THE FORMATION OF THE WEST COAST METROPOLITAN REGION OF TAIWAN IN THE NETWORK SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT: The research questions addressed in this paper concern the social political processes of urbanisation in Taiwan, with considerations of its form, structure, and transformation.   To begin the study, a historical context of the urbanisation in Taiwan is presented.   Six analytical hypotheses are examined through empirical research and practice, which also offer the historical basis for understanding the new spatial form of Taiwan.   The purpose of the paper is to understand the new spatial form and its urban regional processes in the emerging metropolitan region of Taiwan, in the information age.   The articulation and disarticulation in the global metropolitan networks, and the recent "elevation on status" state policy will be discussed.   In conclusion, the challenges and opportunities for the West Coast Metropolitan Region of Taiwan in global competition are emphasised.   The match between the innovative values in global competition and the use of these values in the space of places is exact for the role of a city - the citizen's city. This fascinating urban form comes from the process of the urban meaning of the constitution for the citizen's city.

KEYWORDS: urbanisation, metropolitan region, metropolitan governance, urban movement, citizen's city,

Taiwan

The research questions addressed herein involve understanding the social political processes of urbanisation, and its form, structure, and transformation of Taiwan.   In past urban studies, the idea of urban/rural was the representation of the ideology of modern/traditional; actually, there was neither the binary opposition nor a natural continuous evolution between urban/rural spaces.   Now it is known that production and the social structure determine the spatial organisation.   Indeed, the urban/rural is the differential spatial form of social organisation.   This is the process of social production of spatial forms.[1] To begin with, based on the empirical research, the study will provide a historical context of urbanisation in Taiwan.   Then, the purpose of this paper emerges through an understanding of the new spatial form and its urban regional processes for the emerging metropolitan region of Taiwan, in the information age.

1   THE CHARACTERISTICS OF URBANISATION IN THE RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TAIWAN

Urbanisation is not only the spatial concentration process of population and activities.   Since the 1970s the spatial form of urbanisation in Taiwan has been organised in a specific capitalistic industrial process, which was adapted into the new international division of labour and led by a developmental state, like other participants of the Asian Newly Industrial Economies.   On the basis of the spatial condition of its colonial history, the characteristics of urbanisation in Taiwan could be outlined as follows:

1.1 The rural-urban migration was the major reason for urbanisation after the 1960s.   Taiwanese cities during the 1950s were military bases of anti-communism in the Cold War.   After the late

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[1]   Castells, Manuel (1977) *The Urban Questions: A Marxist Approach*, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, p.9.

1960s, the cities became the bases of export-led process cities in the world market.

With the exception of the political immigration, which occurred from the late 1940s to the beginning of the 1950s, the rural-urban migration was the major reason for urbanisation after the 1960s. Successful rural land reform in the 1950s and technological reform activated the agricultural production in an animated way, and as a result, supported the latter in export-led industrial development after 1969. However, the agricultural products adapted into the world market as commodities also caused unstable agricultural development, which also pushed rural migrants to urban areas. Taiwanese cities during the 1950s were military bases of anti-communism in the Cold War, and the political cities of state bureaucratic dominance. After the late 1960s, cities became bases of export-led processing industries in the world market.

1.2 The specific social and gender structure determines the social organisation of the production space in the cities, in the industrialisation process of Taiwan.

Since the 1960s, Taiwanese women, with the exception of the younger population, have migrated from the rural area to the export-processing zone. For the first time in history, they adapted to waged labour and worked for low wages within a culture of sexual discrimination. This is the specific social and gender structure that determined the social organisation of the production space within cities in the industrialisation process of Taiwan. Sexual discrimination in Taiwanese cities is further promulgated by the pressure of the heterosexual patriarchal family and the power of sexually discriminatory policies instituted by a patriarchal state. Such policies are formidable and disregard the issues of urban transportation, public housing, land use, domestic space, and problems of urban security.

1.3 An informal economy and an urban informal sector define the urbanity of Taiwanese cities as informal cities, which enable people's survival as well as causing the cities' dynamics.

Besides the manufacturing industry in the formal sector, the flexible production networks of the urban informal economy[2] seem to have waited for most rural migrants and transformed them to waged working labourers in cities as part of an industrial reserved army. The informal economy and the urban informal sector are survival mechanisms for people and the reasons behind the dynamics of small- and medium-sized capital. The urban informal sector is evident throughout the cities due to the insufficient urban services for the capitalist reproduction of labour power.

As a developing country, Taiwan was, for a long time, a place where export-led economic policy took command and was led by the state. As far as society was concerned, the economy rapidly matured in the industrialisation process; however, the participant labour in different categories still could not share the institutional wealth. The vitality of the informal economy, the flexibility, and the networks play critical roles in this process of industrialisation.

The different services provided by the urban informal sector became one of the major mechanisms maintaining the competitive edge of the Taiwanese economy in the world market.

Therefore, there is economic development, but the quality of the urban living environment is relatively deteriorated. The pressures of urban life are rather heavy and the urban services are relatively concentrated in Taipei City.

1.4 The urban primacy has existed in two major cities and unbalanced urban networks and regional development have taken shape gradually.

Until the 1990s, urban primacy has existed in two major cities, Taipei and Kaohsiung. An unbalanced urban network and regional development have gradually taken shape. Since the 1980s, Taichung has developed as the consumption centre of Central Taiwan.

1.5 The surplus earned in the world market activates profit-seeking or rent-seeking in the real estate market, and the land policy has spiralled out of the state's control since the 1970s. Thus, the under-consumption of the urban services became more serious. The housing movement in 1989

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[2] Castells, Manuel and Alejandro Portes (eds.) (1989) *Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

caused citizen movements that are an indication of the emerging civil society of Taiwan.

The state did not follow the achievements of rural land reform proposed in the 1950s and the national political philosophy of Dr. Sun Yat-sen – to impose real institutional or planning restrictions on private urban land, to give an impetus to the urban land reform. For this reason, the land policy has been out of the state's control since the 1970s. The surplus earned in the world market activates profit-seeking or rent-seeking in the real estate market.

In the end, housing becomes a luxury, a low quality commodity, but not the right of the citizens. On the one hand, considering the private sector, people cannot earn high enough wages to meet the demand for housing service in the market. On the other hand, considering the housing policy of the state, there is no condition that allows people to organise the creation of enough political pressure to obtain housing service from the public sector, similar to the European state housing policy.

Therefore, considering the housing specificity as a luxurious commodity to be built and fixed on land, and given the political and economic specificity of developing countries – in the historical relationship between state and society, as structured in the international political conjuncture of the Cold War in East Asia – there was no urgent condition of political and social crisis to force state policy into facing the urban housing questions in Taiwan. Thus, the state has never paid attention to the housing policy, as seen in the unique "two" cases in developing countries, Hong Kong and Singapore in the East Asian Newly Industrial Economies.[3]

Consequently, the under-consumption of urban services gradually became more serious. The housing policy required a long-term and delicate form of state intervention. Finally, in 1989, mainly because the housing price speculation was too high, the housing movement experienced a historical opportunity to stand on the frontline against state control over urban and industrial society. This went far beyond the old-style pursuits of misery in Taiwan's early political movements.

Participants of the 1989 housing movement referred to themselves as, "the Shell-less Snails." Considered the forerunner of the urban social movements, this movement and the consequential citizen-inspired movements, are an indication of the emerging civil society of Taiwan.

1.6 Compared with its economic policy, the state has not given much weight to spatial planning.

Compared with its economic policy, the state has not given much weight to spatial planning. As opposed to the Singapore experience, Taiwan is hell for planners. The physical planning and its discourse were transplanted from North America by means of UN consultants. Planning was formal, simple, and incapable of responding to the urban reality. Indeed, the planning process is a political process. It has to face the political specificity of the developing countries; otherwise it is easily distorted by local land and political interests. The situation became more serious outside the capital, Taipei City.

Regarding design discourse, modern architecture was transplanted in the 1950s. It was the by-product of engineering education on the one hand and the product of a state institution of modernity on the other hand. The autonomy of professional architects and planners has not always been maintained.

Finally, six analytical hypotheses, as mentioned above, can be examined through empirical research and practice, which provide a historical context to understand the new spatial form of the emerging metropolitan region in Taiwan.

Next, the trend after the 1990s and the emerging global metropolitan regions in Taiwan will be described. This is the transformation of the historical process of urbanisation after the Cold War.

2 THE FORMATION OF THE WEST COAST METROPOLITAN REGION OF TAIWAN

2.1 The metropolitan region, as the new spatial form of the 21st century, and the metropolitan node in

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[3] Castells, Manuel (1990) *The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome:Economic Development and Public Housing in Hong Kong and Singapore*, London: Pion.

global networks is emerging in the West Coast of Taiwan.

The high-speed railway is a visible form of the flow of technology that expresses the birth of a new spatial form of the metropolitan region[4] emerging in the West Coast of Taiwan. There is not too much differentiation between the urban, suburban, and rural areas in the West Coast, which means an urban continuum has been shaped in the urbanisation process.

The articulation of the metropolitan nodes in global networks determines the global competitiveness of cities. It is an imperative pressure to each city, which must prepare to join in this uncertain future because the citizens' wealth and the rest of the rural areas depend upon it. The production relations, class relations, power relations, and cultural systems are facing new restructuring and redefining processes.

As a mega-project, the high-speed railway further enforces the new urban centrality of Taipei (i.e., within a distance traversable in 2 hours) as a global node and giving a fresh impetus to restructure the local cities inside Taiwan. This is the beginning of a new era of so called, "Urban Flow-Rural Move," which was the theme of a conference held in 2007 in Taipei. The tremendous power of flows would promote spatial restructuring, new development, and create more serious spatial segregation and social fragmentation than before, even in the same metropolitan region or city. Now, gated communities are common, which contrast sharply with the lasting and ignored urban-aboriginal squatter settlements[5] and the ubiquitous migrant labourers.[6] Social polarisation will be a new challenge for the Taiwanese, who were previously unfamiliar with this problem.

2.2 Northern Taiwan is a production node, articulated into global metropolitan regions, which are supported by the cross-border connection of the electronic industry in the information age.

Why is Northern Taiwan a node of global metropolitan networks? The cross-border connection between the Bay Area, Northern California-Taipei, Hsinchu technological corridor-Pearl River Delta since the 1980s, and the Bay Area, Northern California-Taipei, Hsinchu technological corridor-Yangtze River Delta since 1990, have attracted the attention of the entire world. The cross-border production networks have created a vertical division of labour and an "un-continuous" segment in global networks.

In the structure of global production networks, the critical role is held by business, and it is even the "network" itself.[7] Thus, the strategy for the global layout of Taiwanese business plays the role of an articulating node, which is the research and development (R&D) of the production process and has the capability of providing quality control between the production innovation in the U.S. and the mass production sites in China.

These are the flows and links of global metropolitan networks and the 'reciprocal regional development', so called by AnnaLee Saxenian.[8] This is also the new form of regional development in the network society.

2.3 The high-speed railway gives a fresh impetus to restructure local cities to switch on and off, or to articulate and disarticulate the areas that usually accompany the local political identity in global informational capitalism.

[4] Castells, Manuel (2001) "Urban Sociology in the 21st Century", in Ida Susser (ed.) *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp.390-406.

[5] Hsia, Chu-joe (2000) "Social Integration in a Sustainable City? The Housing Questions of 'Urban Indigenous People' in Taipei", Sustainable Cities Task Force, 2000 General Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, Oct. 17-18.

[6] Wu, Pina (2003) "Chung Shan: The Formation of Community Space for the Migrated Laborers from the Philippines in Taipei", Master thesis of Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, National Taiwan University. (in Chinese)

[7] Castells, Manuel (2000) *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 132-135.

[8] Saxenian, AnnaLee (1999) *Silicon Valley's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs, San Francisco, California: Public Policy Institute of California*, pp.56-62; Saxenian, AnnaLee (2006) *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, chapters 4-5.

Kaohsiung and Tainan, of Southern Taiwan, shall be examined. Except for the population increase in Tainan City, due to the effect of the Southern Science Park, all of Southern Taiwan has experienced a population decrease at least since 2000. Why did this happen? Even the decision for the locations of the high-speed railway station was a mistake, due to the struggle with local factions and interest groups.[9] The location of the Tainan station ignored the Tainan city centre and Southern Science Park, and the Kaohsiung station ignored the existing city centre in Kaohsiung. This is why the later, feeder systems for local cities have proved rather difficult. The opportunity to restructure local services through mega infrastructure was distorted unexpectedly. It goes so far as to have the space of flows seem captive by the space of locals.

Compared with other developing countries, the past regional development in Taiwan was not so extensive, relatively speaking. However, it is worthwhile to follow the observations of empirical research in recent years, to see whether the high-speed railway will enlarge the regional distance, or whether the high-speed railway will create spatial segregation and social polarisation, ultimately hurting state legitimacy and social stability.

Compared with the European experience of high-speed railway stations, such as Lyon in France and Liverpool in Britain, local economic strength is critical. Perhaps, the existing situations at Hsinchu station and Kaohsiung station will be improved gradually, but the outlook for Chiayi station is not optimistic. The success of Tainan station and Taichung station depend upon local projects and investments in the coming years.

One more difficulty exists for Kaohsiung's node constitution. In the past few years, the amount of containers delivered out of Kaohsiung Port dropped from number 3 (before 1999) in the world to number 12 (in 2008), mainly due to tensions with China when DPP held the state power from 2000-2008. The geographical advantages of Kaohsiung Port were totally wasted.

The major reason for the exclusion of Southern Taiwan from global networks is state policy. It refers to the state's transformation from a developmental state[10] to a populist state, during the process of economic globalisation and political democratisation of Taiwan. The legitimacy of the state is found in its native political identity, an exclusive local identity. Perhaps, it is the political cost of regional development in global informational capitalism.

2.4 Metropolitan governance is needed urgently in regard to the incapability and rigidity of the state function in globalisation.

Central Taiwan has to overcome a difficult position caused by the bubble effect of the real estate speculation of the city land division projects, and the destruction imparted by an earthquake in 1999. The entirety of Central Taiwan must act through Taichung Port, CCK International Airport, Central Science Park, the municipality directly under the jurisdiction of the Central Government (city directly under Central) and the vision of the development across the Taiwan Strait, to achieve the goals of technological upgrading, industrial transformation, and economic and urban restructuring for global competition.

Generally speaking, the current regional spatial restructuring of Taiwan is seen in the urban and regional processes of economic transformation caused by the rise of high technology and the state policy for global economic competition. In Taiwan, the population is increasing in some areas, and it is the first time that there has been a population decrease in both primate cities – the old urban centre of Taipei and the Southern primate city of Kaohsiung. In contrast to Kaohsiung, the population increased in Tainan city due to the effects of the Southern Science Based Park. The population also increases in Taichung City and County due to the similar effects of the Central Science Park. The population continues to grow in Northern Taiwan and the highest growth is in the airport gateway of Taoyuan County. The city of Taipei, however, is

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[9] Wen, Pei-chang (2001) "The State Transformation and Transportation Planning: The Planning Process of the High Speed Railway in Taiwan", Ph.D. dissertation of Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, National Taiwan University. (in Chinese)

[10] Castells, Manuel (1992) "Four Tigers with a Dragon Head: State Intervention and Economic Development in the Asian Pacific Rim", in Richard Appelbaum and Jeff Henderson (eds.), *State and Society in the Pacific Rim*, London; Castells, Manuel (2000) *End of Millennium*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Blackwell, chapter 4.

still the predominate centre. Therefore, different from a simple south vs. north pattern, a multi-centered West Coast metropolitan region is emerging and there is a specific articulation/ disarticulation pattern. In addition, the state policy is the major element in the process of shaping spatial form. This is also a current challenge for the national territorial governance. For instance, Typhoon Morakot, an effect of global climate change, caused a huge flood in Southern Taiwan in August, 2009 that claimed more than 700 lives and left thousands of aboriginal families homeless, exposed the incapability and rigidity of state function in Taiwan. Another urgent requirement of metropolitan governance is to cross the border of existing local governments.

2.5 Challenges and opportunities: An embarrassing situation for the ungovernable Taiwan in the trap of identity politics? Or, it is time to build up the local autonomy of the cities.

Facing the emerging global metropolitan region and the difficulty of identity politics in political democratisation, regarding the state, Taiwan now presents an ungovernable place and society. Considering the challenges to a poly-centric metropolitan region, the urgent need for metropolitan governance in global competition and the need to reconstruct the city for the citizen, the first issue will be to intervene in the global metropolitan networks of the emerging West Coast Metropolitan Region.

Secondly, territorial planning highly relates to the recent institutional reform of, "elevation of status," which refers to the financial resources gained from the central government on the one hand, and highly relates to the political gain and loss of the numbers of seats in the local election, on the other hand. This is a real struggle for local political power and local notables and the restructuring process between the central-local power blocs of the state power structure. President Ma regained the regime in 2008, and it is highly politically sensitive for the Kuomintang (KMT) Party.

In addition, it also needs smart design to express the historical relationship between the state and society. Regarding the restriction of the existing scale of the local state in Taiwan, it is too small for global competition, but too big for grassroots communities, especially concerning their desire for local participation in the democratisation process. This reveals the urgent need for state rescaling in the challenge of globalisation.11

The first stage of "the elevation of status" had a preliminary answer in the end of June 2009. In effect, five cities were directly under Central (municipality directly under the jurisdiction of the Central Government): Taipei City, Taipei County (referring to themselves as "New Taipei City"), Central Taiwan (Taichung City and County), Southern Taiwan (Kaohsiung City and County), and Tainan City and County, which was accepted as the fifth city through political protest.

Because the polarisation pressure of territorial development and Taoyuan County will reach the population criteria of elevation after just a few months, the schedule for the second stage of "the elevation of status" before 2011 was announced by the Minister of Interior. That was to say, the Taipei metropolitan area will merge into one Northern Taiwan City including Keelung City and Ilan County. It has not yet been decided if this will include Taoyuan County and Hsinchu City and County. Central Taiwan City, surrounding Changhua County, Nantou County, and Southern Maioli County will be included. As for the rest of Yunlin County, a decision has not formally been made.

The most difficult political engineering will be the consolidation of Southern Taiwan. No one can imagine how to integrate Tainan and Kaohsiung into one big Southern Taiwan City for global competition, even with all governors supportive of the DPP. Eastern Taiwan, the Aboriginal Autonomy, and three islands such as Penhu County, Kinmen, and Matzu also will be considered at the same time, before 2011.

The Minister of Interior also declared a consolidation idea for the third-level governments, the city and county elevation, to meet the expectation of participation from grass-roots communities. That is, more than a hundred new cities and counties will be merged by townships. However this leads to unfortunate results, with the Minister of Interior changed his position in the new cabinet. Furthermore, the Premier resigned in

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11 Borja, Jordi and Manuel Castells (1997) *Local and Global: The Management of Cities in the Information Age*, London: Earthscan.

September, 2009, taking responsibility for the landslides triggered by the floods brought by Typhoon Morakot in August, 2009. The reform ideas for "the elevation of status" combined with territorial planning make it hard to succeed. This result, combined with a social exclusionary syndrome, will make the territorial governance worse in Taiwan.

Generally speaking, the urban reality one must face is that West Coast Metropolitan Regions and dominant activities are being carried out in the global interaction process between the complementary metropolitan nodes. A society structured by networks and nodes now exists. The global city emerges on the basis of achieving technological upgrades to the manufacturing industry in the world market. This is the significant character of the Taipei-Hsinchu technological corridor. It urgently needs to break out of the institutional bottleneck of creative industries.

The dynamics of the citizen's city in Taiwan are noticed in East Asian cities, of course, since it needs to overcome the interference of populism. The urban mobilisations in Taiwan during the last 20 years have been accelerated by the accompanied urban and environmental questions in the rapid economic development process. In the trend of political democratisation, the birth of a citizen's city has advanced the time for a dependent city in a developing country. One could argue that any significant urban reform must react based on the initiative of citizen participation through policy and institutional responses.

To pursue the liveable city, the sustainable city, the feminist city, the fascinating city, and even to defeat the effects of social exclusion incurred by an informational city, such as social fragmentation, spatial segregation, and ecological crisis etc., the potential grass-root empowerment of a citizen's city, that is, urban social movements, is the necessary historical power for urban reform. There is no opportunity to change course in the political democratisation process in Taiwan.

There is an opportunity to match the contesting urban meanings between the "use value" pursuit of a citizen's city and the "innovative value" pursuit of the technological upgrade as an innovative node in a learning region. It relates to the historical role of the city in Taiwan.

First, the capability of business flow in global networks is critical for competitiveness. Second, the use value of urban space and urban fascination of space would support the function of a node for the milieu of innovation. This is one of the conditions of a competitive home base.

This is what the Queen said to Alice in her dream:
"Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."

Only when you can run do you become capable of remaining in the same place. This is the experience in Alice's dream, which is hard to understand as the spatial experience in ordinary life. However, it is the logic of spatial flow in the network society.

What do people experience as the space of places? On the one hand, the cities of Taiwan must provide the fascination of the space of places. Empowered citizens and cities are major attractions to reconstitute the urbanity towards dialogue with the Western urban experience and modernity. On the other hand, the capability of handling the space of flows for the urban function of material condition is necessary. In summary, the cities of Taiwan are the most familiar living places for the citizens. The match between innovative values in global competition and use values in the space of places is exactly the role of the city – the citizen's city. This fascinating urban form comes from the process of production of urban meaning, combined with the constitution of the citizen's city.