographics and daily lives of the target population. To avoid such a problematic, gentrification is here treated merely as a specific *mode* of spatial development dependent on the use of cultural as well as other capital to instigate long-lasting and self-reinforcing changes. It is therefore a subordinate process to the re-evaluation of culture as an asset and the commodification of urban space.

Discussions over the technicalities of whether gentrification in Beijing is a real-estate led supplanting of poorer residents with newcomer 'gentry' or whether it is a top-down development scheme that is encouraging the demographic and economic change are highly relevant, yet the situation in Beijing's hutongs seems to fit both criteria. As the municipal government moves toward a marketization and privatization of cultural institutions, so it reinforces the understanding of culture as capital, as well as the shift in approaching questions of urban space through the *mechanism* of the market - even when it operates within the state's institutions. Gentrification presents itself mainly as a lens through which the hutongs' new residents understand the changes in their surroundings: from cafe-owners, small galleries and other 'well-intentioned BoBos', to borrow the Eddy's term. Ultimately however, the question central to both the artist clusters as well as more recent transformations in the hutongs has to do with the capacity and style of governance of the state, as well as the

capacity of the groups involved at being taken into account. While clusters such as 798 Art Zone or Songzhuang have veered from autonomy to commercialisation and integration into the state discourse on creativity, the spatially fractured nature of central Beijing precludes easy solutions, meaning all the actors involved have had to negotiate different, ad-hoc ways of producing creative spaces, though it remains to be seen whether they will amount to radically new developments or reinforce current trajectories of commercialisation and redevelopment by dispossession.

***Dashilar<sup>4</sup> – the ‘platform’ as integration of non-governmental inputs in culture-led regeneration***

While the interplay of private and state initiatives analysed above have not yet led to any larger or more permanent collaborative projects between the dispersed groups of spatial professionals and the municipal state characteristic of Taiwan’s experience, the following case study on Dashilar highlights recent moves towards a platform-based approach to culture-led redevelopment in the old city. While the Qianmen area east of Qianmen Street has seen radical redevelopment stalled by last-minute concerns over heritage preservations, Dashilar has seen a less comprehensive, patchy approach made up of several typical modes of urban reconstruction, from large commercial projects formed by a collaboration of local government and big real-estate, to top-down efforts at historical preservation. Dashilar is a historic commercial area of around one square kilometre, bordered by Qianmen West Street to the north, Qianmen Street to the east, South Xinhua Street to the west, and Zhushikou West Street to the south. While areas such as Liulichang have become tourist attractions through large top-down preservation projects, much of central Dashilar has seen only piecemeal redevelopment mainly centred on its main thoroughfare.

Apart from physical reconstruction projects, the area has been the target of central and local government policies on supporting traditional shops to cater for increasingly large tourist inflow. Using the ‘time-honoured brand’ or *laozihao* (老字号) designation scheme created by the central government, the

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<sup>4</sup> “Dashilar” refers to the local pronunciation of what is called ‘Dazhalan’ in standard Mandarin. The vernacular is used here as it was also used on both the Dashila(b) and Dashilar Platform projects.

Xicheng local government also launched its own initiative. As Beijing's old commercial district, quite a few of the *laozihao* are located around Dashilar, prompting the district to issue a directive to protect and support the time-honoured brands in Xicheng. The directive, while ostensibly aimed at preserving or rekindling skills and crafts lost during the Cultural Revolution, is more akin to a statist decree, stipulating areas of 'support' and 'encouragement' such as administration, production, marketing, cultural value and human resources, outlining the areas in which the old businesses are to receive support in order to achieve rapid growth (Xicheng District People's Government: 2011). The government-run scheme has predictably seen a move towards mass-production and a drop in quality, with many shop-owners told by state-appointed advisors to ramp-up production, even if it means shifting it to the suburbs. The directive also carries spatial considerations, especially due to the emphasis on categorising *laozihao* as part of the culture-creative offering of the city – through its rigid planning approach (stipulating that 50 or more shops must constitute a cluster; that they must be Chinese or 'regionally' owned, i.e. Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwanese; that they must promote a 'Chinese way of life' etc.) and faux-historicist facades mandated by the district government, the scheme has already significantly altered the Shichahai area west of the Forbidden City with miles of identikit 'traditional shops' satisfying demand for cheap souvenirs, many of which are owned by Taiwanese investors. While not directly connected to the production of creative spaces in the area, such policies have important repercussions in limiting the boundaries of the possible and the expected; one such development increases the likelihood of similar projects being done in other parts of the district, as policy-makers rely on familiar ways of upgrading old neighbourhoods.

Amid this heterodox redevelopment and regeneration, a new platform-based project "Dashila(b)", jointly founded by Guang'an Holdings (the local state asset management company for Xicheng District), its subsidiary Beijing Dashilar Investment Limited, and Beijing-based architectural firm Approach Architecture, began operating in 2009. While the scope of their work is small in comparison to some of the projects mentioned above (such as SOHO China's Qianmen Avenue), the case was selected due to its comparative value with the URS project in Taipei (see chapter 2.2), which similarly employs a targeted,

plot-by-plot approach, rather than comprehensively redeveloping the whole area. In contrast to URS however, Dashila(b) was a public-private partnership outside of the municipal planning department. While following Xicheng District's vision for developing cultural heritage as its unique selling point, the format was agreed informally through meetings between the local authorities and the architecture firm. The entire initiative was thus an ad-hoc, limited time project: while the integration of private initiative and know-how was characterised by a corporative approach in Taiwan, the case of Dashilar points towards an altogether different approach, one characterised by the state as an entrepreneurial actor; once the concept and basic workings have been set up by Dashila(b) however, the municipal state promptly transferred the project under its full control, renaming it to Dashilar Platform, while keeping the bulk of the activities (and know-how) intact.

The main concept behind Dashila(b) was finding an efficient way to redevelop the area in the presence of two policy imperatives: heritage preservation and upgrading of infrastructure. The decay of the area was thought to be largely ascribable to fragmented and complicated property rights; while business premises and family-owned houses were on the whole better maintained, those owned by the city were mostly in extremely bad condition. Due to the structure of rental agreements between the Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and its tenants, unauthorised upgrades by the tenants are not be compensated in the case of resettlement, meaning there is no financial incentive for the already poor residents to invest in their rented properties. Adding to this the immigration pressure from the countryside, many such properties have furthermore been sub-divided and sub-let, further compromising the survival of a coherent 'community', which was the notion an initiative such as Dashila(b).

While a wholesale redevelopment may have been possible in previous years, the creeping realisation of the (economic and cultural) value of China's historic urban fabric has allowed alternative ways of redevelopment to take hold in municipal offices. Much like the cases of Treasure Hill in Taipei, or Hamasen in Kaohsiung, the effectiveness of a community-based heritage and revival efforts was however dependent as much on state capacity as it was on the existence

of community networks. Although attendance by local residents was relatively encouraging, the project ultimately progressed towards a model of art-led redevelopment, as the tie-in with the Beijing Design Week had demonstrated. As a project-based initiative, Dashila(b) serves as a good case study of the evolving nature of spatial reconfiguration in central Beijing beyond the usual wrecking ball approach. Any enthusiasm here must be tempered by the size of this case study, which pales in comparison to the extensive redevelopment of historical neighbourhoods into luxury housing or premium office space; nor would it be entirely correct to say Dashila(b) has succeeded in empowering the community of residents, many of which are tenants to absentee landlords chasing large compensation awards rather than the painstaking work of regeneration by involvement (Dashila(b) project staff; Interview, 3 June 2013).

From being a relatively small and experimental project, the current scope of Dashilar Platform is considerably wider; from 2011, the involvement of Beijing Design Week (BJDW), organised by another municipal investment company, Gehua from Dongcheng District, has considerably expanded the international reach of the work. From hosting around 20 venues at the 2012 event, the Dashilar Platform has been considerably upgraded, both in qualitative and quantitative terms: from hiring the prestigious Japanese designer Kenya Hara to design its visual identity, to its presentation at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale. Guang'an Holdings and by implication the Xicheng district authorities have enthusiastically adopted the model of the art/creative led as its own. In essence, much of the work and stated purpose remain the same and are indeed based on the work done by the now defunct Dashila(b), with community building and art-led redevelopment remaining the key differentiating point of Dashilar in comparison to other Beijing hutongs. The cooperation with the private sector can in this light be seen as an exercise in which the municipality acquired the *tools* of governance needed for a culture-led redevelopment project meant to showcase the novelty, modernity and cultural acumen of Beijing's central district. At the same time, neither the municipality nor the private partner were able to sustain the co-operative relationship beyond a pilot project, not only due to quotidian friction, but largely through the lack of a willingness by the state to devolve responsibility for any permanent spatial changes to a body outside of its control. Despite this however, the method or

concept used by Dashila(b) remains in favour, as evidenced though the municipality own, district-run endeavour. Looking at this from a general level, the form of the *platform* has emerged as a mode of operationalizing community-focused, culture-led redevelopment initiatives into the wider institutional network of Beijing's central city authorities. By adopting an open, looser approach, the municipality was in the case of Dashila(b) able to engage the cultural and human 'capital' of the private sector while retaining ultimate control. At the same time, horizontal links through project-based work (such as with BJDW) have enabled the Dashilar Platform to transcend the narrow scope of the district, becoming one of the few Chinese exhibits at the Venice biennale in 2014.

The parallels with the case of Treasure Hill (Chapter Three), offer an opportunity for an analysis of differing *modes* of governance, different *approaches* to the production of (creative) space in Taiwan and China. Although many of the given circumstances are similar (historical yet dilapidated housing, immigrant area, redevelopment through community organisation, the use of art/culture to spur the revival of the area), significant differences have emerged in the state as well as society response to the challenges of redeveloping fragile urban environments. Whereas Treasure Hill was originally a non-governmental (or even counter-governmental) initiative that had been integrated into the city cultural bureaucracy through a community of spatial professionals, the Dashilar Platform has its roots in a joint venture between a private firm, a state-owned holding company, and the municipal government. Even after the genuinely non-governmental partner had left however, Dashilar Platform has retained the outside appearance of a private-public partnership; the Xicheng district can be seen here both as the private investor (through its holding company) and regulator (as the municipal authority). In effect, the local cadres are wearing two hats at the same time, a situation mostly examined in the context of corruption (cf. Zhao et al. 2009; Burns, 1993; Kolenda, 1990), but which also has specific effect for the adaptation of the creative city discourse and culture-led redevelopment. Unlike Taiwan, where the state has emulated and integrated private sector practices (be they for profit or not), the Xicheng District has activated an 'in-house' private actor through a temporary platform-based cooperation with external, non-governmental practices. This is of utmost

importance in answering questions on the style of governance as well as the ability to do so; while open to the transfer of skills and practices from outside the state, the tendency in Xicheng (as well as in Caochangdi) has been to ultimately attempt to recreate the 'template' from within the expanded state, using its many guises and manifestations as actors to populate a public-private partnership. While Keane (2009b) outlines the search for a perfect model or template as a key idea in China, the question remains as to how the mechanism of transfer, of interaction between the non-state and state levels actually operates. The case of Dashila(b)/Dashilar Platform may be small, but it fits the criteria for the exploration of this mechanism, from joint venture to joint venture in name only.

Lastly, any comparison of Dashilar with Treasure Hill or Hamasen in Kaohsiung cannot but pause at the question of heritage and its role in both art/culture-led redevelopment and the adoption of the creative city discourse in general. While all three cities have vastly differing historical heritage, all three have identified in this spatial heritage a cultural capital that can be utilised to promote or increase the city's competitiveness, shifting heritage from a specialised field of preservation and conservation to the contested field of urban redevelopment. Despite this seeming universality of purpose however, both Taiwanese cases are distinguished by a highly politicised discourse on heritage and identity that is characteristic of the island nation's political climate. Consequently, art, culture, and creativity strategies can be used to legitimate the preservation of heritage, draw in the political community and ultimately achieve state recognition (and funds). Conversely, the position of heritage preservation within the production of creative spaces in Beijing is almost reverse, as culture and creativity strategies present a way to make heritage preservation profitable: areas which have had the (mis)fortune of being placed under protection have a limited set of options for development, so culture-creative initiatives are fast becoming a viable policy alternative to tourism. How far such a 'bohemian' regeneration can lead is however a question this work cannot answer; certainly, the openness of local cadres and the level of engagement by municipal holding companies bode well for funding levels. On the other hand, it may be precisely this increased attention that stifles Beijing's 'hutong chic'

through a combination of market and state phenomena such as gentrification or planned clustering.

## 7.4 Conclusion

Although urban redevelopment in Beijing is as much a top-down state-led process as it is elsewhere, the practice of devolving practical responsibility to nominally private enterprises owned or co-owned by municipal bodies has become commonplace and has accelerated the commodification of space, as well as created an entrepreneurial approach to the production of urban spaces, i.e. one in which the state(s), businesses and NGOs all compete on the land market. The adoption of the neoliberal formulas of public-private partnership may serve to attract private capital in the form of joint ventures, but may equally serve as a vehicle for municipalities to capture profits from redevelopment projects and further their particular developmental goals as they engage in competition with each other. Following the success of Chaoyang District's many creative clusters, 798 Art Zone being the foremost, both central districts (Xicheng and Dongcheng) have included goals of setting up culture-creative industry clusters in their own plans. Both are furthermore keen on using existing 'cultural capital' as a basis on which to promote place-making projects, yet their commitment also seems periodic, with bursts of activity followed by long lulls. While the iteration of creativity in the plans and policies issued by them is clearly present, the institutional framework, the *way of doing creativity* seems to be in flux. To illustrate, both districts have also established private enterprises dedicated to the culture-creative industry which act as sources of investment and real-estate developers; yet the extent to which these enterprises are able to act as producers of creative spaces is contingent on the success or failure of attracting outside involvement (be it domestic or international) to compensate for the highly rigid, utilitarian view of culture-creative industries held by the municipal bodies.

Secondly and in relation to the point made above, a question arises to what extent grassroots initiatives and organisations dealing with urban redevelopment, reuse and regeneration are participating in the districts' stated intentions. While the vitality and sheer number of small initiatives, groups and nascent institutions dedicated to aspects of urban regeneration in central Beijing is remarkable, the interpenetration of state and society (or rather, this

segment of society) remains the exception rather than the rule. While the Taiwanese cases, and in particular Taipei, are distinguished by a high degree of co-operation, with many spatial professionals simultaneously serving as civil society leaders as well as municipal planners, employees or consultants, a more competitive configuration already seen in peripheral art clusters is likely to hamper such co-operation. While festival-type events, such as the Beijing Design Week, help to establish practical connections between the municipal, business and creative leaders, it remains to be seen what lasting effect they will have in altering already entrenched ways of treating urban space primarily as a source of income. At best, they provide a way for non-state actors to obtain access to the full support of the state for the duration of the event. After the spotlights are gone however, even the relatively successful pilot project in Dashilar has consistently had to address the 'pressure to redevelop', which emanates not only from the state or real estate groups, but is fuelled by the expectation of financial benefit by hutong residents eager to secure a lucrative resettlement deal as well. The commodification of space (not only 'land') has permeated down to the level of the hutong, making grassroots, community-led initiatives which incorporate some aspect of art or culture very difficult to organise.

While many smaller actors such as HomeShop or even Caochangdi have for long remained 'under the radar' of a municipality used to dealing with hyperbolic projects such as the Olympics, the recent move towards the entrepreneurialization of creative space production may yet provide the municipal authorities with the tools to produce, manipulate and co-opt such smaller spaces. The entrepreneurial approach, based on an integration of the market as the *mechanism of veridiction*, has so far resulted in several strategies aimed at harnessing 'creativity' as an economic asset. At the lowest level of the state, an emulation and reproduction of village-level clusters such as Caochangdi has meant self-organised and peripheral creative spaces are being incorporated into the village's developmental strategy: here, creative spaces can be understood as but another industrial sector or activity available to village enterprises. At the municipal level, the case of 798 Art Zone illustrates how state protection of creative spaces may subject them to commercializing pressures, while the cases of Beijing's historical neighbourhoods highlight the

reinterpretation of heritage as capital via the introduction of a globalised discourse on creative strategies such as adaptive reuse, bohemian quarters and gentrification, all of which have fused with received wisdoms on redevelopment, clustering and creative zones. At this level, the use of creative strategies takes on an additional dimension as a part of a national effort to develop China's cultural power. As such, it is analogous to the invocation of 'identity' in Taiwan's case, yet set aside by the market-based allocation of resources to the creative zones in question. Whereas the Taiwanese cases have exhibited a tendency towards institutionalization within the state (as a museum, as public infrastructure, as governmental bodies etc.), Beijing's creative spaces are more akin to industrial clusters on one hand, and isolated enclaves on the other. As the example of Dashilar shows however, the entrepreneurial local state has of late begun incorporating the know-how and experience of smaller private initiatives; whether these in turn will influence the state however, remains to be seen.

# **Conclusion: Governing Creativity in a New Policy Field**

## **Governing between discourse and spatialization**

The operationalization of creativity in the selected case cities of Taiwan and China was examined through the optic of the production of space to better account for the many dispersed and often-invisible ways in which changing constellations of actors influenced urban space. These practices interrupted both the norms of statist planning and the long tradition of citizens ignoring them, and have found a clear expression in the production of creative spaces, which by definition involve a closer interaction of various state institutions with stakeholders such as artists, community organisers, elderly residents, shopkeepers and sometimes even unsavoury elements from the fringes of society. Being a new field of policy as well as a new set of solutions to long-standing problems of urban blight, there was from the outset an expectation that some degree of institution building was under way. What was however not expected was the sheer number of ways and minute differences in which seemingly identical planning and policy solutions would find their spatial expression.

Measured against a set of criteria such as scale, types of institutional links to the state, types of involvement with stakeholders and civil society groups, the level of business involvement, the presence of conflict, and the types of funding arrangements, it is indeed fair to say there are nearly as many ways of 'doing creativity' as there are sites. To an extent, this has presented a great obstacle to the analysis of the spaces in terms of the kind of repeatable, transferable findings that a political inquiry of this sort should produce. On the other hand, the contingency of the outcomes speaks volumes about the nature of the field; the cases are not so multifarious because the case selection was too loose, but

rather because the overarching policy discourse is vague, experimental, and contested. As a new and often ill-defined area of political action (understood here as action which determines the ways in which future action shall be taken), creative space production is subject to path-dependencies originating from several directions: received economic wisdom on clustering, the continued role of the state as mediator and infrastructure provider, the preoccupation with autonomy typical of Chinese artists and dependence on the state in Taiwan, or the influence and authority of epistemic communities of spatial professionals as they are integrated into the institutions of spatial production. All these have had to be taken into consideration when constructing an argument about which tendencies are emerging, which practices are proving to be more resilient, and which are addressing the widest number of local concerns. Through the empirical research conducted in the three cities, bewildering and somewhat contradictory results emerged; just as *commonalities* in the mentality and assumptions regarding creative spaces on the macro level piled up, so did evidence to the contrary on the micro level of inquiry, suggesting a large *diversity* of outcomes which defied neat categorization by political system and level of economic development (structure), or by the proficiency of civil society activists (agency).

All of the cases examined in Chapters Three to Seven are to an extent characterised by this tension, suggesting an intermediary level of analysis may be an appropriate site to account for the apparent disconnect between a coherent *discourse* on creativity and the diverse *spatialization* (or implementation) of this very discourse. Throughout the examination of creative spaces in Taipei, Kaohsiung and Beijing, several themes have emerged around which this intermediate level can be conceptualised – state capacity, the ability of stakeholders to influence or ignore state activity, as well as the ways in which creative space policies have fared in the integration of marginal space into the city mainstream. This intermediate space of action cannot however be understood without either the apparent placid surface of macro-narratives or the ‘messiness’ of the micro-political activity of daily life; it emerges into view when understood relationally. Thus, while state capacity (a central theme of this research) is certainly dependent on the institutional framework or accrued know-how, it cannot easily be measured independently of the ability of the

targeted population to circumvent, ignore, adapt or participate in the projection of the state's power. Faced with this problem, this chapter will firstly lay out the commonalities at the macro level, moving down to the multitude of micro-level outcomes, before outlining the argument for a typology to be constructed in the interspace between the two.

## **Macro-level commonalities**

### ***1. Coherence of creative city discourse***

While the notion of creativity has throughout been interrogated as a vague concept covering several modalities of implementation, there exists nevertheless a significant coherence across the three different case cities, spanning both the divide between China and Taiwan, as well as that between different levels and institutions of the state, such as central government ministries, municipal bureaux, village or township administrations, as well as public bodies such as museums, development agencies, or state-owned enterprises. At its most fundamental level, all of the state actors appear to have internalised to a certain extent the narrative of post-industrialism and its relation to the creative economy. Even when this concern is not overt, the tactics of stakeholders engaged in negotiations over urban redevelopment projects revealed the effectiveness of appeals to an overarching narrative about the economic value of creativity: Li Xiangqun's proposals for the protection of the nascent creative community of 798 Art Zone in Beijing in Chapter Six, the ability to conflate historic preservation and creativity at Treasure Hill in Chapter Three, or the way in which the Takao Renaissance Association deftly reframed the debate on preservation in terms of policy concerns about Kaohsiung as a tourist destination. All these are examples of the successful framing of petitions and requests within the creative city discourse, which the regulating authorities had evidently agreed with.

Another remarkable commonality found at the macro level is the paucity of canonical works informing the beliefs of many state actors responsible for the implementation of creative city policies. The overwhelming presence of two

names, Richard Florida and Charles Landry, was not evident only in interviews with local officials and planning experts, but could be inferred more or less directly from decisions taken at the highest levels of the city, which was most obvious in the case of Taipei's choice of 'creative city consultant', where only the aforementioned authors were considered, and the latter eventually chosen due to concerns over the former's fees. The influence of the creative city discourse is further seen in the way in which it had been transposed into local discussion on creativity, both inside and outside of policy circles. Just as China's own creativity guru Li Wuwei adapted Florida's 'creative class' into a 'creative society', so municipal policy-speak also began using similar terms, as the Five Year Plans of Dongcheng District cited in Chapter Seven illustrate. The question that needs to be answered is not so much whether this coherence exists – ample proof for this has been documented in previous chapters – but also *why* it exists. The research locates this in two further commonalities found across the research sites: the introduction of free-market reforms in the sphere of urban planning and politics, and the opening up of urban politics to the influence of epistemic communities and stakeholders which were previously excluded.

### ***Marketization and competitiveness***

While the withdrawal of the state from comprehensive management of urban affairs in Taiwan and China is certainly one of the key macro-economic shifts affecting the distribution of resources in the city, the accompanying process of cultural and economic globalization has only accentuated the idea of competitiveness, which pervades much of the thinking on the use of creative city strategies. This is seen not only in the adoption of policies meant to improve the city's economic or cultural standing, but also in the adoption of the methods of doing and measuring this standing. A point to make here, and one already discussed in Chapter Two, is that no matter what agency we may subscribe to leadership structures (e.g. 'neoliberal reform only entered China because the Party allowed it'; 'municipal authorities only use city rating schemes to attract investment'), the adoption of free market reforms and ensuing reliance on the market as a mechanism of distribution as well as a site of veridiction alters the 'rules of the game'; in other words, adopting free market reforms is likely to alter the expectations and framing assumptions employed. A

relevant feature of this shift is the re-evaluation of culture and art as an economic activity, which has allowed creative city strategies to be pursued on a much greater scale, as well as having unleashed the consuming power of the citizenry, leading to an ever-greater demand also for cultural goods. In this positive feedback mechanism, when spaces made for consumption by newly interested citizenry are successful, they trigger yet more investment into cultural infrastructure, spurred on by the inflating value of the discourse on creativity as the lifeblood of the new economy. Whether this may result in 'culture bubbles' ultimately bursting like the proverbial inflatable duck, is not a question this research can answer, yet it remains one of the motivations for further study of the ways in which creativity is being implemented.

### ***Necessity of negotiation***

Lastly, another common feature joins the three cases cities, as well as two countries: the necessity of negotiation. To a large extent, this can be seen as a function of free market reform; as the state withdraws from the provision of comprehensive services, so non-state actors become involved in areas previously firmly on the state's turf. Yet this was found to be only one scenario. In all three cases, the dynamics of state-stakeholder relations were not unidirectional, as the state in fact 'rolled-out' as often as it rolled-back: the examples of 798 Art Zone, Huashan in Taipei, and Pier-2 Art Center in Kaohsiung all exemplify the state stepping in rather than stepping out. This dynamic necessitates negotiation with stakeholders, which may take the form of ad-hoc collaborations (such as a 'platform' or the hiring of consultants) or permanent bodies such as municipal committees. Here, the concept of 'expertise' used by Miller and Rose (2008) is useful to identify agents with a particular social authority: planners, architects, urban scholars and consultants have already become the 'go-to authorities' in Taiwan, while their role in China is also moving in a similar direction, as cases such as Dashila(b) show. The opening up of urban policy to non-state groups is however accompanied by a renewed and extended interest of the state into the *governance of communities*, which differs from the high-modernist governing of society in many ways, though only one bears relevance at this point, the spatiality of community as opposed to the abstract plain of society. The ideas of community and creative space intersect especially in marginal urban spaces

under redevelopment. Here, in this contested field, groups such as residents' committees (seen in Kaohsiung and Taipei, and in embryonic forms in Beijing), professional groups or loose and informal assemblages of actors all become potentially important in determining the outcomes of creative policy implementation, at the same time that they become the object of governmental interest. As such, determining their capacity, autonomy and strategies was a crucial line of inquiry in the construction of a typology of creative spaces.

## **Micro-level diversity**

One of the more surprising and challenging findings of the research was doubtless the wealth and variation of ways to produce creative space. Seemingly defying received notions of categorization by size, political system, or class, the many practices encountered and documented during the research exhibit a contingent complexity. The variations and specific mixes that occur in the production of creative spaces, explored in the empirical chapters of this research, suggest negotiations and outcomes are as numerous as the number of projects themselves. Several questions were raised by this, the first of which relates to a possible mis-reading of the cause for complexity as 'heroic agency' of the actors involved. The discussion on the agency and autonomy of (elite) artists and groups in Beijing versus those in Taiwan has been discussed in Chapters Six and Seven as a potential cause for the emergence of more entrepreneurial and competitive approaches to creative space production in Beijing. However, this should not be taken as heroic agency, where a small number of actors is ascribed a disproportionately large policy shadow. When comparing the outcomes reached by actors such as Margaret Shiu in Taipei (see Chapters Three and Four), or Ai Weiwei in Beijing (see Chapters Six and particularly Seven), the commonalities pertaining to their relative autonomy and their shared antagonism toward the state fail to account for the divergent paths their *models* of creative space production are taking. While the former was instrumental in a state-stakeholder rapprochement and eventual institutionalization of practices of adaptive reuse, the other is to be found outside the state – although Caochangdi village has eagerly emulated, albeit in a simplified way, the practices of spatial production associated with the latter.

Clearly, there was need here to look at the interspace between spatial manifestations and arrangements at the micro level, and discourse and policy at the macro level.

Moreover, the large number of creative space models which have already extinguished (the artist commune at Treasure Hill; the independent artists-tenants of pre-2007 798 Art Zone) or face an uncertain future (such as some URS locations in Taipei, community-led initiatives in Kaohsiung, many of the yet unincorporated artist villages or hutong networks in Beijing), underline the need to look not only at the successes, but also attempts and failures to establish new ways of producing creative spaces. In essence, the investigation of success and failure is what Lawrence et al. call 'institutional work' i.e. creating, maintaining or disrupting institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011). An example illustrating how such processes were traced is the organizational pattern of the 'platform', the use of which has researched both in Taipei and Beijing, and where significant project-specific variations have been found. The URS platform was a transferal of non-state practices of a private art foundation into the realm of municipal action, wherein these practices were grafted onto previous institutional arrangements and used as an entry point for non-state initiatives to obtain public funding and support – a sort of 'policy plug-in'. The Dashila(b) platform in Beijing was a joint project from the outset, yet the organizational pattern of the platform ultimately enabled the state-owned holding company to develop, via a transferal of skills and even personnel, the putative 'private' partner to which the production of creative space was entrusted. The institutional work of the discarded original private actor, though potentially considered as a failure, nevertheless provides the explanatory edge against which similar organizational patterns can be judged not only in terms of that actor's specific capacity, but also certain preferences of the state partner: in this case a preference to maintain a clear vertical flow of power.

Another case, that of the intersections of creative space strategies and heritage preservation, similarly presented a larger than expected number of outcomes. While sites in all three cities were cast by the municipal actors in a similar fashion, emphasizing the cultural capital of historic architectural space and its importance to the construction of creative capital in line with the commonalities

outlined above, they nevertheless resulted in three hugely distinct ways of negotiating and ultimately producing this space. The museumification of Treasure Hill and historicization of Gongyuan Road in Kaohsiung present significantly different outcomes, as does the widespread use of ‘faux preservation’<sup>1</sup> in Beijing. The particular mix of framing assumptions and stakeholders’ actions has also produced divergent results when the question of ‘authenticity’ is concerned, which is especially interesting given the propensity of local actors to understand such changes as a process of gentrification, whether or not this is the case. As suggested in Chapter Five, the process of urban renewal in Kaohsiung has amounted more to a ‘deproletarianization’ than a market-led demographic change, while the upgrading of hutongs in Beijing can be understood using ‘rent gap’ theory either as gentrification or a form of endogenous upgrading benefitting the extant residents. Thus, using classic heuristic tools (gentrification being a typical example) has not always yielded neat groups or cleavages, yet again underlining the need for a tailored approach.

The profound diversity of the solutions and outcomes – some successful and other not – aligns well with notions of creative space production as a new field of policy. In simultaneously exhibiting path dependencies as well as unexpected ‘jumps’ in the evolution of the institutions of creative space production, it suggests the attention to failure is as important as success. In some cases, only the study of continuing experimentation as a fluid and continuous process can outline which solutions are being favoured by which constellations of actors, under what structural inertia. While a longer timeframe would no doubt allow an ‘autopsy’ of this process to identify successful and failed approaches, this research will once more refer to Lefebvre. In his call to move beyond an urban post-mortem characteristic of urban studies, he urges against the study of what he calls the ‘spectre’ of the town, i.e. both as spectral breaking down of space into its components, as well as the study of the ghostly remains of what was once vibrant urbanity (Lefebvre, 2014: 804). A construction of a typology of approaches based on unexpected and fluid

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<sup>1</sup> The use of faux Qing or Ming Dynasty architecture to supplant original buildings, mainly to provide increased floor area and avoid the costs associated with renovation of historic architecture.

outcomes was therefore constructed in the relational space between the commonalities of discourse and the complex variety of the spaces which inhabit the physical as well as organizational level.

## **Interspace tendencies**

The idea of looking at the 'space' between the commonalities of policy and the diversity of outcomes is not novel in itself. What sets this research apart is perhaps the it does so with a new and yet unformed field of policy, where the relative strengths not only of the state apparatuses of Taiwan and China, but the relative strengths of stakeholder and activist networks can be compared. This sub-national comparative approach resulted in what is essential a study of the organizational patterns and their relation to the physical manifestations of creative space. The in-depth ethnographic survey of these spaces has lead to three fundamental positions being formed, on the basis of which a typology of creative space was then constructed: that state capacity *and* style of governance matter; that the models of stakeholder organization matter, and that the field of creative city and its manifestation in space intersects with older, settled areas of urban policy such as the redevelopment of marginal space.

From these findings, a typology of different approaches to the production of creative space was developed; not to provide a definitive or endlessly replicable theoretical device, but as a heuristic device which highlighted certain trends within what was found to be a highly complex and uneven landscape of policy failures and successes, or rather, on-going attempts to forge lasting institutions and make legitimate claims on urban space. By focusing on the interspace found in the mid-level of practice, it has been possible to construct a tentative typology pointing at potential links between selected criteria and outcomes visible in urban space. It has done so by looking at how three cities with similar cultural backgrounds and a history of related high-modernist planning are developing technologies of governing creative spaces, proposing these can be divided into a scheme of corporative, normative, and entrepreneurial technologies or approaches.

Going back to the original puzzle, namely how to account for the great number of ways that policies and discourse on creative space are operationalised on the ground, the research has argued that this diversity is best understood through the examination first of all of the style of governance, i.e. the willingness as well as the ability to incorporate stakeholders to varying degrees, particularly so for the Beijing case. To summarise, the research on Taipei has uncovered that an institutionalization of creative space production is underway, tracing its evolution from Treasure Hill to a more formalised, repeatable and hybrid institution under the leadership of the Urban Regeneration Office. In Kaohsiung however, the continuing presence of a more bureaucratic, *dirigiste* way of producing creative space was documented and linked to the municipality's capacity in pushing through its vision of creative Kaohsiung independently of various stakeholder groups. Lastly, Beijing presented a case of a disaggregated state acting in a competitive environment, punctuated by sporadic top-down interventions. Clearly all three share certain traits which are best understood as a developmental path-dependency, but were nuanced by the practice of grassroots stakeholders as well as overarching narratives.

The differences in the grassroots practices of spatial production form the second set of findings, which again present a set of interlocking cleavages; while both Taiwanese cases were set aside by the financial dependence of stakeholders on the state, the Beijing case was characterised by a globalised, autonomous community of artists who, while politically muted, had managed to carve out patterns of organization which significantly influenced the approach of state actors. Yet, a similarly influential community of non-state actors in Taipei also shaped the trajectory of creative space from Treasure Hill onwards, suggesting financial independence is merely one of the forms of autonomy which determine the stakeholders' power and influence; professional autonomy seems to work just as well. That the 'platform' as an organizational form appears in these two cities should therefore not come as a surprise, considering it is defined as temporary collaboration between various actors that all benefit from each other's involvement, yet lack the formalised structures for their co-operation. In Kaohsiung however, where a lack of organised societal groups able to participate in such a mode of producing creative space has

been identified, it is the state that has been attempting to emulate societal engagement, as the case of Pier-2 Art Center's struggle against messy urban landscapes in Chapter Five vividly illustrates.

Lastly, the question of marginal space has allowed for a limited extent of theory testing, seeing how the redevelopment of these areas using creative city strategies has brought into clearer focus the abilities and willingness of the state and stakeholders to negotiate new ways of producing creative spaces as a solution to urban decay or related challenges. Three resulting processes or mechanisms deserve particular attention: *museumification* (the hybridization of marginal and creative space into a municipal institution), *deproletarianization/historicization* (the supplanting of marginal space using creative space) and *gentrification* (the market-led demographic and spatial shift caused by a rent-gap). These solutions, emerging respectively in Taipei, Kaohsiung and Beijing, have already begun influencing future development. Museumification thus reveals the patterns and tendencies of co-operation under municipal lead, deproletarianization and historicization reveal patterns of top-down, normative attempts to alter urban space, and gentrification reveals entrepreneurial patterns of creative space/strategies as both a spatial fix and opportunity for investment. In Taipei, these patterns have resulted in the continued and intensifying use of mixed, hybrid projects in historic areas. In Kaohsiung, a reaction to the city's use of creative and cultural narratives has resulted in community groups fighting demolition and redevelopment using normative terms about the city's identity, while Beijing has seen both a bottom-up 'self-gentrification' in the hutongs, as well as a continued revalorization of architectural and spatial capital for economic development.

At least in this early stage, under the general rubric of what was tried, what worked and what failed, this research cannot predict with absolute certainty whether these approaches will continue to dominate the production of creative space. While Taipei's case appears firmly on track to develop a set of corporative institutions of creative space production, Kaohsiung may well follow in its footsteps provided a more organised and autonomous citizenry begins iterating demands for greater involvement. Beijing potentially presents the most complex case, not least due to the large number of actors, both state

and non-state, as well as the dynamic pace of change and wider political considerations. Clearly, an insufficiently long timeframe within which the cases were researched stands out as the main weakness of the research. Looking beyond the first and second hurdles to their adoption as the accepted 'ways of doing creativity', it would be necessary to trace how these ways and patterns fare once the policy field settles. Whether this proliferation of styles continues in its diversity or whether the number of models of operationalizing creative space shrinks, remains a question for further research.

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## Appendix – Interview list

Note: Interviewees wishing to remain anonymous have been given names alphabetically from common Chinese surnames, e.g. “Mrs. Ai”, “Mr. Bai” etc.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Date and location</b>
Chen, Zhenfang	The Wall Pier-2 music venue, Manager	2012/09/09, Kaohsiung 2012/10/07, Taipei
Lin Weihe	Founder, Takao Renaissance Association	2012/10/08, Kaohsiung 2012/12/13, Kaohsiung
Zheng Yaoxiang	Member, Takao Renaissance Association	2012/10/08, Kaohsiung
Wang Chichuan	Kaohsiung City Government Urban Development Bureau, Deputy Director General	2012/10/09
Wu Yizheng	Councilor, Kaohsiung City Council	2012/11/08, Kaohsiung
Lo Chen-Yuan	Urban Development Bureau (Kaohsiung), Unit Chief Architect	2012/11/08, Kaohsiung
Yang Yao-Jun	Sin Pin Pier Absolutely Art Space gallery, Manager	2012/11/09, Kaohsiung
Jian Mei-ling	Pier-2 Art Center, Director	2012/11/21, Kaohsiung
Jiang Yaoxian	Taiwan Art Development Association, Chairman	2012/11/23, Kaohsiung
Tsai Dongcheng	Jiasheng Metalworks, owner	2012/12/14, Kaohsiung
“Mrs. Ai”	Former resident, Gongyuan Rd.	2012/12/14, Kaohsiung
“Mr. Bai”	Former resident, Gongyuan Rd.	2012/12/15, Kaohsiung
Jerome Lanche	Member, Takao Renaissance Association	2012/12/18, Kaohsiung
Yang Pingyu	Kaohsiung Chaishan Association	2012/12/20, Kaohsiung
Huang Liangcai	798 Times Space, Planning Director	2013/02/24, Xiamen 2013/06/05, Beijing
“Mr. Chen”	Resident at Treasure Hill	2013/03/17, Taipei
Li Meng-shu	Artist/resident at Treasure Hill	2013/03/17, Taipei
“Ms. Deng”	Artist at Treasure Hill	2013/03/17, Taipei
Yang Xiao-qi	Treasure Hill Artist Village, Program Officer	2013/03/22, Taipei
Peter Nelson	Artist, resident at Treasure Hill	2013/04/16, Taipei
Margaret Shiu	Bamboospace, Director	2013/05/16, Taipei 2014/03/28, London
Lea Lin Yi-chen	JUT Foundation, Secretary	2013/06/13, Taipei

	General	
Lin Yu-xiu	Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office, Department Chief	2013/04/16, Taipei
Peter Nelson	Artist, resident at Treasure Hill	2013/04/16, Taipei
Xu Yan-xing (Hsu Yen-Hsing)	Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office, Deputy Project Manager	2013/04/30, Taipei
Beatrice Leanza	Creative Director, Beijing Design Week	2013/06/19, Beijing
Kong Yin	Dashila(b) Project Manager	2013/06/03, Beijing
Michael Eddy	Founder, HomeShop Beijing	2013/06/03, Beijing
Ai Weiwei	Artist, Caochangdi	2013/06/04, Beijing
“Mr. E”	Local business owner, Caochangdi	2013/06/04, Beijing
“Ms. Fang”	Assistant, FAKE Studios	2013/06/04, Beijing
Mary-Ann Ray	BASEBeijing co-founder	2013/06/04, Beijing 2014/04/20 [online]
Vittorio Sun	Co-ordinator, Beijing Design Week	2013/06/05, Beijing
Beatrice Leanza	Creative Director, Beijing Design Week	2013/06/19, Beijing
Ben Chiu	Taiwan Design Net, Executive Director	2013/06/20, Taipei
Rita Chang Yuan-Chien	Fubon Art Foundation, former art director; Asian Cultural Council Taipei, Director	2013/06/24, Taipei
Lin Hongzhang	Associate Professor, Taipei National University for the Arts	2013/10/09, [online]
Zhang Shuoyin (Ting Tong Chang)	Graffiti artist	2014/02/13, London