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Editorial

Music and Art in Political Campaigns

Bussakorn Binson⁺ Executive Director

Music and art have played important roles in political change throughout history and can be powerful tools for raising awareness about political issues. Music and art have long played a role in political campaigns, particularly in grassroots efforts. These creative forms of expression are influential tools that can help candidates connect with voters on an emotional level and convey their message in a memorable way. Through their works, musicians and artists can draw attention to social and political injustices, highlight the experiences of marginalized communities, and amplify the voices of those who are often silenced. Music and art can also mobilize people to act.

In terms of music, it can be a robust tool in political campaigns, serving to engage and energize supporters, convey messages, and create a sense of unity and community. For example, music can be used to rally supporters and create excitement and enthusiasm at political events such as rallies and speeches. Campaigns can use music to "pump up" the crowd and get people motivated and excited about the candidate and their message. Music can also be used to convey political messages and ideas and create a sense of unity and community among supporters. Campaigns can use songs with lyrics that align with their platform to communicate their message and values to voters which support a sense of unity by bringing people together and create a shared sense of purpose and identity. Using music during times of political change can help political campaigns to reach new audiences who may not otherwise be engaged by traditional political messaging and ads. For example, a campaign could create a catchy song or music video that goes viral on social media, thereby reaching a wider audience than traditional campaign ads. Music can also assist in building a brand around a candidate and/or campaign. A campaign could use a particular song or musical style to create a distinctive identity and brand that sets them apart from other candidates.

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Arts and music have long played a role in political campaigns, particularly in grassroots efforts. These creative forms of expression are strong tools that can help candidates connect with voters on an emotional level and convey their message in a memorable way. In America, campaign songs have been a staple of its politics since the 1800s and they continue to be an important way for candidates to rally supporters and create a sense of enthusiasm around their candidacy. For example, in the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama used the song "Yes We Can" by will.i.am as his campaign's theme song, which helped to energize his supporters and create a sense of unity around his message of hope and change.

For the art aspects in campaigns, it can play a significant role in protests, serving as a powerful tool for communication and expression. Art can create a visual impact that draws attention to the cause. While protest art can take on many forms such as banners, signs, posters, murals, and graffiti, which all serve to convey robust messages and make a statement.



Figure 1. Shepard Fairey's HOPE (Barack Obama, 2008). Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/shepard-fairey-hope-barack-obama>.

Art can create a meaningful emotional connection with the viewer, evoking empathy and a sense of solidarity. This can serve to inspire people to take action and join the protest and can amplify the voices of marginalized communities and draw attention to their experiences. By depicting their struggles and highlighting their stories, art can help to give voice to those who are often silenced. Additionally, the act of creating art provides a creative outlet for people to express their feelings and frustrations. This can be particularly important in protests, where

emotions can run high and people may feel a need to express themselves in a meaningful way. Moreover, art can also serve as a record of the protest and the social and political issues it addresses. Photographs, videos, and other forms of art can capture these events and the messages conveyed by the participants.

For example, in Thailand, prior to election day, May 14, 2023, the Move Forward Party used augmented reality embedded in its campaign billboards, which could transform poster images into videos of the party leader describing his party's policies that were favored by large amount of people during the political campaigns. Moreover, the use an orange color as the symbol of the party and the candidates' attire has led to imitative fans and a noticeable trend in fashion both online and on the streets. Another example is Shepard Fairey's "Hope" Poster for Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign in America. Shepard Fairey, a street artist and graphic designer, created the now-famous "Hope" poster featuring Barack Obama's image during his 2008 presidential campaign. The poster, which features Obama's face in red, white, and blue, with the word "Hope" written in bold letters beneath it, became an iconic symbol of Obama's campaign and was widely reproduced and distributed by grassroots supporters. The poster was seen as a powerful piece of political art that captured the spirit of Obama's message of hope and change. It was displayed in galleries and museums around the world, and Fairey was invited to meet with Obama at the White House after he won the election.



Figure 2. A supporter of Thailand's Move Forward party (whose logo's color is orange) fashioned a large bow to wear as candidate Pita Limjaroenrat greets enthusiastic supporters from a campaign truck.



Figure 3. Thailand's Move Forward party greets supporters. Source for Fig 2 & 3 frame grabs was TikTok, <https://www.tiktok.com/@evescenter1/video/7235122072500849926>.

In conclusion, the use of music and art is a powerful tool to support election campaigns. Through creative expression, political messages can be amplified and emotions can be evoked in voters. Music and art have the ability to connect with people on a deeper level and create a sense of unity and community. When used effectively, music and art can be a valuable asset in any election campaign strategy.

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Talent & Tagging in Harmony:

A Study of Graffiti Art as Subculture & Aesthetic Expression of Urbanization in Malaysia

Stephen T. F. Poon⁺ (Malaysia)

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss contemporary perspectives of street art by examining its influence on urban society and culture. Its research aims to understand social perceptions and awareness towards graffiti art, and how graffiti artists develop a youth subculture through building relationships between street art and the targeted audiences for graffiti. Primary research included interviews with Malaysian graffiti artists. Findings suggest that graffiti art in Malaysia is increasingly accepted as modern representation of cultural idealism through appropriation of local inspirational elements. However, the legitimacy of graffiti art in urban beautification projects is still an unsettled debate, unless shifts in perceptions could boost its positive value through greater acknowledgement of graffiti's aesthetic worth and its fulfilment of social needs. To resolve attitudinal issues, some strategies are proposed. In conclusion, this paper demonstrates why graffiti art has fought hard to earn its stature as subculture symbols by communicating cultural development, as a result of artists given freedom to express their visions of the modern urban condition.

Keywords: *Evolution of Graffiti, Graffiti Art, Malaysian Graffiti Artists, Subculture, Urbanization*

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Introduction

“You’re standing in the station... everything is gray and gloomy and all of a sudden, one of those graffiti trains slide in and brightens the place like a big bouquet.” (Claes Oldenburg, cited by Lisa N. Howorth, 1989)

Graffiti art is a relatively new phenomenon in contemporary culture that arose fitfully to gain mainstream acceptance. Being universally once perceived as illegal and inflammatory, graffiti as a visual concept of human expression only found legitimate footing when examined by researchers working in fields of archaeology, urban culture, political science, and design. Street artists (known within inner circles as writers and style masters) increasingly document graffiti’s growth in the context of urban development (Cortez et al., 2007).

The main objective of this study is to provide insights into graffitiists’ motivations. The primary research aims to answer the following key questions:

- *What role does graffiti art play in developing urban social fabric in Malaysia?*
- *How do positive and negative perceptions increase social awareness of graffiti art as symbols of urban social progress?*
- *How do graffiti artists influence the formation of youth subculture?*

The research concludes by discussing the implications of these findings in regarding graffiti’s value as art, as well framing the significance of these perceptions in its unifying role as a form of creative, social, and political expression of the urban cultural landscapes of Malaysia.

Literature Review

The term graffiti can be traced to the Italian word, *graffiare* (“to scratch”), which describes any type of lettering or image that is scrawled, marked, or painted in any manner on a location, property, or object (Misiroglu, 2015:326). According to The Free Dictionary, graffiti is the plural of *graffito*, defined as a drawing or inscription made on wall or other surfaces, often done illegally, with intention to be seen by the public.¹

Overview of Graffiti as Public Art

Graffiti can be traced to the very earliest written and drawn communication such as cave paintings, carvings on walls and ceilings, as well as on artefacts such as bones, stones, metalworks, and wood. As discovered by archaeologists between 1 B.C. to 4 A.D. in the Mediterranean regions, these “writing on walls” were commonly made by scratching images onto surfaces with sharp tools, chalks, coal, and ground-up paint materials (Daniell, 2011). These evolved into cultural calligraphy demonstrating human attempts to imprint their landscapes through etching their personal expressions and thoughts, thus giving insights into how ancient communities communicated or to gain public attention (Gross and Gross, 1993).

According to Janice Arnold, graffiti derives from an ancestral zeal for leaving a ‘tag’ of having been somewhere that led to the development of public art.² What-

ever materials, motives, and myriad skills involved, it was the technical intricacy of working outdoors, sometimes scaling walls of tall buildings, that takes mural artists from discontented provocateurs to public art professionals dedicated to serving a role as social conduit (Figure 1) in fostering audience relations (Lachmann, 1988).



Figure 1. F*ck The Tories graffiti in Manchester by Paul Wright.

Evolution of Urban Graffiti

Graffiti has not always been historically valuable as a cultural artform. *Latrinalia* is a common graffiti observed in toilets, augmenting its negative associations with vandalizing behaviors. Nevertheless, graffiti provides both linguistic and visual novelty naturally favored by youths. As a medium, it draws youths who perceive graffiti as “speech” incorporating unrefined slangs, while expressing the energetic response of youth’s resentments of being unknown social entities - as “so-called [underdogs]” (Werwath, 2006).

Modern graffiti art’s lineage is associated with urbanization in the 1960s, developing into a subculture in the 1970s that became enmeshed with the emerging cultural scene collectively known as “hip-hop” culture (Blackshaw and Farrelly, 2008). Graffiti’s rise to public fame began as an extension of the hip-hop culture during the politically active Seventies that was dominated by the *mélange* of art genres, music, dance, films, fashion, and live performance (Rocca, 2020). This subculture rapidly gained attention from urban documentarians, critics, and cultural artisans alike. Prominent art shows featuring Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Kenny

Scharf, and Lee Quinones, were organized in New York's downtown East Village where vacant buildings and disused lofts were intermingling spaces for musicians, filmmakers, artists, and other neo-expressionists like the punks. Basquiat and Haring, with strong stance towards racism and police brutality, quickly became anti-establishment heroes (Ren and Keil, 2018).

Basquiat's 1980 New York Times Square Show was a rousing success at a time when art was being criticized as being too formal, patriarchal, and intellectual, neglecting reactionary elements that mark genuine expressions of visionary, groundbreaking art (Rocca, 2020; Stephens, 2016). Keith Haring was America's commercial graffiti artist poster boy. Using vacant New York subways as his canvas, he provoked debates among audiences and within the elite art establishment with unapologetic political messages (Sawyer, 2019). A student at the New York School of Visual Arts (SVA), Haring was inspired by the streetwise creativity and youthful spontaneity of subway graffiti (Figure 2). Basquiat, Haring, Keith Sonnier, Joseph Kosuth, Barbara Kruger, Angel Ortiz, and others were huge influences on emerging pop styles that saw "artistic oscillation[s]" between various disciplines, from music to sculpture, filmmaking, live performance, poetry, fashion, etc. (Buchhart, 2022:14). These experimental artworks were mediums that framed each artists' search for a personal style.



Figure 2. Keith Haring's graffiti art on silkscreen.

According to Jon Naar, a photographer who documented urban culture of New York City in the 1970s, graffiti art's emergence in the 1960s bore characteristics identifiable as provocative expression *and* realism.³ As street art became popular and accessible cultural language, some critics question sociopolitical and socio-cultural concerns such as whether graffiti really adds aesthetic value in their depiction of "idealized communities" (Kizilkan and Ocakçı, 2020:945-950). Urban scholar Heather Mac Donald claims that graffiti is nothing but an ugly blight on public spaces and neighborhoods, not to be tolerated as a "grand political gesture" because, unlike legitimate advertising, graffiti commandeers *others'* rights, often on private property.⁴ Stakeholders in residential neighborhoods, towns and urban areas may feel alarmed, confused, and uncomfortable if graffiti done by tagging crews are associated with gangs (Gómez, 1993; Kizilkan and Ocakçı, 2020).

In past decades, researchers have identified the factors which distinguish authorized, acceptable graffiti from socially irresponsible graffiti based on intention, message, content, permission, location, and geopolitical contexts (Crummey, 1998; Shively, 1997). The latter kind of street art, sometimes known as *hip-hop graffiti*, have been consistently found to produce negative perceptions of a place from their symbolic (implicit) or explicit association with criminal behaviors such as robbery, drugs, street fights, and assault (Gunnell, 2010; Tucker, 1999).

Nevertheless, the evolution of graffiti into the street art movement is a question of social acceptance as part of popular culture and urban adaptation. Studies show that adolescents from low-income or inner cities and suburban communities have shared commonalities of social pressures, morality dilemmas and cultural disenfranchisement (Shively, 1997). Urban graffiti and the process itself is a form of ‘escape’ with messages symbolizing youth’s rejection of authority, norms, and mainstream values (Daichendt, 2017).

Cameron McAuliffe, professor of human geography argues that street artists today seek ways to negotiate moral geographies by normalizing “transgressional” graffiti as creative and politically acceptable artefacts with sociocultural value.⁵ According to Daniel Hunting, graffiti is increasingly identified as public art form, a communal ‘commodity’ with aesthetic (ornamental), educational, and functional purposes.⁶ For example, in Philadelphia, the mural capital of the world, community murals that bore creative and artistic expressions grew prominently in 1965 (van de Geer, 2021). Eventually, Philadelphia street art was embraced as part of the Anti-Graffiti Network, a public art program founded in the 1980s by mural painter Jane Golden (Mural Arts Philadelphia, 2021).

Commercial graffiti art appears in advertisements for lifestyle brands. Sandrine Pereira believes graffiti is increasingly adapted as aesthetic inspirations for fashion, media, and other trendy cultural products as it is perceived by consumers to be a dynamic representation of the clash between propaganda and commercial marketing possibilities.⁷ These have helped to change perceptions of graffiti art from vandalism to sophisticated artform (Kizilkan and Ocakçı, 2020:944).

Graffiti Design Styles

As an art form, graffiti culture has received comparatively less research attention because of the connotations of public vandalism. The act of spray-painting on public spaces is a sociological phenomenon often linked to low socioeconomic status of the writers and their need to mark their places in increasingly complex societies. Graffiti tagging are self-invented stylized letters fused with intricate emblems, logos, or monograms to mark territory. Taggers may use shared codes to make graffiti *meaningful* and thus, legitimate (Salchli, 2019).

Graffiti has evolved stylistically. Spray paints and markers have replaced chalks as tools and materials. With varied semantical forms and complicated hierarchy, street art writing styles run the gamut from quickly sprayed-on Tags to elaborate and often breathtaking Pieces. As cited by John Gruen:⁸

Graffiti were the most beautiful things I ever saw ... [The kids] doing it were young and from the streets ... [they] had this incredible mastery of drawing which totally blew me away. I mean, just the technique of drawing with spray paint is amazing, because it's incredibly difficult ... [The] fluidity of line, and the scale, and always the hard-edged black line that tied the drawings together! It was the line I had been obsessed with since childhood!"

The basic types of graffiti are discussed and shown in the section below.

Tag

Tagging is the simplest type of graffiti, consisting of the writer's street moniker in monochromatic colors (Figure 3). It is basically the artist's signature. If they are associated with a crew, this may contain the crew's name or initials. Tags are commonly done with spray paint or markers. The abundance of tags on public spots and their low quality makes this the lowest form of art for the street artist community (Walsh, 1996).



Figure 3. Tagging by Zexor.

On the subject of tagging, painter Rene Ricard is renowned for highlighting graffiti art as essential to identify individual artists who are teasing out vernacular issues. Ricard claims: *"Graffiti refutes the idea of anonymous art where we know everything about a work except who made it: who made it is the whole Tag."*⁹ Overprotection is deadly; the stuff has to get out there to be seen. To [...] covet one's own work, is professional suicide" (Ricard, 1981).

Stencil

Stencil graffiti uses papers, cardboard, or other textural materials to create images. The desired design is cut out, the stencil held against a surface and the image is transferred (known colloquially as "thrown up") to walls using spray paint or roll-on paint. Sometimes, multiple layers of stencils are used on the same image

to add colors or to create an illusion of depth. Blek le Rat (Figure 4) and Banksy (Figure 5) popularized this graffiti style (Delena, 2009).



Figure 4. The Man Who Walks Through Walls by Blek le Rat.



Figure 5. Chalk Farm Maid by Banksy.

Wildstyle

Wildstyle is a highly intricate form of graffiti. It is befuddling for non-artists who aren't familiar with its *raison d'être*. Wildstyle compositions typically feature 3D arrows, spikes, curves, and other elements that untrained eyes may find confounding (Figure 6). The 1980s Golden Age of Wildstyles intertwined decorative lettering with pop culture iconographs (Dennant, 1997).

Pieces

Deriving from the word 'masterpiece', pieces are larger elaborate works with refined details often found on subway trains and subways. Style is important since they distinguish writers' abstract imaginations using vivid techniques, garish col-

ors, surrealism, symbolisms, and iconography (Figure 7). Pieces painted or applied onto both sides of a symbolic structure such as the former Berlin Wall, become especially meaningful during political protests or as social statements (Waldenburg, 2013). Pieces are hard to do illegally because of the time and effort involved. Therefore, a good piece will earn bragging rights for particularly competent artists.



Figure 6. Wildstyle graffiti.



Figure 7. A graffiti pieces.

Blockbuster

Blockbuster is used to cover maximum area (Figure 8). The style is a straight clean block of bold letters for people to see the work from afar. Its basic lines and colors are vividly compelling, expansive works usually roller-painted, sprayed or brushed on quickly (Anapur, 2016). Sylvester Graham (cited in Misiroglu, 2015) stated that graffiti artists who targeted whole swaths of railway cars, freight trains and subway trains with chunky letters did it for the “thrill of moving one’s tag across the city or countryside, hence reaching potentially vast audiences.”¹⁰



Figure 8. Blockbuster style graffiti.

Mixed Perceptions: Graffiti Artists' Roles

Graffiti has produced a varying scope of perceptions. Some lean toward legitimizing the movement as a true art form, pointing out its gritty, unrefined qualities, although perceptions of vandalism and criminal behavior persist, with graffiti tags (names of artists) covering walls of subways and sides of buildings often dominating mainstream perceptions as being defiant, ugly, and obscene (Bates, 2014; Bowen, 1999; Gómez, 1993; Tucker, 1999). The dictionary defines “vandalism” as an action involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property. Applying this definition, graffiti is vandalism whereby there is no sense of craftsmanship and poor execution. As defined by Daniel D. Gross and Timothy D. Gross, however, the commonly identified criteria for graffiti art includes, and is not limited by tangible elements that showcase a specific place, its history, and cultural significance.¹¹

Claire Malaika Tunnacliffe theorizes that as part of the typology of urban culture, *Environmentally Engaged Urban Street Art* (EEUSA), has become a form of political activism by the “blurring, collapsing, and erasing” of accumulated dirt and grime layers.¹² Environmental art is not an act of vandalism and defacement but aimed at increasing property value, enhancing traditional heritage significance, providing fresh and compelling visual appeal for drab buildings and streets. In *Beautiful Losers* (2004), Aaron Rose and Christian Strike argue that where audiences once considered graffiti as trashy ‘aerosol art’ associated with crime and urban decay, the polished execution of varied styles enable artists to be recognized and praised for their enigmatic and eccentric art, contributing to urban phenomena that transcend vandalism.¹³

Graffiti artists are increasingly given the chance to exhibit their work in art galleries, instead of on trains or on subway walls. Some graffitists are recognized by the mainstream art scene. This recognition is important for two reasons. First, because of art’s own ties to contemporary social, political, and economic influences, stakeholder recognition of street art helps increase awareness and overall value

for this form of cultural expression. Second, it mitigates the public's opinion that all graffiti is vandalism (Miller, 2002), although standards and guidelines was what is acceptable differs based on social awareness of its value.

Design researchers believe contemporary audiences are increasingly capable of discerning the aesthetical value of graffiti by studying the effort taken by street artists. For example, Doreen Lee studied how graffitists of Yogyakarta in Indonesia negotiate permission from building owners and street gangs.¹⁴ Doreen Lee notes that aesthetically empowering graffiti messages enables street artists to be naturalized as “urban scribes” who advocate social change from a sense of pride in citizenship,¹⁵ as opposed to vandals indulging in “ugly” and “meaningless” scrawls (cited by Strassler, 2020:27).

At the same time, graffiti leverages the media to discuss its controversial legitimacy. Media representations of graffiti as subculture questions its positive and negative effects on youth. Street murals that are part of community projects, with relevant messages and interesting aesthetics that prompt public conversations, are known as *bourgeois art* (Senie, 2003; Stephens, 2016). Spaces designated or needed for street art are contested by wider audiences as sites to showcase artistic talent, and as a symbolic expression of urban change (Ren and Keil, 2018). Hence, both public and commercial sectors attempt to legitimize the positive outcomes by ‘commodifying’ graffiti as lifestyle and cultural attractions.

Researchers believe that through this process, graffiti art would eventually be embraced as accessible cultural expressions. Commissioned works in the recent decades reflect this, though critical research to address the negative and positive implications on artistic copyright is still lacking (Daichendt, 2017; Kizilkan and Ocakçı, 2020; Rose and Strike, 2007).

Many graffitists face inevitable ethical conflicts since the question of copyright protection arises in balancing between free speech in the public domain and obtaining writers’ permission in republishing or photographing for the purpose of display, appropriation, and media representations (Schwender, 2016:452-461).

Malaysian Street Art

Investigations and evaluations into the outcomes of public art on society has increased in developing countries such as Malaysia (Muhammad et al., 2016). Malaysian street graffiti are debated for its “empowering” effects on local society by questioning whether such urban aesthetics are relevant, how it creates social empathy for causes, or as iconography portraying political issues (Muhammad et al., 2016).

For Malaysia, graffiti is mainly perceived as a public visualization of “youth slang,” conceived to narrow social class divides and increase racial harmony, besides being an element in the tourism economy (Chang, 2017). Paolo Mura et al. writing in *Perspectives on Asian Tourism*, argues that cultural appropriation is the dominant approach taken by graffiti artists and street mural artists in Malaysia who borrow

Western genres of expression but retain local heritage elements and placemaking imageries which positions each state in the country as a desirable “composite” travel destination for the domestic tourism market.¹⁶



Figure 9. Let's Art at Sawit.

For public art lovers, graffiti brightens otherwise dull commercial spaces or locales; large street murals are trendy and interactive architectural design elements that draw visitor interest toward buildings, while some are cultural and heritage inspirations. Over time, graffiti art in Malaysia is perceived as a positive contribution in enlivening and beautifying towns and cities. Some local artists are satisfied with using limited external spaces such as backstreets, doorways, side walls, and fences as visual communication platforms (Figures 9 and Figure 10).



Figure 10. KL Graffiti Mural @ Storm Drains.

Public art initiatives help bridge the gap between graffiti artists and their audiences, as well as showcasing their talent, skills, and styles. A Malaysian example is the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012, organized by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall which transformed the image of Kuala Lumpur with a continuous mural wall fronting

the city's riverbank (ArtMapTV, 2012). Aside from knowledge of the economic and market value of street art, approval from authorities such as local town councils and permissibility are other critical factors behind social acceptability (Falihin Jasmi and Nik Mohamad, 2016).



Figure 11. *Tree of Hope* Mural art.

A good example is the 'Tree of Hope' mural at *Jalan Klang Lama*, Kuala Lumpur, the longest street mural painting singlehandedly by Fadzlan Rizan Johani (Rahman, 2020). The artist spent nine months and used 250 liters of paint to produce this mural stretch in an old residential area located near busy *Jalan Klang Lama* in Kuala Lumpur to showcase Malaysian nature and products of the palm oil industry, providing the artist a legal canvas to work on, as well as a chance to develop their distinct identities (Figure 11).

Research Methodology

Qualitative methodology was used for primary research in this research. Qualitative undertaking through the interview process is exploratory, descriptive, and useful in discovering outcomes based on human actions, situational experiences, and expectations, rather than definitive knowledge (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014).

The broader purpose of qualitative research is to generate critical perspectives leading to better understanding of the social issue studied. Qualitative research gives in-depth understanding of those with self-interest invested into the subject. From a researcher's perspective, conducting qualitative research is a rewarding aspect of academic practice, providing opportunities for interaction and exchange of views that surveys might not provide.

Research Design

The research was performed in three phases. In the first phase, an extensive literature review regarding subculture content creation strategies was undertaken to guide the research direction with relevant theoretical frameworks. For phase two, qualitative interviewing was used to gather data. Interviewing was selected because it provides depth information of art in the process of social development as opposed to deterministic data from quantitative inquiry (Wang et al., 2017). Interviews help researchers delve into the issue and to explore solutions to specific social problems such as negative public or cultural perceptions. Qualitative methods are suited and useful in designing research approaches that seek correlation between the arts, social engagement, and community relations (Wang et al., 2017). The process begins by sourcing literature and books, journals, videos, online publications, digital and multimedia.

The subjects of research are four local graffiti artists working and based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Qualitative research enables researcher to meet the study objectives which is to critically analyze and interpret the relationship between graffiti art and graffiti artists in urbanization development in Malaysia. The instrument used is interviewing to collect information through self-administered questions to local graffiti artists. To study the perceived value of graffiti art and artists' views on graffiti commercialization, interview questions pertaining to their situational experiences were asked, and each interviewee was invited to expand their perspectives or to address issues important to them.

The interview questions were as follows:

1. *When did you start being a street artist?*
2. *Where did your interest in graffiti come from?*
3. *Would you consider graffiti a form of art or a crime? Why or why not?*
4. *What motivates you to be a graffiti artist?*
5. *The younger generation today has a high respect for graffiti. This has created a new youth subculture (fashion or lifestyle). What is your view on this?*
6. *In what ways does graffiti affect the younger generation of today?*
7. *Graffiti has evolved from street mural paintings to being a design element in commercial advertising. Do you think this will cause graffiti to lose its value as art?*

The four male graffiti artists were from different ethnicities, social backgrounds, and experiences. Two artists manage design studios; the other are full time graffiti artists. All four artists participated in the KL City Council's KUL SIGN Street Art Festival 2012.

Participant 1 (P1), known as Escapeva, was a talkative and energetic youth. Escapeva gives credit for his art pursuit to inspirational teachers. With a local graphic design degree, he freelances as a professional graffiti artist. Escapeva also runs a T-shirt designing company.

Participant 2 (P2) graduated with a diploma in multimedia and runs a studio providing wall art designing and printing services. He self-describes as "genuinely passionate about art and the act of painting large-scale pieces in public spaces."

Participant 3 (P3), a fine arts lecturer, describes himself as “interested in developing a career as a professional artist.” P3 was articulate about graffiti culture, his experiences, and confident about his abilities to be a professional artist.

Participant 4 (P4), an illustrator who goes by the handle Cloakwork, describes himself as ‘street-savvy’, who has a full-time job as an in-house graphic designer.

Results and Discussion

The data collected was processed in response to the research problem based on qualitative descriptions of the interviewees’ personal experiences. This section presents the transcribed replies and quotes provided by the interviewees.

On the first question on whether graffiti should be considered art or vandalism, P1 explains that to him, it is both a form of art and visual communication in public areas. *“It is a weapon to voice out particular messages (protests, threats, crime, artwork) to society. Graffiti art alone has truth in its own. It depends on how individuals perceive the meaning of graffiti.”*

According to P2, graffiti itself is not a crime. *“It is an art using different mediums, mainly spray paint and paint. It depends on the artist’s direction itself. Some keep their lines clean, but others present their art in forms to mirror vandalism.”*

P3 says *“It is a form of art, as it made on public space, just as how big billboards are built in public space. If corporations are allowed to advertise, then everyone should be able to.”*

P4 considers graffiti to be neither art nor crime. *“As the wise man says, ‘Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.’ Different people have their ideas and opinions about this subject.”*

On the motivation to consider graffiti artist as a career, each believed their passion must translate on commercial platforms before the subculture becomes an income generating pursuit. P1: *“My T-shirt design business is based on graffiti artwork style. Graffiti alone is not enough to sustain my living. Setting up my company has made me realize the younger generation today appreciates and respects the graffiti culture.”*

According to P2, *“Art is all about innovation and creating new styles and it is great if they can find inspiration from every different form of art in the world.”*

P3 views graffiti as part of lifestyle. *“It shapes youth’s attitude and way of thinking.”*

P4 agrees that the younger generation has interest in graffiti art. However, he feels that graffiti is losing its essence. *“Artists can acquire some basic skills of graffiti, but their passion towards art may not be visible. I think genuine graffiti artists have long lasting passion.”*

The next question delved into the potential of street art for mainstream acceptance and how graffiti as a subculture was perceived by society in general. P1 agreed that graffiti has evolved from the offsites to gain respectability as part of popular cultural trends which includes hip hop music, skateboarding and un-

derground fashion. *"Graffiti art has come full circle. Once, it was considered trash and frowned upon. However, I observe that in recent years, our country has seen the growth of respected names among Malaysian graffiti artists."*

P1 adds, *"Graffiti artists today are like viral commodities. They get praised as if they were Hollywood celebrities."* In view of this, he appreciates that graffiti art is being respected by the modern generations. *"It has been a constant pursuit of my passion."*

However, unless they undertake commissions, P1 thinks full time graffitists should be mentally prepared for the challenges of generating revenues. *"Parents might not like the idea of their children being artists. The government, society, and the public may not accept your art if it violates public policies or spaces. They have to gain that level acceptance."*

P2 mentioned the freedom of expression that graffiti represents, when legitimized in brand marketing and commercial advertising - has the most effect on the younger generation. *"This has created a youth subculture, integrating street art into trends, fashion, lifestyle. For instance, Nike graffiti-inspired branding campaigns exemplifies what graffiti symbolizes."*

P3 said the way street art and graffiti was promoted affects the way the younger generation perceive art, leading them on their own journeys to explore, discover and appreciate art. *"There is higher respect for graffiti among youths. Most artists today are well educated. They want a way to express themselves, so this is a healthy platform for them."*

On the issue of whether graffiti's evolution from being a street design element to mainstream art will cause graffiti to lose its value as art, some concerns were raised.

P1: *"Graffiti used in branding and advertising may reduce its true value as art."* However, it is undeniable that encouraging street art is a good platform to help new audiences engage into graffiti culture. P1 adds: *"It will give graffiti artists a chance to gain fame. On the other hand, artists might lose their identity to marketers who leveraging their skills for profit."*

P2 disagrees. *"I don't think that commercializing graffiti will devalue the art form."*

P3 thinks advertisers' usage of graffiti elements shows the involvement of Malaysian communities and corporate businesses to expose society towards street art appreciation.

P4 felt that promotion was important for the public to differentiate the styles of graffiti. *"Graffiti art is no longer in the streets. It has mainstreamed into interior architectural and exterior built designs. Graffiti aesthetics will maintain its essence as a symbol of revolt in discussing society's freedom of expression."*

Analysis of Findings

To interpret findings and understand their significance, coding analysis was performed to determine a pattern of data from participants' input. The results were then divided into two themes for critical analysis: first, the role of graffiti art in influencing social development in Malaysia and second, graffiti art as a local subculture practice.

Findings showed a strong interest in producing Malaysian graffiti as statements of 'belonging' to acceptable subculture. None of the interviewees perceived the art as a self-promotional tool or channel. All spoke of its function as a social communication medium, perceived to have positive effects on youths. This concurs with Syafril Amir Muhammad et al., that street art were studies of design composition, color, style, and inspirations that suits local conditions.¹⁷ Each artist was drawn to the genre through personal interest, their perceptions about graffiti as aesthetic artforms that are entertaining, thought-provoking, trendy, and enjoyable, and less about making political statements. One of the participants (P3) strongly emphasized the need to promote acceptance of art forms that are meaningful to youths.

Malaysian mural arts are heavily associated with the tourism agendas of heritage locations such as Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Johor, and Penang, resulting in positive economic spillover, promoting social connections and community engagement. Furthermore, commercial advertising has brought graffiti subculture into the media spotlight. Malaysian graffiti artists are aware that word-of-mouth is insufficient; they need to boost personal status by increasing their media presence on websites, blogs, and social media (BASKL, 2021).

Despite the planning, time, effort, and costs involved, it is undeniable that graffiti in Malaysia have gotten its fair share of societal perceptions as unsightly defacement and some run into legality issues with property owners. Public art installations are appreciated by society at large, yet its contribution to Quality-of-Life improvement as functional urban landscape elements have been challenged as lack of authorities' guidelines to maintain public art would negatively impact or even ruin the community image. In analyzing perceptions of graffiti's impact on Malaysian audience, this paper concurs with Muhammad Falihin Jasmi and Nik Hanita Nik Mohamad, who suggest that increasing social acceptance legitimizes street art and increases public appreciation.¹⁸ For the most part, Malaysian graffiti art is not inflammatory, but are inspired design works. However, graffiti artists must adhere to public art guidelines by city councils. They must also secure the permission of building owners before painting murals.

The idea of integrating artistic and design talent to beautify public surfaces and buildings is part of local cultural preservation of urban heritage. These findings concur with Cameron McAuliffe,¹⁹ Gözde Kizilkan and Mehmet Ocakçı²⁰ and Jane Rocca,²¹ that higher social tolerance for graffiti as subculture legitimizes its expression as sophisticated folk art, as it encourages graffiti artists to confidently portray the unique Malaysian identity on concrete walls and street canvases, in a public exploration of talent and tagging working in harmony.

Overall, findings indicate that Malaysian graffiti artists are passionate, and strive to earn positive reviews and media recognition, although they acknowledge there are legality, public costs, and acceptance issues to grapple with (Cilisos, 2020). Research showed generally positive perceptions relating to the social functions of graffiti. Graffiti artists clearly distinguish street graffiti as artform and not vandalism. Malaysian artists' perspectives on the commercialization of graffiti shows a healthy balance between its value to advertisers, community stakeholders, as a social trend, and for local heritage placemaking.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The intention of this study was to understand Malaysia's graffiti subculture and how it affects urbanization. Artists interviewed highlighted a need to consider the realities of urban identities, how street art and graffiti influence Malaysia's social development, and especially its impact on youth. From primary research, two major conclusions were derived.

First, there is a growth of positive perceptions towards street art with distinct elements of history, heritage, and culture in Malaysia, improving social acceptance while promoting domestic tourism and ensuring tourism development activities are sustained.

Second, a liberal approach is needed to expose Malaysian street artists' works to the public realm and to showcase their talents to energize town and city landscapes. Their main aim is to establish creative personas that identify them as artists, but their collective visions and role is to take society behind the façade of rebellion that graffiti may seem to be, to reveal the method behind their imagined worlds.

Towards this goal, opportunities must be offered for graffiti artists to use walls and building fronts as canvases. Young artists can be invited to participate in dialogues with stakeholder publics, as well as increasing youth audience awareness. This can be done by inviting school students, art club members and art institutions design and execute murals, setting up street art workshops and programs in collaboration with corporations, as well as partnering with state-level public cultural promotion agencies. Art educators and urban culture researchers in Malaysia need to encourage students to express themselves with an emphasis on practical challenges, including learning about the challenges of becoming professional street mural artists. They should guide students toward positive applications of styles that fit their ideologies.

The rise of graffiti culture in Malaysia are legitimate efforts to curb vandalism. Local authorities can promote community ties with graffiti artists while popularizing the art form and ensuring graffiti's visibility. In concurring with Shu Fen Chang, street art endorsed by town and city councils must be well planned since street mural initiatives could implicate substantial spending of taxes for the purpose of "beautification" or "uplift."²²

Media plays a key role in creating better understanding, appreciation and awareness of visual messages communicated by graffiti artists. Media enables local

stakeholders and international communities such as tourists to value self-expression as a civic freedom, while shaping a critical mindset in distinguishing the aesthetic and economic value of street art.

Social progress begins when graffiti and street art is appreciated and experienced meaningfully among every generation. In the context of urbanization, as captured by the spirit of Malaysia's street art, graffiti represents the freedom of cultural expression where there is a constant ebb, flow and intersection of ideas and society's collective memories of an ever-changing urban landscape.

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Figure 7: A Graffiti Pieces Yolande Winegarden. 2012. https://i0.wp.com/thefulcrum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/ARTS_Graffiti_Yolande-Winegarden.jpg?ssl=1 (accessed November 21, 2021).

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Thai Government's Promotion of National Culture *that Affected Thai Traditional Music Research During 1982-2012*

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Abstract

This article reports on a study of the state of knowledge and other factors affecting Thai music research from 1982 to 2012. Since 1982, problems of stability and deterioration of national culture led the government to promote national culture through a “conservation approach” to Thai traditional music in accordance with the customs of the Royal Court. This received governmental support for promotion as national cultural heritage to be passed down to posterity. This involved, for example, securing the involvement of various relevant government agencies, opening Thai music education curricula in higher education institutions, creating criteria for what constitutes “Thai traditional music” and allocating funds to support research on this art form. This support meant that most of the research in the field of Thai music from this time period was fundamental in nature and studied Thai music within the framework of Thai music theory. It examined the components of Thai music with a conservational approach following the prevailing understanding of “Thai traditional music.”

Keywords: *Thai Culture, Thai Government, Thai National Culture, Thai Traditional Music, Thailand*

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Introduction

"Traditional Thai music" is a cultural element that has been a part of the way of life in Thai society, both at the Royal Court and among the people, for centuries. This music used to play a role in traditional ceremonies, the performing arts, pantomime, puppetry, movies, dramas, and other forms of entertainment. Thai musicians were encouraged by the Royal Court and the elite in society to refine their compositions until they developed into high art. After the change of the country's government to a democratic system in 1932, the Thai music customs of the Royal Court were promoted by the government to be preserved by the Thai Music Division of the Fine Arts Department in the Ministry of Culture, which was the arm of the government responsible for transmitting national arts and culture. In addition, the School of Dramatic Arts, the country's first Thai music academy, also had the mission to conserve Thai traditional music. Despite these efforts to promote Thai cultural heritage, the popularity of Western music and culture in Thai society led to the adaptation and mixing of Thai and Western styles of composition and performance. This has included arranging Thai and international bands to play Thai music together using melodies with universal appeal. This east-west integration became widely popular, and has been a part of standard entertainment since the 1940s. Examples include the "Sangkheat Prayukt Band" and the "Sangkheat Samphan Band." Later in the 1970s, there emerged new creative applications in the style of "Thai contemporary music" by combining Thai music with modern music, producing a new genre. This was exemplified by the band "Fong Naam," which employed novel techniques of performance, composition, ensemble arrangement, and combination of traditional Thai instruments and modern music. After that, many contemporary Thai music bands emerged, following various market strategies. One example was "Boy Thai Band" founded in 1993, which used Thai music as a central motif for collaborations with international bands playing popular music at that time such as pop music and fusion jazz, for example using the chromatic scale. However, although contemporary Thai music became a popular part of the entertainment industry, the government was still concerned about the legacy of traditional Thai music that followed the customs of the Royal Court as part of the nation's cultural heritage. Thus, the application of contemporary music characteristics to traditional Thai music was not supported in the field of formal Thai music education. Furthermore, the government defined criteria for music to be considered "traditional Thai music" in order to prevent dilution of the art form and establish a clear structure for its transmission.

Discussion

State Promotion and Transmission of Thai Music as Cultural Heritage

The country's economic and social development strategy has followed the Western model ever since the first multi-year development plan (1961–1966). This mode of planning helped the country to accelerate development in many areas. However, the wholesale acceptance of Western culture as "good" occurred without the necessary screening and selection of the appropriate elements led to a decline in the role of traditional culture. At the same time, the Thai government was concerned about national security, given the festering communist insurgency. This led to a policy to promote Thai traditional culture to boost a national identity and sol-

identity under a common theme and vision. This policy was codified by the establishment of the Office of the National Culture Commission under the Ministry of Education in 1979 as the agency responsible for the promotion and conservation of national arts and culture. Later in 1981, the government announced a "National cultural policy" as a guideline to strengthen unity and national security through the promotion of the national culture as equivalent to "Thai identity." That policy provided the foundation for creating unity and national security centered around Thai people's sense of dignity and pride. The populace was called upon to maintain and promote Thai culture seriously and widely. At that time, the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand stated that "The State should promote and preserve the national culture." (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 8 December, 1981). Coupled with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Rattanakosin in 1982, in which Thai traditional music performances were part of the celebration, interest in the origins of Thai music culture increased. As a result, government agencies and the private sector cooperated to promote Thai traditional music through performances on various occasions. For example, in 1986, the Bangkok Bank and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs first jointly organized a Thai traditional music contest at the secondary school level, called "Pralong phleng praleng mahori," and in 1987, the Luang Pradit Phairo Foundation organized the "Sornthong" Thai music contest, among other examples.

In the 1980s, the United Nations announced the "World Decade for Cultural Development," and the Thai government attached great importance to the promotion of national culture through special activities, education, research, and dissemination of public information. These advocacy efforts continued into the 1990s, with the encouragement of people to recognize the value of the Thai identity and to take part in the passing on of Thai cultural heritage to the next generation. Accordingly, Thai traditional music was supported by relevant government and private organizations. For example, in 1994, the Imperial Queen's Park Hotel and the Pisces Music Co. organized the *Piphat Mai Khaeng Prakob Sapha* competition as part of the program "Siam Wichitsilpa No. 5. In 1997, the College of Music at Mahidol University organized the "Youth Musician Competition."

The government's promotion of Thai traditional music made Thai society more aware and interested in this art form. In addition, entertainment media played an important role in resurrecting Thai traditional music as popular media content. For example, in 1990, the novel "Khu Kam" was made into a weekly television drama series which enjoyed universal popularity among the Thai viewing public (http://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khu_Kam), and the show's use of "khim" (Thai hammered dulcimer) for the theme song led to greater appreciation of the instrument. Another example was the success of the 2004 film "The Overture," which drew its plot from life story of Luang Pradit Phairo (Sorn Silpabanleng), the head of an important Thai music school in the past. This film inspired many Thais in the younger generation to learn how to play traditional Thai music and instruments. There were also numerous entertainment programs that promoted Thai traditional music performances, such as "Khun Phra Chuay" a TV program premiering in 2004 that promoted Thai identity. In addition, "Atsachan Kanthonrap," which first aired

in 2008, was a program promoting Thai arts and culture. There have been numerous Thai music competitions over the past 20 years.

Thus, it can be said that the government's national cultural heritage promotion has awakened interest by large segments of the population young and old in supporting Thai traditional music. This heightened awareness is an important foundation for creating a systematic approach to preserving Thai traditional music heritage for subsequent generations of Thais, and the music world in general. One step in this direction is the creation of formal academic Thai music courses in institutions of higher education, the definition of criteria for classifying a composition as genuine "traditional Thai music," and the provision of research funding into traditional Thai music.

Academic Courses in Traditional Thai Music in Higher Education Institutions

The government's conservation-oriented approach to promoting national culture caused many colleges and universities to create courses in traditional Thai music at the undergraduate and graduate levels. For example, Kasetsart University opened a Thai Classical Music program in its Department of Music of the Faculty of Humanities in 1981, and in 1983, Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts opened its bachelor's degree program of Fine and Applied Arts in Thai Music in 1983, among many others.

In this way, the government's policy to promote Thai traditional culture as part of the country's national heritage through education and research support has led to serious study of traditional Thai music as an academic discipline in the education system. One of the objectives of the 7th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-1996) was "To develop higher education institutions, both public and private, to be able to perform their main mission with excellence in production of graduates, research, academic service, and preserving the arts and culture." (http://www.nesdb.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=3782). This policy led educational institutions to open research-related curricula in Thai music culture at the graduate level, starting in 1989 with the Master of Arts Program in Cultural Studies (Music) of Mahidol University's Research Institute for Languages and Cultures for Rural Development (now called the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia). Since then, other higher education institutions have launched master's degree programs in music. For example, in 1992, Srinakharinwirot University opened a Master of Arts Program in Ethnomusicology; in 1993, Mahidol University opened Master of Arts Program in music; and, in 1994, Chulalongkorn University opened a Master of Arts program in Thai Music, for instance. However, the government's policy on conservation of cultural heritage has steered Thai music education programs toward the patterns that were practiced in the Royal Court. For example, the Master of Arts program in Thai Music of Chulalongkorn University cites as one of its objectives "To produce graduates with knowledge, skills, and ability in Thai music through creative initiatives to conserve Thai music, as well as to promote cultural transmission through educational institutions as national cultural heritage." (Master of Arts Program in Thai Music, n.d.). Similarly, the Master of Arts Program in Ethnomusicology of Kasetsart University (revised 2005) has the

objective “To promote research and study in the field of ethnographic music both domestically and internationally, and to benefit the preservation of Thai music.” (<http://music.human.ku.ac.th>).

In addition, the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) focuses on promoting culture for social and community development, improving the quality of education at all levels, and establishing a mechanism for quality assurance. The plan calls for developing a curriculum to meet the standards. The 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) emphasized education reform and lifelong learning. It placed emphasis on the development of curricula and personnel through the educational quality assurance system (<http://www.nesdb.go.th/Default.aspx?tabid=91>), leading to the development of higher education covering Thai music education. The first doctor of arts program in music education was launched in 2005 at the College of Music at Mahidol University, under the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Musicology and the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Music Education (<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/th/history>). These developments made the production of research on Thai music more open to new perspectives, issues, and concepts. However, most of these programs still focused on education and research to increase academic knowledge of Thai music rather than research studies to apply research findings to society at large.

The Construction of Traditional Thai Music Criteria

Thai music education in the past was through a music “house,” a music school, or individually by a teacher whose skills were recognized and respected. This fractured approach led to different teaching patterns and content. Therefore, when Thai music education programs were launched at the higher education level, it soon became clear that there would need to be standard criteria for what constitutes “traditional Thai music.” The Ministry of University Affairs has the main role in regulating and managing educational standards at the higher education level of Thailand. Accordingly, a Cabinet resolution assigned the Ministry of University Affairs to oversee the Thai Music Promotion Project during 1987–2001. This project had the objective of promoting the sustainability of Thai traditional arts and culture as an invaluable part of the cultural heritage of the Thai people. The project applied criteria for traditional Thai music, starting from pre-primary school to tertiary education for use in teaching and learning management, and personnel management (Traditional Thai music criteria, 2002).

The first set of criteria for what constitutes “traditional Thai music criteria” was drafted in 1993 as a guideline for preparation of academic courses at various levels. The criteria cover the study of Thai music both in theory and in practice. This led to the creation of a framework and set the direction for Thai music education in the formal education system at all levels. The criteria established by the Ministry of University Affairs adopted the conventions of the Fine Arts Department, which were sourced from the Thai music education and transmission customs of the Royal Court—customs (both in theory and practice) that had long been accepted in academia. However, these Thai music benchmarks were set up in circumstances where there were not yet concrete research results that would stand

up under current conventions for academic research—meaning that the various actions taken to formulate the criteria and requirements had to be based on professional experience. The academic criteria for music education thus date back approximately 60 years, with the Fine Arts Department as its core (Ibid, 2002).

In 1993, official criteria for calling a composition “traditional Thai music” were approved by the Cabinet. These criteria were proposed by a consortium of the agencies involved in Thai music education, namely the Ministry of Education, Ministry of University Affairs, and other related agencies. These criteria were then used as a guideline for the preparation of curricula and teaching of Thai music. In addition, relevant agencies such as the Office of the Civil Service Commission, the University Civil Service Commission, and the Office of the Teacher Civil Service Commission applied the official traditional Thai music criteria when deciding to appoint persons to serve as teachers or instructors of Thai music. In this way, the understanding of Thai traditional music based on the model endorsed by the Royal Court has been transmitted as the standard for the country. This has also led to a number of research papers that studied the academic and professional standards of Thai music, such as Bussaya Chittuam’s 1997 study of the *krap-sepha* standard pattern, and the master’s degree thesis of Prayuth Kong (2001), which studied the main traditional Thai melodies in *piphat* music according to academic and professional standards among other research studies.

Support for Research on Traditional Thai Music

Promoting the transmission of Thai music through the education system has resulted in the provision of research grants from relevant agencies such as the Cultural Promotion Fund, an agency in the Office of the National Culture Commission, with the objective to promote and support arts and culture through research studies, conservation, and dissemination (Ministry of Education, 1993). Examples of Thai music research projects funded included the thesis such of Phaisal Wonksiri, a student in the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, entitled “An Analytical Study of Sepha for Thai Literature Instruction” (1982), and Janporn Nounpang’s 1998 study on *sepha*.

In the 1980s, the focus was on the application of research to national development. This also heightened government awareness of the need for funding research grants. Accordingly, the “Thailand Research Fund” was established to address this and other needs. However, at that time, there was scant academic work in the field of Thai traditional music that were supported by the fund. One study was conducted by Sugree Charoensook, et al (1995) entitled “Research for Standard Pitch and Scale of Thai Music,” among others.

However, after the establishment of academic departments and programs on Thai traditional music, higher education institutions and nongovernmental organizations had a mandate to provide cultural research scholarships in accordance with government policy. For example, in 1982, Chulalongkorn University provided grants to Oravan Kamawatana and Kattika Kangdhanakanond for their research “Opinions concerning music education in the demonstration schools in central

Thailand.” In addition, the King Prajadhipok and Queen Rambhai Barni Memorial Foundation and Srinakharinwirot University (Prasarnmit) provided a scholarship to Anong Phawaphutanon Na Mahasarakham, a student in the field of Educational Technology, to write a thesis (1988) “On the effects of a video presentation containing computer graphics as a supplement to regular classroom teaching on mat-thayom 3 students’ attitudes and skills in Thai music.”

Research grants became an important task of educational institutions after the passage of the National Education Act in 1999. This launched major educational reforms in the country, which placed importance on the implementation of educational standards for the development of society and the country, as well as on the encouragement of teachers to develop curricula suitable for learners at each level of education (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 1999) through controls on personnel and teaching development standards based on educational quality assurance criteria. Therefore, educational institutions were motivated to have systems and mechanisms to support full-time instructors in conducting research to improve teaching and learning under research grants (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2008). For example, Chulalongkorn University provided research grants for faculty members through such facilities as the Thai Music Culture Research Unit of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts (established in 2004). This unit has the aims of promoting the research of faculty in the Department of Thai Music and building a cultural research database of Thai traditional music to serve teachers, students and researchers from various institutions both domestic and abroad (Honors and Awards for Teaching and Research, 2011). The Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University supported lecturer Rajan Sornchai to do research on Thai music research in classrooms (2010) for the development of Thai music teaching and learning. The Faculty of Arts of Silpakorn University supported research funding for faculty members of the Faculty of Music, including Boondarika Kongphet for her research “Methods of Khim Production and Performance: A case study of Mr. Winit Puksawat.” (2010). Khon Kaen University funded a study by Tharanat Hin-on “On the culture of *mukhapatha* oral transmission of *so u* playing by Khru Luang Phairoh Siang Saw (Oun Duriyacheewin)” (2009). Burapha University provided a grant to Chuchart Pinpart titled “Surveying Thai Musicians in the Eastern Region of Thailand” (1996).

Impact of Promoting Thai Traditional Music through a Conservation Approach and Thai Music Research

The promotion of traditional Thai music focusing on educational institutions both the offering of courses related to traditional Thai music and the administration of research grants and educational quality assurance led to an increase in the number of research studies on topics related to traditional Thai music. Since the 1990s, there has been more attention to how research findings are utilized for the benefit of society. This had led to an increase in research on traditional Thai music across a wider range of disciplines than before.

Research in the Field of Traditional Thai Music

Thai music research output, as the product of academic courses that shape professors or academics in the field of traditional Thai music or other relevant fields,

at first took the form of historical data collection and archiving. One example is the research of Poonpit Amatayakul, et al. (1989) titled “Alphabetical list of names of Thai musicians, song writers and composers of the first 200 years of the City of Ratanakosin,” which includes a collection of biographies and pictures of Thai musicians of the Rattanakosin Era (Amatayakul, et al., 1989). Another example is Phaisal Wonksiri's 1982 thesis titled “An analytical study of “Sepha” for Thai literature instruction.” This research described the history of the *sepha*, how to conduct prosody analysis of the use of words and style, and the opinions of academics and lecturers on the challenges of teaching and the classic *sepha* works (Wonksiri, 1982). Some researchers also focused on the creation of new forms of Thai music; for example, Kovit Kantasiri et al. (1991) conducted research on “Computer analysis of Thai traditional songs.”

Besides the research focusing on collecting and compiling data, most research in Thai music would have a similar academic framework and methodology. Although the production of research for each course would have a specific purpose, most of the research studies were within the framework of Thai music theory, took an approach from ethnomusicology, or focused on innovative, creative, or inventive elements. Still, most of the research remained on the topic of traditional Thai music, and there was little research on Thai contemporary music, despite its widespread popularity.

Research in the Framework of Thai Music Theory

The research analyzes musical elements such as song structure, scale, playing style, lyrical content, and special techniques. An example of an academic program that focuses on these elements is the Master of Arts Program in Thai Music at Chulalongkorn University. One study that came out of that program in 2009 was titled “A musical analysis of *krao nai* for *ranat thum* solo: A case study of Kru Uthai Keolaiaad,” by Nottanunti Charoen. This study of *krao nai* music for solo *ranat thum* analyzed special techniques and melodic features in musical elements of *krao nai* music for solo *ranat thum* within the framework of Thai music theory (Charoen, 2009). Research that adheres to an ethnomusicological approach uses the framework of Thai music theory as well as anthropological methodologies to collect data in order to study the music's sociocultural relationships. An example of this is the Master's Program in Cultural Studies at Mahidol University, and the 2002 study of Yuthana Chittuam titled “Changwang Suan: Ban Pephath of Prapadang District, Samut Prakan Province. This study looked at historical dimensions and the transmission of *piphath* ensemble music from a perspective of ethnomusicology, with an analysis of the composition of *thao* songs by Changwang Suan Chittuam according to Thai music theory.

Research on Innovative, Creative or Inventive Elements in Thai Music

This research concerns developments such as the creation of new compositions and the creation of Thai musical instruments. This format started to get attention in 1994 when the Cabinet resolved to make February 2 of every year Inventor's Day, in order to honor His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who invented the “Chaipattana Aerator.” One of the objectives of this resolution was to support innovative research covering creative work in Thai music. For example, Chul-

alongkorn University supported the Ratchadaphiseksomphot Endowment Fund, established in 1997, with the aim of promoting and supporting useful inventions that can be used in teaching to produce tools or equipment that are beneficial to society and creative works. (i.e., art) (<https://www.research.chula.ac.th/project/grant-for-invention-th>). In addition, a new academic course was created to support production of creative musical works, resulting in more creative works in Thai traditional music. Two such programs are the Doctor of Philosophy curricula in Musicology, and Music Education, both offered by the College of Music at Mahidol University. The objective of the program is “to create a repository of knowledge, ideas, and creativity of music researchers and music scholars in Thailand.” (<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/history>). Another curriculum is the Doctor of Fine and Applied Arts program at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Chulalongkorn University (2007). This program aims “to produce graduates with knowledge and competence in fine arts research, and to produce research and creative work that contributes to the body of knowledge in fine arts.” (Doctor of Fine and Applied Arts Program, 2007).

Thai institutions’ research grants for innovation and invention, as well as the opening of academic courses that place importance on creative innovation, has caused the amount of research in this area to increase both creative works of music composition and research related to innovation in Thai musical instrument creations. For instance, the research study “Thayoi Deow for Jakhey solo,” by Pakorn Rodchangphuen (2006) created a new Thai composition in the melodic form of a Thai classical solo. As for music research that studies innovation in creating traditional Thai musical instruments, most studies focus on production data, processes, and procedural techniques that are characteristic of famous craftsmen in producing quality musical instruments. Examples include the thesis of Anong Jitrmanee’s (2000) titled “Production methods of Peenai” Poomjai Ruenroeng’s thesis (2008) “Making procedures of Klongkhaek by Khru Sanae Phakphong,” and Veerawat Senchanthichai’s thesis (1969) “Process of making the musical instrument *saw sam sai* by Master Vinij Puksawa,” among others.

Interdisciplinary Research on Traditional Thai Music with Content Related to Other Sciences

This approach has gained attention in academic circles, starting in the 1980s. This type of music research has appeared in Thai music education, which studies issues related to the principles of music arrangement, music psychology, evaluation, and development of musical learning, including musical skills for teaching. Research in this field is, therefore, diverse. This field includes the use of research methods in social sciences, such as applying the hypotheses of important theorists as a guideline for the use of statistical data. For example, there was a study of factors which lead to the development of teaching innovations, including the application of Thai music theory in analyzing relevant data, such as Athaporn Tassana’s (2003) study titled “Opinions of Thai music teachers in the secondary schools in Bangkok area concerning the standardization in Thai music occupations.” Another study was conducted by Jiraporn Sinsombat (2004) and was titled “The condition of teaching and learning Thai music by local experts at schools under the Ratchaburi Provincial Primary Education Office.”

Thai Music Research Aimed at Bringing Benefits to the Community and Society

This research has received some interest in the use of music for healing and conservation of music in the community. An example is the research titled “The use of Thai musical instruments as tool in music therapy with reference to Akaboshi method,” by Bussakorn Sumrongthong, et al. (1999). That study looked at Akaboshi music therapy patterns and methods to consider the possibility of using Thai music as a replacement for Akaboshi therapy devices. The study tried to identify the appropriate pattern in the use of Thai music for therapy in groups of people with disabilities (Sumrongthong, et al., 1999). Research entitled “Participation action research to encourage and conservation for solving the problem of Thai classical music decline in Mae Klong River Basin,” was conducted by Peerachai Leesomboonphon (2011). This study aimed at mitigating the risk of losing Thai traditional music traditions in the Mae Klong River Basin.

Thai Music Research in Other Disciplines

Since the 1990s, the government has continued to promote the transmission of Thai cultural heritage. The 2005 Graduate Program Standards emphasize the development of academics and professionals with high-level competence in a range of disciplines through a research process that includes creating, connecting, and integrating one’s own area of expertise with other sciences (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 2005). This led other academic fields to take an interest in studying Thai music by integrating data from across disciplines. This includes basic research for knowledge creation, as well as applied research.

Research to Build Basic Knowledge

Most of the basic research uses an educational framework or theory in their respective science or academic field. There are studies on topics related to Thai music, such as the research entitled “Bang Khlo Neighborhood and Thai Traditional Music Conservation,” by Punnee Buale (2007), using historical methodology to analyze data on the formation and transformation of the Bang Khlo community from a historical lens. This study shows how change in a community can affect the transmission of Thai music cultural heritage (Buale, 2007). The thesis by Suphat Thongchawee (2011) titled “Information Behavior of Students in the Field of Music at Tertiary Institutions,” in library and information science involved a study of behavior of music students at tertiary institutions.

Applied Research for Use in Higher Education Institutions

Applied research includes studies to develop practical innovations. These involve integrating knowledge across disciplines, such as science, social science, and humanities, as applied to traditional Thai music in terms of development and evolution of the art form. This has resulted in more research in different fields that study issues related to Thai music in a cross-disciplinary manner. These studies are useful for academic purposes, as well as for their benefit to communities, businesses, and society at large.

Research for Academic Benefit in Teaching and Learning

This includes studies such as those in the fields of higher education, elementary education, primary education, curriculum and supervision, curriculum and in-

struction, and educational psychology. Courses include the study of issues related to the teaching of Thai music in various aspects by integrating information on Thai music. An example of this type of research is the thesis of Wassana Bunyaphithak (2001) titled “Development of educational quality management strategies in accordance with education criteria of performance excellence for higher education institutions offering Thai music and drama degree programs.” This study aimed at studying the current situation and educational quality management strategies in accordance with education criteria and to study best practice in educational quality management based on the education criteria of performance excellence for higher education institutes offering Thai music and drama degree programs (Bunyaphithak, 2001). Another study, conducted by Prayut Thaithani as part of his dissertation in counseling psychology (2003), was titled “The construction and development of Thai music aptitude test.” The purpose of this study was to construct and develop a Thai music aptitude test for students between 10 and 18 years of age (Thaithani, 2003).

Research for the Benefit of the Community and Society

One example that was intended to inform health- and psychology-related therapeutic applications was in Burapha University’s Master of Education Program in Educational Counseling by Daojai Thiansi (2001) titled “A comparison between the effect of Thai classical music and applied Thai massage on patients with post-caesarean section pain.” This study examined the effects of music therapy on post-operative pain of patients after general surgery (Thiansi, 2001). Another study was part of Srinakharinwirot University’s Master of Education Program in Guidance Psychology, conducted by Arunee Tongba (2004) and titled “The effect of systematic desensitization on the Thai music presentation anxiety of Thai music department students of Srinakharinwirot University.”

Research on Application of Technology in the Field of Science and Technology

This research studies the use of technology to develop Thai music in various ways, such as to improve teaching and learning. A study on craftsmanship in making Thai traditional musical instruments, conducted as part of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University’s Master of Philosophy Program in Management of Information Technology by Somchai Rassamee (2012), was titled “The combination pattern of Thai and Western music by the use of computer technology,” and examined the use of computer technology to study the fixed frequencies of Thai music and its combination with Western music (Rassamee, 2012). Another study of Thai and Western music using this approach is the thesis by Khanpetch Khamsat (2008), as part of Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University’s Curriculum and Instruction Development program, “Computer-Assisted Instruction Development of Thai Musical Instruments and Ensembles: History of Thai Musical Instruments.” There is also a thesis in computer technology by Sureeporn Unem (2009) titled “The development and finding efficiency of computer-assisted instruction about Angkalung.”

In addition, there are also research findings in various fields that study Thai music to be useful in aspects related to business management. An example includes the thesis in interior design by Wasin Wesetsakdee (2007) titled “The influence of Thai classical music in interior design for music therapy institute,” which studies

the design of the environment inside a music therapy facility using philosophy of identity and personality of the elements of Thai music (Wesetsakdee, 2007). Another study, conducted as part of Thammasat University's Master of Arts Program in Cultural Management, was by Nantipa Chanboon (2010) titled "Thai music knowledge management: A case study of the Foundation of Luang Pradit Phairo (Sorn Silapabanleng)." This studies the modes of managing the organization and presents a direction for organizational management for the benefit of society (Chanboon, 2010).

Conclusion

The promotion of Thai heritage by the government with a focus on passing on the national culture, is a strategy to bolster and solidify national identity and contribute to national security. As a result, there have been a number of policies and programs that support the transmission of traditional Thai music through government agencies and research studies in higher education institutions. In addition, the creation of a set of criteria which defines "traditional Thai music" has furthered the transmission of this art form as cultural heritage of the nation and has had the effect of making most of the research on Thai music focus on this conception of traditional Thai music meaning that the research output is generally fundamental in nature and aims to build the academic body of knowledge. In the 1990s, the promotion of research that can be used for benefits did cause there to be many studies that are directly applicable to instruction programs and curriculum development in music education. However, there are a large number of inter-disciplinary studies that draw on various fields to study Thai music. Nonetheless, the majority of the studies are conducted within the frame of transmitting the traditional Thai music of the Royal Court as national cultural heritage in accordance with government guidelines. This promotion of Thai music culture in the decades described above has laid a foundation for Thai music research that has continued to exert influence up to the present day.

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Philippine Gabaldon Heritage School

Buildings in the New Normal: Safety, Sustainability and Human Development Perspectives

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Abstract

As the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted education, stakeholders find means to return to the New Normal through limited face-to-face learning. The Philippine Gabaldon School Buildings (GSBs) are seen as venues where this can happen. Built from 1908–1915, GSBs were erected during the American colonial government. Republic Act 11194 mandates these buildings' conservation. Due to its perceived astounding structure and cultural value, a qualitative study was conducted that delved into the existing publicly available documents related to the buildings, for in-depth analysis. The investigation highlights how GSBs potentially address the minimum health standards relevant to the pandemic and limited face-to-face learning. It was also found that safety protocols can be observed in these structures given the spacious perimeter, good ventilation, and high ceiling for classroom acoustics. GSBs could also contribute to sustainability efforts in promoting local tourism. As these GSBs relay narratives over time, local heritage could exert effort to promote sustainability and local cultural community. In other words, the findings reveal that (a) GSB qualifies as a prospect venue for face-to-face learning due to its ventilation and dimension; (b) the building is seen as a sustainable tourism landmark; and (c) the structure contributes to individual and community human development.

Keywords: *Heritage, Gabaldon School Buildings, New Normal, COVID-19, Sustainability, Philippines*

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Introduction

The unimaginable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various societal aspects and transactions has created shifts on how human development and personal lifestyles. With mobility restrictions, even access to food has been under great threat that government institutions were urged to establish policies related to food security (Poudel et al., 2020:221-225). While the nature of the disease is continuously understood and with the presence of vaccines and health interventions, it is undeniable that there exists challenges and significant effects in terms of education, economy, travel and hospitality, and others. Policy makers and government institutions have established approaches to COVID-19 challenges to contribute to uninterrupted Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) responses. According to Rashid et al. (2020:340-343), learners are challenged with their classes as access and financing the emergency learning modalities become an issue. Aside from these, families with children also struggle in terms of mental health and childrearing practices (Prime et al., 2020:631). It is imperative that these inputs become central to COVID-19 recovery roadmap for sustainable development. Amidst the pandemic, social and personal lifestyles that uphold accountability and liability are at the core towards recovery from the pandemic. Altered lifestyle (Mattioli et al., 2021:356-359), as opposed to the usual pre-pandemic routine has been one of the major changes brought about by the health crisis.

Design and implementation of programs and policies on urban planning contribute significant hallmark in the new normal. A study by Rimapradesi and Fajrina (2021:134-144) revealed how Indonesian local government units have contextualized their own policies relative to the national government's mandates in mitigating the impact of the health crisis. Practices rooted on cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural domains on local, national, and global scales reflect efforts of communities, researchers, and stakeholders who pursue sustainable development in their own respective fields. Individuals' interaction and 'activity patterns' have been shaped by various health protocols and measures evident in different policies and programs (Munawar et al., 2021:1276). As communities become busy again with the influx of transactions and engagement among people, cultural continuity and the vibrance of various spaces serve as a reminder of recovery, healing, and (new) normalcy. Noting the possibility that the COVID-19 virus could still be present in the future, Jamaludin et al. (2020:165-170) recognized the significance of the community in observing health protocols and mandates in the New Normal.

The COVID-19 pandemic is indeed a human development crisis. The experience has exposed divide among people in terms of economy, technology, education, among other domains. Various government responses to the health crisis have created a gap on human capacity to be resilient and disruption-proof when it comes to social and economic engagement and interactions. Lloyd – Jones (2021:41-54) argued the crucial need to explore ways and means in the domains of self-care, practices, and approaches to link researchers and practitioners towards the provision of support during the pandemic. Beyond financial and social focus, the shift needs to highlight how individuals can maximize one's capacity to realize potential and personal pursuits amidst the crisis.

The Philippines' Gabaldon School Buildings (GSBs) are structures erected in the public school system built in the early 1900s. These school buildings were the brainchild of Filipino Assemblyman Isauro Gabaldon who in 1907 was instrumental in passing the Gabaldon Law (Act No. 1801) which institutionalized the budget in building these structures. GSBs represent the grand architectural heritage and historical narrative of the Filipino people (Ancho and San Juan, 2021:104-116). While some of these GSBs can still be found across the Philippines, some face threat of deterioration and demise. Thus, in 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Republic Act 11194, known as the Gabaldon School Buildings Conservation Act, which upheld the "policy of the State to conserve and promote the country's historical and cultural heritage resources."

As the pandemic continues to impact "cultural ecology" (Wang and Du, 2021:187-192), including cultural contents (Vuckovic et al., 2021:379-397), the present study attempts to highlight GSB as a Filipino heritage and arts in the time of COVID-19 pandemic, and how these structures contribute to community well-being, health, safety, and human development. With community quarantines and school closures brought about by the pandemic, GSBs presence in the Philippines maybe considered a thing of the past, but with the gradual implementation of face-to-face classes, these structures become significant towards strict adherence to health and safety protocols in ensuring that no one gets left behind. Silberman (2020:467-475) has recognized how the health crisis breeds effects on safeguarding and highlighting cultural heritage, an event being a major turnout point in the post-war period.

Human development constructs are also highlighted in the present study by emphasizing how capacities of communities and individuals could be improved, making them resilient against disruption, such as the pandemic. Penkler et al. (2020:664-665) concluded that efforts spearheaded by the community as backed by up the government could beef up mechanisms in championing individuals and communities during a crisis. In the context of early childhood education, Egan et al. (2021:925-934) argued that teachers facilitate education based on young learners' pace. The presently experienced crises had emphasized how heritage serves as an ingredient towards achieving community solidarity, progress, and psychological health of individuals (De Luca et al., 2020:119-132).

The efforts of community members through various mechanisms in fighting the spread of the virus show favorable effect in stemming the disease (Lasry et al., 2020:451). As stakeholders find ways to implement limited face-to-face learning in schools in the Philippines, it also reflects efforts to address concerns such as digital divide, access to quality education, and uninterrupted teaching and learning processes. True enough, these steps bring individuals one step ahead in closing the gap in relation to various impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Efforts towards the upkeep of GSBs could be reaped as Filipino students gradually physically return to schools and take classes in these buildings. GSBs as learning facilities provide potential advantageous features relative to health protocols and standards. In the long run, banking on the mandates of RA 11194, GSBs do not

only stand as school buildings, but also as cultural icons of the local communities, as witness of the engagement of time, people, and space. Projecting GSBs at the core of local tourism creates a rediscovery of the past while keeping up with present-day challenges in foreseeing the future. Fernandez et al. (2022:121301) noted the crucial role of cultural heritage being one standard in which tourism competitiveness could be based in the post-pandemic era recovery. How can GSBs address minimum health standards in relation to limited face-to-face learning in the Philippines? How can GSBs contribute to sustainability efforts in promoting local tourism? These inquiries are the central questions of the present study. Overall, this paper highlights GSBs as narratives of culture and arts in pursuit of promoting sustainability and local cultural community. The COVID-19 health crisis has underscored the need to crucially reframe focus in realizing SGDs, especially in the region. Recovery and post-pandemic scenario need careful planning and approaches and culture and heritage also play significant roles in achieving these pursuits.

Methodology

The present study utilizes qualitative method particularly document analysis. Focusing on the GSBs, the analyzed and interpreted data set came from the following materials which can be publicly accessed online: Republic Act 11194 (Gabaldon School Buildings Conservation Act); DepEd Memorandum No. 071 s. 2021 (Preparations for the Pilot Face-to-Face, Expansion and Transitioning to New Normal); Department of Education – Department of Health Joint Memorandum Circular No. 01, s. 2021 (Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of Limited Face-to-Face Learning Modality; and the Updated Tourism Response and Recovery Plan from the Philippines' Department of Tourism.

With the aim of capturing the emerging themes, the gathered data from the materials were analyzed qualitatively to answer the following research questions: (1) How can GSBs address minimum health standards in relation to limited face-to-face learning in the Philippines? (2) How can GSBs contribute to sustainability efforts in promoting local tourism? Both queries were answered by putting a premium on human development lens. Provisions and mandates serve as data sets of the documents which were eventually analyzed, clustered, and discussed according to established research questions. Furthermore, the study utilized documents which can be accessed publicly; hence, no ethical concerns have been noted on the part of the research. The following principles were observed in the conduct of the analysis: objectivity, fairness, and honesty. Furthermore, the targets of the investigation are to capture these GSBs current status, their place in COVID-19 recovery period, their cultural value, and their epitomes as insights to human development.

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the results of the analysis based on the established research questions. It is mainly divided into two parts: GSB and minimum health standards in education; and GSB towards promoting local tourism. The findings are discussed through the human development lens in relation to the New Normal setting.

Safety: GSBs and Minimum Health Standards in Education

The need to develop measures in combatting the virus is an imperative step in the New Normal. The protocols need to be revisited as new findings about the COVID-19 arise (Khalifa et al., 2022:1-8). The presence of these policies and guidelines, being the “new order” (Sari et al., 2020:8938-8946), provides directions for individuals in navigating daily transactions and engagement outside the comforts of their homes as usual daily physical contacts are made.

In the light of the implementation of limited face to face classes in the Philippines, students are expected to be back again on school premises after two years on closures of learning facilities. With the onset of physical contacts and transactions, observing minimum health standards becomes a crucial step in ensuring safe, equitable, and secured back to school experience of Filipino students. By instituting protocols, GSBs serve at the forefront of learning in the New Normal. These structures boast features that fit the requirements of the contemporary times. The nature of GSBs reveals how teaching and learning could be continued in these spaces in a safe and secure manner.

GSBs as grand structures carry spacious perimeters, both indoor and outdoor. In the post pandemic scenario, expansive spaces allow room to encourage “meaningful collaboration and innovation” (Papu and Pal, 2020:1-8). The illustration below shows a GSB in Manila highlighting its perimeter space and floor plan. It can be noted how the structure becomes massive in terms of length and width.

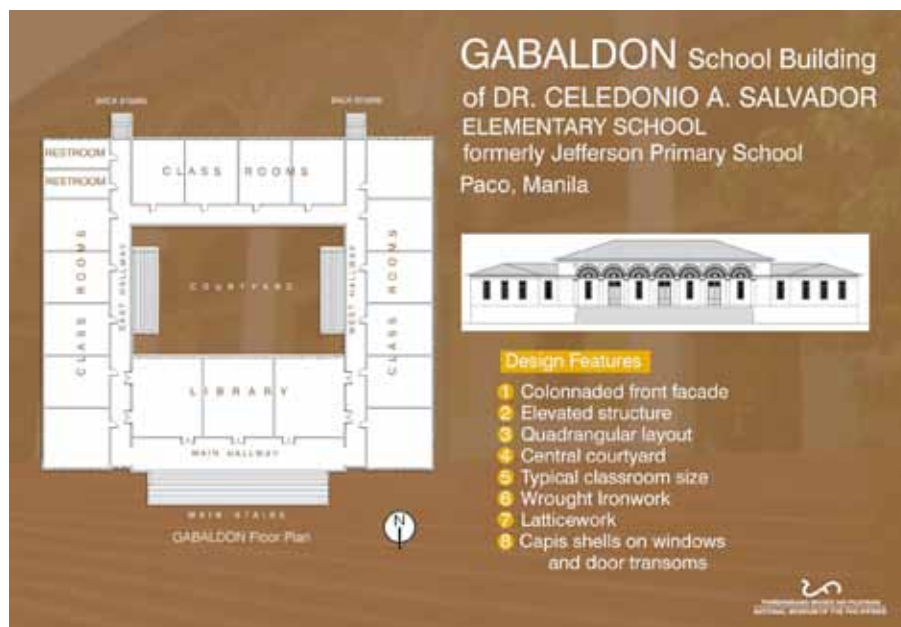


Figure 1. GSB Floor Plan. Source: <https://www.yodisphere.com/2021/06/gabaldon.html>.

The Philippine Department of Education’s mandate on the Preparations for the Pilot Face-to-Face, Expansion and Transitioning to New Normal (DepEd Memorandum No. 7 s. 202) clearly states that in managing school operations under the

classroom layout and structure indicator, seats occupied must not exceed the maximum allowed, being 1 – 2 meters apart. The space must also allow physical distancing equipped with effective management of traffic system.



Figure 2. GSB of Dr. CA Salvador Elementary School in Paco, Manila. Source: <https://www.yodisphere.com/2021/06/gabaldon.html>.



Figure 3. Façade of a GSB in Cebu. Source: <https://verafiles.org/articles/heritage-lessons-saving-gabaldon-schoolhouses>.

The Joint Memorandum Circular issued by the Philippine Department of Health and Department of Education (Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2021) outlines how other facilities and large spaces could also be used as learning areas. These include the school grounds, and other facilities. Megahed and Ehab (2021:110471) stressed in their study how building designs could contribute to combating the spread of the virus. Given GSBs' lay-out, safety protocols could be observed most especially with the spacious perimeter of the area.



Figure 4. Hallway of a GSB. Source: <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/7662/1454/1600/4487scd.jpg>.

Good ventilation is also one aspect that can be attributed as a merit of GSB. The Philippines, being a tropical country is home to structures and building with good ventilation, and GSBs are designed to allow the flow of fresh air. Foster and Kinzel (2021:021904) noted that learning spaces that are ventilated with moderate filters contribute to lessening the infection transmission. Coupled with social distancing, ventilation has been regarded as contributory in controlling the virus (Sun and Zhai, 2020:102390). Enhanced ventilation is regarded as a factor that could reduce virus transmission (Morawska et al., 2020:105832).



Figure 5. Inside the rehabilitated GSB. Source: <http://www.balungao.gov.ph/?p=1534>.

With limited face-to-face sessions, teachers are expected to conduct actual classes, and this poses the risks of transmission through saliva and droplets. As COVID-19 passes on from one person to another by talking, sneezing, or coughing (Valenzuela – Fonseca et al., 2022:529), it could be assumed that the risk is higher as teachers conduct classes, especially with exerting efforts to be heard by the students. GSBs as structures with high ceilings (Senate of the Philippines Press Release, 2015), serve to enhance “freedom of speech and engagement” (Study International, 2019). High ceiling improves the possibilities for optimum classroom acoustics. With this set up, noise level inside the classroom is decreased and speech recognition becomes favorable (Culling et al., 2020:223-228). Teachers and students alike do not need to raise their voices to be heard or understood.



Figure 6. GSBs presented in the tourism website of a local government. Source: <https://www.ragaycam-sur.gov.ph/tourism/gabaldon-building/>.

Sustainability: GSBs Towards Promoting Local Tourism in the New Normal

Tourism and hospitality industry has suffered undeniable impact of the health crisis. The pandemic has created chaos on a global scale as individuals lost their jobs owing to lockdown, restrictions, and quarantine measures. Small enterprises related to travel were affected and struggle to keep afloat. A study by Rech and Migliorati (2021:6301) concluded that due to COVID-19, people had decreased cultural activities and travel activities. The way people consume cultural contents has also shifted from the usual physical contact to online and virtual tours and experience, which can also be considered as another challenge and competition faced during the pandemic.

Being one of the hardest hits by the health crisis (Franczuk et al., 2022:e00217), the onset of the return of face-to-face interactions and lifting of travel bans seems to be a promising development in the industry. Innovative options have been practiced fulfilling the absence of physical tourism activities (Jeon and Yang, 2020, 3324-3338). Given the realizations during the pandemic, the tourism industry is

posed as a period to devise mechanisms that advance sustainable tourism and hospitality practices, highlighting disruptive-free plans and programs.

GSBs as community icons could be tapped to emphasize local tourism. Aside from being a heritage site, GSBs could potentially contribute to enriching community capacity emphasizing history, community engagement, and a sense of national pride. With the participation of various stakeholders, GSBs position could give a boost on local communities, thereby allowing sustainable tourism to emerge. The grandeur structure and historical past of these structures will not only fill the minds of the learners and teachers who occupy the buildings, but tourists could also witness how GSBs stood the test of time: educating the Filipino people through teaching and learning and standing as a reminder of the country's glorious past towards sustainability. Lee and Leung (2022:76-93) recognized the need to advance tourism forms that are more sustainable leading to the enhancement of tourism at the localities. Indeed, tourism positively affects the locals of the community where it belongs (Yoopetch, 2022:3-22).

While some GSBs are currently pipelined to be projected as historical sites, the present study argues that more attention and provision should be given to materialize these ideals. On a positive note, Brouder et al., (2020:735-746) noted how the presently-experienced crisis could lead people to appreciate and express support for local business and tourist spots that are "lesser known." Stakeholders and government and non-government entities need to put premium on the potential of GSBs to contribute to sustainability efforts in promoting local tourism (Saleh et al., 2022:48-63). Encouraging local tourists could remain a trend despite scrapping travel bans at larger scales (Flew and Kirkwood, 2021:16-20). In the tourism website of Laoag City, one GSB in the community is listed as a potential destination for visitors. The description states that:

"Constructed in 1929 as part of the implementation of the Gabaldon Act 1801. The Act was sponsored by then Assemblyman Isauro Gabaldon, which explains why the law is more commonly known as the "Gabaldon Law." Gabaldon Law's main objective was to promote that education was for all, which explains why the "Gabaldon" type schools can be found all over the country to provide basic education – literacy to all Filipinos. The school, located in the heart of Laoag City, seems to have existed forever in the minds and hearts of every Laoagueño, not just an institution of learning but a historical and cultural heritage." Source: <https://laoagcity.gov.ph/tourism/cultural.html>

The presence of GSBs all over the Philippines could also be tapped as a springboard for contextualized learning in various learning areas such as history, values education, and others. As the Department of Education mandates the contextualization of learning, students and teachers no longer depend on theoretical concepts but GSBs stand as evident artifact. As these GSBs relay different narrative overs time, local heritage could be given emphasis as an effort to promote sustainability and local cultural community while delivering quality and accessible education.



Figure 7. GSB of Laoag Central School. Source: <https://laoagcity.gov.ph/tourism/cultural.html>.

Human Development: Perspectives and Impact

The documents analyzed in the present study revealed strong connections among stakeholders in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. DepEd Memorandum No. 071 s. 2021 clearly states how individuals and the community could work hand in hand in ensuring the safety and security of school children during the conduct of limited face to face classes. As a study that looks through the lens of human development, GSBs in the time of pandemic contributes to describing the colorful past of the Filipino people while making it meaningful by highlighting historical and social significance. GSBs as potential agents towards sustainable tourism contribute not just to individual growth and meaning, but also of the development of the community, the country, and beyond.

Significant facets of human development have been witnesses to the ravage of the COVID-19 crisis. Enterprises have closed leaving people jobless with economic transactions paralyzed, physical and mental well-being were at threat as death toll continues to escalate, and while limited face to face classes are underway, it is no doubt that the education landscape has been shaped and altered in unexpected directions. Technology has played a crucial role in most interactions initiated by people: commerce, education, socialization. This trend seemingly creates layered challenges as access to the internet and technological device has caused digital divide and inequality between and among users.

Conclusion

The present study goes beyond school buildings and limited face to face classes. The argument manifests over and above safety, sustainability, and human development perspectives. These three constructs, when viewed together echo a discourse that calls to examine and reexamine the currently experienced pandemic through the lens of equity and equitability. The health crisis may have posed challenges, but it is undeniable that opportunities also come along it. Stakeholders, especially those in the local communities should be provided with support that

genuinely showcase their potential and capacity: the post-pandemic scenario is a period to revive the localities: the past, the present, and the future.

More than equipping individuals to be resilient and be able to transact disruption-free activities, it is argued that people's capabilities be improved and given attention to create meaningful experiences in the present that is anchored on their colorful past. This way, a future anchored on one's total way of life can be imagined.

The chronicles of GSBs as heritage structures pose significant narrative in the new normal era. As issues on safety is addressed, sustainability also surfaces as a priority. With all these constructs, human development positions at the core of the entire efforts towards healing and recovery in the post – pandemic period. It is about time to redefine the shift towards local communities together with individuals to champion heritage and culture that make up one's local identity. By doing so, the foundation of a country's basic unit becomes a solid representation of the totality of individual experiences.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is limited on the researcher's firsthand personal observation and/or experience, and the existing documents publicly available online. The arguments and conclusions on the applicability of GSBs structure for ventilation and acoustics due to high ceiling are all based on the triangulation of the aforementioned former and latter limits. Hence, future researchers are suggested to further examine these GSBs on the perspective of in-depth engineering and architecture since the study's scope solely covers the layers of educational and cultural point of view. Furthermore, though there are some historical episodes related to the buildings, the investigation is limited to the GSBs present-day descriptions, its place in this era of recovery, and its present-day cultural value and relevance to human development. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to delve deeper on the buildings historical past to put them on record for further studies.

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Don Mula (Original Dance) and the “Sacred Sound” of Buddhism:

*Performing Collective Identity Among the
Pwo Karen in Thung Yai, Thailand*

Jarun Kanchanapradit⁺ & Sooi Beng Tan⁺⁺ (Malaysia)

Abstract

The *Don Mula* (Original Dance) represents an important part of the collective consciousness and identity of the Pwo Karen people in the Laiwo sub-district, Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary in Western Thailand. Due to modernization and changes that have occurred in Karen society at the turn of the millennium, many functions of the dance have been transformed. While the dance continues to be performed to pay respect to the Rice Goddess, it is employed to educate the younger generation about Buddhist knowledge and Karen beliefs as expressions of "Karen-ness." Through in-depth interviews and a study of the musical lyrics and dance, this article shows that the Karen identity in the *Don Mula* dance has shifted from the sacred texts and sound of Buddhism in the songs for the older generation to a performance and the dance movements for the younger generation.

Keywords: *Don Mula Dance, Pwo Karen Identity, Cultural Transmission, Sacred Sound of Buddhism, Collective Consciousness, Thailand*

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Introduction

The Pwo Karen, who refer to themselves as *Plow* (meaning ‘people’), is a Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family living as a minority ethnic group in Western Thailand. The Pwo Karen inhabit the forested areas along the Thai-Myanmar border where they are distributed in a number of Thai provinces including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Tak, Uthaitani, Rathchaburi and Kanchanaburi (Suriya Ratanakul, & Somsong Burutpat, 1995:4). This article focuses on the *Don*¹ dance (also known as *Thoeliton*² in the Karen language), a distinctive traditional dance of the Pwo Karen of Laiwo sub-district in Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary (TYNWS) in Kanchanaburi Province, Western Thailand. The *Don* dance and lyrics have been absorbed into the religious beliefs and have become part of the traditional ceremonies and expressions of the Pwo Karen. Further, the Buddhist stories that are found in the lyrics of the songs that accompany the *Don Mula* dance portray the Karen worldview. In this way, the *Don* dance plays an important function, as a vehicle for identity construction of the Karen (Smith, 2018).

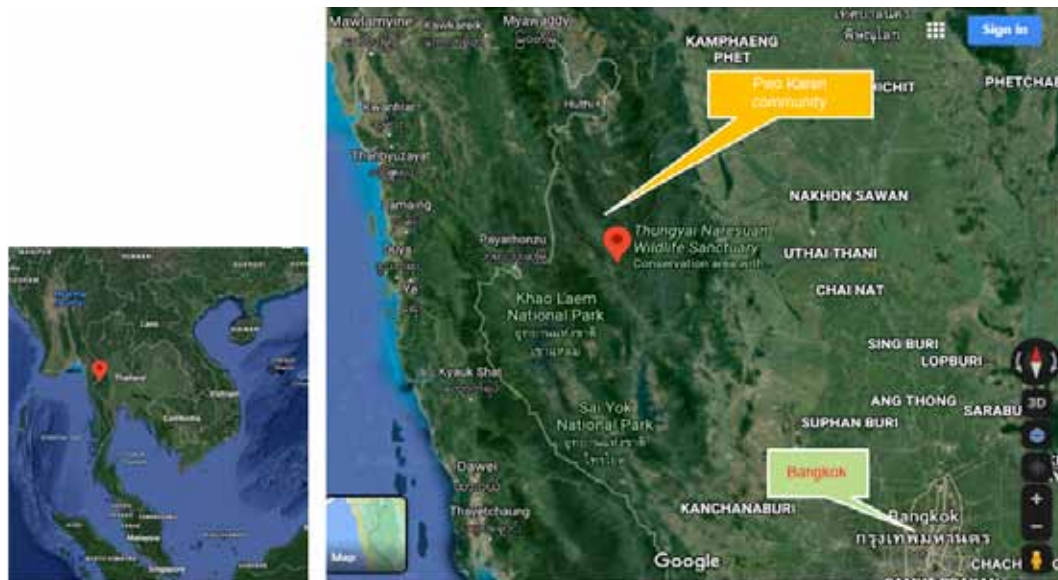


Figure 1. A map of the Pwo Karen community in Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary. Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Thungyai+Naresuan+Wildlife+Sanctuary/@15.408807,98.8154627,92125m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x30e6c3fa7e9a780b:0x76febcad4c39a70c!8m2!3d15.3333647!4d98.9164846>.

This article explores the meaning, history, characteristics and transmission of the Pwo Karen *Don Mula* dance. The *Don Mula* dance provides spaces where the Pwo Karen can perform their identity as well as educate the younger members about Buddhism and other religious beliefs. Regarding the three primary concerns are the following: What were the origins of the *Don Mula* dance and how was the dance connected to Buddhist and other religious beliefs in the past? What is the current state of the *Don Mula* dance? How does the *Don Mula* dance engender a conscious sense of Karen identity for the new generation?

This paper applies Benedict Anderson's concept of “religious community” (2006: 21), to frame and understand how the process of building a “collective identity” occurs through the *Don Mula* dance. This involves exploring the Karen commu-

nity's processes of transmitting the *Don Mula* dance in relation to the construction of identity and a Buddhist community within the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary.

The *Don Mula* Dance Embraces Animist and Buddhist Beliefs

The term *Don* is an onomatopoeic term that the Karen use to imitate the sounds made by beating the instruments such as the *Waleko* (a percussion instrument made of wood) that accompanies the dancer and controls their movements. *Mula* is derived from the Pali language word *Mun-La* meaning “root” or “original.” Together, *Don Mula* refers to the original dance of the community. The *Don Mula* dance reflects the blending of two religious belief systems: animism and Buddhism. In the case of animism, the dance has been and still is performed to show respect to the Rice Goddess (*Pi Bue Yo* in Karen language) during the annual Rice Threshing (*Poe Bue*) ceremony held in December.

It is believed that Buddhist stories were incorporated into the *Don Mula* song around the middle of the 19th century after Buddhism was introduced to the Pwo Karen community in Thung Yai by the Mon people who were close with the Pwo Karen (Stren, 1968). Although, the Karen of Thung Yai practiced animism then, they did not deny or resist the introduction of Buddhism and have adapted old and the new religious practices into a well harmonized local syncretic form of religion. After Buddhism was accepted by the Karen, song lyrics which included Buddhist stories were added to the performance as a main narrative source. This remains the current practice in the community.

A legend that has been recounted among the Karen in Thung Yai highlights the combination of these two belief systems. The legend is about a debate between Lord Buddha and the Rice Goddess who both claim to be important to humans. They each believe that humans (in this case, the Karen) cannot live without them. As the legend goes, when Lord Buddha ignored humans and did not give them teachings, the people became immoral and unhappy even though they had food. However, humans cannot survive without rice. When the Rice Goddess ignored humans, even for a moment, she was called back to protect the rice and help the people succeed in their rice farming. Both the Rice Goddess and Lord Buddha are equally important to the Pwo Karen people because rice is necessary for the body and Buddhism is important for the mind (Chumwaratayi & Sangcharatan, 2004). Although this folktale may not relate to the *Don Mula* directly, the appearance of the *Don Mula* dance for expressing respect to the Rice Goddess in the Rice Threshing ceremony and the appearance of Buddhist teachings in the song of the *Don Mula* dance, illustrate how the Karen have adapted to both animism and Buddhism.

The Karen remember that the *Don Mula* dance was such an important part of their daily lives that it was performed at Buddhist temples for important life-cycle occasions. For instance, in 1923, the dance was staged at Phra Si Suwannakhiri, the

Governor of the city of Sangklaburi Muang’s funeral ceremony at Wat Si Suwan (Buddhist temple), Wang Ga village, Shangklaburi. At that time, many Karen performed *Don Mula* dance for remembrance of *Phra Si Suwannakhiri* who was an important leader of the Karen at the Thailand-Myanmar borderland (Setaphan, personal communication, January 22, 2022).

Present-Day Pwo Karen Don Mula Dance and Music

Typically, but not always, a performance consists of sixteen dancers; they arrange themselves in four rows with four dancers in each row. The movement of the body emphasizes the hand movements in various poses as well as rhythmic feet stomping. Before the performance commences, the troupe leader must pay respect to the spirit of the village (*Phu Phadu*) for protection against any mishaps. The dancers then pray to the sacred entities of higher faith in a ritual known as *Kala Chai To Song* (take the remembrance to sacred entities such as the *Devas*, *Brahma*, *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sanga*). In this ritual, all the dancers kneel in front of the musical band (*Cha-Pu Chap U*) and move their hands and bodies. After paying respect to the sacred entities three times, they begin the next section of the dance.

Musical accompaniment has historically been provided by the *Waleko* (a percussion instrument made of wood) and *Chaco* (a small drum). The dancers also sang while they moved. In present times, more musical instruments including *Patala* (iron xylophone), *Khanui* (oboe), and *Mong Wai* (frame gong), have been included in the dance, making up the band called *Cha-Phu Cha-U* (Bhrammaputra, 2009) (see Figure 2). There is no fixed number of musical instruments accompanying the dance; this depends on the availability of musicians in the villages. It is not uncommon to find only one melodic instrument accompanying the dance because of the lack of musicians. The melodic instruments such as the *Patala*, *Khanui*, and *Mong Wai* improvise and imitate the melody sung by the vocalists. When there is no singing, the band plays variations on the main melodic themes but remains within the orbit of the basic vocal melody.



Figure 2. Left, *Che-pu Che-au* Band accompanied *Don Mula* dance. Right, *Don Mula* dance of Kongmongta village (Kanchanapradit, 2015).

The musical score is written for four instruments: Patala, Voice, Chaco (drum), and Waleko (Wood percussion). It is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the Patala playing a melody, the Voice entering with the words 'Hey Hey', and the Chaco and Waleko providing a steady drum pattern. The second system continues the melody with the lyrics: 'Te Wia Ta', 'Eng Ploe Poe Mong', 'Chu Loe Chi', 'Moe Poe Toei Tong', and 'Sa thu Sa thu'.

Figure 3. Melody of *Don Mula* dance (the first section of the dance).

As shown above, the melody of the *Don Mula* dance includes lines performed by the *Patala*, *Voice*, *Chaco* and *Waleko*. The introduction begins with the *Patala* (line 1), *Chaco* (line 3) and *Waleko* (line 4) on the strong beat. The voice enters with the word “Hey Hey.” This vocalization indicates to the musicians the beginning and the ending of each of the lyric sections and the length of the song. While the lyrics are sung, the *Patala* plays along with the singer with improvised melodies that imitate the sung melody. As we shall see in the analysis below, this vocal melody has been an important marker of Karen identity for the older generation.

Buddhist and other Religious Elements in *Don Mula*

The *Don Mula* dance is regarded as a distinctive local traditional cultural practice and a symbol of Pwo Karen Thung Yai identity because of the presence of stories about Buddhism and Buddhist doctrine as well as of the Karen legends in the songs. As the *Don Mula* exponent Setaphan (personal communication, January 22, 2022) says, “there have been many Karen *Don* dance songs that contained Buddha’s stories, which were combined with stories about Karen ancestors since the early twentieth century.”

How is the *Don Mula* dance connected to Buddhism and other religious beliefs? Phu Jo Pong, a wisdom leader of the Karen in Kongmongta village (a village in Thung Yai) states that around 1944, he learned the *Don Mula* dance from a *Chera Don* (*Don* dance teacher) in the Karen village near the Si Suwan temple (Currently, this temple is submerged in an area called *Sam Prasop* of Sangklanburi). It is said that the Karen philosopher Phu Yong Do was a creator and teacher of the dance in that village. The song that accompanied the dance at that time comprised lyrics strongly related to the teaching of Buddhism in an ancient language (Phu Jo Pong,

<i>Form</i>	<i>Content Meaning</i>
First part: <i>Karu Chai To Song</i>	1. Deva being above, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Deva being above and protective Brahma The ten fingers raised to the head To say <i>Satu! Satu!</i> and prostrate on the ground
Second part: <i>Narrative story</i>	2. I am about to tell the past The telling is about religion Having passed over two thousand and five hundred years It was foretold that the sinful people would win & rule over the virtuous 3. The world is covered with delusion and greed The world is full of the smoke of delusion 4. Hearing dogs' groaning They are chasing for treasures 5. In a fog of greed, they never have enough In a fog of greed, they never stop competing in the mundane world 6. Believing in material riches, And ignore the Dhamma of the Buddha. 7. When the time's up When death comes You cannot beg for your life with nice words You cannot take your treasures with you
Third part: <i>Reminding</i>	8. Buddhism calls <i>Vīdhi</i> (disease) and <i>Jarā</i> (aging) We must realize the reality of the body

Figure 5. English Translations of the *Don Mula* dance song of Kongmongta village troupe.

The structural analysis of the lyrical content of this *Don Mula* text provides a three-way division of the form. The first part, *Karu Chai To Song*, deals with the remembrance of and pays respect to the sacred entities of higher faith such as the Devas, Brahma, Buddha, Dhamma, and Sanga that must be performed before the dance commences. Following this, the narrative story refers to the order of the prophecies in the semi-Buddhist period when Buddhism began to decline due to defilements of greed, and delusions that took over people's minds because of lack the principle of morality. The third part is the message reminding everyone that birth and death are inevitable and everyone must face their mortality. When we die, nobody can take anything of value with us. It is only the precepts that are in our hearts that will always be with us. This section reminds everyone to purify their hearts and live by the Five Precepts according to the Buddha's teaching.

The texts from Phu De Ko's scriptures not only contained Buddhist stories, but also information about Karen wisdom, including information about Karen legends, ancestor teachings, rituals, Karen harp and the *Don Mula* dance. Historically, Karen wisdom was written on palm leaf in the form of old Mon-Karen script called *Lai*

Talaya. The original palm-leaf scriptures were damaged and lost but some were transcribed onto paper and kept as individual property by individuals with personal interests. For example, the palm-leaf scripture named *Salapot Nimit Samo Leo Roe* (Palm-leaf of One Thousand Visions) describes the Wrist Tying ceremony in which the human spirit was called when people became sick or were injured in an accident. Another unnamed palm-leaf scripture mentioned two types of Karen harps: the Pwo Karen harp, which is called *Na Deng* and the *Sgaw* Karen harp which is called *Tena*. This set of palm leaf scripture describes the song lyrics of the *Don Mula* Dance.

Nevertheless, the written script of the *Don Mula* song lyrics is no longer used today and transmission is carried out orally. The change has shifted the focus and authority of knowledge transmission from the Karen written language, which used to be the sacred text connected to Buddhist teachings, to human produced sounds such as chants and prayers in the Buddhist ceremonies. The inclusion of Buddhist stories in the song of the dance preserves the Buddhist knowledge. However, it is not the same form of chanting as found in Buddhist rituals, but rather a song lyric that is performed at various traditional events in the Karen community, which is central to both life and religious knowledge. For instance, during a funeral ceremony, old women of the village perform the *Don Mula* dance at the house of the deceased at night. The dance helps to transfer Buddhist knowledge to those who attend the funeral. The lyrics draw attention to the inevitable reality of death that everyone must confront and the truth of life that everyone will have to meet. In addition, the dance is meant to commemorate and honor deceased ancestral members of the community.

The *Don Mula* dance involves making vocal sounds that are “sacred” to the Karen people because they provide a path for accessing the truth of life. The sounds are “emanations of reality not randomly fabricated representations of it” (Anderson, 2006:14). The older generation villagers appreciate watching the *Don Mula* dance because the song provides the highest knowledge and is in essence “the truth.” This is consistent with Anderson’s conception that “ontological reality is apprehensible only through a single, privileged system of re-presentation: the truth language” (Anderson, 2006:14). In this case, for the Karen this truth language is in the song lyrics of the *Don Mula* dance of the Karen Thung Yai. We have tried to show that the performance of the Karen *Don Mula* dance is not just a performance for entertainment, but a ritual that emits “sacred sounds” that can take the Pwo Karen to meet the truth of life.

This is a process of making the “collective consciousness”, an insider’s perspective obtained through the “sacred sounds” within the *Don Mula* dance. It is a process through which the Karen identify themselves and self-consciously celebrate how they establish their “religious community” (Anderson, 2006:21). This shapes social relations, constructs a shared consciousness, and forms a sense of togetherness with a unified community.

Women Elders Educate the Younger Generation about Karen Beliefs via *Don Mula*

To illuminate the current state of the *Don Mula*, I draw attention to the dance as an important educational tool for providing religious instruction to the younger Pwo Karen. In response to modernization and changes in Karen society, older female community members who are experts in *Don Mula* dance have assumed a new role in educating the younger generation about Karen and Buddhist beliefs using the *Don Mula* dance performance. Through the dance, young members of the community are being enculturated into Karen beliefs at various social occasions such as weddings, funerals as well as new Rice, Threshing, annual Buddhist and other ceremonies.

In the past, the *Don Mula* was a principal form of knowledge for the Karen people and was seen as important cultural information that must be learned. The dance was also an important center space for the community where people gather and communicate with other members of the village. The centrality of the dance to traditional life drew both young men and women to learn it. But this situation has gradually changed over the past three decades as the Karen people's values have shifted. Today, dance is considered a feminine activity and playing music a male activity. The majority of the current generation also do not study traditional Karen dances. These "cultural change processes" (Ilgi Toprak and Orhan Hacihasanoglu, 2022:19) influence the transformation of an insider's perspective. Kongnandee, a Karen leader of Sanepong village who runs summer dance workshops for the younger generation Karen, emphasizes that: "Nowadays, all dancers are women who have married and adult men no longer perform the dance but play the music" (personal communication, May 29, 2021). As a result, the *Don Mula* dance is often referred to as *Don Misa* or *Don Plow Misa* which means the dance of the old women.

The transformation of the *Don Mula* dance to involve only women performers has consequently increased the importance of women in the transmission of the dance. This situation encouraged the building of a new form of "collective consciousness" within the Karen people in the community in which women's duties were recast. As it is the older women who perform the *Don Mula* dance, it is appropriate for these women to take up the important role of educating the children. This is not surprising as women play leadership roles within the family and community in Karen society. They conduct the rite to worship the spirit of ancestors in their houses. According to Buergin's study, kinship among the Karen in Thung Yai "is based on matrilineal descent, by which children are born into their mother's group. Upon marriage, the husband becomes a member of his wife's group" (Buergin, 2002:9), which Hinton (1969:35) calls "the matrilineal guardian spirit." For this reason, the eldest woman of the family has been promoted to conduct the ritual as the leader of the family. From this lens, the *Don Mula* dance is a significant responsibility of the senior women Karen descendants of the community, (as it is they) who have the strength to transmit the culture of the Karen. For the Karen woman, the practice and preservation of the *Don* dance is a way of expressing continued observance of their ancestors' teachings and the traditional practices of worship to the "ancestor spirit" (Kunstadter, 1969a:31).



Figure 6. Top, Che-pu Che-au Band accompanying the *Don* dance. Bottom, *Don Mula* dance in the New Rice Ceremony of Kongmongta village (Kanchanapradit, 2016).

Practicing and Learning *Don Mula* Dance Among the New Karen Generation

I now turn to the case of two young girls in the community who have experienced practicing and learning *Don Mula* dance in the village to deal with questions around how the dance creates and promotes a conscious sense of Karen identity for the new generation. Ji Po and Priao began participating in *Don Mula* dance and became members of the village dance troupe out of their interest and willingness to learn. This interest was encouraged and supported by their families. They enjoy the activities with their friends; participation allows them to gradually learn about interacting with other people and helps them absorb the surrounding soundscapes. This personal experience connects them emotionally, viscerally and bodily to village culture.

Ji Po, Phonchawee Setaphan, is a twenty-one-year-old girl from Kongmongta village. She is currently studying Public Health at Boromarajonani College of Nursing in the Thai town of Suphanburi under a scholarship from a government agency in Kanchanaburi. She began learning her first *Don Mula* dance at age eleven with her sister who was five, and about other children of the same age. They all learned the dance with Chera Thongkhai. Ji Po said that she had an interest in and wanted to learn the *Don Mula* dance during a summer break. So, she and her sister joined the village dance troupe that runs workshops for young participants in April every year. This project for teaching *Don* dance to youths in the village was funded by the Laiwo sub-district Administrative Organization. Participating children practice singing, dancing, and playing the *Waleko*, the principal instrument for playing the

beat accompanying the dance. She said that “everybody was happy and had fun because practice time was a chance to do new things with friends and on some days, we got to eat delicious food or snacks that Chera prepared for those who came to study.”



Figure 7. *Don Mula* dance Transmission Project, Kongmongta village (Kanchanapradit, 2011).

Ji Po recalled her first experience,

New children must first learn the rhythm of the Waleko instrument for understanding the beat. Everyone must practice singing the *Don* dance song for one or two rounds and then start learning the dance. When we start the class, Chera (teacher) will review the early dance practices first. When I can remember the steps, I will be allowed to continue learning the new movements until the end of the song.

The second young participant is Priao, Phannika Sangkhakiadtikhun. She is twenty-two years old and was studying in the Department of Primary Education, Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education at the Rajabhat University in Kanchanaburi. She is the daughter of Chera Kongjeng who is a music teacher of the *Cha-Phu Cha-U* band in Kongmongta village. She began studying music with her father, Chera Kongjeng when she was in elementary school. The instrument she chose was *Mong Wai* (Frame Gong). Additionally, she learned the traditional dance from her mother, Maausu, who is recognized by the village for her ability to perform the *Don* dance. Children in the village are taught the *Don Mula* routine by her mother.

Priao said that when she was learning the dance for the first time with her mother, she had to learn the beats and rhythms of the song by practicing the Waleko (percussion instrument). It was only after she understood the beats and rhythms that her mother demonstrated the poses of the dance to her. She then followed

her mother's movements. Priao has been able to inherit the dance and music knowledge because of the opportunities to study seriously within her own family as both parents are capable performers. She remarked that "I started to feel that the music and dance of the Karen were important to me because the younger generation seemed to know less. I'm glad to learn and have pride in my parents."

The two case studies illustrate the personal experiences of the younger generation of Karen who have the opportunity to learn *Don Mula* dance in Kongmongta village. Their memories of the *Don* dance involve learning new things as children, doing activities with friends, showing their talents, and being admired by others. But when asked about the lyrics to the song that they studied, both gave the same answer "I cannot remember all the lyrics, I know they are about Buddha's teachings." While they remember some parts of the lyrics and some sections of the song, they cannot understand the meaning as the words are hard to understand and the language is not used in everyday conversation. They cannot comprehend the long sections, such as those in the song of *Don Mula* dance which are associated with Buddhism. Despite this, they are happy that they have an opportunity to perform dances with others.

The two examples indicate that the inclusion of Buddhist knowledge in the *Don Mula* song may not be as important to today's young people as it was to the older generation. Despite this potential loss of religious meaning, the experience of the *Don Mula* dance practice still functions to connect the community members to a greater consciousness of their "Karen-ness." Even though the Buddhist messages in the lyrics were not interpreted doctrinally, the experience of learning the *Don* dance instilled in them a common sense of Karen identity. Ji Po told me, "Pwo Karen, it's me, if you say the word Karen, I will think of *Plow* (*Pwo*), it's me" (Ji Po, personal communication, January 1, 2021) and *Plow* (*Pwo*) is us" (Priao, personal communication, January 3, 2021). The consciousness of "Karen-ness" constructed through their personal experiences learning *Don Mula* dance as children is a powerful form of identity formation and affirmation; this has endowed the younger generation with a sense of their cultural (collective) and personal (individual) identities of which they are proud.

Like many Karen children, the two girls may leave the village to live in an urban society, where they will learn to apply new life skills and knowledge studied in Thai educational institutions; they may never return to the lifestyle of their parents, but they are proud of the *Don* dance and their "Karen-ness." These cases reflect the worldview of the new generation of Karen within a recalibrated Karen society with different ideas and expression of their "Karen-ness." In the past, Karen people accepted that knowledge of Buddhism and other traditional beliefs was important as it provided them with the truth of life and directly helped them to live happily. This understanding of the role of Buddhism and other Karen beliefs may be under threat because of modern secular ideals, forms of knowledge and ways of living that stand to displace them. Nevertheless, the Karen continue to create new ways of expressing their identities. As Bussakorn Binson (2022:216) writes, "the adaptation of the indigenous cultures takes place so that the cultures can survive the changes."

New Perceptions, Identity Formation and Transmission of the *Don Mula* Dance

Changes in the diverse life experiences of the different generations of Karen influence how the latter interpret and access the *Don Mula* dance. Those who have studied and practiced *Don* dance have different perspectives and relate to the dance differently compared to those who have not. Learning and practicing *Don* dance and singing is a means of accessing knowledge that requires physical learning which links learning in the body with the mind. Body learning involves the immediate subjective experience and perception of how the body's various parts move in specialised and unique ways.

In the Karen practitioner's view, learning to dance involves learning physical movements. Learners from outside the community might not be able to replicate the movements completely or express them as a Karen would "naturally." This is because the dance imbues an intuitive inner feeling of being Karen. An outsider who learns the dance and imitates the gestures cannot produce the movements like a Karen performer. On numerous occasions, the authors observed students from Bangkok who had come to the village to learn dance from the Karen culture bearers in the community. Although they were competent dancers who could dance well, their bodily movements were consistent with the characteristics of the Thai dance forms that they were familiar with and expressed what was seen as "Thai-ness." The distinct dance genres involve different styles of movements and a dance observer (with knowledge of the different practices associated with the different traditions) would be able to see which tradition the dancers come from.

As in the use of verbal language, dances of different cultures have important but subtle differences in physical expression and their respective nuances cannot be faithfully imitated in a short study period. The character of dance movements is a combination of the dancer's unique personalities and the cultural background. Although all members of the Karen community might not have the same opportunity to learn the *Don Mula* dance, those who do participate in a practice that is critical to both the construction and absorption of a collective Karen consciousness ("Karen-ness"). Dance is critical to Karen identity because children who perform *Don Mula* dance in the community learn to move their bodies in a style that they perceive to be both more natural and beautiful than other styles, but which is strongly connected to their ethnic identity.

At the same time, the markers of Karen identity in the *Don Mula* dance have shifted from the singing (referred to as the "sacred sound" of Buddhism) in the past to the dance performance today. The disparity between bodily and written knowledge is further widened in the *Don Mula* dance context, because not only does the language of body movements have no corresponding counterpart with the world of written language, but the new generation does not use the Karen written language and has no experience in its study. The locus of symbolic meaning has shifted from the sound of the vocalist singing the lyrics to the highly specialized and culturally rich body movements of the dancers. Neither the new generation Karen performers nor their audiences understand the language in the vocal songs of the *Don Mula* dance. So younger audience members focus on the dance movements of the performance.

A consequence of the social transformation processes thought to be modern is the steady decline of the “unselfconscious coherence” of the religious community of the Karen Thung Yai, which, according to Anderson (2006:16, 18) is “a gradual demotion of the sacred language itself.” Although Anderson’s “sacred language” is embedded in the written language used in text publications, the authors show that dance and music performances also have the power to emanate the “sacred sound” that has a profound influence on human feeling.

Conclusion

The *Don Mula* dance is a core cultural practice and marks the identity of the Pwo Karen in Thung Yai. It plays a defining social role when performed in Buddhist, rice harvest and funeral ceremonies. A distinctive element in the *Don Mula* dance is its presentation of the Pwo Karen’s Buddhist and other religious beliefs within the narrative of the vocal music. This is a source of important philosophical knowledge to the villagers. The origins of the *Don Mula* dance which are related to Buddhism are tied to the sacred language of *Lai Talaya*, the Pwo Karen script that was invented to record and transmit the Buddhist knowledge on palm leaves during the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The knowledge recorded on the palm leaf script is expanded to record other aspects of Karen wisdom and religious beliefs. The *Don Mula* lyrics were composed in a traditional Karen form of poetry and recorded in the ancient language comprising Mon-Karen and Pali words. The meaning of some of the words of the written lyrics are accessible to the old Karen, but many of the younger Karen do not understand this language or read its written form and thus cannot access this part of their cultural heritage. Structural changes to the transmission and reception of animist and Buddhist beliefs make the *Don Mula* dance an important cultural prism through which to observe changes in social meaning and ideology.

The dance was formerly performed to pay respect to the spirit of the Rice Goddess (Pi Bue Yo). When song lyrics were added, they contained Buddhist teachings, thus expanding the scope of meaning and function of the *Don Mula* dance to incorporate a pedagogical dimension that was crucial to the reception of Buddhism among the Pwo Karen community in Thung Yai. The teachings within the song texts have been embraced by the community who consider Buddhist knowledge to be “the truth” of life. This elevates the social practice of the *Don Mula* dance to a cultural performance made up of “sacred sounds.”

Although Karen society has changed in the past century, the *Don Mula* dance continues to represent the “collective consciousness” and “un-selfconscious coherence” of Karen identity. But changes to the structure of Karen society have altered the cultural meanings that have accrued over time. The new generation Karen sees the traditional practice of the *Don Mula* dance differently from their elders in terms of its social function and cultural meaning. The source of “un-selfconscious coherence” of “Karen-ness” has been relocated and transformed. Whereas previously it centred on belief in the Buddhist ideology, which was expressed in a lan-

guage not widely understood, "Karen-ness" is now embodied in the movements of the *Don* dance. The "sacred sounds" of the *Don Mula* performance still play an important role in affirming the Buddhist ideals and identity of the Karen community of Thung Yai, but these sounds are perceived and interpreted differently by the younger Karen. The younger community members who have experienced the *Don Mula* dance, may not realize "Karen-ness" through the song lyrics as their parents did, but they construct their "Karen-ness" through the unique physical movements required to perform the *Don* dance properly.

The *Don Mula* dance opens multiple spaces of identity formation that span many generations of Karen. While its Buddhist origins are recast as transient among the younger generation, these meanings are nonetheless deeply ingrained in their "collective consciousness" as they access its meanings through body movements.

Endnotes

- 1 The word *Don* is a local abbreviation of *Thoeliton* which is a Pwo Karen term for traditional dance.
- 2 The word *Thoeliton* can be divided into two words; *Thoe li* means dance. It may have its roots in the Mon language term *Leh* which means dance (Mon-Thai Dictionary, 2005, p. 225). *Ton* is an onomatopoeic term derived from the sound made when the *Waleko* is played.

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Setaphan, Apichart (musician, leader of the Karen wisdom of Kongmongta village), in discussion with the author, January 22, 2022.

Setaphan, Phonchawee (member of the Don dance of Kongmongta village), in discussion with the author, January 1, 2021.

Integrating Cultural Planning Approach in Urban Parks:

Case of Fateh Garden, Iran

Mehdi Nilipour* (Iran)

Abstract

Cultural planning has been used in some instances of urban planning and regeneration, but it is less frequently used in the planning of urban parks. The present study proposes a cultural planning model for urban parks and provides cultural planning recommendations to improve the condition of Fateh Garden as a case study. The four steps of this study are case study selection, cultural mapping, cultural assessment, and cultural planning. Cultural mapping has been done using ethnography and the grounded theory method, cultural assessment has been done using interviews with the park authorities, and cultural planning has been done using creative methods. The findings show that Fateh Garden is a successful urban park with popular cultural resources. Among the components in Fateh Garden, sycamore trees, are the most important components from the users' point of view. Moreover, sports activities are the most important events and activities and the feeling of peace is one of the most important meanings and associations in this park for users. This study has provided a range of recreational opportunities available and recommendations for Fateh Garden. This study also detected some conflicts, issues and problems for users and proposed some solutions. Cultural planning of urban parks helps to identify cultural resources and use them in creative ways to improve the condition of parks. Future research should therefore concentrate on making optimal use of cultural resources of urban parks to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for users.

Keywords: Cultural Planning, Cultural Resources, Urban Parks, Fateh Garden, Iran

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Introduction

As Borrup (2021) asserts, there is a cultural dimension in every component of urban planning that urban planners are often unaware of. One of the approaches that can help urban planners to understand these cultural dimensions is cultural planning. According to Bianchini and Parkinson (1993:209), *“Cultural planning can help urban governments identify the city's cultural resources and think strategically about their applications, to achieve key objectives in areas as diverse as physical planning, townscape design, tourism, industrial development, retailing, place marketing, community development, education, and training.”*

Cultural planning focuses on the cultural resources of a place (Ghilardi, 2001). The work of cultural planning as Davies (2004) mentions, is putting people in the center of the space, creating opportunities around them, and motivating them to take those opportunities, work through them, and deliver something, which will not just benefit them but also benefit the community. As Bianchini (2004) discusses, cultural planning recognizes the value of local cultural resources, challenges traditional approaches to urban development, and contributes to the integrated development of a place.

The application of cultural planning has so far been mainly related to urban regeneration. There has been little consideration for the use of cultural planning in urban parks. This research helps fill a gap in the literature to investigate the use of cultural planning in an Iranian urban park. Therefore, the use of cultural planning for urban parks' planning and management is an area that has yet to be explored. In this regard, this study sought answers to the following questions: (1) What cultural planning model informs the planning and management of urban parks? and (2) What cultural planning recommendations could be outlined in the case of Fateh Garden? Therefore, the goal of the research is to propose a cultural planning model for urban parks and provide cultural planning recommendations to improve Fateh Garden.

Theoretical Foundations

Cultural planning first appeared at the end of the 1970s to address cultural concerns (Borrup, 2021). It was proposed by Harvey Perloff. Perloff (1979) considered cultural planning required to achieve the objectives for the arts. A definition of cultural planning is given by Mercer (2006) who described it as the strategic and integral planning and use of cultural resources in urban and community development. He emphasizes that “cultural planning does not mean the planning of culture but, rather, ensuring that culture is always present and not marginalized in the planning process” (Mercer, 2006:9). Bianchini (1999) also emphasizes that ‘the planning of culture’ is dangerous and probably impossible undertaking and it is not the task of cultural planning.

Montgomery (1990) debated the art of cultural planning for UK cities. He quotes Wolf von Eckhardt that stated “effective cultural planning involves all the arts—the art of architecture, the art of urban planning, the art of winning community support, the art of transportation planning and the art of mastering the dynamics of economic development.” Montgomery believes that cultural planning is not a difficult task, though it has its problems.

Various studies have been conducted on cultural planning and its application in different countries. This has been seen in the case of Australia (Dowling, 1997; Mills, 2003; Young, 2008; Stevenson, 2005; Hill, 2011), Canada (Baeker, 2008; Hume, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2009; Wekerle, 2011; Kovacs, 2011; McVay, 2014), UK (Montgomery, 1990; Bianchini, 1993; Ghilardi, 2001, 2003, 2010; Bianchini & Ghilardi, 2007; Connolly, 2013), Sweden (Ghilardi, 2016; 2018), Austria (Krisch, 2019), USA (Jones, 1993; Redaelli, 2012; 2013; Markusen, 2006; Ogusky, 2010; Borrup, 2019), Europe (Bianchini, 1991; 1993), China (Zhou et al, 2018) and UAE (Zaidan, 2016).

A Cultural Planning Model for Urban Parks

Cultural planning at all levels is closely related to the theme of leisure. Certainly, any cultural planning is a kind of leisure planning. Considering that urban parks are part of urban recreational spaces, and planning for them follows the principles of recreational space planning, it is necessary to specify different types of planning for such spaces. Therefore, their relationship with cultural planning should be considered.

Since cultural resources are the basic material of the cultural planning process (Landry, 2008:173), it is necessary to identify cultural resources to use them at different stages. The presence of cultural resources within an urban park indicates the park's endeavor to incorporate diverse modes of artistic representation and create a welcoming environment for its users (Borrup et al, 2021). Therefore, the first step in the cultural planning of urban parks is cultural mapping to properly identify the cultural resources of urban parks. The cultural resources of urban parks include tangible cultural resources (man-made components, natural components, sensory components, plants, animals, and humans) and intangible cultural resources (meanings and associations).

After cultural mapping, in the second step, it is necessary to evaluate these cultural resources. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the views of managers and policymakers of urban parks concerning these cultural resources. At this stage, it is determined how to decide on the components in urban parks and their location, and what is the approach of policymakers and managers to these components, and the users' activities and events that result from them. It also takes into account the meanings and associations that these components, activities, and events create in the minds of users.

Once cultural resources have been identified and located, and the approach of policymakers and urban park managers has been evaluated, a range of recreational opportunities tailored to cultural resources is provided. What plays a crucial role in the success of urban park cultural planning is the use of creative thinking. Landry (2008) believes that creativity provides an opportunity for a city to sustain itself over time. In his view, creative thinking uses cultural resources in a way to

develop them. According to Landry (2006), creative thinking sees every problem as an opportunity for change, and any weakness can become a strength.

Given the diversity of users in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, language, and diversity of cultural resources, it is necessary to provide different types of recreational opportunities to meet their desires and needs. This variety of recreational opportunities and facilities for a wide range of users will naturally lead to the formation of conflicts, issues, and problems. Therefore, it is necessary to identify these cases. Some of these conflicts, issues, and problems are major and need immediate action. To solve them, the issues approach is used. In this approach, the main and key issues are identified first. It is then prioritized and addressed through user participation, park managers, NGOs, and other decision-making bodies. Some of these conflicts, issues, and problems are minor and can be resolved through the organic or incremental approach. This is done gradually and with the participation of users and park managers and using the capacity of cultural resources.

After resolving conflicts, issues, and problems, it is necessary to pay attention to the health, welfare, and well-being of users. For this purpose, the community development approach is used. Community development is an all-inclusive process that manages changes within a community by engaging citizens in discussions to determine necessary actions, sharing their vision of the future, and involving them in the implementation process (Vincent, 2006). The advantages comprise of empowering the community, enhancing their sense of identity, utilizing cultural resources, fostering a sense of ownership, and increasing the probability of long-term success (Curson et al, 2007).

Community development approaches are among key characteristics of successful cultural planning (2010 Legacy Now & Creative City Network of Canada, 2006). The implementation of cultural planning through a bottom-up approach in new public management is centered around supporting and enabling community development approaches (Baeker, 2002). Cultural planning focuses on sustainable community development by placing people and culture as its central elements, utilizing a multi-sectoral approach (Curson et al, 2007). Community development can refer to the result of creating an urban park or the process of involving park users in discussions to identify necessary actions and share their vision for the future of the park (Vincent, 2006).

Many tasks related to the maintenance of plants, trees, animals, and built spaces as well as holding various events can be left to the users. Creating a participatory system to use users' opinions in all decisions related to parks and delegating responsibility to public institutions for the optimal use of cultural resources can empower the users and increase the sense of belonging of users. Figure 1 shows the cultural planning model of urban parks.

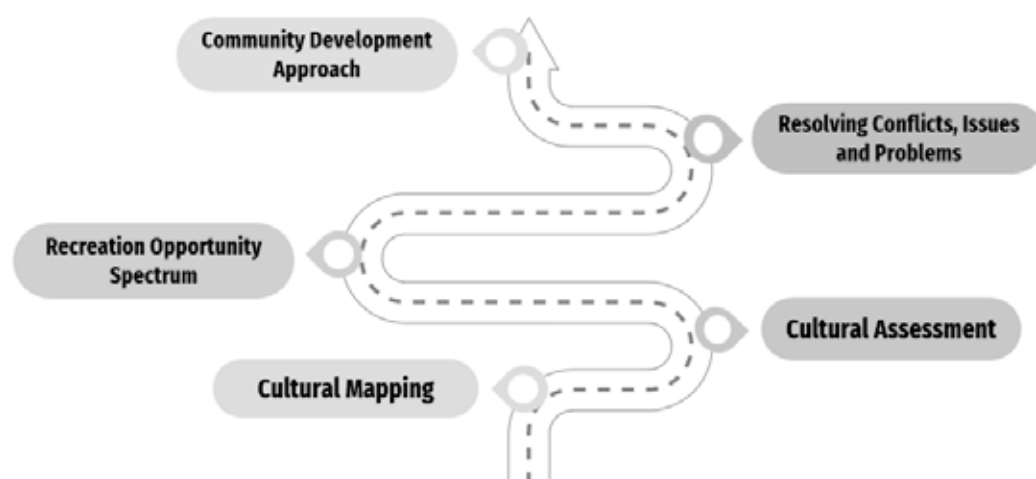


Figure 1. The cultural planning model of urban parks.

Research Methodology

In this study, several qualitative methods were employed to discover the cultural resources of Fateh Garden, assess them and make cultural planning recommendations. A grounded theory method (to discover the meanings and associations as the intangible cultural resources) and an ethnographic approach (to determine the component parts, events and activities as the tangible cultural resources) were adopted to derive a bottom-up understanding of cultural resources of Fateh Garden. ATLAS.ti software was used to facilitate the data analysis process. Moreover, some creative methods were used to make some cultural planning recommendations for Fateh Garden. In total, this research includes four steps that need to be done to achieve the desired result. Figure 2 shows the different stages of this research.

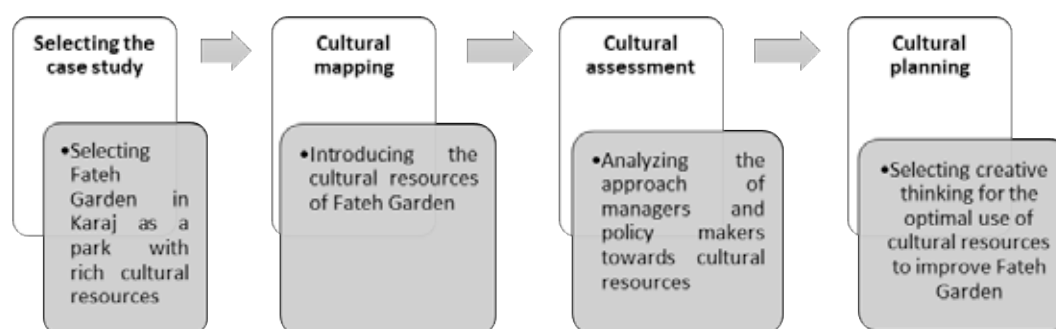


Figure 2. The stages of this research.

Timeline of Study

Fateh Garden was selected as a case study in the winter of 2020. Cultural mapping was done throughout the winter, spring, summer, and autumn of 2020. Fateh Garden was visited on weekdays and weekends at the times of early morning, morning, late morning, afternoon, late afternoon, early evening, evening, late evening, and night. About 45 observations were conducted at various times and on different days of the week. In total, nearly 6,800 visitors were counted. The number of

leisure activities observed in Fateh Garden was about 70. Cultural assessment was done in the winter of 2021 and cultural planning was done in the winter and spring of 2021.

Step 1. Selecting the Case Study

Fateh Garden is located in Karaj, Iran. According to the 2016 census, the city of Karaj, located in Alborz Province, has a population of 1,592,492 people, which is the fourth most populous city in Iran (Statistical Center of Iran, 2018). According to the Head of Landscape and Green Space Organization of Karaj Municipality (2020), there are 243 parks in Karaj. Fateh Garden is the second-largest park in Karaj with an area of 15 hectares. Until about ten years ago, it was used as a private garden full of many fruit trees that were sold commercially. Due to the convenient location of this garden in the city, its numerous and valuable trees, and the demand of the citizens of Karaj, the Municipality of Karaj took over this garden, and within a few years, with the addition of the necessary facilities, turned this garden into an urban park. Fateh Garden is also one of the registered national heritages of Iran as one of the gardens of Jahanshahr (The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, 2006).

Fateh Garden was selected because this park is at the top of the Karaj urban parks in terms of the number of photos and comments on social media such as Instagram and online tools such as Google Maps. The location of Fateh Garden in Karaj facilitates the access of the residents of the adjacent areas to it. Moreover, a large number of entrances to the park from the streets and alleys and the possibility of parking cars on the side of the street have made it easy for visitors to access this park. Figure 3 shows a picture of Fateh Garden.



Figure 3. A picture of Fateh Garden (Photo by author).

Step 2: Cultural Mapping

What is being done at this step is to identify the cultural resources available in the Fateh Garden. These cultural resources include tangible cultural resources

(components, activities, and events) and intangible cultural resources (meanings and associations). Ethnography and grounded theory method have been used to identify the cultural resources of Fateh Garden. Given the method used by some previous research studies on urban parks (e.g., Campbella et al., 2016; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995; Rall and Haase, 2011), the research data was drawn from three main sources: direct observations of human activities (32 observations on weekdays and weekends), observation of the events and activities, and interviews with park users (57 interviews).

Fifty-seven semistructured interviews composed of 27 males and 30 females were conducted with Fateh Garden users. Among those interviewed were 3 children (under 15 years of age), 14 adolescents (15 to 20 years old), 28 youths (20 to 35 years old), 9 middle-aged people (35 to 60 years old), and 3 elderly people (over 60 years old), and they were composed of 30 females and 27 males overall. Each interview lasted between 20 and 60 minutes and was held in Persian. Some questions include the following: How often do you come to Fateh Garden? What do you usually do when you are in Fateh Garden? What does Fateh Garden evoke for you? What is the reason for your interest in Fateh Garden? Which parts of Fateh Garden are more attractive and memorable to you? How do you feel when you take a walk in Fateh Garden?

Step 3. Cultural Assessment

In this research, the two-way relationship between the cultural resources of Fateh Garden and the managers and officials influencing the Fateh Garden is considered. It is necessary to determine the approach of the managers and policymakers of this park towards the cultural resources. In this regard, the designers, planners, and manager of Fateh Garden as well as the current and previous Head of Landscape and Green Space Organization of Karaj Municipality, head of Fateh Foundation, and a member of the city council were interviewed to discuss their approach to the components of the park, their location in the park, and their relationship with the events, activities, meanings, and associations they have for the users.

Step 4. Cultural Planning

In the final stage, based on the cultural resources of Fateh Garden and the use of creative thinking, the range of proposed recreational opportunities was presented. Then, the existing conflicts, issues, and problems were identified and the proposed solutions were introduced. Finally, the suggestions of cultural planning of Fateh Garden were presented according to the community development approach.

Results

Cultural Mapping

Cultural mapping responds to the policy challenge by proposing a flexible approach to define a particular community's cultural resources (Evans, 2015). Cultural resources of Fateh Garden include component parts, activities, and events as tangible resources and meanings and associations as intangible resources. Component parts of Fateh Garden include natural components, sensory components, plants, animals, humans, man-made components, and places. Figure 4 shows some of the plants, humans and man-made components in Fateh Garden.



Figure 4. Some of the component parts of Fateh Garden (Photo by author).

Events and activities can be human or nonhuman. The human events and activities related to what the users do in Fateh Garden, including sports, games, and fun activities, children's activities, taking photos and recording videos, events related to socializing with friends and family, making friends, working, holding studying, literary, artistic, and educational sessions, political activities, smoking, drug dealing, patrolling, buying and selling goods, occasional events. Figure 5 shows playing sports and figure 6 shows playing chess and backgammon in Fateh Garden.



Figure 5. Playing sports in Fateh Garden (Photo by author).

Non-human events are animal-related events & plant-related events. Figure 7 shows dogs in Fateh Garden & figure 8' table shows its cultural resources in detail.



Figure 7. Dogs in Fateh Garden (Photo by author).

Cultural Resources	Some Examples	
Component parts		
Natural components	soil, water, wood, stones, brick, plastic, and polyethylene	
Sensory components	different colors (green, brown, gray, white, yellow, black, blue, orange, and red as the most frequent colors), smells (e.g., plants, wet soil, and cigarettes), sounds (crows, birds, dogs, cats, insects, human laughter, human speech, water, music, and songs)	
Plants	the fruit trees (e.g., mulberry, plum, Coe’s golden drop, pomegranate, walnut, pear, and apple), the non-fruit trees (e.g., sycamore, maple, poplar, ash, weeping willow, and acacia), and flowers	
Animals	crows, other birds, cats, dogs, insects	
Humans	sports practitioners, teenagers, young families, couples, middle-aged and elderly people, children, artists, poets, writers, photographers, musicians, singers, students, unemployed people, sweepers, gardeners, security guards, and workers	
Manmade components	swing benches, fixed benches, gazebos, four-seater chess tables, sitting walls along the main walking path, fitness machines, fountains, entrances, border features, statues, playground equipment, drinking fountains, rubbish bins, signs, lights, stone vases	
Places	Shamdooni Café, Book Café, Garden House, food kiosks, restrooms, prayer rooms, playground, fenced sports enclosure, tennis courts, badminton courts, plots, walking paths	
Events and Activities		
Sports	morning group workouts, walking, jogging, running, tennis, badminton, volleyball, chess, skating, cycling, parkour, slacklining, and football	
Game and fun activities	board and card games, backgammon, Frisbee, pantomime and Mafia, and music and singing	
Children's activities, taking photos, recording videos, holding studying, literary, artistic, and educational sessions, making friends, political activities, smoking, drug dealing, patrolling, buying and selling goods		
Socializing with friends and family	conversations, laughing, eating, and drinking	
Occasional events	The Fall Leaves Festival, the Celebration of Mid-Sha'ban, Pomegranate Celebration on the occasion of Yalda Night, world yoga day, taekwondo annual meeting, kickboxing conferences, and general training in self-defense and cold weapons	
Animal-related activities	dog walking, feeding animals	
Plant-related activities	irrigating, fruit picking, and maintaining the trees	
Meanings and Associations		
Meanings	antiquity, originality, deep-rootedness, greatness, strength, stability, calmness, freedom, vitality, positive energy, the flow of life, glory, freshness, delight, happiness, enthusiasm, beauty, mobility, kindness, mercy, pleasure, affection, hope, comfort, solitude, loneliness, privacy, companionship, friendship, charm, mischief, drowsiness, joy, passion, change, movement, health, a sense of life, coolness, peace, loveliness, proportion, symmetry, sacrifice, magnanimity, chivalry, courage, forgiveness, effort, excitement	
Associations	Individuals	the hardworking gardeners, fiancé, girlfriend or boyfriend, family, friends, children, high school classmates, adolescent girls and boys, lively and friendly older men, participants in business meetings, passers-by, bodybuilders, athletes, sports practitioners, swimmers, the late Fateh
	Animals	crows, stray dogs, cats, insects
	Places	nature, Valiasr St. in Tehran, forest parks such as Chitgar Forest Park, forests, the north of Iran, private gardens, walking paths, children's playgrounds, sports clubs, gyms, pools, rivers, lakes
	Events or activities	playing music, feeding animals, dog walking, talking, eating, and drinking in groups, riding on children's swings, group music performances, group games (chess, backgammon, cards, snakes and ladders, ludo), swimming, making friends with other people
	Components	old trees, swings, meals, drinks, musical instruments, chess, backgammon, ludo, snakes and ladders, cards
	Periods	childhood, spending time with friends, gatherings with classmates, nights, meetings and classes, the period of being with a spouse, fiancé, or family, times of playing live music, training times in the gym, summer, the time when Fateh Garden was a private garden

Figure 8. Table of Fateh Garden's cultural resources.

Cultural Assessment

The analytical framework used to assess the cultural resources in Fateh Garden is based on the criteria for defining strategically important Arts, Cultural and Entertainment (ACE) facilities. According to the suggestion, if a cultural resource meets any of the definitions mentioned in figure 9, it can be categorized as strategic (Curson et al, 2007). Figure 9 shows these definitions and examples in Fateh Garden.

Criteria	Examples in Fateh Garden
A cultural resource that attracts a notable portion of its visitors or users from the rest of the city.	Sycamore trees, sports facilities
A cultural resource which provides a service for the users who come from outside the region.	sports facilities
A cultural resource which is unique to this sector of the region.	Sycamore trees
A type of cultural resource with special amenities e.g. disability access, equipment, and which is unique to this sector.	Garden House
A type of cultural resource that serves particular groups, such as cultural minorities, and which is unique to this sector.	Sports facilities, Garden House
A cultural resource that is currently or expected to be utilized by a considerable number of visitors.	Sports facilities
A cultural resource able to host special events that is unique to this sector.	Garden House, tennis courts
A cultural resource with particular historic associations that is unique to this sector.	Sycamore trees

Figure 9. Criteria for defining strategically important ACE facilities and the examples in Fateh Garden.

To uphold the significance of cultural resources and promote social progress, it is essential to have a strong commitment and effective policy measures in place (Ancho, San Juan, 2021). Before becoming a city park, Fateh Garden was owned by the Fateh Foundation and the Abadani and Jahan Foundation, which operate under the control of the Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation. There is still an abandoned plot of land in the north of Fateh Garden, which is owned by Abadani and Jahan Foundation and has a dispute with Karaj Municipality over how to use this land. After the acquisition of this land by the Municipality of Karaj, the Head of Landscape and Green Space Organization of Karaj Municipality and his deputies came every morning to do morning group workouts in Fateh Garden, and due to the passage of cars on the main and important streets leading to this park, doing morning workouts in Fateh Garden has become a common activity. Since then, many citizens of Karaj, from children to the elderly, from employees to retirees, and from men to women, engage in morning workouts in the early hours of the day, turning Fateh Garden into a large open-air sports club.

This situation is fully endorsed by the managers and policymakers of this park and they support sports practitioners in various ways. The park manager personally visits the park every morning and takes care of sports-related matters in this urban park. Issues and problems related to sports equipment and sports fields are quickly investigated and resolved. The construction of eight tennis courts at the beginning of the establishment of this urban park by the park managers shows their determination to encourage users to do sports activities in this place. There-

fore, sports activities in Fateh Garden, as the most important activity available and one of the most valuable cultural resources of this urban park, are strongly supported by managers and policymakers.

The next point is related to the plants in Fateh Garden as one of the most important cultural resources of this urban park. According to officials, the number of trees in the plots has increased dramatically since it became an urban park, and worn-out trees are quickly being replaced by more trees. However, the number of fruit trees has decreased due to their short lifespan in the polluted urban space of Karaj and has been replaced by other trees. A lot of money is spent on planting and maintaining plants and trees in the plots, and the efforts of the managers of this garden are to preserve the garden-like identity of this urban park. Therefore, the construction of roads, sitting walls, stalls, and buildings in the plot is not allowed. This has made the plots still look pristine and natural, and the various animals that can live in the plot can nest or feed on them. Preserving the garden-like identity of this urban park has been the main goal of the managers and policymakers of Fateh Garden.

One of the buildings that, according to the former head of Landscape and Green Space Organization of Karaj Municipality, is one of the most important assets of the Fateh Garden, is the Garden House. This building has been built for the general use of citizens to hold classes, events, and activities of individuals and non-governmental organizations and has hosted many individuals and institutions to hold weekly monthly, or occasional events. Moreover, the Book Cafe has been established to promote reading and hold literary meetings, and Shamadoni Cafe, with the emphasis of the park manager, has provided a pleasant space for users to relax in a colorful combination of chairs and tables, along with water and trees.

The approach of park managers and policymakers towards the animals is different from the opinions of users in some cases. For example, there are many stray dogs in Fateh Garden that most of the users do not have a problem with their presence, but the managers at different times try to catch them and transfer them to dog shelters that are opposed by some users who prevented from doing so. Moreover, the presence of domestic dogs is opposed by the managers. Sometimes domestic dogs are not allowed in the park which is protested by the owners of these dogs. In other cases, the approach of managers and policymakers is in line with user opinions. For example, the staff of Fateh Garden is also allowed to feed the animals along with the users. Moreover, the animals live in peace and do not feel disturbed by the park staff. Holding bird-watching tours by different companies and individuals is also approved by the managers.

Offering a variety of options for users to sit in the park has made users easily find a place to sit. The installation of swing benches in two walking paths, fixed benches in most of the walking paths, gazebos in four walking paths, four-seater chess tables in one walking path, and sitting walls along the main walking path have made it easy for people to find a place to sit. Given what has been said, managerial findings for use in cultural planning are shown in Figure 10.

Cultural resource	Management findings
Plants as the most important natural resource of the Fateh garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserving the garden-like identity of this park due to the role of the environment and its impact on encouraging users to sports activities - Preventing construction of walking paths or buildings in the plots and preventing the destruction of plants and trees - Using the shade of sycamore trees on the walking paths for sitting, walking, and doing sports
Sports activities as the most important activities in Fateh Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of eight tennis courts at the beginning of the establishment of this urban park - Creating a fenced area for ball sports - Allocating a walking path to chess by installing four-seater chess tables - Allocating a walking path to badminton by creating five-lined courts and installing bars - Allocating three walking paths to exercises by installing a large number of fitness machines - Facilitating users to do sports such as parkour, skating and cycling on walking paths, and slacklining on the plots
Garden House as the most important place in Fateh garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the spirit of participation among users and promoting group activities - Providing free educational services for citizens - Providing a gathering place for users to hold weekly, monthly or special events - Providing a place for the sale of handmade products of citizens on different occasions
Animals in Fateh Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not disturbing the life of animals in the plots - Transferring stray dogs to shelters - Facilitating users to feed animals - Facilitating bird watching tours
Urban furniture	Providing a large and varied number of options for sitting through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installing swing benches on two walking paths - Installing of fixed benches on nine walking paths - Installing gazeboes on nine walking paths - Installing four-seater chess tables on a walking path - Installing seating walls along the main walking path
Food and beverage outlets	Providing different options through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book Café to promote reading and holding literary meetings and gatherings of poets, writers, and literary figures - Shamdooni Café in the form of an artistic café with colorful chairs and tables next to the water and trees to gather artists, athletes, and other users - Three food and beverage kiosks in three different places

Figure 10. Management findings for use in cultural planning.

Cultural Planning

Once the cultural resources of Fateh Garden have been identified and the approach of managers and policymakers towards these cultural resources has been determined, it is necessary to provide a range of recreational opportunities appropriate to these cultural resources for users. Due to the sports atmosphere in Fateh Garden, sports activities are the most important activities in Fateh Garden. As mentioned earlier, various sports are practiced in different parts of this park, including tennis, volleyball, badminton, chess, skating, cycling, slacklining, parkour, and football. Although this variety of sports activities is very valuable, it seems that it is still possible to do some other sports in Fateh Garden.

Considering that tennis is the first sport in Fateh Garden and has even caused Fateh Garden to be known as "Tennis Park", it is possible to install table tennis tables for those who are interested in this sport. Because table tennis balls are so small, it is very unlikely to injure other users or trees if hit. Moreover, due to a large number of trees and the natural and relaxing atmosphere of this park, it

can be suggested to do mental exercises such as yoga. This sport can be done on plots and walking paths. Sports such as bowling can be performed in this urban park due to the length of the throwing path, which does not occupy much space. However, sports such as basketball are not suitable for this park due to the need to install baskets and the weight of the ball.

Users of Fateh Garden play different games in different places. For example, on chess tables, various games such as chess, backgammon, snake and ladder, card, and other board games are played. However, these games are also played in other parts of the park, including gazebos. Due to the interests of different groups of users in these games, from young people to the elderly, more of these games can be suggested for this urban park. Installation of football tables and air hockey tables due to their small size and low risk can enhance recreational opportunities for young people in this park.

Many events are held on different occasions in Fateh Garden. These special events are held both on national and religious occasions. Moreover, various sports groups, governmental, non-governmental, civic, or environmental organizations organize events in this urban park on different occasions and by obtaining the necessary permits. Most of these events are popular among the users of Fateh Garden and users have good memories of them. It seems that more events can be done on different occasions as shown in figure 11. Some events are also held daily, weekly or monthly in the Garden House. These events can be more varied and can be done in other places in the park. In this regard, other events can be organized. Figure 11 shows the range of recreational opportunities available and recommended for the Fateh Garden.

Available sports	Recommended sports
Tennis, volleyball, badminton, chess, skating, cycling, slacklining, parkour	table tennis, yoga, bowling
Available games	Recommended games
Chess, backgammon, snake and ladder, card, other board games, Frisbee	Air hockey, table football
Available occasional events	Recommended occasional events
The Fall Leaves Festival, Mid-Shaban Celebration, Nowruz Celebration, Pomegranate Celebration on the Occasion of Yalda Night, World Yoga Day, National Pump and Body Balance Conference, Taekwondo Conference, Kickboxing Conference, Colorful Balloons Festival on the occasion of International Children's Day, Book Day and Book Reading Festival, a conference to honor and commemorate the International Day of Disabilities	All national and religious holidays, Women's Day, Men's Day, Girl's Day, Youth Day, Adolescent Day, Student Day, World Elderly Day, Teacher's Day, Karaj Cultural Day, Physical Education and Sports Day, World Poetry Day, World Water Day, World Health Day, Persian Gulf Day, Handicrafts Day, World Blood Donation Day, National Flower and Plant Day, Holy Defense Week Festival, Research Day and World Board Game Day
Available daily, weekly or monthly events	Recommended daily, weekly or monthly events
Gardening workshop, Shahnameh reading, Masnavi reading, Hafez reading, painting training, painting exhibition, handicrafts exhibition, group consultations	Friday cultural and artistic bazaars, artists' gatherings, bird watching tours, art education workshops, special education sessions for students, sports competitions, art competitions

Figure 11. The range of recreational opportunities available and recommended for Fateh Garden.

These recreational opportunities can create conflicts, issues, and problems for users. For example, due to the narrow width of the walking paths, doing some sports such as skating may cause pedestrians to encounter skating practitioners. This has caused some people to protest. Assign part of one of the walking paths to skate can solve this problem. Moreover, the possibility of a volleyball or Frisbee colliding with pedestrian users causes them to be frightened while walking. Due to the fenced area for ball games, it is necessary to play volleyball only in this area. Also, due to the existence of an empty and open field in the north of Fateh Garden, Frisbee enthusiasts can use that piece of land.

Another issue is the use of children's playgrounds by those interested in parkour and martial arts for training, which has provoked protests from children and their parents. Due to the good flooring of this area, athletes sometimes use this place to do their exercises. Since there are two flat and wide stone sitting platforms in Fateh Garden, by equipping them with suitable flooring, they can be allocated for sports exercises. Given what has been said, Figure 12 shows the conflicts, issues, and problems and recommended solutions for the Fateh Garden.

Conflicts, issues, and problems	Recommended solution
The possibility of pedestrians encountering skating practitioners on the walking path	Assigning part of one of the walking paths to skating
The possibility of volleyball or Frisbee colliding with pedestrian users	Playing volleyball only in the fenced area Throwing Frisbee in the open and empty piece of land at the north of Fateh Garden
Simultaneous use of children's playground by those interested in parkour and martial arts on the one hand and children on the other	Equipping two flat and wide stone sitting platforms with suitable flooring for parkour and martial arts practitioners

Figure 12. The conflicts, issues and problems with recommended solutions for the Fateh Garden.

After resolving conflicts, issues, and problems, it is necessary to pay attention to the health, welfare, and well-being of users. For this purpose, the community development approach is used. Many tasks related to the maintenance of plants, animals, and built environment as well as holding various events can be left to the users. Creating a participatory system to make the benefits of users' opinions in all decisions related to parks and delegating responsibility to public institutions for the optimal use of cultural resources can empower the community, increase the sense of identity and sense of belonging of users to parks. User comments were used for this purpose. Since cultural planning is a participatory approach and it is necessary to ask the opinions of other users of Fateh Garden, in the community development approach, different methods can be used to meet the needs and desires of users. The table in figure 13 presents the final recommendations for Fateh Garden, taking into account the community development approach.

General suggestion	Recommended for Fateh Garden
Delegating many tasks related to the maintenance of plants to the users	Planting plants according to the interest and desire of users Involving users in the process of preserving the plants through the formation of voluntary groups - Facilitating the participation of environmental groups to provide suggestions related to the type and method of planting the trees and flowers in the park
Delegating many tasks related to animals to the users	- Facilitating the activities of individuals and organizations that support animal rights to feed animals in the park - Organizing stray dogs through animal advocacy groups
Delegating many tasks related to the maintenance of the built environment to the users	- Garden House management by users through the formation of various voluntary groups - Monitoring the activity of food and beverage kiosks, Shamdooni Cafe, and Book Cafe through users - Providing solutions to problems related to restrooms, sports equipment, prayer rooms, etc. through users
Delegating holding various events to the users	- Organizing sports competitions by sports groups - Holding art competitions by art groups - Holding scientific and educational competitions for pupils and students by volunteer groups - Holding charitable celebrations to help the needy by charitable organizations - Holding celebrations and festivals on national and religious holidays by various groups of people - Setting up stalls to sell home-made products by different groups and individuals - Holding training classes to empower users and create job opportunities
Creating a participatory system for the optimal use of user opinions in all decisions related to the park	- Holding elections to form the Park Management Council - Communicating with members of the Park Management Council through face-to-face and social media - Holding weekly meetings to hear the opinions of users in the park
Deciding how to spend the park resources and how to inform the users	- The transparency of the expenses and incomes of Fateh Garden through public announcement - Holding surveys on how to spend the park's revenue regularly - Providing monthly and annual performance balance to users

Figure 13. Table of the final recommendations for Fateh Garden considering the community development approach.

Conclusion

A model consisting of three stages for cultural planning of urban parks is introduced in this research. Cultural mapping, which involves identifying cultural resources, is carried out in the first stage. The cultural resources of Fateh Garden can be categorized into tangible resources such as its components, activities, and events, and intangible resources such as meanings and associations. The results indicate that Fateh Garden is a prosperous urban park, featuring well-liked cultural resources. According to users, the most significant element of Fateh Garden is the sycamore trees. Additionally, users consider sports activities to be the primary events and activities in Fateh Garden, while the feeling of peace is among the most critical meanings and associations that this park holds for them.

The second stage involves doing a cultural assessment, which includes assessing how urban park authorities and policymakers have approached the park's cultural resources. Fateh Garden authorities enthusiastically support sports activities, growing and maintaining trees, and hosting events at Garden House. In the final stage, this study showcased the variety of leisure activities that are presently accessible and advised for Fateh Garden. Table tennis, yoga, and bowling are among the suggested sports, while air hockey and table football are among the recom-

mended games. Furthermore, the study proposed various events to take place in Fateh Garden, including cultural and artistic markets held on Fridays, meetings for artists, bird-watching excursions, workshops for art education, specialized sessions for students with unique needs, sports tournaments, and art contests. The use of a cultural planning approach may suggest potential solutions for the problems, conflicts and issues present in Fateh Garden. Allocating a section of a walking trail for skating, limiting volleyball games to a designated fenced area, utilizing the open and unoccupied area to the north of Fateh Garden for Frisbee throwing, and providing two level stone platforms with appropriate surfaces for individuals practicing parkour and martial arts are some proposed solutions.

Compared to many other countries, Iranians have a limited range of recreational activities, and their primary choices for socializing with friends and family include visiting parks, cinemas, restaurants, and cafes. Islamic regulations prohibit Iranians from attending Western-style entertainment venues, such as nightclubs. Therefore, urban parks are an excellent alternative for teenagers and young adults, especially when it comes to utilizing their free time. Iran has a distinct approach to urban park planning when compared to other countries, particularly Western nations. The primary reason for this variation is related to the governing bodies responsible for making decisions about urban parks, as well as the banned events and activities within parks in Iran. In Iran, municipalities do not have sole decision-making authority on certain issues related to the management of urban parks because governmental, military, and religious institutions and organizations also have a role to play in this regard. In Iran, the police and religious institutions are against the idea of having pet dogs in urban parks. Furthermore, these entities are against the presence of music and dance groups in parks throughout Iran. Their belief is that Iranian urban parks should adhere to Islamic principles, and only events and activities that align with Shia Islamic doctrine are permissible in these parks. As a result, certain leisure activities that are popular in urban parks in Western countries, including alcohol consumption, dancing, and walking dogs, are explicitly banned in Iranian parks.

The recommendations of this study regarding the implementation of cultural planning in other parks across Iran are broadly divided into two sections. The initial part pertains to the disregard of cultural features unique to every city and neighborhood and the lack of attention given to cultural resources. The approach taken towards designing and organizing urban parks in Iran has been somewhat uniform, involving the installation of man-made elements like benches, gazebos, and restrooms, along with the planting of grass or trees to create a verdant environment. No consideration has been given to the cultural attributes of individual neighborhoods or cities in this regard. The way of life in each neighborhood or city is influenced by their belief systems, resulting in a preference for particular cultural resources that urban park planners and policymakers should take into account when formulating plans. Cultural planning has the potential to effectively identify the cultural resources present in urban parks and utilize them to their fullest extent to enhance the parks and cater to the needs and desires of park users.

As an instance, in an urban park where group activities are prevalent, it is vital to incorporate features like gazebos or circular seating arrangements that facilitate face-to-face interactions. It is important to take into account users' preferences for sensory and natural components such as their favorite colors, scents, cuisine, and sounds when designing urban parks. The flora and fauna present in urban parks are also important factors in making them appealing and unforgettable. Thus far, there has been a focus on enhancing man-made components in urban parks, such as benches, gazebos, and amenities like restrooms, while many other cultural resources have been disregarded. By taking into account all cultural resources, an urban park has the potential to become a second home for its users, which can enhance the frequency and quality of park usage. Consequently, by identifying and effectively utilizing cultural resources, urban parks can serve as a place to fulfill a variety of user needs and desires, creating a peaceful environment for park-goers.

The second set of recommendations pertains to improving the communication and interaction between the policymakers and officials of urban parks in Iran and the park users. An often neglected aspect of planning and designing urban parks is the engagement and interaction between park managers/policymakers and park users. In order to meet the users' demand for greater support and promotion of fun activities, the park officials ought to carry out a survey within the activity areas. This will enable them to gather feedback from the community and gain a better understanding of their needs and concerns.

Additional studies on cultural planning for urban parks could provide answers to other inquiries. Here are some potential areas for future research:

- How to apply cultural planning to transform urban areas and rejuvenate them.
- Identifying the suitable locations, elements, flora and fauna that urban parks require in order to fulfill users' needs and desires.
- Ways to make events and activities enjoyable for the park users and how to make them more accessible.
- How to differentiate an urban park from other parks based on the requirements and preferences of its users.
- The significance and connotations that an urban park holds for its users.
- Conducting studies like the current research in other urban parks or different urban spaces, with diverse users.

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Contemporaneity Decolonizing Knowledge & Independency

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Abstract

This article discusses the platform and selected texts from Journal of Urban Culture Research (JUCR), in relation to contemporary turns from the 60s on participation and diversity in responses to the making of an open society to the 80s on decolonization of knowledge from the enlightenment trajectory. Only lately, these ideas of 'decolonization' has gained traction in our regions and we need to be careful not to mix the meaning of this term with the fight for independence after the WWII by colonized nations or criticism of the concept of orientalism and the construction of racial stereotypes. Discussed turns on participation, diversity and decolonization are juxtaposed to issues and working in urban culture, the everyday, the cognitive and communicative qualities in the performance of the self, and the many others. This text includes discussion and exploration of critical structures in research and analytic processes, on reading theory-based and practice-based writings and relates these to art-making in traditional spaces and in real world situations.

Keywords: *Contemporaneity, Decolonizing Knowledge, Artistic Research, Urban Culture, Urban Culture Research, Journal of Urban Culture Research*

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Introduction

The Journal of Urban Culture Research (JUCR), is an educational open platform with aims to nurture and scrutinize knowledge production through writings and researches urban culture's many faceted connections and the arts. It is based in Thailand, a collaboration starting in 2010, between Chulalongkorn University, faculty of Fine and Applied Art (Chula) and the Osaka City University (OCU); recently renamed Osaka Metropolitan University (OMU); both based in non-native English-speaking societies.¹

History has shown that start-up of research journals are not easy, particularly when they are not located within the dominant culture. Pakistan artist and intellectual, Rasheed Araeen moves to London in 1964 and started Third Text (TT) in 1983 after founding the short-lived publications of Black Phoenix/ Black Umbrella in 1978. His concerns with postcolonialism and eurocentrism are well known,² his publications served as a platform for voices residing outside the west and from a recent report, Araeen made texts to become part of his various artistic medium.³ For Araeen, to establish Third Text in London seem to be the zeitgeist of those decades for intellectuals to be present within the site of power if we take into account of Stuart Hall's effort to encode and decode messages between the dominance and the others and see culture as a space of remixing meanings, and Frantz Fanon's revelation of the everyday indigenous world and the violence produce by western dominance⁴ are further instances of such efforts.

JUCR has among non-western platforms independently acted to make connections within regional context on research and knowledge production. Resource-scarce non-western journals faced many and different difficulties in light of the prevalent authoritarian state and control in Asia's different belief and political systems. One of such initiated by artist and educator Lucy Davis, was the journal *Forum On Contemporary Art & Society*⁵ that began in 2001 and ended in 2007 after having to negotiate the complexity of funding, free expression, and 'management' in the nation state of Singapore. Their unexpected final issue was on discussing censorship and receive the wrath from the domineering self-named 'smart' city state. Third Text, being Asian led but based in one of the centres of modernity has become an international reputable journal for critical perspective in term of being cited,⁶ exists today under Taylor and Francis after the departure of Araeen in 2011 while the Third Text Asia with editorial based in Karachi and London exists from 2008-10.⁷ The end of TT Asia is certainly a disappointment for Araeen as he has express hope for it to succeed.⁸

Against these backgrounds, I begin my discussions on selected texts from JUCR publications. I am an artist-curator practitioner with praxis of over 35 years, beginning in Cologne,⁹ specializing in public spaces with focus on social engagement, participatory, and community self-determining activities, and with prior experience in sciences and health.¹⁰ Focusing on visual and public art, the progression of my practice to praxis involved trans-disciplinary artistic research in the University of the Arts Helsinki, an institution that did not belong to the modernist enlightenment bloc. My artistic and curatorial activities mostly took place in both

west and east Europe and in East and Southeast Asia in systems under communism, military dictatorship, flawed democracies, include immersive experience in nomadic cultures both in their dominance (Outer Mongolia) and minority (Irish Travellers) roles and in various religious societies. These experience and opportunities allow me to take on different professional roles as educator, evaluator, and mentor. Being aware that bias, opinions, and cognitive flaws still exist in my own thinking and expression, even with heightened consciousness, I hope to counter them with an open reciprocal praxis, development of participatory writing,¹¹ and specific validating structures from the real world, as a form of criticality to present constructive texts.

As this review cannot be separated from my own praxis, my text will meander between reviewing past texts of JUCR with what may appear as my readings or proposals of its full possibilities.

Urban Culture as An Open Site for Practice To Praxis

Generally, our education has primed and schooled us to value the readings of books, until we realize that not all knowledge come from printed or written matters. Schooled under the western system, being taught literature interpretation skills and exposed mostly to their philosophy thoughts, I could not remember acquiring any critical tool to dissect and intervene matters from within, but rather was schooled to pass examinations. As our awareness progress to consciousness and criticality of the exploitation of modernism and social injustice, our need of negotiating with the many and different others in society become acute, exacerbated by increasing uncertainties in the macro fields of the economy, ecology, and governance to the micro fields of mental health. With the resulting “contemporary turns”, consciousness of the values of diversity, the participatory, and lately decolonization in knowledge production, activities in critical knowledge production to question existing structures, dominances and demand for constructive changes has increased. However, with the urgency of climate disaster and reoccurring pandemic, what is an urgently needed ‘new criticality’ seems to move at a snail pace. .

Theory-based and Practice-Based Research and Writing

JUCR was initiated and is managed through a collaboration of Chula and the OCU.¹² Chula supported both forms of theory- and practice-based research up to the doctoral level with terminal qualification in PhD and DFA made it interesting. Practice-based research – also widely known as artistic research – would always conclude with field projects together with a thesis to discuss the dynamic of practice with theories as praxis, and would normally require a longer duration to reach graduation. Practice-based research should not be confused with other investigations in which artists produce texts that describe their practice or projects, and are claimed as “practice-based” or “practice-led” by some institutions and researchers.¹³ The historical development of artistic research in the attainment of a DFA over the last hundreds of years emerged from art practices to praxis in the drawing schools to academies,¹⁴ mostly began as drawing schools, such education form prioritizing real world application also exist in other fields.¹⁵

Theory-based writing tends to be dominated by western enlightenment trajectory and north-Atlantic hegemony, which have shown their shortcomings and have created inequalities,¹⁶ challenged by the call and actions of the decolonization movement rising from scholars from the South, African, and east European. Such as in the late 80s by discussions initiated by Rosa Maria Rodrigues,¹⁷ Walter Mignolo,¹⁸ and many others such as Enrique Dussel.¹⁹ Only lately, it gains traction in our regions we need to be careful not to mix this decolonization of knowledge with the activities for independence after the WWII or criticism on the concept of orientalism and the construction of racial stereotypes.²⁰ This decolonization of knowledge is another crucial factor in any platform of knowledge production.

Because of these two different processes of research, writings on practice are as important to nurture as those based on theory. Even though Chula U and OCU are institutions from non-native English-speaking societies; JUCR encourages contribution in English in order to make knowledge accessible to a wider audience, to encourage exchanges and discourses. OCU priorities trans- and inter-disciplinary research application into the field of the progression usages of energy, social conditions in health science, and support and care in the field of disaster management.²¹ There are ideal opportunities for JUCR to nurture research texts of combining urban culture and arts in real world situations and applications of Arts & Science, Arts & Health, extending research, practices, and activities into working with the ecology, aging society, social illness, addressing embedded anxiety, and trauma.

However, theory-based English texts have shown many limitations in incorporating experiential qualities, emotional properties of the everyday and traditional oral knowledge of different cultures that are passed down the generations, although English texts have contributed to creating new structures in urban settings as cities grew and have been able to respond to contemporary turns but because these texts originated from the master's tool²² (western education), we need to be critical of embedded agenda. Experiential knowledge is local – often contained in oral history – are embedded with emotional properties, from anxieties to uncertainties, and inherited ancestor narratives. Knowledge-experience from other cultures (that are yet to be translated) and the Quantum Entanglement (although a phase pioneered in western knowledge but understandings of it have already existed in different forms in non-western knowledge) are barriers to researchers who only seek text-based research and even more so if they are English texts.

I see the potential for the field of urban culture – and for a journal such as JUCR as the platform – to play a constructive role, in bringing together the two forms of research and knowledge discussed above. JUCR can serve to act as a research platform on urban culture to nurture responses to contemporary turns, participations across sectors and disciplines. Additional support for texts from non-native English speakers that focus on regional contexts will advance progress in the decolonization of knowledge. Western education structures' domination is continually being criticized, and calls for expanding connection, diversity, and collaboration of

the global South and elsewhere is increasing being heard, such as this tagline for Knowledge and Global Power:.. “The demonstrated existence of Northern dominance and influence does not imply Southern passivity, nor uncontested domination. Knowledge production is now negotiated, and creative ways of participating are devised.”²³

Urban Culture: Experiential Meaning-Making and Social Connectivity

In the everyday, real life performative interactions contain non-verbal and verbal communication, which are inclusive of tones and expressions that contain and produce interactive knowledge, with deep meaning-making. They build relationships and manifest nuances of power relationships and internal struggles of materials and class division. In my over 40 years of working in public spaces to create network and activities in various fields to initiate participation to collaboration, I have found that using text alone without human interaction cannot succeed. The lockdowns in our recent past confirmed our needs for the ‘social everyday’, to connect with performances of the self to the others.

However, the interactive knowledge, reciprocity, and experience situated in the everyday need continual affirmation and validation. Through our sometimes shifting and dynamic cultural values, practices, and depending on the different sites and purposes, such knowledge dictate the performances of our multiple identities and the reciprocities from the many others.

Experiential meaning-making within urban culture is defined by the emotional and dynamic stages in our everyday perception, which are always fluid. Our manifold interactions with others, institutions, states, and the public transcripts²⁴ are the main factors that determine outcomes we make. As each individual evaluates their existence with the others, in the face of uncertainties, value is placed on tangible and intangible actions and gestures that could elevate the anxieties and challenges of the everyday. Arts, culture activities and materials that cannot provide the crucial ‘witness thinking’²⁵ – linking to the real and the environment – but only have message pointing to, talking about or down to, will not be valued or will be seen as non-essential during times of crisis by the people at large, such as during a pandemic. As shown in a recent survey²⁶ in pandemic stricken Singapore, 71% of respondents listed artists as the most non-essential jobs, before telemarketer, social media/PR manager among others. What caused this low esteem toward artists?

Some artists responded to the results by challenging the people to do away with entertainment – which many turned to during the pandemic – as entertainment is art as well. Such a retort blinded the bigger picture, and missed the opportunity for constructive discussion on the highly intangible values residing in arts and culture. A prominent public intellectual and social-political leader of the ruling oligarchy responded to results of that survey by listing out the theoretical values in arts,²⁷ which to me was a rather top-down approach that did not respect and respond to individuals’ needs during crisis.

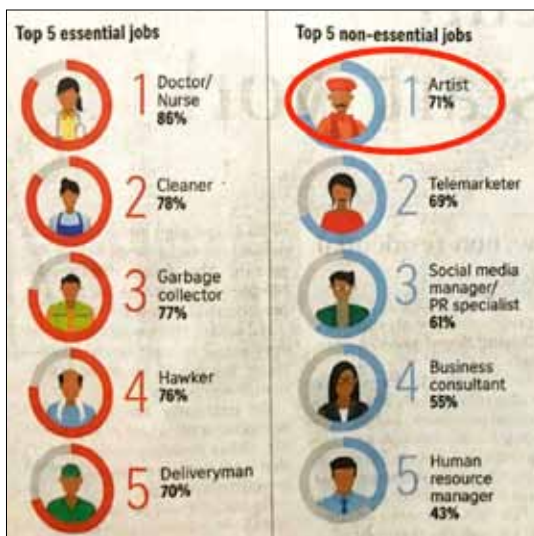


Figure 1. The Sunday Times, Singapore, June 2020. Source: Author.

Macro (Power and Policies) and Micro (Everyday) Structures in Urban Culture

JUCR's inaugural issue in 2010 focused on community development and social transformation through the lens of cultural and artistic activities in relation to respective authorities in different countries. In his text, *The Progression of Art in Bangkok's Public Spaces* educator and artist, Kamol Phaosavasdi see:

'...Art, not only as an aesthetic tool, but also as a tool whereby human beings may learn more about themselves and their societies.' (Vol.1:75)

And calls for a scrutiny of our egocentricity, as a reboot in the community or at a larger reference, associated with the new millennium. He discusses his hypothesis

"art and cultural activities (to) slow down the pace and rhythms of life, ... providing a more delicate world vision and empathy." (Vol.1:76)

Believing in the universal quality of intangible art beyond its aesthetic could work in tandem with emotional intelligence to nurture development of love and empathy across divisions to face earthly calamities. The author is conscious that this is a hypothesis, aware of selective bias and dominant influence but with high hope because of the city authority support to develop an independent Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) as a milestone through the signing of the agreement 'Bangkok's Declaration of Cooperation in the Field of Art and Culture.'²⁸ With the end of this agreement in 2021 and the past years of tension with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, BACC faces various rocky roads ahead.²⁹ Questions arise as to the artists working with BACC – being experienced in creating objects and concepts for spaces, mostly indoor, and in short duration – were equipped to deal with the open public environment and the Thai's many layered social norms in intersubjective exchanges.

In the same issue, Takuya Oi's *Alleviating Isolation Through Art Projects* (JUCR Vol.12) discusses social isolation of the marginalized community of "day labourers - yoseba" in the Kamagasaki district of Nishinari Ward, Osaka City. These are citizens and residents of the city affected by issues of old age and economic recession. In order to alleviate these isolations, a local NPO, Cocoroom, includes public art activities such as workshops and events to address the result of physical social distancing, lack of independent resources and mental wellbeing of the 'yoseba' as homeless persons, to increase social participation for this community. The project is named as "Kamagasaki Geijutsu-Daigaku (Art University) = Kamagei." Kamagei provides lectures and workshops by specialists on various subjects.

The short text did not elaborate any conceptual theory that can accompany the implementation of the public art activities open to everyone. The core concept is simply:

'We wanted to create a space where people of Kamagasaki and people from outside the area could encounter each other.' (Vol.16:76)

As there was an omission in describing the processes of making the program, of choosing the subject and facilitators, these came across as being organized in a top-down manner and the locals and participants were not roped into the decision-making, the sharing of ownerships, experience, knowledge in organizing the activities, with future possibility of taking over and be independent after the organiser has left. The unpacking of one workshop 'Expression', the only example, did not indicate additional qualification of the drama educator's experience in working with persons of different classes, ages or understanding communication processes between strangers. The facilitator's statement of the goal of the workshop.

'...is for each and every person to be able to be just as they are in this venue. That's the space we're creating.' (Vol.16:77)

– is a wish but being aware of the difficulties of initiating public and intersubjective communication within a Japanese society, especially among strangers and hoping that it would somehow work, by saying that the workshop is for

'...letting each and every person be just as they are, and making a space for that,...' (Vol.16:77)

To me, this may be stretching a speculation too far and risk sounding like rhetorical acrobatics. Missing are learning moments in discussing how the local contexts and cultural practices can play roles in the motivation, implementation, and evaluation of such public activities.

The discussion on 'Isolation as a Social Problem' (Vol.16:74) gives the circumstances of the yoseba being discriminated leading to them being a taboo in communication processes and producing their transitory social life that prevent social bond-

ing. Could this art project includes some motivating processes of interactions, where the yoseba could at their own pace, outside a classroom scenarios (of being taught), use everyday activities and community services to create opportunities of exchanges with residents in the neighborhood. These yoseba are matured and elderly individuals and not young children whom one can put into the classes and teach to communicate and interact.

In Bussakorn Binson and Alan Kinear's 'Creative Arts Therapy with Thailand's Mobile Arts Therapy Group'(JUCR Vol.6) on recurring flood crisis in Bangkok, specifically in period of 2011-12, a volunteer Mobile Arts Therapy group³⁰ was initiated to elevate the acute trauma and anxieties face by displaced residents living in flood relief centers³¹ all over Bangkok. The conceptual framework grounding the activities in this period was termed as Creative Arts Therapy. The descriptive text discusses the use of creative art activities from various mediums of visual arts to performing arts to engage with the residents' emotional conflicts, to foster self-awareness and personal growth. The theory was drawn from the American Art Therapy Association³² but in the creative activities, visual arts, music, dance, and language were applied in connection with local context so that the young participants could connect with them. Both verbal and non-verbal communication were applied which could support any individuals who may be reluctant to express or may be emotionally charged and have difficulties to communicate with strangers and those outside their comfort zones. Narrations in activities with the facilitators plus the participants' ability to verbalise or express their stories and events will help to reduce tensions and anxieties, and can create a witnessing of positions, relationships and reciprocity with the many others. The mundaneness of the everyday and of waiting are countered by these activities cum entertainment, creating learning moments for participants and can generate positive imaginations and hope.

However, a limitation needs to be pointed out about these activities – with older persons as facilitators and young participants – is whether the young participants would be able to draw on critical positions to articulate any feedback to the project, especially in the context of the Thai's reverence for the older persons. For a research journal, I think that such aspects of activities can provide learning opportunities. The obvious 'Chang'(Thai for elephant) in the room, is to ask what or where is the State during such calamities? What about the other communities that do not have the fortune to receive assistance from these volunteer groups, who are seeking refuge in the various relief centres, Do they belong to a specific class and how are their hardships compare to other citizens. To connect such a project to a larger discussion, such as unpacking Thai's volunteerism within the Theravada concept and the established priority given to community development are other constructive entry points for this study, from the perspective of urban culture.

Through the above texts, we can see that urban culture is a vast field where the interconnected dynamic practices of the intellectuals, power leaders, activists,

citizens, and residents predetermine the everyday social, in tandem with the economic and the political, to make meanings and progress. The everyday's effects on individuals evidence the legacies and manipulation of past deeds, patience and greed, and also show victims' and survivors' resilience to deal with impending uncertainties and disasters. These three texts offer greater potential than that realized, to explore in greater depth, to discuss critically within their specific belief systems, to engage respective authorities, and open up possibilities to initiate policy changes.

The Dynamic Manifestation of Political, Economic and Social Well-Being in Everyday Life

To go deeper into the Everyday, it is in its spaces that the stages of our existential identities are put on display and mirrored, whether in private or public. These are performances of the self, to act out and on our togetherness; they display our anxieties, and our stages of mind to the many, different others, and emerging uncertainties. Urban culture and the everyday is an area of contestation between the dominant, public transcript against the public display of private transcripts. They are about everything social, political, and economical: they highlight resistances, struggles, and anxieties, and attest to people's creativity to intervene and respond to the structures and uncertainties.

I would like to use the following three examples to illustrate opportunities for the study of the intersections of the politic, economic and the social well-being, as visualized within everyday contexts.

In Havana, the capital of Cuba, a much sanctioned country³³ lack availability to global materials, Cubans used creativity to manage shortages, such as condoms,³⁴ and local resources, to sustain their well-being. Cultural workers find ingenious ways to get their work out especially during and after the pandemic,³⁵ writers reading out their works, utilizing videos and free broadcast with their improved Wi-Fi access points and internet to overcome long queues.



Figure 2. Havana, Cuba 2017, Social activities in the non-touristic area of La Lisa in outer Havana. A game in the public space and chat group in a residential neighborhood.



Figure 3. One of the many parks in Havana city, where paid Wi-Fi can be accessed. These are the only public spaces available for residents to go online in, using time-rated prepaid cards, while internet service on cell phone is only available from very late 2018.³⁶ Other spaces for Wi-Fi are in the lobbies of international hotels in sanctioned Cuba.



Figure 4. Creative private repair works in progress as spare car parts needed to be sourced, in the non-touristic neighborhood away from Havana old city centre.



Figure 5. Daily activities at a neighborhood store, away from Havana old city centre. Most goods are limited and have to be allocated to residents of each neighborhood.



Figure 6. In the aftermath of the rare (since 1923) category 5 hurricane, Irma, that landed with great devastation in Cuba, September 2017, army personnel of both genders move in with hand tools to various sites. Power was down for over 7 days in this residential non touristic quarter.



Figure 7. Elderly struggle to survive in Singapore.

In 'smart' and expensive Singapore, the elderly struggle to survive and this has gained much public attention. The 'smart' nation label³⁷ given to Singapore are connected to technological and modernisation advances that have made life easier but the everyday visuals of elders working in public eating places and housing estates have raised anxieties and incited people's senses of social justice. Everything is top-down in Singapore's neo-liberal led authoritarian system, and

when facing criticism, the retorts are mostly myopic (see my discussion before on a recent survey on how essential the arts are in pandemic stricken Singapore). The lack of human-centric consideration,³⁸ chasing materialism and exploitative factors has made Singapore a very unhappy place.³⁹

In sanctioned Myanmar, below, the oppressive state has always used the everyday to place and perform their public transcripts of dominance and manipulation. Residents resist with their private transcripts and establish cultural practices as counter to the wide spread oppression and lack of resources that I have discussed in detail in my case study of setting an independent capacity-building space in Yangon.⁴⁰ When the private transcripts reach a seething point, it will break out into the visibility of the public ‘everyday.’



Figure 8. In Yangon, Myanmar a billboard depicting the military's statement of the “People’s Desire” that targets foreigners.

Billboard depicting military statement of the “People’s Desire” in English that targets foreigners, in 90s Yangon, (similar billboards in Burmese are in their neighborhoods) is one of the many public transcripts created by the military dictatorships, on top of local laws, and cultural practices.



Figure 9. A 2007 Yangon billboard stating ‘Be hand in hand for the national convention’ asking the people of different ethnicities to work together.

In Yangon, 2007. Billboard stating: ‘Be hand in hand for the national convention’ asking the people of different ethnicities to work together, create a new constitution, and trust the forming of the democratic government. This was not true as the quasi-civilian government formed in 2010 was completely controlled by the military. Books published now reveal the narratives of control, deceit, and mind-sets of how those in power were undermining democracy.⁴¹



Figure 10. Yangon 2021. Peaceful protest against the military coup. Private transcript made public. Photo credit: The photographer and citizen wish to remain anonymous.



Figure 11. In Yangon 2022, young persons used masks during public display of their resistance as many of them have died and captured.⁴² Photo credit: Yangon Revolutionary Force.

The dynamics of politics, economy, and social well-being cannot be explained in their singularity. In time of scarcity, individuals and the state will produce creative improvisation. In Havana, I observe the strong social bonding coming together, patiently waiting for their turns to do whatever they can.

In Myanmar, the young people have discarded their fear and use all means to create tools for resistance. In the past military periods up till 2009, the various ethnic groups were divided but the young individuals are now able to start to unify in their present fight.

What is “Appropriate Knowledge” to Respond to Contemporary Turns?

Diversity, Participation and Author-Centricity

Diversity and participation are known for quite some time, as emergent concepts in discourses in Postmodernism around the mid-twentieth century as a resistance or challenge to modernism. Different disciplines build upon these discourses and refine their criteria to be suitable for further exploration in their specific fields. Some important fields emerged such as deconstructionism and post-structuralism, which did not matter when look at the structures now. However, I observe that after all these years, author-centricity in production is still prevalent in the academia, as well as and in the arts, especially in international events promoting regional identities and interests.⁴³

Earlier implementation of ‘participatory’ practice in the 70s by the NGO sectors working in less resourced countries with local communities and grass roots provide adjustment to their learning curves...mistakes like doctoring participation count on paper to obtain funding, not following through of concept on inclusiveness or carrying out activities absence of discussing diversity and participation block the transfer of knowledge, experience, and shared ownership.⁴⁴

Historically social engagement in art was pioneered by female artists in the 70s as performances in the public. Only in the 80s does art production makes a slow entry into the participatory realm under the rubric of ‘socially engaged art’ with art activities taking place outside the box, e.g. in public and everyday spaces, performances in non-institutional settings.⁴⁵ Dialogical Aesthetics (Kester, Grant) became the concept to unpack this new field and it was in the late 90s that I was exposed to the critical discussions through an international platform and enter into meaningful exchanges with like-minded colleagues from the west. - Although social engagement has existed in different ways in artmaking in Asia, the Chiang Mai Social Installation (1992-1998) - which demised after its 4th iteration in 1997-8 – was one of the earlier manifestations of what is termed as the “socially engaged art” form in Asia, albeit in a largely show and tell approach than those practised in the west. Unfortunately most of these activities are driven largely by good intention, passion, and author-centricity, lack critical knowledge to question their power relationships (the dominances and the others, feminist perspectives,..) or sustainable structures to nurture their art practice into praxis.

Plastic Sea: Art Exhibition on Marine Plastic Pollution, a recent text (JUCR 2021 Vol.23) by Haisang Javanalikhikara, is on raising awareness of pollution, in a 9-day public project announced as artistic research, that include components of participation, public activity in building diversity in knowledge, and emerging technology in art making. This text narrates a wide range of public art projects, locally and foreign, but with only brief descriptions of intentions and without providing theoretical concepts for these examples to guide or discuss the learning moments. The exhibition Art for Air (JUCR 2021 Vol.23:241) mentions ‘...to use creativity and artistic practices to raise awareness on the issue, and to find ways to solve this problem.’ However, details from Art for Air, that could be shared and discussed with Plastic Sea as learning opportunity are absent, especially the part on finding ‘ways to solve this problem.’ The technology of the artwork did make an impression if one is exposed to it for the first time but how can this impression become knowledge to nurture changes that can reduce plastic waste? How can such new awareness of pollution in a show-and-tell motivate the audience to make concrete change on their return to their everyday or resist peer pressure?

Plastic pollution is not caused by technology but human’s dysfunctional relation with nature and uncontrolled consumption of materials following their egocentric ways. Superficial discussions and short interactive durations are inadequate to support public facing activities, to teach or pass on knowledge or to intervene the socially negative practices of plastic waste in the society. Criticism of the top-down 12-year plan of the Thai Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (JUCR 2021 Vol.23:240) is a good start but why did the project coined as artistic research just point to the issues without offering any durational intervention or viable solution? Are there possible processes of working to motivate the people and to identify the sources that generate these plastic wastes as community activities? Author-centric rhetoric without discussing actual processes or public incentive to motivate real world measures and more crucially with no effort to hold the sources of these pollution accountable, are not helpful. These issues on claim as artistic research, local context, and others are discussed later under different criteria in some following sections.

Educational Outreach Unit for Visual Arts Exhibitions (JUCR 2011 Vol.2), a text that discusses the use of mobile platform to conduct participative educational activities for the public, began by listing the budget constraints of operating a museum and named many national and well-known museums around the globe. Whether and how these foreign museums share any common context and purposes to those in Thailand is not discussed. The author, Monvilai Rojanatanti could have just made a small selection with one or two case studies on these public outreach activities and discuss their success or failures. He does question the viability of foreign materials for Thais in ‘Does these written materials really enhance the interpretive learning process for the Thai audience?’ (Vol.2:70). The Singapore Art Museum serves as an ideal example in his text but the author neglects to take into consideration the authoritarian structures of a government that has held onto their power since independence in 1959.⁴⁶ All public materials to culture, education, and other institutions serve only to uphold the ruling party⁴⁷ and the censorship of culture, films and the arts are common occurrences.⁴⁸

The Outreach Unit's agenda advocated in the text's abstract, commonly state objectives such as 'enhancing their (the people's) understanding of art...' and '... shape their hearts and souls leading to good citizenship,' Such rhetoric should raise red flags as they sound like brain-washing or priming strategies used in commercial or state propaganda. No doubt the author's Outreach Unit may have the good intention of doing social good but they fail to consider that audience are not empty vessels nor ignorant, and may have greater concerns in life and face greater struggles in the everyday, which raises question of the suitability of this top-down approach. Should not the targeted audiences be consulted on what they wish to gain from the museum and how the role of education be transmitted? I think the author is out of touch with the context, using a reference from 1995 that discusses the Louvre which was conceptualized in the late 18th C Europe and does not account for the context of education in contemporary Thailand or in an open society.⁴⁹

Similarly, in JUCR 2020 Vol. 21, a classical theory and statistic-based academic text, *Strategy & Social Interaction for Making Creative Community...* Dongsuk Huh, Su-Hee Chung and Byung-Min Lee discuss the effort of Korean cities to use craft production to build '...culturally creative community...based on cultural and place-making strategies....' The authors relies solely on empirical study to theorise social interaction in '...place identity and social empathy in order to achieve sustainable regional development.' (Vol.21:4).

In fact, the reliance on the theory of place-making has been criticized as being top-down and associated with the detrimental effect of gentrification.⁵⁰ The absence of engaging local residents in consultation and participatory processes indicate problems in social interactions,⁵¹ unless the residents are not parts of the community or this text is only trying to influence state policies for business development.

In the afore-mentioned texts, the mainframe seem to be all authors-centric and artists-led, selective, top-down research and writing, with almost no reference to the diversity or participative input from the audiences, residents and participants. Diversity has become a much-loved narrative of neo-liberalism, but its outcome should not be a superficial display of multiculturalism. Diversity should include the narratives of people's feelings, experience and differences allow these nuances to surface and claim their importance in our everyday, locality, and formation of knowledge.

Practice to Praxis: Employing Artistic Research and 'Thick Description'

To effectively respond to the contemporary turns of diversity, participation, decolonization and to nurture scholarly texts that discuss the turning of practices to praxis, critical distinction needs to be made to differentiate artist-led or author-led research with artistic or academic research. Author-led research, also known as text-based academic research – being not inclusive of non-text experience or oral knowledge – would not be able to acknowledge cognitive bias and the absence of diversity of other voices and participation in knowledge production. Artistic

research is not about learning rigid regulations or adhering to set of methods but acquiring a mind-set of the progressive stages of awareness to consciousness in producing shared knowledge, local context, and experience.

A good method to adopt in artistic research is to write using the richness of ‘thick description’⁵² popularized in anthropology and ethnography texts. It is a qualitative method that is able to effectively respond to and capture experience, emotion, interactions, and be inclusive of unspoken thoughts and contexts. All these could otherwise be lost if writings used to discuss praxis are not able to adopt a language that is differentiated from writing based only on text references. I will further discuss how this method can be used in my discussion of the following text.

In *Dialogic Performance*:... (JUCR 2010, Vol. 1:118-127) Dan Baron Cohen as an outsider based in Brazil uses the theory of performativity of dialogical aesthetic⁵³ to unpack his interactions with the locals and the possibility of decolonization of the participants’ (including his own) internal dialogue with their embedded historical memory and imagined identities. These intercultural interactions took place within the intimacy of the everyday, which for the author is a form of participatory and educational democracy, and if carried out with adequate duration could have transformative potential.⁵⁴

The author’s narration of his praxis begins with the crossing of the inner and public stages of non-verbal and verbal interactions to make meanings. He begins with performances of the self,⁵⁵ in the between strangers and then progresses to subsequent social stages of acquaintances, participants and ideally as collaborators.⁵⁶

‘In the fractional pause in our public dialogue, I read the eyes and ‘comportment’ of my questioner to interpret his(or her) subjectivity, his presence and how he is reading mine, to decide how I will identify the two stories I inherited with my name,...’⁵⁷(p. 119)

The text discusses issues of intimacy and public dialogue and the complexity of intersubjective interactions, of reflection, interpretations, performances, and expectations. These references could have moved out of the individual cognitive bias and imaginations, to discuss with different others’ imagined narratives in another context or belief systems.

The author also discussed colonized subjects bear the mutilation of their cognitive selves, distorting intimate dialogue and expressions and recognizing his performativity as a ‘white male.’ The author’s efforts of applying decolonization within these intimate exchanges with the locals draw from his personal and traumatic history of loss and cries for social justice. He regards such breaking of silence of bias and selection in dialogue as beneficial for all participants and be constructive as shown in

‘...breaking our silence in an intimate space of principled but empathetic solidarity where we could reflect analytically and creatively, not defensively and dogmatically about the politics of our subjectivity,...’⁵⁸ (p. 125)

Another indication of the author's reflection of his praxis is the discussion on the internalization as colonized subjects and acknowledgement of the effect of immunization..

'...to know what needs to be transformed to avoid reproducing our oppressors within our own subjectivity.' ⁵⁹ (p. 125)

We need to recognise that these reflections are made as part of the author's efforts of moving his own practice to praxis; however, the others – his referenced individuals – did not affirm nor deny these reflections. His method may be able to reflect the exchanges during the social stage between strangers but I speculate that it would be inadequate in the more advance social stages of participation where trust need to have developed. Language proficiency would have been another factor to allow unhindered understanding of each other.

As the local's unedited expression and interviews are not available, we can only rely on the author's words, as he describes with good intention and an informed white gaze, the '...unintentional...repressed Brazilian presence' when he discusses the performance of the self in the dynamics of the culture of local hospitality, with 'excessive generosity' to strangers and with 'increasingly global, neo-liberal reflexes...on empathy...poverty...within the rural culture of solidarity.' (p.123) Such descriptions add depth to his study, albeit being speculative on the author's part.

In order to discuss his individual position towards conflict, trauma, and tragedy with all the subjective emotionality, any researcher's process of acquiring distance to discuss it in detail, and present them as knowledge for scholarly purpose would have been paved with potholes and bias, as Cohen would have faced. Employing the method of artistic research would assist a researcher to avoid selective bias and personal position, and by applying concepts of reference investigating from the positions of social relationship within local family structures and society norms, the researcher can find useful entry points. Any member of the society will be able to connect on the micro level with the identities of many different others as each person would know what it is to be a son, daughter, man, wife, brother, sister, mother, or father.

Produced knowledge should not only reflect the competence and quality of the individual researcher but should also to communicated and discussed with the many other colleagues across sectors, disciplines, and belief systems. When civil language and constructive framing are used in criticism, and are not personal attacks, it should not offend others, As knowledge is not rigid but need constant validation, continual meaning-making with other disciplines and sectors are crucial in moving knowledge and experience forward.

Returning to the example above, I would propose to frame the analysis of Cohen's project using his descriptions of oppressed colonized subjects (p.124), and include references to empathy, solidarity with the others. By employing the method of thick description – as a qualitative method to reflect on emotion, experience, and

interactions – to discuss his intimate exchanges with participants, the writing have been inclusive of unspoken thoughts and contexts and provide a closer study of the internalization of oppression and the immunization of the Brazilian participants to the contradictions between resistance and self-determination. These are examples of some entry points to discuss a praxis based on artistic research. The qualitative intersubjectivity and theoretical framings of multiple spoken and unspoken voices in artistic research would be able to accommodate differences and contestation in discussion across sectors and disciplines.

Criticality in Analysis

My entry points in discussing my selected JUCR texts are certainly infused by my own bias, as mentioned in the beginning: there is no escape from the ego, conditioning, education, and personal limitation of an author. For example, I did not include topics crucial to the Asian context such as feminism, gender, and queer studies, for lack of competency to discuss them in depth such as the development to the 3 waves of feminism⁶⁰ or the hardship of members of the LGBTQ in gaining social acceptance. I have instead chosen to focus on discussions on critical structures, accountability, and otherness, and I hope that they can be constructive to shaping future publications of JUCR.

Although I have criticized numerous texts as being top-down in approach, due to their western modernistic structures and dominance of western resources, neglecting non-western origins in knowledge production, this does not mean that these texts do not have any critical and constructive features. Credit needs to be given when texts adopt ethical processes, acknowledge shortcomings, wrong doings, and show constructive forms in analysis and depth of discussion. An example will be the academic and author-centric text, *Strategy & Social Interaction for Making Creative Community* (JUCR 2020 Vol. 21) criticizing the city lack of paid ‘attention to the cultivation of expert communities and young craft artists,’ (p. 19) and not working with educational functions in this aspect. This text is able to discuss shortcomings and offer suggestions on constructive actions moving forward if residents’ emotional reflection and participation in city planning be included.

Issues in Decolonizing Knowledge

After discussing the necessity of responding to contemporary turns and inclusion of artistic research to adequately address practices to praxis and the everyday I conclude here with discussing some issues in decolonizing knowledge.

Language, Publishing Conventions and Dominating Concepts in Education and Discourse

As I mentioned in the beginning, with the difficulties facing a journal produced by non-native English institution and the need for making available English texts for sharing and dissemination of knowledge, we are presented with an unequal playing field.⁶¹ In fact, these difficulties do not begin with text production but from accessing education itself and making a mark in the international arena, where clearly those who are from English colonized countries have certain advantages. My personal experience of encountering postgraduate non-English native-speaking students in western European institutions suffering from humiliation and deg-

radation in their studies and examination are numerous. The dominant language has also been employed as a tool to reject references in other languages,⁶² to censor unwelcome critical text due to difficulties of interpretation or to be reviewed, accessed, and accepted into the institutional knowledge bank. My experience bears witness to these and showed me the necessity of the processes of decolonizing knowledge.

Within the field of research methods, each writer needs to decide on what kind of research they wish to produce; the same with JUCR on what kind of journal it wants to be. The wide field in urban culture does make this difficult to achieve a committed and consistent approach for the journal. Presently, its inclusion of short texts, mostly descriptive, from different disciplines, that even includes journalist reporting gives the impression that everything goes.

Perhaps, JUCR can try implementing a few categories that provide substantial analysis, texts from practices, and an open section with more attention given to the length and usage of references in the texts. Over 20 years ago, *Third Text*⁶³ demands from each contributor a word count of from 2000 words and increased to 7000 words, which is similar to JUCR. This length is necessary in order to unpack and analyze, provide adequate materials and different voices or case studies. Editors should be strict on this word count, clarity of connecting analysis and knowledge, and demand precision through proper citations, page referencing, and quoting and not be satisfied with a list of book references. Today contemporaneity demands making interconnections, transparency and substance, especially in knowledge production.

Accountability to Readers: Appreciation, Appropriation and Transference

Is accountability subjective (just a matter of opinion), or related to the general perception, like that mentioned in the survey from Singapore, on the public perception that artists are non-essential to the community? Or could accountability be discussed in the framework of appreciation vs. appropriation? In the larger arena of the real world, ethics, issues of appreciation vs appropriation, acts of transference are often discussed in dynamic to each other. Appropriation and transference are also popularly engaged in contemporary artmaking.

Transference began to be used in the field of counselling in therapy practice,⁶⁴ to discuss unconscious association but it has also been used in education, as in the "transference of knowledge." When used in visual cultures and the arts, it denotes a conscious exercise. The ethical discussion in culture and art involves issues of whom transference benefits and is it appropriated for personal gain. Examples are forthcoming. It is considered to be acceptable when transference benefits a community, or assist in the struggle of many to overcome hardships and transference is seen by Nietzsche's transformative narrative⁶⁵ as a transitional phase in individual quest for self-knowledge.

An example of transference was found in the merging of the tiger and the eagle symbols on the external and other animal symbols on the inside walls of the

Catholic CamLy Parish church in Dalat, which has found a foothold in a dominantly non-religious Vietnam while working with members from the mountain indigenous communities. The compromise of its Christian doctrine by using non-Christian symbols from the minority's existential struggle in Vietnam is a case of positive transference of meanings that are valuable to the mountain communities and in turn add reason to justify the church presence.



Figure 12. An outside wall of the CamLy Parish Church, Dalat, Vietnam.

A controversial event in association with transference arose during Singapore Biennial 2016 when artist and educator S. Chandrasekaran⁶⁶ in his installation and public performance protested the historical exploitation of Indian convicts under British colonial rules in the 1800s to serve as cheap or free labour in pre-independence Singapore. His proposed public performance, was to walk in the public streets, while being bodily pierced with metal hooks, rod, and attached sculptures along the roads and passing buildings that the convicts built, with the intention of portraying their hardships, and through his performance he hoped to “gives meaning to their presence” (quote taken from Today). In doing so, he ‘transferred’ – through his own ethnicity – the suffering of the convicts onto his body. However, he seems to have forgotten the privileges he has now, a citizen with rights, as an artist working on an international platform, and in a different time and site. All these was not available to those convicts he wished to connect with. Critically, it would seem that the artist is the sole benefactor of the attention seeking act. As he failed to obtain permission for the proposed performance from the biennial organizers, partly because of resemblance to a Hindu’s religious act, he transformed his artwork to become an installation in the form of “an intention to walk” and during his artist’s talk in the gallery where his installation is shown, he performed a blood oath as protest and declared that he will cut himself everyday as a sign of his protest until the day he is allowed to perform his walk, which to my knowledge, he eventually did not carry through with.⁶⁷ Nor did he pull out of the biennial.

The Weakness of Intertextual Reference and Interpretation

Textual knowledge demands that we use references to show the connection, acknowledgement of ownership in knowledge production. In education alone, each level, from under- to post-graduate demand different criteria applied to the outputs of research processes, texts, and articulations just to name a few.

However, text references become outdated, when they are, let's say, over 10 years old, if left to stand on its own without being subjected to contemporary validation, because our world move at a pace at which knowledge production cannot follow up with, depending on the disciplines. When a referenced book is published over 10 years ago, the research done would have been much older, written in a different context from the present author's. If this text involves interviews, reports, and... then other contexts are also implicated in their reciprocity and impact the original author's findings and conclusions. There would be numerous contextual information – for example those that implicates various power relationships (dominance, resources enable to scarcity, linguistic competence,...) – that would be lost and flattened when an author simply builds an argument by solely lifting off a statement from another author's text. No matter how brilliant the interpretation may be, it denotes incompetence, laziness, and... on the part of the author. In several texts published in JUCR, references used are over 20 years, one was in 1934 to reference social patterns in a city that has not yet exist.

There are various ways to circumvent these shortcomings (of using outdated references), for example, by understanding the backgrounds and the contexts of the interviewers and interviewees and within which the artwork was made, quoting authors through depth of research or asking for updated comments from parties concerned. With deceased authors, reading more than a book of these parties will throw more light. When I discuss the Dialogism of Bakhtin⁶⁸ as one of the main foundation to discuss my Art-Led Participative Processes, Bakhtin's Russian texts on linguistic, heteroglossia, and polyphony, and the dynamic and unfinishability in meaning-making was only translated into English in the 80s which demanded that I read different translations of his books. Dialogism, a later coinage, discussed the flaws in Marxism which in turn was a criticism on Modernism, in connection to labour, capitalism, and social exploitation. Bakhtin's era was during the period of Russian imperialism, evolving into Russian socialism, under the oppressive hands of Stalin and Lenin and the departure of Trotsky. The suppression of critics has been acted out in history, as in today. Bakhtin was fortunate to be saved from execution but met with banishment to a small village where he could teach and died in the mid-70s. These backgrounds, the various concepts in and interpretations of Dialogism from different translators and disciplines, and lastly how they are connected/applied to other knowledge out there.⁶⁹ If no one uses Dialogism for contemporary discussions, it could mean that this knowledge has become irrelevant.

Another way of overcoming outdated references would be to initiate communication with the authors to ask for their comment on the context of the statement and their references. Remarks could be discussed and analyzed with author's

intentional use and context of discussion. When the original refereed actors are not available or remarks not forthcoming, feedback can be sourced from contemporary colleagues or persons to provide polyphony and diversity. These acts of consultation, reciprocity will not remove all bias but can be used to show depth, respects, and engagement of ethical processes to cultivate inputs and decolonize the knowledge of a single voice. Whether if it is text or practice led knowledge production, domination by one over the others or the many (history, popularism, the famous) on one should not take place.

Another aspect that can assist the decolonization of knowledge is using non-English with English References, as it will present more than one perspective, as interpretation and translation never provide exactly the same content. It will not be a single voice.

Revisiting and Updating

Another way of dealing with outdated references is by revisiting the subject. When Plastic Sea made references to many public projects, especially those in Thailand that took place years ago (one of these, The Land project, will be discussed here,), time passed could be included as a marker to analyze outcomes, what are the stages or forms that, these projects have become or progressed into and what are their effect on the participants? Have any of the objectives that emerged during the formation years reached any fruition? Has their practitioners practice evolved?

When The Land,⁷⁰ a project that took place in the environment outside the city of Chiang Mai was initiated in the late 90s by artist and mindfulness practitioner Kamin Lertchaiprasert, I was extended an invitation. The concept as I understood was for artists to use a small lot that was given to each artist for mental contemplation, not to produce any works, and use the common communal space for exchanges. I was hesitant as I was in the midst of getting out of the author centric traditional mode of art making and was still lacking a critical viable structure to scrutinize my practice and had doubt of whether such a concept could take precedent over the goals of egocentric art production. On visiting the site a year later, I saw that various housing artworks of international artists were displayed without any visible evidence of occupation or meditative activities. Engagements with the public, environments or with any community in the vicinity of The Land was absent, except for Mit-JaiInn who attempted to grow a circle of quick growth trees, hoping to create some form of housing although I was told later that his idea could not be realized. Subsequent visits revealed some locals have moved in and out to use the land for cultivation and some students were trying to make project work, but the ground looked desolate with non-functioning and neglected art installation. The narratives I heard were that the students were waiting for leadership to kick-start many ideas. The project has much attention from the art world that questioned the meanings of the physical and mental space⁷¹ and contains valuable learning moments of working in the real world outside elitist spaces and outside of the short duration of modernistic art making.

Conclusion

The Importance of Connecting and Negotiating with Real World Complexities

Throughout this text I have repeatedly stressed the importance of using context to scrutinize ideas, practices, and their application in the real world culture without neglecting the position of dominance, processes of reciprocity and prioritizing clarity in communication and interactions. At this very moment the art world is rocked by the controversy in Documenta 15⁷² related to arts from our region. The quinquennial aims to serve to show and tell and the intention of the city of Kassel to use this event to enhance its cultural standing but have now taken a hard hit even involving criminal proceeding due to reaction to the presence of anti-Semitic imagery in the work by Indonesian artist group.⁷³ Not considering the privilege, context and inability of those from the dominant group in society to be equipped to deal with complexity in multi-layered conflicts, and going into the real world of politics with the naivety of art world egocentricity are some of the major causes.

Summed up here by artist Hito Steyerl who withdrew her work from D15:

‘I have no faith in the organization’s ability to mediate and translate complexity.’ ... the curators ‘repeated refusal to facilitate a sustained and structurally anchored inclusive debate around the exhibition, as well as the virtual refusal to accept mediation.’⁷⁴

On one hand German intellectuals, stakeholders, and public have developed a rich history and perseverance of dealing with resistances, conflicts and trauma, their own and with many different others, relating to ideologies, racism, religious tension, wars and holocaust. There are acquired competence and also blind spots. On the other hand, we have art workers belonging to the dominant group from Indonesia, a post-colonized country, with long history of resistance, dealing with fundamentalism, schooled in their local practice. But perhaps, being in the dominant group, they have been comfortably unchallenged, and have not acquired the capacity to deal with the complexity of negotiating with cultures very different from their own. In contemporary circles, I have often encountered artists who operate under a universalism equipped with a self-righteous ideology to speak for the selected weak, for selected wrongdoings or in the name of free expressions.

According to philosopher Omri Boehm, this is a clash of two ideologies of anti-universalism,⁷⁵ that has pitted a European post-holocaust thinking against a Post-colonistic global south. I think we can add one more universalism to this simplify duality, the one from the art world where saying ‘it is not our intention to cause trouble’ and ‘this artwork has been exhibited elsewhere without causing problem’ and the super card of ‘freedom of expression’ to trump all other existing values.

In our alternative facts, post-truth⁷⁶ and fake news world, mishaps, misunderstanding, and accusations are bound to happen with any confrontational provocative works and activities. We all need to build the ability to contextualize, communicate, and mediate effectively and sincerely in multiple sites or else such incidents will keep happening in the future.

Endnotes

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Rasulan as a Javanese Slametan Tradition

on Compromising the Changing of Society

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Abstract

Rasulan is a tradition in Java; it's one form of Javanese *Slametan* (a ritual meal). This research aims to describe the *Rasulan*, explains the role of the worldview and how the elements of culture, religion and the spirit of the nationality are compromised and changed therein. This research is a mix of library and field studies, utilizing the theory of worldview. Results show that *Rasulan* is not a religious tradition, but a harvest celebration, taking the form of gratitude in the agrarian society. It consists of world views of space, time, causality and self-other relationships, which constructs how people practice *Rasulan* within community life. Compromise in the values of tradition, religion and social life occurs with the incorporation of religious events on respecting and appreciating religious groups in the community. This study contributes to the strengthening of the view that *Rasulan* is not a religious ritual, but a cultural activity.

Keywords: *Rasulan, Slametan, Worldview, Tradition, Java, Ideology, Indonesia*

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Introduction

Rasulan is a form of *Slametan*, a ritual held by people in area of Gunung Kidul, a part of Yogyakarta Indonesia. Yogyakarta is one of Javanese culture and value centers, besides Surakarta. Javanese culture is full of symbolic things, as depicted in traditional Javanese songs which are used by the people in expressing cultural values (Wadiyo, Slamet Haryono, and Joko Wiyoso 2022:168). *Rasulan* is held in almost every village in Gunung Kidul and usually carried out after the harvest season as an expression of values and world views that become the basis of people's lives. It is a kind of community festival which is not only a sacred-oriented action but also a tradition of gathering citizens, as the function of *Slametan*.

Slametan is one of the Javanese cultural icons that has attracted the interest of many researchers. One of the researchers who popularized *Slametan* was Geertz, who believed that it is one of the many rituals performed by Javanese people. There are diverse forms of *Slametan*, which is a ritual that is performed at many kinds of events, including life cycle ceremonies such as birth, circumcision, marriage, death. It is also performed when someone is sick or is having nightmares, when changing names, moving house, constructing buildings, and other events (Geertz, 1976:11). *Slametan* is also believed to be a form of Javanese syncretism (Beatty, "Adam and Eve and Vishnu." and is associated with Islam (Woodward, 1988). Also, women plays a role in its the implementation, (Newberry, 2007).

Slametan ritual studies in Java today receive less attention. Several studies of rituals in several other countries appear in archaeological studies. One of these studies illustrates the elements of offerings found in houses of worship during the past centuries in the Croatian region (Reed, 2019). Other studies are in the form of a ritual description in a cave (Goldgeier, Munro and Grosman, 2019), a study of prehistoric communities in the tombs involving isotope values from the remnants of ritual food (Kellner et al., 2020), and the more recent ritual-related studies are Feng Shui rituals (Ogilvie et al., 2018). Using a religious framework, several studies of rituals are found in the literature. These include studies` on religious layers and symbolism of the film (Fatu-Tutoveanu, 2015) and about the media as a tool for the transfer of religiosity in the discourse of the sacred and profane (Petrof, 2015). There is also a comparative study of the actions of shamans (usually involving certain rituals) in Africa and direct killing as in the West (Dooley, 2011). There is no study of Javanese rituals.

It is found some explorations among Indonesian researchers, such as study in the use of language in the ritual of the departure of the corpse (Munandar, 2019), the period times when Javanese-Saivism ritual was held in Bali (Suamba and Mudana, 2018), and the acculturation of Hindu-Javanese culture, which motivated the taking of relevant actions for the purpose of maintaining ecological harmony (Ali Ikhsan, Setioko, and Suprpti, 2017). Other studies namely acculturation between Hindu-Javanese culture, Buddhism, and Islam in the ritual traditions at the Yogyakarta Palace (Sulaeman, 2019), the clash between Islam and local culture in the process of Islamization and development tourism in Kotagede Yogyakarta (Schlehe, 2017), and the experience of the meaningfulness of religious rituals from the followers of the Pangestu creed in Salatiga, Central Java (Suciati, 2015).

Although Javanese *Slametan* received less attention from researchers and publishers, the practice of this ritual still exists and has even become more diverse. *Rasulan* is one type of *Slametan* which has attracted a lot of public attention in Yogyakarta. The phenomenon of *Slametan* becomes interesting when this event is revealed to be nothing more than a cultural event (Fathorrahman, 2006:2). This article addresses on describing how *Rasulan* was carried out, the rationale underlying it, how the religious community has played, and how this cultural aspect fully supports the ideology of diversity in Indonesia.

Theoretical Framework

Worldview

Worldview is a set of guidelines and values in life (Woodhouse, 2006:13) or, in other words, thought patterns used to organize and give meaning in social life (Abdullah and Nadvi, 2011:269). The world view plays a role in directing human life in everyday life, both individually and in groups. Worldview is a perspective that lives and develops in society, often equated with ideology, but which is actually broader because the scope of ideology is usually narrower (Oesman and Alfian, 1991:48). Worldview can be considered in line with the understanding of philosophy. Philosophy is defined as a system of views, guidelines for life or values ((Woodhouse, 2006:13) while worldview emphasizes specific historical and personal aspects (Abdullah and Nadvi, 2011:269).

Individuals or communities are mutually influential in a person's generation of thoughts, feelings, desires, expressions and culture. Both are mutually supportive and interdependent (Veeger, 1993:107–8). One's worldview has implications for humanity's awareness in identifying oneself and responding to its relationships with the environment, including relations with God, nature and other humans (Peursen, 1992:233). Worldviews can be categorized by referring to Kearney's views, which are among others, views of time, space, other people, causality, and classification (Sartini and Ahimsa-Putra, 2017:272). Every community has a unique worldview construction.

Slametan

Geertz called *Slametan* as a communal feast (Geertz, 1976:11). In its implementation, *Slametan* can be interpreted as a prayer and meal together that is performed by inviting neighbors, family or surrounding communities in the aim of requesting the smooth running of all matters and or for safety. *Slametan* is also intended as a thanksgiving and expressing of gratitude to God for some perceived favor or grace.

Methods

The main material of this research is comprised of the results of previous studies and scientific journals on *Rasulan* of Gunungkidul Yogyakarta Indonesia, namely Dengok Kayen, Kropak Sidorejo Semanu, Kalidadap Gari Semanu, Ngunut Playen, Gedhe Ngalang Gedangsari, and Jatimulyo Dlingo. The data is complemented by a field study conducted at Glagah Kemiri Tanjungsari Gunungkidul that made use of observations and interviews with the general public, village officials, event organizers and traditional stakeholders (*modin*). Data is interpreted by reading it care-

fully to obtain the meaning, value and human purpose in order to understand the nature, theory, and cultural phenomena that the information presents. This study looked for internal and holistic coherence, carried out to look into the relationship between concepts as a whole. Clear descriptions were provided for these concepts. Synthesis-analysis was utilized to investigate the *Rasulan* phenomenon as a comprehensive unity of interconnected concepts (Bakker and Zubair, 1994:41-42).

Results and Discussion

Rasulan Between Description, Setting and its Meaning

Rasulan is said to have originated from the word “*Rasul*” that means messenger or treatise (Fathorrahman, 2006:25). Supposedly, this term is very close to the term in Islam that refers to the Prophet or Messenger of Allah. Another explanation is that the word specifically refers to the Prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, when referring to a religious activity in the Gunungkidul community, *Rasulan* is not always related to religious events such as the Prophet's Birthday or Isra 'Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad. For the Gunungkidul community, the term *Rasulan* is intended to name a series of activities aimed at expressing gratitude to God for all the favors given to all citizens, as based on an interview with one of the elders (respected community leaders) in Kropak (Kinanthi, 2018:31).

Rasulan as a form of Slametan ritual (Afifah, 2011:77) is also a form of village salvation ceremony that is carried out by all villagers, usually after the harvest period (Putri, 2018:43). The Dengok Playen community similarly has this concept of the term. *Rasulan* is a traditional form of celebration performed after the harvest and is a tool of farmers' expression of gratitude to God for giving them abundant blessings and fortune from agricultural products (Mixdam, 2015:33). Studies in the village of Ngunut reveal the community's understanding of the concept as meaning holy, so *Rasulan* is also called *Bersih Desa* (cleaning the village). It is a form of gratitude for the people of Ngunut Village for a year of life and the harvesting of agricultural products, especially rice. The *Rasulan* tradition is one of the expressions of gratitude from the people for the blessings the Almighty has given them (Maula, 2018:51-52).

Although *Rasulan* is a peasant party in the post-harvest period, it is no ordinary celebration. According to one source, *Rasulan* is a sacred salvation ceremony attended by all villagers (Fathorrahman, 2006:26). It is a sacred event that is part of the series of activities relating to religious beliefs and actions. According to Mr. Wasno, the *Rasulan* activity held in his village, Glagah Kemiri, is a form of gratitude and supplication and not performing it will bring bad luck. As can be gleaned from Wasno's thoughts on *Rasulan*, there exists a strong belief about the necessity of the performing, and the continuity, of this ritual.

For the Dengok Kayen community, *Rasulan* is a form of expression of religious practice that involves communicating with entities that are invisible to the human eye. Communication is done by words and through "offerings" (Fathorrahman, 2006:25). *Rasulan* is a rite and religious dimension (related to beliefs and religions), and a form of social activities (related to community integrity and safety, inten-

sifying community solidarity) as it is about individuals (establishing community intimacy and supporting personal satisfaction) (Fathorrahman, 2006:27). It is a form of respect for the Prophet Muhammad, with the intention of praying to ask for his blessings. This goal is symbolized by the savory *sega Rasul* (Apostle rice) (Fathorrahman, 2006:29). This shows a proof that the propagators of Islam in Java incorporated Islamic values into their culture.

The *Rasulan* tradition is a form of expression of gratitude to Almighty God for all the blessings and gifts received, specifically abundant harvests, and for showing respect and even asking for salvation from the *dhanyang* or *mbaureksa* (village spirits) or spirits guarding sacred places. *Rasulan* is performed in the hope that the village be delivered from harm or distress, in addition to being an expression of gratitude by reading prayers (Kinanthi, 2018:32). According to the results of studies in the village of Ngunut Playen, *Rasulan* is part of the culture of the ancestors aimed at giving thanks to the blessings of the Almighty in relation to harvest and agriculture accomplished by community members as according to the customs of the village (Maula, 2018:51). In other sites according to the beliefs of the ancestors of Rejosari, Dodogan, and Kedungdayak, *Rasulan* is a tradition of *mboyong* (bringing home) *mbok Sri-Sadhana* (rice goddess), brought by residents home from the *tegal panas* (paddy fields) (Afifah, 2011:76).

In Jatimulyo Dlingo, villagers also hold similar beliefs. The tradition of the *Rasulan* ceremony in three villages is a form of ancestral tradition that aims to appeal to *dhanyang* (*Sing Mbaureksa*) so that the community of people and even animals and plants, are protected from all distress. After the religion of Islam was introduced, *Rasulan* was modified so the singing will no longer be addressed to *mbaureksa* but, instead, to God (Allah). Some informants argue that the *Rasulan* tradition is now a form of respect for the founder of the village, *Mbah* (grandfather) Rana Wijaya, a *juru kunci* (doorman) Kali Sendang Ayu. He left a message that society must preserve tradition (Afifah, 2011:75-77). At Dengok Kayen, the observance of *Rasulan* was at first a ceremonial tribute to the gods, especially Dewi Sri, the guardian of agriculture, to the ancestors, and to the village *dhanyang* in the form of spirits (Fathorrahman, 2006:25). In the village of Gubug Gedhe, the story of Eyang Meles or Harya Bangah, a regent of Prabu Brawijaya followers while leaving Majapahit because of a dispute with his son, Raden Patah, is part of the *Rasulan* (Putri, 2018:43-44).

According to Mr. Wasno, the establishment of the Kemiri village cannot be separated from the history of Majapahit. At first, 11 *padukuhan* (villages) were united as one, led by the Poncosentono headman in Panggang. The *Rasulan* ritual was held in relation to the origin of the village. To the present day, some other hamlets hold their agreements with residents and usually are done after the harvest. The process of determining the time varies.

In Kropak, the details and duration of *Rasulan* implementation were not always related to (the period after) the rice harvest but were instead carried out in accordance with the agreement of all residents (Kinanthi, 2018:34). In 2017, *Rasulan*

was held on 30 June, precisely on Friday Legi (Jumat Legi) and observed for three consecutive days. Thus, the observance of *Rasulan* is not based on a predetermined date but on a community agreement. However, the choice of Jumat Legi has a special meaning. Apart from its being carried out according to the Javanese calendar, Jumat Legi is believed to coincide with the establishment of the Palace of Jogja as well as the first existence of the Cuwelo village (Kinanthi, 2018:35-36). In Kayen, *Rasulan* is held on a Monday Pahing (Senin Pahing), one day in the month of Zulhijjah (Fathorrahman, 2006:25). In Dlingo, *Rasulan* is held on Wednesday Kliwon, on the third day of celebration (Afifah, 2011:80). Whereas in Ngunut Playen, *Rasulan* is held on Monday Wage (Senin Wage) (Maula, 2018:51).

Below is a table showing some maps of the implementation of *Rasulan* in several villages to show the similarities and differences in the implementation.

Components	Kropak Candirejo Semanu (Kinanthi, 2018)	Gubug Gedhe Ngalang Gedangsari (Putri, 2018)	Dengok IV Playen (Fathorrahman, 2006)	Dengok Playen (Mixdam, 2015)	Glagah Kemiri (Wasno, 2019)
Day	Jumat Legi	Minggu Pahing or Senin Pahing	Senin Pahing	Sabtu Wage-Minggu Pon	Rabu Wage
		Selasa Kliwon (Nyadran Gadean)			
Month	By agreement of people	Ruwah or Sya'ban (a month before Ramadhan in Islamic calendar)	Zulhijjah (Islamic calendar)	24-25 Mei 2014	By agreement of people
Reason of date choices	Practical reasons	After harvest	After harvest	By agreement of people	After harvest
Place/center of activity	<i>Balai Dusun</i> (village meeting hall)	village meeting hall for festival			Meeting village hall
		Petilasan Gadean, the tomb of Prabu Brawijaya V.	Petilasan Eyang Damarjati	Petilasan Eyang Damarjati	<i>Mbah Ponco Sentono Tomb</i> in Gunung Tanjung (Mount Tanjung)
Reason/objectives	-commemorate the first existence of the village -expression of gratitude to Almighty God for abundant harvests - showing respect and even asking for salvation from village spirits or spirits guarding sacred places	- gratitude to Almighty God for blessings - Salvation ceremony -Appreciation to people who contribute to the village and its community	tribute to the gods, especially Dewi Sri, the guardian of agriculture, to the ancestors, and to the village dhanyang in the form of spirits	gratitude to Almighty God for blessings	expression of gratitude to God and an expression of gratitude to those who have contributed to the village and its people.

Figure 1. A table listing *Rasulan* events in some villages in Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. Note: Senin (Monday), Selasa (Tuesday), Rabu (Wednesday), Kamis (Thursday), Jumat (Friday), Sabtu (Saturday), Ahad/Minggu (Sunday).

In the Gubug Gedhe Ngalang, a meeting attended by village elders was held to arrive at the most appropriate day for the *Rasulan*. At the time of the study, the village had two choices of observance day, namely Sunday Pahing (Minggu Pahing) and Monday Pahing (Senin Pahing). Today, it has been adjusted to the count of Java for observance before the month of Ruwah (Putri, 2018:51). Ruwah or Sabin in the Islamic calendar is the last month before Ramadan (fasting month) so that the *Rasulan* is held two months before Ramadan. In this month, Javanese people actually have another event to celebrate prior to Ramadan, called Ruwahan. Election day must involve elders who are regarded as knowledgeable in the history and traditions of Java as in Jatimulyo Dlingo, the timing of which is determined by Kejawen experts (necromancer) (Afifah, 2016:54).

Based on the date of implementation, that the *Rasulan* tradition was carried out not in the context of welcoming the Islamic month, especially Ramadan, but with the aim of it being an expression of gratitude for abundance or harvest of the farmers' crops. The choice of venue for the *Rasulan* ceremony takes the element of trust into account. For example in Glagah, according to Mr. Wasno, the community trusted the choice of the village ancestor named Mbah Ponco Sentono who is believed to have been given a message about the location for the *Rasulan* implementation, and in case the venue were to be moved, there has to be a strong reason or justification for it. The community highly respects and maintains the ancestral message. As a result, when one day the location of the implementation was changed, villagers viewed the situation as problematic because of the belief that it could cause community members to suddenly get sick, suffer falls or be disturbed by unseen creatures.

The important thing about the choice of the ritual day and implementation is the community's hope for their safety, security, peace and harmony. The days the community considers not auspicious or suitable for such ritual observance should be avoided. For example, in the Gubug Gedhe, the choice of ritual timing always excludes *Uwas* or bad days as according to the Javanese tradition (Putri, 2018:46). The Ngunut Playen people also subscribe to calculations of important dates based on the Javanese calendar. The implementation of *Rasulan* must avoid the meaningful day of ringkeling menungsa (human weakness, that is Thursday, if it falls on Thursday it is straight line) on *bothong* (Senin Wage, Monday Wage is squeezed by two lines so that the day is struck), and Wuku Kurantil. Avoiding this bad day is believed to be important so that people can enjoy the goodness life has to offer. By carrying out the "good" day it is hoped that farmers could obtain maximum yields in the following year (Maula, 2018:56).

The locations used for *Rasulan* varied. In Glagah, it was initially performed on Mount Tanjung (*Gunung Tanjung*) according to the *Nyadran* tradition during the period of ngawu-awu (one of the stages in farming activities). It used to be that this activity was carried out in *petilasan* where a spring (water source) was located nearby. The *Petilasan* has been considered sacred, often used as a place of prayer by people from various religions. As time went on, activities were moved to the newly built mosque, which is positioned next to it, before being again moved to

the place presently used for the ritual, the Village Hall (*Balai Desa*). Meanwhile, the *Rasulan* procession in Dengok called *Asum Dhahar* (serving food) was originally performed in the Eyang Damarjati Petilasan located in the Dengok IV Hamlet area. This is different from *Rasulan* in other hamlets which are only held in the hamlet pavilion (Mixdam, 2015:37). While the *Rasulan* festivity in Ngunut is carried out in the Kyai Condong Tomb because of its position, being considered the origin of the village of Ngunut, and other festivals in the hamlet hall (Maula 2018:58-59). Different from what has been explained, in Gubug Gede, festivity is carried out in each group of housing while the *hasil bumi* is taken to the Ngalang village hall and raided to the Gede Gede Rest Area (Putri, 2016:51). In the area of Dodogan, Rejosari, and Kedungbayak Jatimulyo, the alms (*sedekahan*) were carried out around (kali, river) Sendang Ayu (Afifah, 2016:66).

The Indigenous leader of the *Rasulan* event is *Modin*, also called *Mbah Kaum*, who is the main figure for the said ritual festival. At Glagah, the main role of *Mbah Kaum* is to lead a prayer that begins by explaining the meaning of offerings prepared for the event. The organizing committee consists of the residents who are considered experienced and who understand the *Rasulan* series of events. In Kropak, the members of the organizing committee that come from the Cuwelo Overseas Association are individuals believed to have the ability to organize events. The master of the festivity is also *Mbah Kaum*, a *petilasan* caretaker who is believed to have the ability to communicate with the *mbaureksa*. *Mbah Kaum* (leader of the ritual) is in charge of leading ceremonies related to spirits, which are essentially the opening ceremonies, preparing of offerings, and leading of prayers during the festivity (Kinanthi, 2018:36).

In carrying out the feast ceremony, certain offerings that must be prepared, some of which are the *kembang setaman* (various flowers, especially *kanthil* flowers) a cigarette, and all food consumed by the local community. The whole offering is placed in a *kencana* bowl made from palm leaves. If the residents prepare offerings at home, the offerings are placed on the table, equipped with candles or *senthir* (oil lamps) as a sign that the spirit itself does not die and what does die is only the physical body. A *bokor kencono* (a kind of bowl) is also provided, which is placed near a large tree or river with its swift water, a place believed to be where spirits dwell in. Offerings are also placed in locations where accidents often occur, on rocks, or on wood (large trees). *Rasulan's* festive equipment consists of *ingkung*, savory rice, plain white rice, *jenang-jenangan* (various soft food made from flour), and *gunungan* (rice shaped like a mountain). *Ingkung* is considered a manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad who has *khatam* (closing). *Ingkung* also symbolizes the union of God and humans (*manunggaling kawula Gusti*). According to Mr. Wasno, savory rice symbolizes comfort to the heart. *Gunungan* contains a series of agricultural harvest produced depending on the ability of the village community. The committee also provides *ingkung* and rice in large quantities. Some community members contribute their provision. The produce which is paraded around the village (*kirab*) is usually fought over by the community and the food is distributed to the community and guests.

After the *Rasulan* feast, rice and *ingkung* are wrapped in containers called *kisa* that are made from woven palm fronds. This food parcels are distributed to the guests, including the researchers and the team members of this study. *Kisa* symbolizes the smoothness and calmness of the heart. After use, the brush is usually not thrown away and is placed on a tree. This is since it is thought to be a blessing: it is believed that coconut trees where brushes have been hung will bear many fruit.



Figure. 2. *Gunungan*, rice and *Ingkung*, and the *Slametan. Rasulan* in the Village Hall of Glagah.



Figure. 3. *Kisa*, food parcels distributed to the guests of *Rasulan*.

In more detail, *Modin* who led the prayer explained to the audience what the symbolic meanings of the various kinds of offerings were. Offerings of various kinds must be interpreted as reminders for humans. The words used by *Modin* was *mengeti*, *pepenget*, which means to commemorate, remind, or remind something. The thing that needs to be reminded is related to the existence of humans and parties that are considered meritorious for human life. The purpose of remembering the parties is as an expression of gratitude, hope and prayer that they live safely, comfortably and peacefully with all of God's creatures.

Worldviews Based

Worldview serves to construct community actions. Based on the research data from this study, it can be understood that the *Gunungkidul* people strongly believe that there are places that are sacred and the dwelling place of invisible creatures. Such a place also provides a historical understanding of the origins of society. This shows a form of awareness of the history and life of the village the residents inhabit. This awareness gives rise to feelings (and expressions of) gratitude for

the gifts obtained in life. People are reminded of this awareness, or need for this awareness, every time with the holding of *Rasulan*. The determination of the time or date of holding *Rasulan* shows the community's appreciation of the history and origin of the village, along with the figures in that history, and even the role of the palace as a state institution that once overshadowed the community.

The Kropak people believe that implementing *Rasulan* is an obligation that must not be abandoned. There was a time when the Kropak community did not observe *Rasulan*-related activities and what happened next was that one of the community members died unexpectedly and rather strangely. The people then came to believe that this happened as a result of failure to observe *Rasulan* (Kinanthi, 2018:31). The Dengok community holds a similar belief – that if no offerings are made at the *Rasulan* event, misery and *kuwalat* (bad feedback) will ensue (Fathorrahman, 2006:30). For its part, the Glagah Kemiri community believes that a relocation of *Rasulan* activity outside the field will have bad consequences, such as people getting sick, falling from vehicles or trees, or being possessed (entered by spirits).

Rasulan, besides being understood as an expression of gratitude for the harvest, is also understood as a tribute to the *dhanyang* or *mbahureksa* (spirits) of the guardians of the sacred places (Kinanthi, 2018:32). In the Dengok community, offerings are a form of respect for ancestors and *dhanyang* (village watchmen) (Fathorrahman, 2006:31). Appreciation for its existence and respect is expressed by choosing the place of ritual activities. The selection of activities in certain sacred places (*petilasan*) is a proof of respect for services rendered by the ancestors. Respect is conveyed verbally and symbolically manifested in *gunungan* and other offerings, which refers to respect and appreciation for all those who play a role in life, including parents, ancestors, saints, the companions of the Prophet, Prophet Muhammad and God. The expression of gratitude for all efforts for one year, good harvests, and prayers for salvation show man's surrender to God's power. *Rasulan*, therefore serves to maintain harmony and good relations with fellow human beings.

The social function of *Rasulan* has been developed in various sports activities, arts performances such as reog, and cultural events where it serves as the highlight activity. The village neighbors, relatives, friends and school friends or office mates come to visit to enliven the event and to stay in touch with each other. The atmosphere is similar to the Eid al-Fitr where members of the community, relatives, friends and friends visit each other, with various treats prepared to welcome the event (Kinanthi, 2018:33). The preparation and implementation of activities involving all elements of community both current residents the village and those who already have migrated, reveals the strong social cohesiveness of the Gunungkidul community. Not only that, the culture of feasting by eating together shows the familiarity and harmony between the citizens of the community. Distribution of rice during the festivity shows the joy of sharing with others. The self-other aspect is very visible in the implementation of *Rasulan* rituals, in the relationships with fellow humans and deceased (spirits of) ancestors, with invisible beings and with God.

The view of place/space, time and understanding of causality can be seen in how *Rasulan* “forces” the community to maintain the ritual. Sacred time, place and condition of offerings still play an important role in directing the community to carry out and continue the tradition. It is true, though, that one factor why *Rasulan* persists is people’s fear of incurring inauspicious events, i.e. if they do not observe the ritual according to the ways handed down by the ancestors. Nonetheless, the holding of additional events as described above displays adaptation to current developments.

Compromising Changing of Religions and the State Ideology

Majority of the Gunungkidul people still use *petilasan* as a place for ceremonies. However, some villages perform ceremonies by conducting festivity at the village hall or mosque. This more recent trend reveals a shift in orientation with regard the view on praying – that does not have to be performed at the pilgrimage site (a sacred place or a place where an important historical event occurred) because it can be done anywhere, including in places that tend to be viewed as neutral, with some consideration.

In Jatimulyo Dlingo, the *Rasulan* ceremony was originally a form of ancestral tradition of pleading to *dhanyang* (*Sing Mbaureksa*) so the people of the hamlets, both humans, animals, and plants in the countryside, can remain protected from distress. After the rise of Islam, it was modified to be addressed no longer to sing mbaureksa but to Allah (God) (Afifah, 2011:76). The prayers led by a Modin or Mbah Kaum actually already contain elements of Islamic teachings. Even so, *Modin* prayer is usually very cultural and more like an existing spell or standard rules. As the researcher observed, *Modin* prayer readers at the festivity in Glagah were very familiar with the prayer narrative that begins with an explanation of the meaning of various ceremonial offerings. The pronunciation of the prayer is a mixture of Javanese and Arabic but with the Arabic part not being fluent enough. This reveals a pattern of how the Javanese accepted Islam while still holding cultural ritual activities and even somehow still practicing their Javanese religion (Fathorrahman, 2006:40). In the beginning, the ritual was only intended to clean the village in order to avoid danger by making offerings to ancestral spirits, *dhanyang* village, gods, and spirits. After the conversion to Islam, prayers from the religion of Islam were incorporated (Fathorrahman, 2006:27).

The development of religious elements in *Rasulan* can also be seen in how it accommodated activities and religious traditions that have developed. Islamic religious activities, recitation of the Qur'an are now part of *Rasulan*'s series of events. It is also worth noting that in the community in which Christianity holds sway, the thanksgiving prayer (*Misa Syukur*) was also held as part of *Rasulan*. This shows the peaceful co-existence of cultural and religious adaptations in the ritual.

Community understanding of *Rasulan* productivity in supporting the lives of Indonesians who are basically religious even though they differ. Having embraced the Pancasila Ideology, Indonesians place religion as the basis for religious life, even though the country is not a theocracy (religious state). Indonesia provides

the same living space for all religions and beliefs. Within the framework of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tungga Ika*), the Indonesian people exhibit multicultural awareness. *Rasulan* activities tends to be viewed as a cultural media in which all religions can develop and participate. Such community awareness promotes the peaceful and harmonious national life.

The opposite will be very different if the phenomenon of tradition is regarded as a religious practice. Claims of truth that are often made by certain parties often become a source of problems, which can worsen if an arbitrary action is made in the name of religious truth. Therefore, clear understanding is needed regarding the truth of religion, multicultural awareness, and awareness about cultural and social life on which social life rests. *Rasulan* is proof that an awareness of differences and mutual needs leads to a peaceful life in society. Pancasila as an argumentative ideology that cannot be rejected, whether it is informal or formal (Wahyudi, 2006:105). Pancasila will overshadow the lives of Indonesian people. Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian nation is considered important by the founders of the state – a convention system that functions as a binding force on the mentality of the people (Mustansyir, 2006:2).

How does *Rasulan* relate to community religiosity? Pancasila by Notonagoro is considered to be a “religion” for the people of Indonesia, serving a guideline for the life of the people of the country. It is a guideline for godly living or a guideline for decency in social life. Pancasila became the cultural origin, religious principle and state principle in the life of Indonesians (Hidayatullah, 2006:35-36). The Gunungkidul community with its *Rasulan* has proven its implementation. This awareness should be the basis of life for all the community members and especially its leaders. Ethical leadership that is professional in its steps and suitable for the people of Indonesia will, of course, start from ethical experience in community life experiences (Frunza, 2017:3).

Conclusion

Rasulan is one form of Javanese *Slametan* which is carried out by majority of Gunungkidul people in Yogyakarta. Also, often referred to as *Bersih Desa* (village cleansing), and the observance of *Rasulan* has undergone many modifications. There are also variations in the implementation of the *Rasulan* ceremony, particularly with regard the determining of the date and duration of the ritual, a phenomenon tied to the understanding of the origin of a village. *Rasulan* is not a tradition of celebrating religious holidays but is instead a kind of harvest party and a form of gratitude performed by agrarian communities, partly symbolized in the distribution of mountains and festivals from the community's produce.

In holding the *Rasulan*, the concepts of worldview about place, time, causality and self-other relations in the Gunungkidul community are very visible. The concept of classification can be concluded by abstracting the implementation of other worldviews, for example, in the concept of self-others showing an understanding of the classification of species. The community's view of the place/space, time, causality and understanding of self-other significantly constructs the implementation of *Rasulan*.

Compromise in the values of tradition and religion occurs the addition of religious events such as the Great Recitation (*Pengajian Akbar*), *Sima'an Qur'an* and even *Misa Syukur* that is held to respect Christian groups. This reinforces the view that *Rasulan* is not a religious ritual but, rather, a social cultural activity serving as an expression of gratitude to those who play a role in life, the desire to have good relations with others and other creatures, as well as gratitude for the gift of fortune and goodness given by God. These views are not based on certain religious understandings and beliefs but serve as reflection of a more universal pattern of understanding worldviews. Such understanding is very supportive of the concept of life based on the Indonesian ideology of Pancasila that teaches unity in diversity and declares the peaceful co-existence of all religions and beliefs in God Almighty. Learning from the way of life with Pancasila values in the case of *Rasulan* will inspire respect for others and contribute to promoting world peace.

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“Hin Le Le” Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province:

Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The objectives of this qualitative research were to investigate (1) the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, Thailand (2) the forms, methods and existence of folk songs during the COVID-19 pandemic, using musicological methodology. The examination of the background, musical characteristics, components and forms at present revealed that the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs is “the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok province, keep up with ongoing events for all age groups and are created by the elderly in the community.” The examination of the forms and existence methods of folk songs in Phitsanulok during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that fewer musical events were held during the pandemic than in normal circumstances. However, Hin Le Le folk songs, which were composed specifically to portray the COVID-19 situation and promote preventive measures, continued to be performed with support from the Cultural Office. This research sheds light on the cultural significance of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province and their resiliency. It highlights the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage, particularly during times of crisis.

Keywords: Folk Song, Musical Identity, Hin Le Le Song, Thailand, Phitsanulok Province, Wat Bot District, COVID-19

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Introduction

Every ethnic group has its own unique culture, especially the musical culture, which indicates the history of ethnic groups, living habits, and other related cultures. Michael B. Bakan (2019:10) referring to Edward Tylor in the defined of culture, asserting that complex whole includes knowledge, belief, art, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man. On this formulation has proven extraordinarily durable. It still provides a good baseline for comprehending the concept of culture in our modern world. Given the present-day global cultural trends, it is obvious that the influence of outdoor cultures has had an impact on the culture within society. It is undeniable that globalization is a significant factor in the transformation of global society. Additionally, natural disasters and pandemics are also contributing factors in the emergence of new cultural trends, which is consistent with sociological and anthropological processes.

The intangible aspects of art and culture, such as principles, beliefs, narratives, melodies, and sounds, are the fundamental essence of art and culture of ethnic groups. These aspects are primarily associated with indigenous knowledge, which is transmitted through societal practices to portray the history as well as reflect the way of life and the uniqueness of their culture. This is based on the love, faith, and trust in the principles established by their ancestors. Culture clearly represents the background and occurrences within a particular society, encompassing both tangible and intangible elements. The term “culture” refers not only to the clothing, housing, language, or way of life of a particular group within society, but also encompasses art, performance, and music.

The arts and culture, including the local music culture, play a vital role in preserving the history and cultural heritage of ethnic groups. Additionally, the arts and culture can encompass the study and performance of music within ethnic groups. The performance of music is an integral part of the arts and culture, contributing to the uniqueness and the interplay between community, environment, and technology employed in each era and society. It also plays a crucial role in communication among individuals and ethnic groups, especially within multicultural societies. In Thailand, it is common to witness a diverse range of musical cultures that represent the unique identities of ethnic groups, spanning from the northernmost to the southernmost regions.

The musical culture of each ethnic group in each region of Thailand can certainly represent similarities and differences in the uniqueness or identity of each region. Thailand has a diverse population made up of many different ethnic groups, each with their own distinct traditions and cultural practices.

These regional musical styles are not only distinct in terms of the instruments and melodies used but also the lyrics, which often reflect the daily life and traditions of the local communities. By listening to and studying the music of different regions in Thailand, one can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and identity of each region.

Referring to the traditional music culture of Thailand, Sophon Lawan (2021:33) asserts that folk songs are a cultural tradition of playing and singing that varies across different regions of the country. This tradition has been handed down for generations, using various methods of transmission such as oral tradition or written records. This behavior passed down from generation to generation can also serve as evidence of a cultural tradition or ritual. Folk songs represent a way of life through various forms of playing and singing, which can be seen as the legacy of ethnic groups or even the cultural heritage of the nation.

Furthermore, the way in which these musical traditions are passed down from generation to generation and the role that music plays in the local community can also provide insights into the social and cultural practices of each region. Overall, the musical culture of each ethnic group in each region of Thailand is an important aspect of the country's diverse cultural heritage and identity.

The custodianship of folk songs presently rests with the older generation and community leaders, while younger generations appear to exhibit declining interest due to the abundance of foreign cultures and media outlets. Consequently, the younger generation tends to neglect the significance of their ancestral heritage and the legacies passed down to them over time. Regrettably, this trend is contributing to the erosion of traditional cultures within society.



Figure 1. Wat Bot map. Source: www.mapsofworld.com/thailand/provinces/phitsanulok-map.html.

Phitsanulok province in the lower northern region: It is a city with history, development, and importance for a long time. From prehistoric times to the present, traces of human habitation and evidence of ancient settlements were found. This evidence shows the living conditions, cultural prosperity, way of life, and wisdom of the people living in the Phitsanulok area as well. The geographical location of

Phitsanulok province has played a significant role in shaping its musical culture, which combines different regional styles from central, northern, and northeastern Thailand. Folk songs in Phitsanulok share similar characteristics with those of the central region, in that they are typically sung in leisure time during agricultural harvest or at play in important festivals. As Chanvichai (2011:31) refers to folk songs in Phitsanulok, Pin Le Le or Hin Le Le songs are ones in which young males and females sing in a call-and-response form when they meet at festivals. Call-and-response singing is performed extemporaneously. There are several traditional folk songs sung as call and response between men and women in Phitsanulok province in Thailand, for example, Hin Le Le (ฮินเลเล), Kun Son Kun (กุ่มซอญกุน), Pleng Malay (เพลงมลายู), Ling Lom (ลิงลม), and Nang Dong (นางดัง).

Hin Le Le, also known as Pin Le Le, is a kind of Pleng Pa Ti Pak featuring a call-and-response singing between male and female voices performed live, which requires quick wit to perform call-and-response singing instantly. The lyrics encompass themes of courtship, complaints, and at times incorporate elements of sarcasm and mockery, intended to provide entertainment and offer a chance for young males and females to engage in courtship. Hin Le Le songs in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are typically performed in conjunction with Nang Dong songs, Nang Tan songs, and Ling Lom songs. Hin Le Le in Nakhon Thai district, Phitsanulok province, are typically performed alongside Chacha Lahong songs and Phuang Malay songs. The singers engage in call-and-response singing, taking turns throughout the day, and they may interrupt the singing by other plays or performances such as Luk Chuang, Saba, and Mon Son Pha, in both Wat Bot district and Nakhon Thai district. Hin Le Le songs are characterized by their brevity, with each line typically consisting of ten syllables or more, and each line ending with a word with the vowel /e:/. The songs are performed live and therefore demand a certain level of quick thinking and improvisation from the performers. The call-and-response performances promote exercising the brain and intelligence simultaneously. Also, the analysis of the lyrics of Hin Le Le/Pin Le Le songs revealed the presence of dialect words within them. Moreover, the expressions used in the lyrics can provide insights into the contexts, modes of thinking, and societal values of the period in which they were created (ศูนย์ข้อมูลกลางทางวัฒนธรรม กระทรวงวัฒนธรรม, accessed 2022).

As previously stated, culture and tradition serve as a means of conveying the stories, histories, and ways of life of people transmitted from generation to generation, using various mediums throughout different historical periods. If there is a phenomenon that affects ways of life, attitudes, and driving forces across all systems, including cultural and traditional practices, that phenomenon holds great significance. The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another phenomenon that poses a threat to the ways of life of people worldwide.

The end of 2019 witnessed the outbreak of COVID-19, and Thailand began to be impacted by the incident in early 2020. At that time, the government operated a strict disease control policy both at central and regional levels, causing everyday life and activities in Thai society to be adapted and modified to move forward.

Many cultural events throughout the country, such as Songkran Festival, had to be canceled. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people's lives, including their mental health and well-being. Music culture can play an essential role in helping people cope with the stresses and challenges brought on by the pandemic. Here are some ways in which musical culture holds importance for humans amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the pandemic situation, it is certain that people worldwide, including those in Thailand, are experiencing stress in all aspects concerning their survival and adjustment to the new normal. Mass gathering events and group gatherings are prohibited to reduce the number of people per private activity. Ways of life, working, doing activities, and communication are set up online. Lifestyles, work, activities, and communication have transitioned to online platforms. Music can be therapeutic. Music has been proven to have a therapeutic effect on people's mental and emotional health. It can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, and promote relaxation. During the pandemic, when people are dealing with a lot of stress and uncertainty, music can provide an escape and a way to cope with difficult emotions. Music can bring people together. Although the pandemic has forced people to isolate and distance themselves from others physically, music can still bring people together virtually. Online concerts and music festivals have become increasingly popular during the pandemic, allowing people to connect with others who share their love for music. Music culture is incredibly important for humans during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can provide therapeutic benefits, bring people together, provide a sense of nostalgia, and inspire creativity. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, music culture can be a powerful tool for helping us to stay connected, cope with stress, and find joy in difficult times.

In the live performance of the event, “National Artists on the Road” (ศิลปินแห่งชาติสัญจร), organized by the Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University, at the end of 2020 at the first wave end of the COVID-19 pandemic, folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, were invited to perform their own music. The researcher found that the main performance of the Wat Bot artists was Hin Le Le songs, which have already been registered with the Ministry of Culture as the folk songs of Phitsanulok province. As the researcher has an interest in investigating folk songs that are vigorous and culturally transmitted and that are under management and administration to preserve their own musical culture, she is interested in examining “Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province: Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Objectives

In the study, Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province: Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the significance of folk songs in Phitsanulok is underscored by the researcher's personal connection to this province, where she is currently residing and working. Moreover, the ongoing pandemic has highlighted the importance of exploring and preserving cultural heritage such as folk songs. The researcher outlined two research objectives. The primary objective was to explore the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the pandemic

and gain insights into the characteristics of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province. The secondary objective was to examine the forms and existence methods of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the pandemic, with the aim of using the research findings to help preserve these traditional songs.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach in the field of ethnomusicology. Field data were collected through interviews and observations. The resulting interviews were then transcribed into written texts for analysis. The audio recordings of the Hin Le Le folk songs were transcribed into musical notation for further analysis and synthesis. To achieve the research objectives of exploring the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province and their forms and existence methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study employed analysis and synthesis methods based on ethnomusicology and Western music theory.

Population and Sample

The researcher sought information from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office about a group of folk song artists who have been consistently recognized for their empirical work in the field of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, as well as at the national level or by other organizations. The information obtained revealed that the folk song artists who have been recognized for their empirical work are in Wat Bot district and Nakhon Thai district. After considering the inclusion criteria established by the researcher, the group of folk song artists that meet the criteria of recognition in the field of folk songs in Phitsanulok and at the national level or by other organizations is those in Wat Bot district since their work has been registered as cultural heritage Hin Le Le folk songs by the Ministry of Culture.

Research Site

Since the research sample was the Hin Le Le folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, the researcher collected field data in the same district within Phitsanulok province. In addition, the researcher obtained a performance recording of Hin Le Le against COVID-19, performed by the artist group in Wat Bot district, from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office's YouTube channel for analysis purposes.

Background, Role, Function, and Hin Le Le Songs in Phitsanulok Province at Present

Phitsanulok is a province located in the lower northern region of Thailand that is known for its rich cultural heritage, including its traditional folk songs. The musical culture of Phitsanulok is a blend of the musical culture from the central region and the traditional folk songs from the northern region. The folk songs of Phitsanulok come in various forms, including solo singing and group singing, which are in line with the traditional style of Thai folk songs. The folk song singing style in Phitsanulok province is characterized by its group singing, and it is similar to the group singing style known as “Pleng Pa Ti Pak” in the central region, which comes in various forms such as Pleng Kiew Khao, Lum Tad, Pleng Ruea, and Pleng Phuang Malay. Based on the analysis of field data, the researcher found that folk songs in Phitsanulok province are sung alongside other folk songs that are commonly found in the central region of Thailand such as Pleng Phuang Malay and Pleng

Rumwong Boran. Phitsanulok folk songs come in various forms and are often sung during traditional and cultural events for entertainment, as well as to portray the harmony of local villagers through singing. One such song is called “Hin Le Le,” which is believed to have originated within the province during the early 20th century and has become a beloved part of the region's cultural heritage.

Hin Le Le is a folk song that has been treasured through generations, making it an integral part of Phitsanulok's cultural heritage. The artist group in Wat Bot district, comprised of artists from various areas in Phitsanulok, has been passing down the traditional folk songs for centuries. Hin Le Le is a creative work that captures the thoughts and feelings of the locals, recording the experiences of the ancestors that have been passed down to younger generations. Additionally, this folk song helps to preserve Thai indigenous knowledge and contributes to the enhancement of wisdom among Thai locals both directly and indirectly. The transmission of Hin Le Le songs has been voluntary. Evidence demonstrates that the Hin Le Le folk song artists in Phitsanulok province are eloquent and poetic, making Hin Le Le songs recognized by the Ministry of Culture as a unique cultural identity of Phitsanulok. In addition to Wat Bot district, Hin Le Le songs are frequently sung in Nakhon Thai district, Phitsanulok province. In this district, there is a folk song called “Pin Le Le,” which shares similar patterns and characteristics as Hin Le Le songs in Wat Bot district, despite having a different name. Based on the interviews with local wisdom scholars of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, it was found that the singing of Pin Le Le in Nakhon Thai district predates the singing of Hin Le Le in Wat Bot district. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a shortage of composers for Pin Le Le songs in Nakhon Thai district, as the previous composer died of old age during the outbreak, causing the development of Pin Le Le songs to slow down. The singers also consist entirely of elderly individuals. The song commonly sung during cultural events is Rumwong Boran. According to the field data collection, it was revealed that the folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are a group of artists selected by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office to be one of the top representatives of folk song artists in Phitsanulok province in presenting works of folk song culture at provincial and national levels on behalf of Phitsanulok province, as the artists have various works and they are recognized by related organizations at provincial and national levels.

The folk songs in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are composed by Mrs. Chalom Samit, pensioner of teacher government official, who formed the band of Wat Bot district prior to her early retirement in 2011. Mrs. Chalom Samit is a renowned and highly respected composer of Hin Le Le songs in Phitsanulok province. She applies her knowledge of Thai poetry composition, using assonance and repetition of tones in her composition, as well as her passion for folk song singing since her young age. The song lyrics refer to current situations, way of living, and courtship, all of which Mrs. Chalom Samit has kept up to date on current events and represented the way of life of the locals in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. All the songs performed by the singing band of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, on several occasions are call-and-response songs between males and females (Pleng Pa Ti Pak). Typically, these songs involve a male singer singing a verse, which is then followed by a female singer responding with a verse of her own. The lyrics of these songs often depict stories of love and courtship and encompass

various genres, such as Hin Le Le song, Kun Son Kun song, Phuang Malay song, and Chap Kay song.

Singers are a vital component of folk songs because they are responsible for transmitting songs to society and passing down musical culture. They act as both transmitters and receivers of musical culture. All the singers in the singing band of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are the locals residing in the Wat Pak Sa Phatthana community, Wat Bot subdistrict, Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. The band consists of more than 16 members, all of whom are aged over 60 and spend their time after work rehearsing singing and doing activities together. Nowadays, Thailand is an aging society. Wat Bot district is considered to be a good example of locals taking initiative and engaging in activities, by continuously receiving the policy-based support from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office. For instance, the locals are sent as provincial representatives to present folk songs on various stages and they are also sent to the cultural village contest at provincial level. The elderly group in Wat Bot district are nominated to the contest, performing Hin Le Le folk songs. According to these data, it is found to be consistent with Vich Boonrod's (2022:29) statement as follows.

“According to a report by the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI), it is found that Thailand's population structure has undergone significant changes over the past 3-4 decades. The Thai population has increased by approximately three times, resulting in a shift from a youth population to an elderly population in terms of age structure. In other words, the birth rate of the Thai population has decreased, while the elderly population has increased. The gap between the birth rate and the death rate narrowed in 2019. The number of newborns exceeded the number of deaths by just 100,000, accounting for 0.2% of the population. According to the Office of the National Economics and Social Development Council, it was estimated that by mid-2019, Thailand's registered household population would consist of 66.4 million Thai nationals and 2.9 million non-Thai nationals, predominantly comprising Myanmar people, Cambodians, and Laotians. As a result, the total Thai population would be approximately 69.3 million.”



Figure 2. A rehearsal prior to the performance of the elderly group of folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (December 15th, 2021).

Given that the Hin Le Le folk song artists are a group of elderly individuals, this artist group has become a key driving force behind the preservation and propagation of folk song culture in Phitsanulok province. In this context, the researcher regards them as performers who provide entertainment to their audiences. Additionally, these artists convey the uniqueness and identity of Phitsanulok's folk song culture, while also passing on their knowledge of singing and composition to younger generations. The transmission of knowledge of folk song singing in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, occurs through oral tradition. The melody currently being played is the original. The poetic lyrics are adapted by the composer to achieve the singing objectives. The songs are mostly sung to entertain at various festivals and traditions such as Songkran, Loy Krathong, and wedding receptions.

However, when considering the role of Hin Le Le songs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the field data collection revealed that the role of Hin Le Le folk songs in local communities in Phitsanulok province was very limited. This can be attributed to the emergence of new forms of entertainment, as well as the education system's role in promoting and controlling society, replacing the role of folk songs. With the fast-paced development of technology, communication, and transportation, the younger generations have become more interested in contemporary music rather than traditional folk songs. Therefore, the role of Hin Le Le folk songs has declined if the content and pattern are not developed to be suitable for modern society. As a result, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office plays a significant role in promoting and encouraging the learning and transmission of knowledge regarding Hin Le Le folk songs to younger generations. Afful et al. (2022:215) discusses the importance of being aware of the advancement of multimedia, which can have an impact on creating works that meet consumers' demands, as follows:

“In the advancement of technology, social media has created a great platform for producers, artists, designers among others to carefully market and create the needed awareness on relevant issues through their practice.”

Currently, the new generation of youth acquiring the folk singing knowledge of both lyrical composition and vocals are very few. In other words, there is almost none, especially those acquiring the knowledge of lyrical composition of Hin Le Le folk songs. According to the interview with Mrs. Chalom Samit, the Provincial Cultural Office has offered her opportunities to be a speaker passing on the knowledge of Hin Le Le folk song singing to students at Wat Lao Khwan School, Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, to be able to sing at fundamental level to make video presentations introducing Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok. However, it is currently very rare to find successors to continue the legacy of folk song artists.

Given that the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, consists entirely of elderly individuals and the management of folk song singing knowledge at Wat Lao Khwan School is not consistent, there is concern about the availability of potential successors to Hin Le Le singers who can effectively present cultural performances and compose new Hin Le Le songs.



Figure 3. A screenshot of the video clip introducing Hin Le Le folk songs by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrJlKymu1PA&t=584s.

Characteristics of Hin Le Le Songs

The principal components of Hin Le Le songs comprise not only the singers who perform them but also the lyrics that convey the message. The poetic form of Hin Le Le song is arranged in verse, using assonance and repetition of tones based on the form of Thai folk songs. The refrain begins with the word “Hin Le Le,” which is also the title of the song, before singing each line. The singing form involves call and response between male and female singers. This song genre is called Pleng Pa Ti Pak, in which the male singer begins singing a line first, as illustrated below.

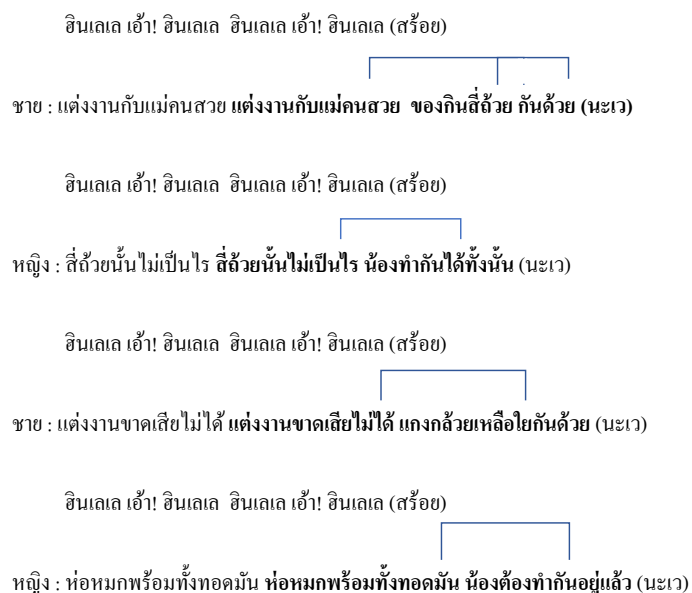


Figure 4. The poetic structure of Hin Le Le lyrical composition. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (2022:84).

The lyrics of Hin Le Le song, as shown in Figure 5, is intended to demonstrate the use of assonance in poetic lyrics. In order to facilitate the comprehension and pronunciation of Hin Le Le song lyrics, the researcher transcribed the lyrics into phonetic alphabets along with their translation. This example of lyrics conveys

the message of wedding preparation, emphasizing the importance of the bride possessing advanced cooking skills, which are a traditional Thai cultural quality expected of a housewife, as shown below.

Thai	ฮิน เล เล เอ้า! ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล เอ้า! ฮิน เล เล (สร้อย)
phonetic	Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le (Refrain)
English	(It's do not have meaning in this lyric. It's the part of the song's name.)
Thai	แต่งงาน กับ แม่ คน สวย ขอ กิน สี่ ถ้วย กัน ด้วย (นะเว)
phonetic	Tàengngān kəp mæ khn swy K̄hx kinsīthwy kəp đwy (nawe)
English	Marry with my beautiful lady. May I have four cups of food please?
(Refrain)	
Thai	สี่ ถ้วย นั้น ไม่ เป็นไร สี่ ถ้วย นั้น ไม่ เป็นไร น้อง ทำ กัน ได้ ทั้งนั้น (นะเว)
phonetic	Sī thwy nān mī pēnrī sī thwy nān mī pēnrī n̄xng thā kəp đī thāngnān (nawe)
English	Four cups is OK. All of this. It's so easy and we can make it.
(Refrain)	
Thai	แต่งงาน ขาด เสีย ไม่ได้ แกง กุ้ง เหลือ ไข่ ด้วย (นะเว)
phonetic	Tàengngān khād sēy mī đī kəng k̄wy hēlūx yī đwy (nawe)
English	Wedding arrangements can't be without the banana curry.
(Refrain)	
Thai	ห่อหมก พร้อม ทั้ง ทอดมัน น้อง ต้อง ทำ กัน อยู่ แล้ว (นะเว).
phonetic	H̄h̄hm̄k ph̄xm̄ thāng thxdmān n̄xng t̄xng thā kəp xyū lāw (nawe)
English	Steamed fish curry in banana leaves and fish cake in deep fried, It's so easy and we can make it
(Refrain)	

Figure 5. Table of the Thai Hin Le Le song lyrics obtained through the field data collection, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (May 2nd, 2023).

The Hin Le Le song analyzed based on their transcription is in a major tonality. The sounds produced by the Hin Le Le song are cheerful, delightful, and easy to listen to. The song conveys a sense of happiness that aligns with the meaning of the song, which describes the courtship and the joy of young lovers. It also conveys positive messages or thoughts. Each artist has unique vocal accents, tones, and vocal ranges. Singing is the act of using the human voice as an instrument to produce musical sounds. Singing folk songs is aligned with local ways of life. The singers do not follow strict or fixed music theory rules, regulations, or patterns as they sing for entertainment, and each singer has a unique vocal quality. They each have unique vocal qualities, including clear or hoarse voices, high or low pitches, and varying singing abilities. These factors contribute to the movement of

rhythms, melodies, and other components in folk songs that may not entirely conform to Western music theory. However, from the perspective of ethnomusicology theory, this phenomenon is considered the charm and identity of folk songs.

ฮิน เล เล

Andante ♩ = 74

Major tonality

ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล >>> Refrain

ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล ส. วัส >>> Refrain

ตี พี่ น้อง จำ ส. วัส ตี พี่ น้อง จำ วัน นี้ ฉัณ

มา เล่น ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล >>> Refrain

Figure 6. The structure of Hin Le Le song from the field data collection in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: Sasint Phonnil (May 2nd, 2023).

Based on the aforementioned results, the researcher aims to summarize the main points that characterize the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province. Hin Le Le songs in Phitsanulok are the songs whose melody has been passed down from generation to generation. Nowadays, the songs are sung by the group of elderly singers. The lyrics are composed, and the management of the folk song band is overseen by elderly individuals who have earned recognition at both provincial and national levels. The songs reflect the way of life of Phitsanulok locals, and they have been adapted to keep up with ongoing events in Thai society, especially the ones affecting Phitsanulok locals' way of life.

The identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok in 2021 is “the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok, keep up with ongoing events in all ages and are created by the elderly in the community.”

Existence of Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The further examination of the interview with the Phitsanulok folk song artists regarding the current forms and presentation methods revealed that the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office and other related organizations have come to play a role in creating a video clip of folk song in Phitsanulok, i.e. Hin Le Le, and publishing it on YouTube since Hin Le Le song has already been proposed to the Ministry of Culture as the folk song of Phitsanulok province. Other songs such as Kun Son Kun have not yet been widely disseminated through online media; however, these songs are frequently performed alongside Hin Le Le at cultural events.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread worldwide since the end of 2019 and started in Thailand in early 2020, has caused people's lives and activities in Thailand and around the world to be adapted under vigilant measures against the spread of the disease both at provincial and national levels. Phitsanulok province has issued measures against the spread of COVID-19, causing difficulties in organizing events, including onsite events that promote art and culture. For instance, since 2019, singing rehearsals and social gatherings have required control and prevention. Essential events have had to be conducted online. Therefore, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office operates the policy aiming at expanding and promoting Phitsanulok folk song culture intended for the youth in the local area and citizens around the world interested in Phitsanulok folk song culture. The policy also aims at encouraging folk song artist groups in various localities in Phitsanulok to create and present their works on a wider variety of media channels.



Figure 7. An example photo of performance on the song, Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, by the folk song artists of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: <https://youtu.be/iJXOxn6tINk>.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office had the idea of promoting folk song culture by presenting folk song works on the occasion of Thai Heritage Conservation Day on April 2, 2021. The song's concept is "Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19." The song lyrics refer to the act of understanding and knowing about COVID-19, risks, and prevention. The performers' dress is in colorful folk song singing costume in line with typical folk song singing costume in Phitsanulok province, which is typical costume in the central region. The singing venue is the temple court of Wat Bot, which has been a popular performance venue since in the past. This is because, historically, temples served as the primary gathering places for community activities and events. Nowadays, however, the choice of performance venue is determined by the convenience and objectives of each individual performance event. Thai society places great importance on cultural activities and traditions that have been held at temples in communities since ancient times to the present day. These activities and traditions are an integral part of Thai society and are deeply ingrained in the country's history and

identity. Most videos featuring the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district and other artist groups are filmed in temple courtyards, and so is the video, “Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19,” which is filmed the temple courtyard of Wat Bot. The objective is to present the forms that preserve the traditional forms of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, as well as the unique forms that are specific to the region.

Thai	ฮินเลเล เฮ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เฮ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)
Phonetic	Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le (Refrain)
English	(It's do not have meaning in this lyric. It's the part of the song's name.)
Thai	สวัสดีครับ ทุกคน เรา มา ฟัง กัน เพลง ฮินเลเล
Phonetic	S̄wās̄dī khr̄ab thuk thān reā mā fang kan phelng h̄i nlele
English	Hello everyone. Hello everyone. Let's listen to Hinlele songs.
Refrain	
Thai	โค วิด เชื้อ ไวรัส ช่วย กัน กำจัด อย่า ใต้ ถังเล
Phonetic	Kho wid cheūx wīrās̄ chwy kan k̄ac̄ad x̄yā d̄ī langle
English	COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus. Let's not be complacent and work together to prevent the spread of the infection.
Refrain	
Thai	คู่ แรก ผ่าน ไป ขอ เชิญ คู่ ใหม่ ออก มา นะ เว
Phonetic	Kh̄ū r̄æk phān p̄i k̄hx cheiy kh̄ū h̄im̄ x̄xk mā nawe
English	The first couple sang I invite the next pair to continue singing.
Refrain	
Thai	ปิดแมส และ ล้างมือ จะต้อง ยึดถือ กันไว้ นะเว
Phonetic	P̄id m̄æs̄ læa l̄āngm̄ūx ca t̄xng yud̄th̄ūx kan w̄ī nawe
English	Wearing a mask and washing your hands regularly are essential practices that should be observed diligently. Please do not forget to do so.
Refrain	
Thai	อยู่ห่างกัน สักพัก อย่าอยู่หมุ่มมาก กันเลยนะเว
Phonetic	X̄yū h̄āng kan s̄ak ph̄ak x̄yā x̄yū h̄im̄ m̄āk kan ley nawe
English	During this time, it is important to maintain social distance and avoid being in close proximity to large groups of people.
Refrain	
Thai	หมั่น วัด ไข้ เมื่อ มีอาการ ร่วม ด้วย ช่วยกัน ปลอดภัย ทุมเท
Phonetic	H̄m̄n wad̄ kh̄ī meūx m̄ī x̄ākār r̄wm d̄wy chwy kan pl̄xdphay th̄umthe
English	When experiencing unusual symptoms, it is important to regularly monitor body temperature and seek medical attention. Let's not be complacent and prioritize everyone's safety.
Refrain	

Figure 7. Table of the lyrics of Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (May 2nd, 2023).

The Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19 song, sponsored by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office, was transcribed into written text, and then transcribed into phonetic alphabets. These transcriptions provide insights into the song's meanings and Thai pronunciation in the same way as the lyrics' phonetic transcriptions shown in Table 1. The lyrics of Hin Le Le were paraphrased in each example to help readers understand them. These lines of the lyrics refer to the preventive

measures practiced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the researcher presented six lines of the lyrics, excluding the three repetitive refrains “Hin Le Le,” which is the song’s title and has no inherent meaning. The lyrics of Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions, as illustrated in Table 2, are as follows. Line 1 means, “Hello everyone. Hello everyone. Let’s listen to Hin Le Le songs.” Line 2 means, “COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus. Let’s not be complacent and work together to prevent the spread of the infection.” Line 3 means, “The first couple sang. I invite the next pair to continue singing.” Line 4 means, “Wearing a mask and washing your hands regularly are essential practices that should be observed diligently. Please do not forget to do so.” Line 5 means, “During this time, it is important to maintain social distance and avoid being in close proximity to large groups of people.” Finally, line 6 means, “When experiencing unusual symptoms, it is important to regularly monitor body temperature and seek medical attention. Let’s not be complacent and prioritize everyone’s safety.”

Conclusion and Discussion

The two research objectives have resulted in the following research findings. From the examination of contexts in the past, songs’ background and forms, existing musical components, and existing social components and situations, it can be concluded that the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok is “the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok province, keep up with on-going events in all ages, and are created by the elderly in the community.” This is in line with Vich Boonrod’s (2022:29) assertion citing the report by the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI) that “Thailand’s population structure has undergone significant changes over the past 3-4 decades. The Thai population has increased by approximately three times, resulting in a shift from a youth population to an elderly population in terms of age structure. In other words, the birth rate of the Thai population has decreased, while the elderly population has increased. The gap between the birth rate and the death rate narrowed in 2019. The number of newborns exceeded the number of deaths by just 100,000, accounting for 0.2% of the population.” This is connected to the research findings of the second research objective, which pertains to the forms and existence methods of folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phitsanulok province has formulated a plan to develop urban society and promote culture in the region. The province also collaborates with various organizations from the public and private sectors, with a special emphasis on the private sector. Community-level network coordinators have been appointed to strengthen culture in the community and carry out various projects to continuously initiate a cultural move in the province. As a result, Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province have continuously been performed at various events and created even during the global outbreak of COVID-19. This phenomenon is consistent with Afful et al.’s (2022) assertion that “In the advancement of technology, social media has created a great platform for producers, artists, designers among others to carefully market and create the need awareness on relevant issues through their practice.”

The involvement of the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office in promoting Phitsanulok's folk song culture is a highly positive phenomenon since nowadays the significance of folk songs in the daily lives of the locals has diminished and altered due to technology's prevalence. Rapidly advancing distractions in society are significant factors that negatively impact the younger generation's inclination to study folk songs. There are very few individuals interested in studying folk songs, if any. Modern music receives greater attention in contemporary entertainment, although its cultural value cannot be compared to the beautifully crafted cultural heritage left by the ancestors. Musical culture is not only an artistic expression, but musical culture in each city or place is also an entity explaining the historical background and way of life as well as representing the melody of cultural moves surrounding musical culture that coexists in each urban society. In the researcher's opinion, “folk song artists” are essential for the successful and prosperous progression of musical culture in each urban society while also coexisting harmoniously with the ethnic identity of each city.

The researcher would like to extend her sincere gratitude to all the esteemed elder members of the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, and would like to encourage and advocate for the continued existence and perpetuation of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province for generations to come.

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A Study of Historic Waterfront Revitalization:

from Clarke Quay-Boat Quay, Singapore to Puerto Madero, Argentina

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Abstract

Many researchers have examined and discussed the study of revitalization, but a fewer still have discussed revitalization along riverbanks. This research aims to explore the revitalization of riverbank areas by focusing on and comparing two East and West locations. The Clarke Quay-Boat Quay area in Singapore – East and Puerto Madero, Argentina the West precedent. The research's method was qualitative by comparing two precedent studies to seek the typology of the revitalization concept. This paper obtains results using a descriptive narrative approach to describe the analysis of both precedent studies. In conclusion, it was found that both precedent studies have the same concept of revitalization. Both precedents use adaptive reuse as a concept to have a new function of both areas from warehouse and port areas to be commercial areas for tourists such as restaurants, cafes, bars, shops etc. It was concluded as well that both precedent studies with different social-culture conditions have adopted the concept of converting historic buildings (repurposing) to new host new functionality resulting in more commercial value.

Keywords: *Historic Waterfront, Revitalization, Clarke Quay, Boat Quay, Puerto Madero, Adaptive Reuse, Singapore, Argentina*

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Introduction

The study of revitalization has been discussed and studied by many researchers. Although, before we discuss some revitalization studies, we need to understand the meaning of “revitalization” is exactly. We understand that the word “revitalization” is very familiar in conservation and preservation. From the Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite 2012, the meaning of “revitalization” is very often understood as “rehabilitation of existing facilities, historic preservation and reuse of obsolete structures.’ The term “revitalization” itself is from the word “re” and “vitalize,” which means “re” - “again” and “vitalize” - “to switch on” - “to make life.” Thus, the term “revitalization” could be understood as switching on again or making it live again. Referring to the revitalization of a particular area or district, it means that the concept has delivered a concept to make that specific area live again because that area was unused, under-utilized, abandoned and has a degraded infrastructure.

Wilczkiewicz and Mamcarcyk (2015) have discussed that the term “revitalization” has become significantly popular in recent years in many countries. The term is used in urban planning and landscape and in everyday life to describe various forms of revival (spiritual, fitness, material situation). Wallace (1956) in Wilczkiewicz and Mamcarcyk (2015) was an anthropologist specializing in studying the culture of Native American or American Indians. He was the one who introduced the term “revitalization,” which has been defined as efforts of members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture by inner revival. This theory was into practice in the USA and was related to problems of minorities, the inhabitant of poor districts and slums with high crime and unemployment rates.

Pawłowska and Swaryczewska (2002) in Wilczkiewicz and Mamcarcyk (2015) stated that the term “revitalization” had been used in various meanings depending on the discipline such as architecture, social sciences, economics, etc. This flexibility resulted from new experiences, and the development of a more conscious society increasingly interested in co-deciding about their environment was still growing. Pawłowska and Swaryczewska (2002) also mentioned that revitalization is defined as a many-sided effort including revalorization, restoration, reconstruction, modernization, and actions aimed at the revival of a building district or a town devastated in various aspects, also economic and social. Some researchers also mentioned that revitalization actions had been taken in many different places, cities in the world and have considered various assumptions (Lichner, Breznoscak, 2007:22; Casanovas, 2007:73; Rui, 2003:2; Narring, 2008:197-213). But in every renewal action which has been taken so far, some aspects are common. Moreover, Niemieć (2016) has mentioned that revitalization measures should target ensuring sustainable development. The implemented processes should result in making degraded areas able to function efficiently again by changing the structure of the areas and giving them new functions – Poland- Operational..., 2008:3].

Niemieć (2016) also underlined that revitalization-oriented actions are largely concentrated on improving urban space's image and beauty. They are primarily projects associated with the modernization of buildings, improvement of the quality of technical and social infrastructure, and marginalization of the economic and environmental aspects. Niemieć (2016), in her research, also discussed that it

is essential to achieve balanced social and economic development, environmental management, and effective governance. In the context of a sustainable city, it is hard to accomplish it in terms of revitalization. Moreover, in some cases, the meaning of revitalization has been interpreted narrowly. The very notion itself is often treated as renovation or modernization, which stands for extension or alteration made to some part of a building (e.g., adaptation of the attic for inhabitable rooms).

Referring to Rypkema and Tiesdell (1996) in Purwantiasning (2014), alleging that the old historic buildings mostly do not have adequate utilities so that the building is not feasible and does not have a value in accordance with their respective functions. The weakness in most of the old buildings, in the end, caused the buildings not to function as they should be. All those problems revealed various efforts to revive old buildings in some countries that have historic building legacies. Certainly can never forget about a statement that a great nation is a nation that always appreciates its legacies of history.

When we talk about historical site as well as historical building, we need to discuss about what is history. Purwantiasning, et al. (2020) had discussed some theories about history and underlined that history has a particular meaning. She had mentioned that history can be considered as a chronological event in the past, which could be used as a method of way of thinking to collect data and information that related to the past and could be used to help to analyze all the collected data. History can be defined as a way of thinking of significant event which has been seen in different time or era. By using history, it could be understood the chronological event also the reason of cause-effect of those events and why it is still maintained until the present day.

Purwantiasning (2014) also has stated that the areas of conservation which have been regarded as old historical sites with a lack of utilities and not liveable anymore, could be revitalized as a new place with a new function. This effort will support the condition of social, economic, and culture of the area. And as a result, the successful implementation will improve the quality of the environment and the quality of the human being within the area. She has also highlighted that revitalization is not only activity-oriented to the physical solution but also aims to enhance the community's economy and culture. In implementing the revitalization activity, some parties need to be involved because it will not work by government funds only. The roles of the community and their involvement are essential as well. It should be underlined that the involvement and the roles of the community will become the main component of the activity of revitalization.

Loades (2019) underlined through the statement of Orbasli (2002), Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) that The pressures of tourism, and the often associated demands of development and construction, are challenges shared by a large number of World Heritage sites. However, these issues are often most acutely felt in urban World Heritage sites, particularly the 'tourist-historic cities,' which tend to have many infrastructural and architectural limits to the number of tourists they can

absorb. Loades (2019) also explained that to stimulate sustainable management of World Heritage sites, heritage sites need to be understood and managed in connection with the broader spatial and cultural environments in which they are embedded. Other areas, which may also be central to cultural heritage and identities, may be overlooked by awarding protection to certain spatially defined areas of culture. In the wake of obtaining World Heritage nomination, pressures to construct tourism facilities near the sites often emerge. As such, these areas close to World Heritage sites are particularly vulnerable to exploitation from market interests. On the other hand, Draper (2017) has mentioned that under the heading 'Preservation and promotion of ASEAN cultural heritage,' the strategic objective is to: Promote the conservation and preservation of ASEAN cultural heritage to ensure its continuity to enhance awareness and understanding of the people about the region's unique history and the cultural similarities and differences between and among the ASEAN Member States and to protect the distinctiveness of ASEAN cultural heritage as a whole (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009:22).

Furthermore, Ancho and Juan (2021) also have discussed the significance of preserving heritage buildings. They said that preserving heritage buildings can be seen as knowledge generation rooted in the historical past. It provides contemporary perspectives to visualize the future. Studies such as these are platforms that celebrate cultural experiences for continuity and a sustainable future. Especially during recent times, advocating the preservation and conservation of GSB calls for stringent measures. Amid efforts to value the past, social development requires commitment and sound policy attempts to ensure cultural resources are valued and given attention.

Another essential thing about preserving heritage places is maintaining the area as a memory from one generation to the next generation. This statement has also been highlighted by Hristic and Stefanovic (2020) that discussed how to rebuild memory through architecture. They have discussed that conservation and development strategies are based on a clear perception of the existing potential and their rich use in the future. The principles of preserving heritage and reconstruction fit into the general concept of renewal, "completed transform of passive to the prospective way, abandoning the principle of resolving the fate of architectural heritage through static conservation – like a museum." The active protection of the urban unit and dynamic rehabilitation involves integrating heritage into contemporary life trends by emphasizing the identity of space. Hristic also said that this is especially important when reconstructive procedures are introduced in the historical areas, where is the need to harmonize the conditions of protection and conservation with the requirements of modern life. This is an example of how tradition and memory of the place are essential and how contemporaries should regard the layers of heritage and decisions for earlier periods.

In the previous research, Purwantiasning (2019) had mentioned that historical places not only bringing memories to the society, but also giving an attachment among them, she called it as a historical attachment. An attachment can be related to the history of an object which is either via written history or by oral his-

tory and in this case, a historical building or area. If the attachment is related to a place, then it becomes something special for someone who lived within the area. Individuals may feel a sense of the atmosphere or experience of the space, based on memory or individual interpretation. Historical buildings, or even historical areas that could be considered as places, become essential or significant when related to history or the past.

Denes and Pradit (2022) said that the revitalization of intangible heritage has strengthened local collaboration between sectors, including urban communities, educational agencies, academic networks, and local authorities. The revitalization of intangible heritage also has led to the transmission of cultural knowledge between urban and suburban areas.

This research aimed to explore the revitalization of the riverbank, which has designated two precedent studies from East to West. The Clarke Quay-Boat Quay area in Singapore has presented the East, and Puerto Madero and Argentina have presented the West. The research has explored and studied the differences and similarity of both precedent studies which representing two different countries with different aspect of social culture between East and West.

Research Methods

This research has explored and revealed the differences and similarities of applying the revitalization concept along riverbanks within two precedent studies. One precedent study has represented the East (Clarke Quay-Boat Quay, Singapore), and another one has represented the West (Puerto Madero, Argentina). To fulfill the aim and objective of this research, we have conducted a descriptive qualitative research method which used a descriptive narrative approach using precedent studies from two countries. Collected data has been analyzed using two approaches. The first approach was by exploring and describing the history of both precedent studies narratively, generally. The second approach was identifying the typology of both precedent studies, particularly the typology of the revitalization concept and the typology of the building performance within the area of both precedent studies, particularly along the riverbanks.

Location and Research Time

The research was undertaken in two locations. The first one is the area of conservation known as Clarke Quay and Boat Quay, Singapore, which has been regarded as a Conservation Area since 10th December 1993 by the Central Government of Singapore under Capitaland. We chose the areas of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay in Singapore as the first particular locations for the research (see Figure 1). The second location is the area of conservation known as Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires, Argentina, representing the West region. This area has been regarded as a Conservation Area since the 1980s after being abandoned for several decades. The area of Puerto Madero (see Figure 2) become a pilot project of revitalization in Argentina under CAPM (Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero) since 1989.

The research was conducted for about two years between 2020 and 2021, while the primary data collection took around three months in different years in 2020 and 2021.

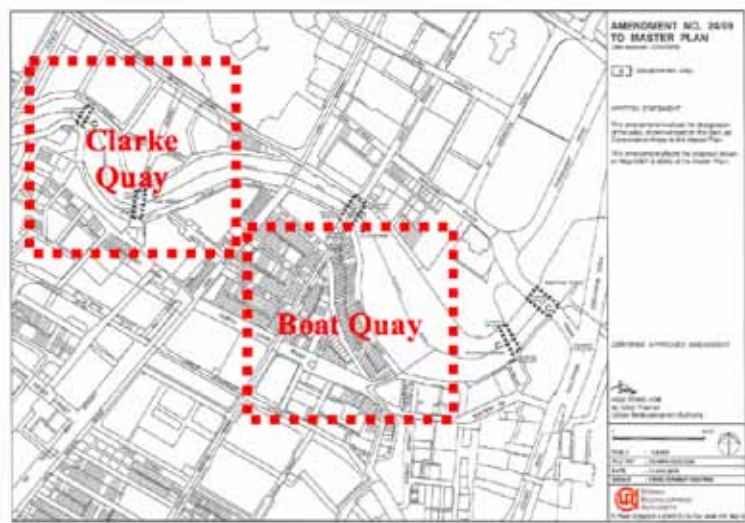


Figure 1. Research location within the historical site of Clarke Quay-Boat-Quay, Singapore. Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2021.



Figure 2. The location of the research within historical site of Puerto Madero, Argentina. Source: Unidad de Sistemas de Informacion Geografica.

Results and Discussion

The History of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay, Singapore

Boat Quay and Clarke Quay, known as the Quays, are the areas along the Singapore River, where Sir Stamford Raffles first set foot in 1819. This area was once a center of trade and a warehousing center area realized because of these trade activities (see Figure 3). All ships must pass through this dock to reach the ranks of shops at Boat Quay. The more days of trading activities are growing so that other piers such as Clarke Quay are growing.

As the times progressed, the Singapore River was getting dirtier due to trading activity. Then the port was moved, and the government was encouraged to carry out revitalization activities by cleaning the river. Initially, this area will be destroyed because of its squalmen making Singapore have a declining environmental quality. Still, under Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew, who is the only person with a high forward vision of the Quays area, the area that has declined in quality is revitalized. By applying various conservation principles governed by Singapore government regulations, the Clarke Quay and Boat Quay areas were successfully revitalized into areas that improved the quality of their built environment. By applying the concept of pedestrianization, the place is very pedestrian-friendly. The beauty of the original buildings is displayed by using the concept of adaptive reuse to every warehouse building in Clark Quay and Boat Quay. The primary function as a tourist attraction has also been applied to this area. The old function of the warehouse is transformed into bars, restaurants, cafes, and various entertainment venues that tourists can use both domestically and internationally. This area has become one of the mandatory destinations for tourists. The area is very pedestrian-friendly because the facilities provided also provide comfort and security for visitors.

With the development of the Quays area, the Singapore government has been increasingly developing tourism and culture in the region until now. Clarke Quay and Boat Quay are not only areas for tourist pleasure, especially culinary tourism, but also become shopping areas, nightlife, and restaurants (see Figure 4) and various recreational facilities such as cruise boat tours.

This area is used as a conservation area by the Government of Singapore. This area becomes an attraction for the surrounding community (domestic) and foreign (international) communities. In addition to the many historic buildings in the area, there are many rows of restaurants that offer a variety of food flavours with views of the river that stretches. At night, the area feels more romantic, with lights in restaurants and riverbanks. In this area, various kinds of transportation can be used to access this area. Cruise ships are one of them, which is water transportation that is often used by tourists and nearby residents to circle the Singapore River. In addition, there is an MRT that passes underground, buses that pass with several stops in this area, motor vehicles such as motorcycles and cars with lines that have been provided, and bicycles.



Figure 3. The condition of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay as warehouses before revitalization. Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority, has been accessed 20th November 2021.



Figure 4. The image of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay as tourist destination after revitalization. Source: Author, 2019.



Figure 5. Some images of Clarke Quay as tourist destination after revitalization Source: Author, 2021.

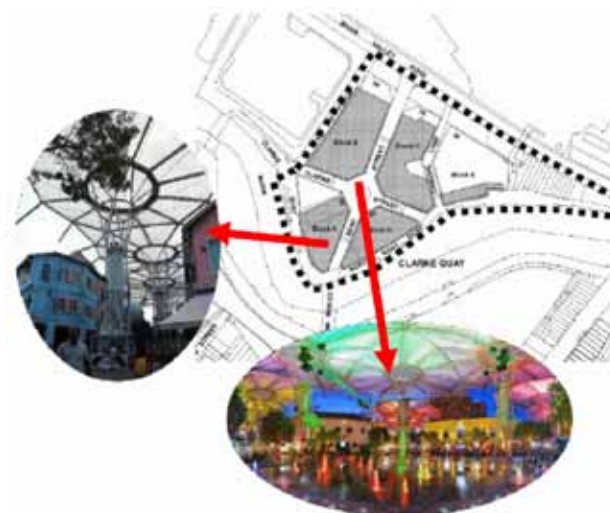


Figure 6. Giant Umbrella as a landmark of Clarke Quay as tourist destination after revitalization. Source: Author, 2021.



Figure 7. The row of restaurants, cafes, bars of Boat Quay as tourist destination after revitalization.
Source: Author, 2021.

The History of Puerto Madero, Argentina

Puerto Madero dates to 1889 as Buenos Aires' first port, built in front of Argentina's federal administrative center (Plaza de Mayo) and the President's residence (Casa Rosada). Several years after completion, the port was rendered useless to vessels due to faulty engineering, sending the area into decline. However, in 1918, the municipality of Buenos Aires started the construction of a public promenade along the shore that would become the Costanera Sur. The Costanera Sur functioned as a famous public beach until the 1950s when water pollution made it undesirable. Many plans have been drawn for the rehabilitation of Puerto Madero, but none were implemented to revitalize the site until the Puerto Madero regeneration project of the 1990s. (worldbank.org, has been accessed 20th November 2021)

The world bank's book also said that the port was inaugurated in 1889 when the rustic pier to the wide River Plate (Rio de la Plata) was replaced by Puerto Madero. The port was rendered useless a decade later because it lacked access to deep water and had a faulty design, which generated operational difficulties. Not long after, a new port was opened further north, and Puerto Madero began to decline. Access to the area was fenced off from public use from the very beginning.

From the history of Puerto Madero that has been discussed in the book of the world bank, it stated that in 1918, the municipality of Buenos Aires started the construction of a public promenade along the shore that would become the Costanera Sur. The Costanera Sur functioned as a famous public beach until the 1950s, when the pollution of the River Plate became so pervasive that the boardwalk area deteriorated. At the end of the 1970s, a new urban high-way program reclaimed the land that was to be destined for the new administrative centre of the city. However, in 1984 the project was abandoned. Puerto Madero and Costanera Sur lost the open view of the river, and, in 1986, the reclaimed area was declared a nature park and ecological reserve.

These efforts were part of a much longer history of many plans formulated to re-design and redevelop the entire Puerto Madero area. At the beginning of the 1940s, plans were designed to build and improve upon the site—some initiated by local and international architects and some by regional, municipal, and city officials. In 1981, the Buenos Aires Municipality prepared a land-use plan to expand the central business area, which proposed utilizing the reclaimed river area to extend the city's CBD. A super grid would advance into the river. The channel between the Costanera Sur (part of the Puerto Madero area) and the reclaimed area would be filled. As a result, the site would increase to a total of 800 hectares (ha). The plan included uses directly related to the CBD, as well as for residential use. There was also a metropolitan park closer to the waterfront for recreation.



Figure 8. The condition of Puerto Madero as warehouses before revitalization. Source: world bank online, has been accessed 20th November 2021.



Figure 9. The condition of Puerto Madero as commercial buildings after revitalization. Source: Author, 2020.

The Revitalization of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay, Singapore

Revitalization activities in the Boat Quay and Clarke Quay areas are based on conservation considerations from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), which

has specific criteria and conditions for establishing buildings from suitable areas for preservation or preservation. An area can be designated as a conservation area if the area has criteria such as unique character, historical value. The area can contribute to improving and improving the quality of the buildings and the environment around the area.

Based on the above requirements, Boat Quay and Clarke Quay are designated as conservation areas because this area has a particular historical value. This area is a combination of several cultures such as Chinese, Indian and Malay. This is shown in the form of buildings in this area. As a result of the revitalization in the region, the Boat Quay and Clarke Quay areas became more colorful and livable, making them an exciting place to visit as a tourist area.

One interesting thing about Clarke Quay and Boat Quay is the existence of a row of shophouses that decorate along the Singapore River. The presence of this shophouse building became a unique and special character of the Quays Area (see Figure 10). This is what prompted the Singapore government to keep this area and be set up as a conservation area with a unique character.

Traditionally, shophouses are designed to provide for business premises on the ground floor and residential accommodation on the upper stories; terrace houses and bungalows are designed purely for residential use. Structurally speaking, the original use is always the best use for a conserved building.

However, old buildings may often have to be restored and upgraded to meet modern living needs or accommodate new uses. In restoring and adapting a conserved building to new uses, it is essential to adhere to the conservation principle to retain the intrinsic character and historical value of the building (see Figure 11). Alterations or strengthening of the building structure is to be done most sympathetically and unobtrusively, using the original methods and materials wherever possible.

The restoration and adaptation of conserved buildings to new uses require an understanding of the behavior of traditional buildings, traditional building construction methods, and how the buildings hold themselves together by the intricate interaction of the various elements (see Figure 12).

Pattananurot and Khongsaktrakun (2022) have mentioned that the concept of adaptive reuse is modifying old buildings to meet new economic and functional values that can create attraction to activities in the district by maintaining the value of elements that represent the place or identity of that building.



Figure 10. Shophouses in Clarke Quay and Boat Quay. Source: Author, 2019.



Figure 11. The typology of shophouses in Singapore. Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority, has been accessed 20th November 2021.

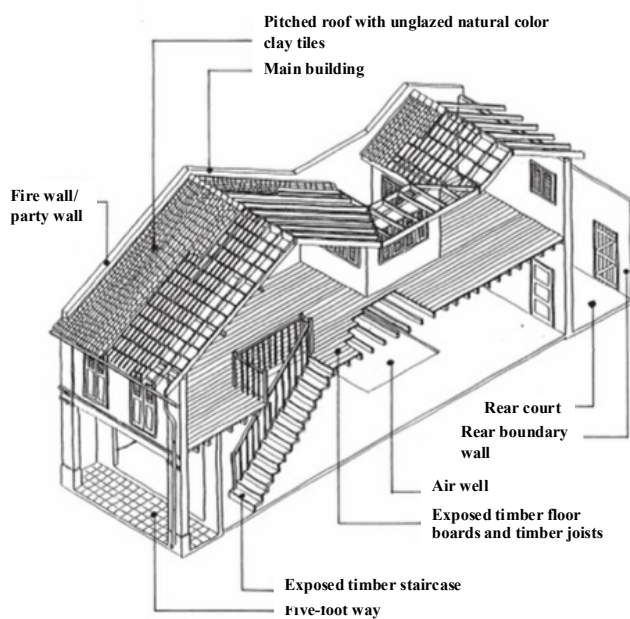


Figure 12. The main elements of shophouses in Singapore. Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority, has been accessed 20th November 2021.

The Revitalization of Puerto Madero, Argentina

The condition of Puerto Madero in Argentina as the main port area was getting worst for decades. The situation worsened when Argentina's political and economic conditions struggled from one political issue to another. Keeling (2001) had mentioned that changing national and international political and economic circumstances in the late 1980s encouraged a revaluation of the role of both Buenos Aires and Argentina in the global economy. Keeling (2001) also mentioned that with creating a public-private partnership system designed to represent the many competing political and economic interests, the next step involved untangling the multiple jurisdictions that controlled property in Puerto Madero and creating a mechanism to finance the redevelopment. Several provincial, federal, and municipal agencies and private corporations doing business in the area used the docks, old warehouses, and mills, as did hundreds of illegal squatters. The federal government transferred ownership of the land and the existing infrastructure to the newly established corporation to solve jurisdictional and financial problems. It required that the property be used to raise capital solely for the redevelopment of Puerto Madero. Resolution of these problems marked the first time in Buenos Aires's urban planning history that the federal government and the municipality had reached an agreement on a joint urban development policy, especially one that would have such far-reaching implications for the city.

Garay et al. (2013) had discussed Puerto Madero, which was abandoned as a port at the beginning of the 20th century when operations transferred to Puerto Nuevo. They also mentioned that by the late 1980s, Puerto Madero had suffered several decades of neglect and underutilization. The federal General Administration of Ports owned the land, but the city and national governments both had jurisdiction over planning. Similarly, greater Buenos Aires – home to 35 percent of Argentina's population and producer of 46 percent of its GDP – is governed by an overlapping set of institutions that often have trouble coordinating. To simplify this inter-jurisdictional governance, a public limited corporation, with shares divided equally between the national and city governments, was formed to manage the project. In 1989, the federal government transferred ownership of this port sector to the new corporation, CAPM (Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero).

Moreover, Garay et al. (2013) have explained that after receiving the federal land transfer, the role of CAPM was to develop the site plan, define a self-funded financial model, undertake the site improvements associated with the project, commercialize the land, and supervise the development process in accordance with the established time frames and guidelines of the master plan. Unlike similar ventures elsewhere in the world, which generally rely on substantial public financing or access to credit, CAPM by decree would receive no public resources besides the land transfer and generate its revenue to cover operating costs. The port redevelopment could not have happened otherwise, as the federal government was focused on fiscal recovery and job creation amidst a nationwide economic crisis. As in most Latin American cities, the displacement of activities from Buenos Aires's traditional downtown had curtailed the use of the public transit system and led to the slow decline of historical buildings, many of which had lapsed into substan-

dard housing. The proposed redevelopment of Puerto Madero was part of the city's broader strategy to protect heritage, promote downtown development, stimulate the local economy, and contribute to the reversal of these undesirable settlement patterns. The condition of Puerto Madero after revitalization shows significant differences. The old buildings that used to be docks, warehouses, and mills became commercial places such as restaurants, cafes, bars, and shopping areas (see Figure 13). All the areas become pedestrianized, as seen in Figure 14; thus, they become pedestrian-friendly for visitors.



Figure 13. The condition of Puerto Madero as commercial buildings after revitalization. Source: Author, 2015.

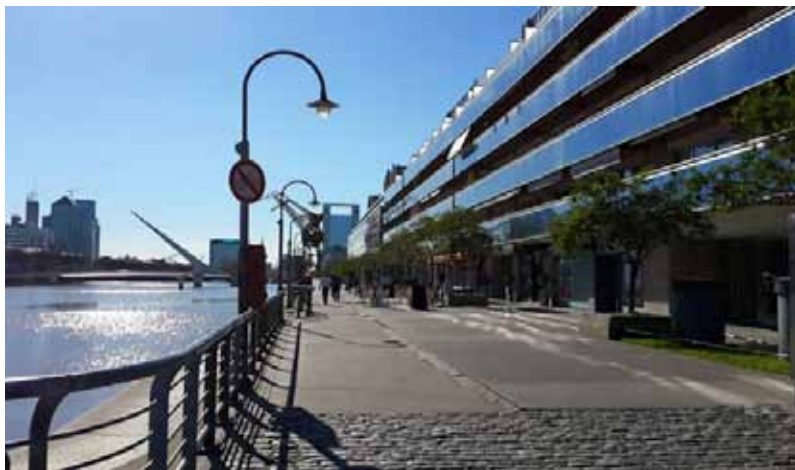


Figure 14. The area of Puerto Madero's riverside is friendly for pedestrian. Source: Author, 2015.

Although Puerto Madero has become an exciting place to visit, Puerto Madero is still poorly served by public transport and is not well integrated with the urban transit network. Access and egress to the zone by pedestrians remain difficult and dangerous, especially across the two central boulevards that separate Puerto Madero from the city center. Buenos Aires lacks sophistication in its tourism marketing and promotion vis-a-vis the new area. There is little evidence that Puerto

Madero's attractions have been meaningfully articulated with the city's major tourist destinations. The author has experienced this condition in 2015 while Visiting Puerto Madero. For sure, this has become a future program that the Government should consider.

The existence of some new functions within Puerto Madero will attract many visitors to come, but unfortunately, it will not work if the accessibility of the area is slightly difficult. People will not consider coming if there is not such comfortable access. Figures 15, 16, and 17 show that some places in Puerto Madero have been changed to a new function to give a new life for old buildings in Puerto Madero to attract many visitors.



Figures 15 & 16 are before and after images. One of the areas in Puerto Madero's riverside that has been revitalized to a new function. Source: World Bank Online, has been accessed on 20th Nov. 2021.



Figure 17. One of the buildings in Puerto Madero's riverside that has been revitalized to a new function as a commercial building. Source: World Bank Online, has been accessed on 20th November 2021.

The Typology of the Revitalization:

From Clarke Quay and Boat Quay to Puerto Madero

From the above explanation and discussion, it could be underlined that both areas of revitalization, Clarke Quay-Boat Quay Singapore, and Puerto Madero Argentina, were used to be port areas that have an essential role for the city even the Country. Both areas represent a historical area designated as a conservation area

and feasible to be revitalized. The condition before revitalization was terrible, and many buildings were become abandoned and lack of utility, the area lack of infrastructure as well. By the government's initiative, both areas have been revitalized and become a new area with new functions and new appearances of the buildings. Although, the character of the building remains the same.

Buildings within Clarke Quay and Boat Quay Singapore have a specific character representing Chinese architecture with the concept of shophouses. Figure 18 shows how the shophouses in Clarke Quay-Boat Quay remain the character of the Chinese architecture with the main three elements: ground floor as a public space (shops, cafes, restaurants, etc.); second floor as a semiprivate space (for guests, family, friends, and relatives) and the upper floor for private spaces (for family activities). But after revitalization, some owners have moved to another place, and no longer live in that shophouses. All the areas of the shophouses become a commercial space, although the upper floor sometimes becomes a rest area for staff and stocks spaces/ storage.

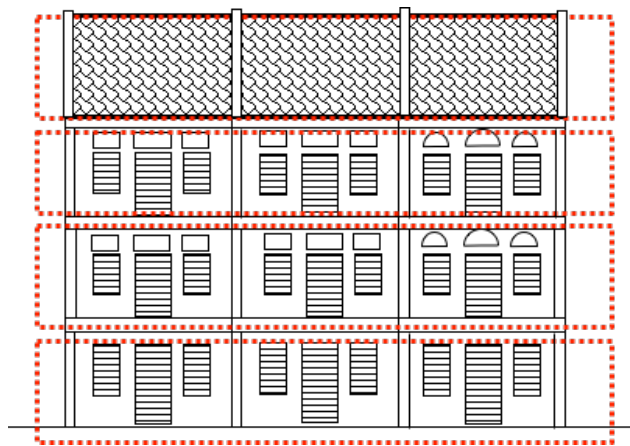


Figure 18. The schematic typology of shophouses in Singapore. Source: Author, 2021.

On the other hand, buildings within Puerto Madero, Argentina, have a different character. The buildings covered by red brick represent the era of Victorian architecture. The buildings have used to be docks and warehouses for the port. For many decades those buildings have been abandoned and neglected with a lack of utilities and infrastructure. Learning from another country that succeeded with the revitalization program for old buildings, Puerto Madero had been proposed and promoted as a tourist destination in Argentina.

Figure 19 shows that some buildings within Puerto Madero have similar typologies as warehouses with a particular character in Victorian architecture. Those buildings have a similar appearance in façade with a specific form of doors and windows. After revitalization, the function of the buildings has been changed into a new function by applying the adaptive reuse concept. On the ground floor, the areas have become commercial areas for shopping areas, cafes, restaurants, bars, just like shophouses in Clarke Quay-Boat Quay Singapore. On the upper

floors, they have been changed into other functions such as retails, rental spaces (co-working spaces, offices), and some become rental apartments or hotels for tourists.

The similarity of both case studies shows that the concept of adaptive reuse seems to become the perfect solution to regenerate and revitalize old buildings into new appearances and functions. Both cases studies have similarities as a port area, warehouses, and recently as a commercial area. Both case studies become significant places to be visited by domestic or international tourists. The comparison between both precedent studies could be seen in the Figure 20.

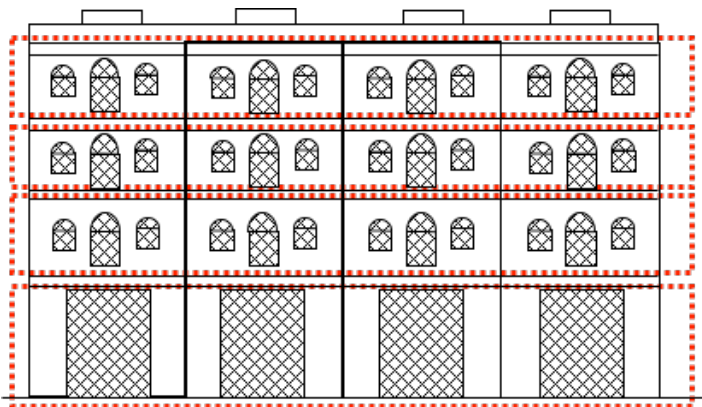


Figure 19. The schematic typology of buildings in Puerto Madero. Source: Author, 2021.


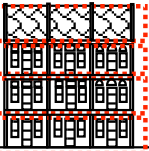

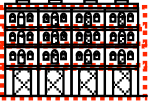
No	Waterfront Area	Building's Appearance	Building's Typology	Architectural Style	Old Function	New Function
1	Clarke Quay-Boat Quay, Singapore		Shophouses: 	Chinese Architecture	Warehouses, docks and residents, lower areas for storage and upper areas for living	Shops, Bars, Restaurants, Cafes
2	Puerto Madero, Argentina		Docks & Warehouses: 	Victorian Architecture	Warehouses, docks	Rental Offices, Bars, Cafes, Restaurants, Co-Working spaces

Figure 20. Table of the comparison of buildings between Clarke Quay-Boat Quay, Singapore and Puerto Madero, Argentina. Source: Author, 2023.

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torat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi and the Rector of Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta.

Conclusion

Clarke Quay-Boat Quay area in Singapore and Puerto Madero Area in Argentina have similarities both as former Port Area and former Port warehousing buildings. Also, the two have similarities in the method of the revitalization of the area. Namely, using the concept of adaptive reuse by re-functioning the buildings of former port warehouses into commercial buildings profitable for tourists both domestically and abroad, from restaurants, cafes, bars, and lodging to rental offices.

Although the two regions have similarities in the initial function and the method of preservation, both have different uniqueness in terms of the appearance of the character of the building and its architectural style. In Singapore's Clarke Quay-Boat Quay area, the buildings that line the Singapore River represent ethnic Chinese architectural styles with the typology of their shophouses. Meanwhile, in Puerto Madero, Argentina, the main building along the Darsena Sur River (Rio Darsena Sur) displays a Victorian architectural style that shows the dominance of red from red bricks (red bricks) that show the peculiarities of the character of Victorian architectural style.

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Creative Musical Art for Supporting Society:

Music and Meditation

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Abstract

This article discusses research intended to create music conducive to support a meditative state with the aim of reducing the problem of violence in society. Music is an art form that use sounds to convey emotions. A composition is a combination of instrument sounds and musical elements can be utilized to support sustained attention while reducing affective hostility and aggressive behavior. Ten instrumental compositions developed under the “Creative Musical Art for Supporting Society” program as part of the “Music and Meditation” project are discussed. Experimental compositions with certain musical patterns; ex. slower tempos and low-to-moderate volume levels to induce a state of relaxation supportive of a meditative state and mindfulness which in turn may improve problem solving skills, reduce violence and in general contribute to a more peaceful society. The results of this research aims to be applied in proactive programs in the near future.

Keywords: Music, Meditation, Violence, Relaxation, Supporting Society, Wabi-Sabi, Thailand

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Introduction

The increase in domestic violence is a major problem today. “Music and Meditation,” part of the research project “Creative Musical Art for Supporting Society,” is therefore intended to create ten musical compositions, aiming to use music as a tool to help listeners reach a meditative state and to apply the principles of meditation in reducing violent behaviors against people and society. It is mainly about developing a group of compositions employing characteristics that the studies have shown to be supportive of meditative state.

“Meditation” is a mental practice to develop self-awareness and consciousness. Meditation instills internal security, cultivates mental strength, and develops a sense of morality. Meditation practices vary as they have been inherited from one period to another since ancient times. Some studies have found that children with short attention spans can become aggressive, violent, tend to be more disobedient, and anti-social than children with average attention spans (Goodman, 2011:563-576). With proper treatment, the deviations can be corrected. However, it is likely that the children's aggressive and violent behaviors are misunderstood and simply punished by adults. This would then prompt depression and self-injury. Once these children become adults, they tend to display aggressive behaviors which frequently lead to domestic violence. Therefore, establishing meditation practices toward wisdom is crucial for living amid current affairs in Thailand which may cause emotional insecurity in children and adults and in turn bring about domestic violence.

The researcher recognizes the significance of music in inducing a meditative state and constituting wisdom and emotional stability. Sound and melodies are powerful agents in interpersonal communication. Music helps human brain to better focus and stir various kinds of imagination. For more than a millennium, Western sacred music, namely Christian incantations and prayers have played a major role in connecting the rituals to believers. The created sounds theoretically bring peace of mind to the listeners. Meanwhile in the East, Buddhist prayers in the Pali language with their unique sound characteristics, has been a method of creating focused and powerful minds. Vibrations of emitted sounds and prayers with auspicious words and meanings referenced to and inherited from ancient times create peace of mind, boost morale, and enhance wisdom, resulting in improved problem-solving ability. The use of musical art in meditation is a path towards a better society.

This research project aims to create musical compositions that can enhance people's concentration, to promote values of meditation practices, and to attract people to the use of meditation against domestic and social violence by listening to meditation music. It also aims to be a model for musical creations with social awareness as well as artistic research on meditation. Additionally, it aims to make this kind of music easily, widely, and sustainably accessible and suitable for all genders and ages.

Scope of the research is a musical suite comprising ten compositions for two instruments, or a duet, accompanied by animated videos which support the audi-

ence's meditation through their auditory and visual perception and disseminated on social media which play an important role in today's digital age.

Context of Meditation and Music

In psychology, meditation is used in the explanation of levels of consciousness and widely utilized with different purposes. A calm state of mind leads to a change of attitudes and good physical health including heart and circulatory systems. Meditation can be utilized in slow contemplation to bring about calmness and positively impact daily living.

The application of meditation in healthcare and medical studies in recent years shows interest in meditation practices and psychological medicine. Concepts of meditation have been medically utilized to measure the efficacy of meditation in different body systems; for example, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Recently, there have also been attempts to explain connections between meditation and various phenomena. Subsequently, meditation has been included as part of healthcare systems for its capability in alleviating stress and pain. For example, in 1972 Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique was used for the reduction of metabolism, blood biochemicals caused by stress namely Lactate, heart rate, and blood pressure as well as for necessary brainwave entrainment (Wallace, 1972:84-90). It is evident that meditation practices also help reduce stress, an emotional foundation for aggressive, and oppressive behaviors. Also mentioned are meditation practices with the use of light and sound to help the human mind concentrate without being wavered by emotional changes.

"Music" is innate to every human being as its colors and beauty make all happy while listening to it. Local and international research have found that music can alleviate symptoms of disease (Garcia-Navaro, 2022:775-790). Elements of music which affect human body and mind are pitch, intensity, and tempo. Meditation practices can help develop immunity, peace of mind, relaxation, consciousness, and systematic thinking process. Listening to music with rhythm equal to our heart rate and the volume of which is normal and not too loud, we can feel relaxed and joyful as it constitutes good health. Power of music refines our mind and, consequently, a concentrated mind leads to better health. Listening to a composition with sheer concentration and without other emotions for a few minutes, our mind will be still and calm. Everyone's internal rhythm is the heartbeat that responds to music. There are many ways to use music as a tool in meditation practices -sitting still and listening to instrumental composition, for example. Listening to songs with lyrics, one can easily lose concentration. When we hear familiar words or those relating to our past experiences, our brains directly focus on them. Instrumental compositions are therefore better for meditation.

Wabi-Sabi Aesthetic

The "Music and Meditation" suite is inspired by the Wabi-Sabi philosophy, the key concepts of which are ephemerality, infinity, and imperfection. In this creation of artwork full of aesthetics, the focus is on our access to the true beauty of imperfection and detachment which constitutes peace of mind. The Wabi-Sabi aesthetic

has concretized everything, making it accessible and tangible and creating internal peace. Moreover, it creates “empty space,” a major principle of meditation. Its provision of space which helps soothe the mind is considerably significant. This simple and solitary aesthetic accepts and delights in solitude with a calm and tranquil mind. It reflects the standard of beauty we are not yet familiar with: the beauty of seeing values of simplicity, the discovery of beauty amidst the mundane, and the acceptance of imperfection of occurrences.

The concepts of this philosophy focus on the search of happiness by acceptance of imperfection of or blemishes in humans, animals, or objects all of which are never perfect. Instead, it encourages us to look for simplicity, calmness, and naturalness in them. Interestingly, this philosophy is related to Buddhist principles as it wishes everyone understand the way of nature in which everything is imperfect, changes in accordance with time and not exactly as we want. The core of Wabi-Sabi beauty is different from fashion as it is simple, classic, natural, and solitary. In other words, it is unembellished beauty. Not only should we accept the condition of things as they have decayed over a period of time, but we should also search for beauty hidden behind blemishes and imperfection. The application of Wabi-Sabi philosophy in the composition of this musical suite is relatable to principles of meditation -calmness, solitude, simplicity, and tranquility.

Creative Musical Art for Supporting Society: Music and Meditation

The researcher has studied musical compositions the subject matter or sounds of which create calmness, including classical and easy-listening compositions with various styles of music, in order to find the suitable approach for the creation of compositions in accordance with the research purposes. For the first example, Johann Sebastian Bach's Prelude in C Major No.1 BWV 846 Book I is a composition for keyboard in which he used repeated melodies, sub-melodies, harmonies, and rhythms to create stillness with very little movement, rather consistent intensity in addition to narrow range without much difference to create an easy-listening and relaxing experience. Second, Erik Satie's Gymnopédie No.1 is a piano composition in which he used slow rhythms and repeated melodies with lightness. Its tenderness helps our mind to better concentrate and recollect thoughts. With low-pitched range, the tones we hear help relax our brain waves as if we were sleeping. Third, Arvo Pärt's Spiegel im Spiegel is a minimalistic composition heavily inspired by sacred music of the Middle Ages with serene melodies on piano and violin, emitting sound waves suitable for meditation and calming our thoughts and emotions.

After reviewing the related literature including research on the use of music in meditation and finding appropriate musical genres for analysis and synthesis, a conclusion is reached on the instruments for the creation of sound corresponding to calmness, a key factor in the creation of this work. The researcher has found that the use of very few instruments creates simplicity and straightforwardness, in accordance to the Wabi-Sabi philosophy, traditional Japanese aesthetics mentioned later. Thus, for each composition, the researcher uses only 2 instruments -piano as the main one and another solo instrument in the style of duet. For the

latter, the researcher selects those with the quality that promotes calmness and simplicity, namely cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, violin, viola, bassoon, and double bass, in accordance with the research purposes. The piano is the main instrument here as it gives all dimensions of sound, including melodies and harmonies, and its beautiful tone also helps create an atmosphere of relaxation.

Methodology

Elements of Meditation Music for Reduction of Aggressive Behaviors

As meditation music can help reduce human aggressive behaviors, this research chooses the type of music fits for stress reduction and relaxation. It relies on the Wabi-Sabi philosophy which emphasizes simplicity, tranquility, naturalness, ordinariness, and sincerity that successively constitute concentration. The focus is on the major foundation of family namely youths, children, and parents. This research process has led to the creation process of a suite of musical compositions. The research finds that 2 important elements in the creation of meditation music are sound characteristics of musical instruments and musical elements.

Firstly, in accordance with the Wabi-Sabi philosophy's principle of tranquility, the researcher uses only 2 instruments as a duet in each composition. The instruments are chosen for their sound characteristics that can create peacefulness. The piano is the main instrument since its range is wide, from low to high pitches, and it can create gentle and peaceful sounds. It is used together with another instrument with different tones, either a woodwind or a string instrument. As a result, the listeners can focus on the tones of very few instruments as if they were meditating with determination, relaxation, and peacefulness, rather than being too distracted by or enchanted with music.

Secondly, the musical elements appropriate for creating relaxation, peacefulness, and concentration are as follows:

1. Rhythm is the movement of sounds at a period of time or duration of sounds. Rhythm is essential for music. Fastness, slowness, and types of rhythms greatly affect the listeners as they stimulate mechanisms of body systems and emotional responses. For example, fast rhythm causes excitement, increasing pulse rate; slow rhythm creates calmness, reducing pulse rate to about 50-70 beats per minute (bpm); and medium rhythm that is close to the normal pulse rate, 70-80 bpm, brings about relaxation and comfort. As for the types of rhythm, march energizes and incites the listeners; rock creates excitement; rumba brings about cheerfulness; slow constitutes calmness, and so forth.

In the research, Mona Lisa Chanda finds that slow music can help reducing heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature as well as effectively control the brain stem's reflection (Chanda, 2013:174-193). In addition, rhythm effect can support the fight against stress and worry. In his research, cardiologist Peter Sleight finds that slow music in 10-second loops can help calm the listeners as it corresponds with the flow of signal from the brain to the heart which controls blood pressure and circulation (Sleight, 1995:103-109).

In the composition, the researcher mainly selects slow rhythm and pulse rate, especially the pulse rate that is close to the heart rate that constitutes calmness, 50-70 BPM in adult, and continuously repeats the rhythm (Figure 1).

Light

P.Sasi

Adagio ♩ = 63 *pulse rate close to heart rate*

Clarinet in Bb

Piano *pp*

9

Cl.

Pno.

continuous repetition of rhythm

Figure 1. Pulse rate close to heart rate and continuous repetition of rhythm.

2. Melody is the combination of sounds with high-low pitches and rhythm with consideration of the duration of each sound and its aesthetic correlation. The sound frequency is measured by cycle per second, or hertz (Hz). A high-frequency sound is a high-pitched one and a low-frequency sound a low-pitched one. Sounds with the frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz are audible to human ears. The frequency of normal conversation is about 85-1,100 Hz and that of musical instruments, like piano, 30-4,100 Hz. A middle-frequency sound is about 440 Hz. Each frequency range has different effects. A very low one constitutes fear, frustration, and uncertainty; a low one calmness; a middle one comfort; and a high one excitement or exhaustion as it affects functions of the endocrine gland related to the sympathetic nervous system (Patarathipakorn, 2021:104-115).

It has been proven that quality music can generate happiness and comfort; therefore, music is a kind of medicine. It has been said that having our household filled with music is like having nutritious food and vitamins around. In his research, American psychologist Ian Cook (University of California Los Angeles) finds that sound with frequency of 110 Hz alleviates frontal lobe activities as it generates calmness and that of 90-120 Hz constitutes changes in brain activities (Cook, 2008:95-104).

In the music composition, the researcher uses pitches with the frequency around 90 to 120 Hz, or G2-B2 as the basis for the composition. The melody is in the low to medium pitches, with special focus on its continuity ensuring that the listeners feel calm, comfortable, and relaxed and is able to better concentrate (Figure 2).

Quietude

P.Sasi

Larghetto (Slow with Broad) ♩ = 66

G2 pitch creates calmness and relaxation

Figure 2. G2 pitch creates calmness and relaxation.

- Intensity is measured in decibel (dB). Sounds with an intensity from 0-120 dB are audible to human ears. The intensity of normal conversation is about 50-60 dB. Listening to a rather loud sound of 80 dB may lead to stress. Moreover, loud sound causes muscle twitching and continuous fatigue. The intensity which does not constitute stress is that of soft music, at 30 dB, and instrumental music, 60 dB, equal to that of human conversation.

In the music composition, the researcher chooses the quiet (p) to very quiet (pp), close to the intensity lower than 60 dB. These compositions sound like background music, with the focus on softness and lightness to soothe and relax the listeners and the focus on continuity to create calmness (Figure 3).

White

P.Sasi

Figure 3. Intensity p to pp creates calmness.

4. Quality comprises vibrancy, clarity, color, and tone, important elements that can enhance quality of music. Vibrancy and clarity of human sounds are dependent on their larynx, throat organs, mouth, and nose. A vibrant, clear, and soft sound constitutes the listeners' physical and mental comfort. Colors of musical instruments depend on their sound producing materials as well as various playing techniques. Sound quality is the first attraction for listeners and varies from one type of musical instrument to another. Performing a beautiful piece in a slow rhythm constitutes calmness and relaxation. For example, the piano sound is highly effective in stirring the imagination due to its wide pitch range. Besides, research shows that sounds of certain musical instruments, like violin, flute, and piano, help relieve some pains like headache (Howlin, 2022:1-20).

In the compositions, the researcher selects piano as the main instrument as its quality and tone color can help create relaxation and alleviate stress. This quint-essential instrument, complete with all elements of music, namely melody, rhythm, harmony, intensity, and sound quality are performed in a duet with another instrument, like flute, violin, cello, and clarinet. The tone and color of the combinations constitute calmness, and the ranges are also specifically selected to create calmness, tranquility, and relaxation (Figure 4).

Breath P.Sasi

Lento $\text{♩} = 55$

The musical score for 'Breath' is written for Bassoon and Piano. The tempo is Lento, with a quarter note equal to 55 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8, and the second system contains measures 9 through 12. The Bassoon part is mostly silent, with a few notes in measures 9-12. The Piano part plays a continuous melody with chords, marked with dynamics like *mf* and *mp*. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 1-8 in the first and 9-12 in the second.

Figure 4. Piano and Bassoon the tones of which help alleviate stress.

It should also be noted that each composition is created with special consideration of the target listeners and emphasized on the structure and elements that constitute calmness, comfort, relaxation, and stress alleviation, leading towards their meditation.

Results and Discussion

A suite of compositions for meditation focuses on structures and elements that promote an atmosphere of calmness, minimal movement, and comfortable listening. It helps the audiences to feel relaxed, reduce feelings of stress which will result in gradually forming a concentration in the end. It is based on 2 important elements which are the Wabi-Sabi philosophy's principle of tranquility and musical elements with sound characteristics. The suite is performed with few instruments and in a simple and easy-listening style. With repeated melody and harmony as well as slow rhythm, the suite does not focus on variation of sound intensity in order to create delight and calmness. The performance of the selected instruments is not too impeccable and the listeners can hear either the musician's breathing sound on a woodwind instrument or bowing sound on a string one. This high level of naturalness causes the listeners to feel its ordinariness and sincerity. The Wabi-Sabi aesthetic, a globally recognized Japanese cultural foundation, is applied as the key concept for this collection as it is a science of living that will enable us to magically discover beauty and happiness. This is like our lives and, as no one is perfect, we should realize our differences between generations or viewpoints. With such understanding, one would not need violence in expressing different opinions and our society would become more peaceful.

The researcher creates the following 10 instrumental compositions collectively known as "Music and Meditation:"

1. WHITE, a composition for piano and flute
2. LIFE, a composition for piano and oboe
3. REMEMBRANCE, a composition for piano and violin
4. BREATH, a composition for piano and bassoon
5. LIGHT, a composition for piano and clarinet
6. ZEN, a composition for piano and glockenspiel
7. FREE, a composition for piano and viola
8. REST, a composition for piano and double bass
9. QUIETUDE, a composition for piano and cello
10. CALM, a composition for piano solo

"WHITE," a composition for piano and flute, was inspired by walking meditation to create meditation according to Buddhist practice. One of the basic methods for cultivating mindfulness involves focusing closely on the physical experience of walking, paying attention to the specific components of each step. The characteristics of the flute give a feeling of floating, light, mellow, bright, elegant, clear, whispery, and breathy sound. The melody is in the middle range C5-B5 which is mellow and relatively calm. It is ideal for meditative walking. There is only one single melody presented throughout the entire piece. The significant motif is continuous triplet-note repetition. This is in line with meditative walking that requires consistent breathing at the same time.

"LIFE," a composition for piano and oboe, was inspired by Wabi-Sabi aesthetics. If we stay conscious and concentrate, we will eventually lead to wisdom in living a

balanced life. Nothing is perfect in life according to the Wabi-Sabi philosophy. The smooth and beautiful sound of the oboe, blending with the middle range of the piano, creates a harmonious melody. The piano begins with a broken chord in the high range to create a floating atmosphere. Simple chords have been used to comply with the way of life that should not be overly complicated. The oboe performs a simple but beautiful melody with less movement harmonized with the warm piano part. It shows that using uncomplicated melodies can also create beauty.

“REMEMBRANCE,” a composition for piano and violin, was inspired by Wabi-sabi philosophy referring to imperfection hidden by traces of memories. It can be compared to our lives where no one is perfect. Everyone has good and bad memories. However, the memories that most people recall are maybe a childhood memory related to their families. It is a bond that people must have at some point in their lives. This violin plays the melody in Eb major. But the piano plays A natural borrowed from Eb Lydian. This pattern has also been repeated for a long time, making the listeners familiar with A natural. It can be compared to the imperfections in the musical scale but causing familiarity in memory. The melody proceeds in the same manner throughout the piece. The piano plays broken chords and the violin plays melody with less movement in the mid-range. This range of violin is rarely heard in presenting the melody because the sound is not very airy but gives a peaceful mood instead. The piece is in Eb major throughout because the special note (A natural) has been used continuously.

“BREATH,” a composition for piano and bassoon, was inspired by the mindfulness on breathing which is one of the practices of meditation. In addition, regular breathing can help us calm down. When our emotions are calm, the intellect will lead to concentration. The piano part proceeds with a steady rhythm, similar to regular breathing. The bassoon with a medium range moves in a relatively slow melodic line and gives a deep feeling. However, it is not uncomfortable but rather creates an atmosphere of mental stability. The piano plays relatively light intensity because it is placed in a mindfulness on breathing. The bassoon has a moderate sound intensity that sinks into the mind. The melodies between piano and bassoon are imitated. Bass notes are used in the manner of a drone to give a static mood.

“LIGHT,” a composition for piano and clarinet, was inspired by Prelude & Fugue in C, Book 1 by Johann Sebastian Bach. The Prelude is a light, comfortable melody with a repeating pattern. The piece is, however, less movement creating stillness. Therefore, bringing this concept to create a peaceful, comfortable piece with piano sound mixed with a round, floating clarinet sound. This is suitable for meditation. The piano plays notes repeatedly, calm and with little movement as if in a reversal of steadfast and unwavering concentration. The clarinet has the ability to draw a long and continuous sound, flowing beautifully. With a continuous, steady, and floating sound, it promotes an atmosphere of unmoving meditation. This piece is comprised of limited use of raw materials, little movement, repetitive chord components, and harmonic sequence technique. Simplicity on harmonious blend of piano and clarinet creates the ultimately calm atmosphere.

“ZEN,” a composition for piano and glockenspiel, was inspired by Zen, a school of Mahayana Buddhism derived from the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word. Zen emphasizes rigorous self-restraint, meditation-practice, and the subsequent insight into nature of mind and nature of things, and the personal expression of this insight in daily life. Wabi-Sabi is an aesthetic practice that is closely related to Zen Buddhism. However, perceiving Wabi-Sabi merely as a creative concept, as an art form or a collection of creative principles, is not enough. Wabi-Sabi has always been very closely connected to the core concerns of Zen Buddhism. Eventually it can be best described as a way of perceiving and expressing things. Many of the basic principles of Zen Buddhism can be found in objects with Wabi-Sabi quality. The piano is set to carry all main melody and harmony, along with the recurring sound from Glockenspiel. It is representing the sound of bells often heard in Buddhist temples. It represents waking up the mind to concentrate on meditation, aiming to be firm and stable. The modes used are Lydian, Dorian, Mixolydian and Ionian modes, which are ancient modes commonly used for Christian hymns in the Middle Ages. It also creates a very peaceful atmosphere found in a temple or church. The use of melodies in various ancient modes such as Lydian, Dorian, Mixolydian, and Ionian modes creates an atmosphere of calm, relaxed, and free from chaos. Glockenspiel has been presented intermittently and, finally, the music gradually fades away.

“FREE,” a composition for piano and viola, was inspired by the concept of independence. To free yourself from chaos turns into a peaceful lifestyle creating balance in life. It was inspired by the Impressionistic music of Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, giving an atmosphere of drifting, relaxation, and freedom. The piano part in this music is in high range to create an atmosphere of drifting while the viola plays a melody creating a feeling of tension, unrelenting, with a deep, soft, and slightly uncomfortable tone. The main melody is mostly in dominant chords in C minor, boosting slight tension. The middle section in C major gives a feeling of independence and free yourself from the restraints of the minor scale. The piano plays a relatively soft and floating sound while the viola plays a deep voice in medium intensity, giving a restful atmosphere.

“REST,” a composition for piano and double bass, was inspired by the meaning of salvation. The desire is to create more space within the mind which leads us to meditate eventually. The piano part plays in high register with continuous bass line in a still and slow movement. It creates a contrasting color while the double bass presents the solid deep sound which creating an atmosphere of emptiness. The double bass line begins with the first melody in G Mixolydian mode. The harmony from second melody appears in D Mixolydian scale and imitates the melody with alternate piano. The piano part has a relatively light intensity. It combines with the double bass part which is quite tight, yet stable.

“QUIETUDE,” a composition for piano and cello, was inspired by the sound of an ancient Christian chant providing a sense of immense and calmness. This music mainly uses low register and mild intensity. The soft melody can penetrate deeply into the soul during meditation. The low range of the piano gives a sense

of immersion when mixing with the cello which creates a wide and peaceful atmosphere. The cello part provides a mellow, warm, calm, pure, continuous, and solemn atmosphere. The ancient modes giving a spacious sound will make the listeners calm and not distracted. The middle part of the piece is in A Aeolian mode with a continuous cello part, induced to the sound of the organ used in churches during Christian ceremonies. The piano part plays repeated low notes around the A, similar to the roman chant. The cello part plays the G and D string ranges for a smooth, resonant, and continuous sound giving an atmosphere of peace as well. The piano part represents the chant by repeating the notes over and over. It reinforces the concentration to go deeper in the end.

“CALM,” a composition for piano solo, was inspired by mindfulness on breathing, one of the practices of meditation. It is set to be a piano solo piece with a calm and sweet melody in order to relieve tension and anxiety. The focus is the lower register piano part, giving a calm mood. The piano can produce a variety of sounds and different atmospheres. It has its own identity which is different from the colors of other instruments. This piece emphasizes the A2 and G2 to correspond with calm, in-and-out breathing. Music and sound waves with specific frequencies, intending to affect the functioning of the brain, similar to meditating. The key of A minor was chosen primarily in accordance with the emphasis on the A2 to show that the range of this note seriously affects concentration. Broken chords and repeated notes are used all over the piece as well. The idea presents slow music loop back and forth in 10-second repetitions, helping the listeners to calm down.

From the review of relevant documents and empirical research on roles and meanings of meditation and music, it is found that mental health created by the use of music as a medium in constituting meditation can change human mental development from a negative to a positive one. After the process of analysis, synthesis, and application, the researcher finds the approach appropriate for 10 compositions in the “Music and Meditation” research which would help create calmness, promote concentration, and will further develop this creative approach.

Sample of “Meditation and Music” works can be accessed on social media, YouTube Channel: MusicFAAChula: Music and Meditation, or by scanning this QR code (Figure 5).



Figure 5. https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnhC359gp3MbEh1mvMZHZMIhJQ_2NsIH2.

Benefits from Research

We experience many different thoughts each day and probably find it difficult to clear our head. Meditation, practiced by Buddhist monks for thousands of years, is a good solution as it promotes awareness, clarity, positivity, and tranquility. Ancient meditation techniques have been adapted to and thus gained popularity among today's practitioners. Meditation is a way towards higher levels of intelligence, happiness, and well-being. The benefits of music in everyday life are reducing stress, improving memory, sleeping better, and boosting mood. Listening to music on a regular basis brings joy and delight to the listener, stimulating positive emotional effects in ways that one feels naturally happy.

The two target groups expecting to benefit from future research when it is put into practice are the parents and the youth. The parents and guardians who listen to the compositions should feel calm and composed. Parents and guardians, equipped with more awareness, will feel ready to attentively listen to the youth. The older, free from anxiety and stress, can better help the younger solve conflicts and prevent any violence that may occur within a family unit as well as those in the society. The young who perform the music in the research promotes concentration needed in the music execution. Slow practice demands precise motor control and intense focus. In the same fashion, walking meditation requires attentiveness when walking back and forth at a different pace for a set distance. Like playing music, walking is a type of physical activity that can be used as a tool to still the mind. Music practice is an activity that helps foster emotional stability in the youth yield unwavering, unshakable, resilient strength and patience to systematically solve problems in the daily life. The practice creates a state of peace and serenity which could be the answer in preventing emotional and behavioral violence among the young.

The research focuses on the use of music in the areas of emotional and behavioral support rather than those in medical treatment and music therapy. Therefore, the emphasis is on the genre of music that promotes relaxation. Feeling relaxed, the listener is more likely to behave in ways that strengthen the institution of the family and the society.

This set of compositions expects future study how music impacts mental health as it helps develop meditation. Nevertheless, this research only focuses on the creation of music based on the findings of musical elements that affect emotional control and alleviate aggressive behaviors. Hence, it does not yet find out which musical experience is key to promotion of mental health. In the subsequent research, this musical suite should then be tested on the target group by connecting musical experience with mental changes that are measurable by scientific processes -music and emotional dimension, the listeners' emotional control, for example. It would then become integrated research with concrete creation and maximum benefit.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This series of compositions is based on the concept of Wabi-Sabi aesthetics to promote meditation for the audiences. Music connects its listeners with many things both externally and internally, including emotions, feelings, and experiences, and serves as a medium in human interactions. Music therapists have found that music can effectively heal human illnesses and develop quality of life (Dileo, 2021:79-93). Music is an art form that uses sound in conveying emotions to the listeners and an aesthetic that is expressed mentally and with power of thought. It constitutes happiness, appreciation, and impression in accordance with one's perception. Music is an easily accessible art and a medium for better mutual understanding as it narrows gaps in interpersonal relationships. It is capable of not only connecting one with society and other people, but also explaining their internal connection. In other words, music enables people to discover, communicate with, and understand themselves better, especially for those that cannot be put into words.

Music can enhance one's mental health and quality of life. Sound and melody of music are powerful agents in human communication. The use of musical art in supporting meditation in the "Music and Meditation" compositions will help alleviate aggressive behaviors in the household (Peijie, 2021:1-13). Helping their listeners develop meditation, these compositions have significant values and merits in uplifting the minds of people so that they become quality human resources who can mobilize the development of their country at their full efficiency towards supporting society.

This creation of meditation music is open to all communities nationwide. It is not limited to only institutions and organizations but being disseminated to youths and families as well. It aims to create positive impacts on communities and societies, reflect issues in the contemporary Thai society caused by domestic violence. Our goal is to develop socially responsible Thai citizens and the society where people live peacefully amongst differences as well as to reinforce social stability. Besides, this work serves as a model for a new generation of musicians and music makers so that they become more interested in creating work for the society, or Music for Community by promoting public consciousness among them, paving a path towards the dynamic society.

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Identifying the Key Value of Urban Architectural Heritages

*vis-a-vis Human Awareness:
Case Study in Hanoi*

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Abstract

Conservation of urban architectural heritage works (UAH) is an important test for cities to increase their cultural and economic competitiveness. However, UAH preservation mostly focuses on physical value, which results in a contradiction between conservation and development. Moreover, new contexts of 4.0 technology and urbanization are deepening the impermanence, transformation of all things, in which of people and their awareness - the beneficiaries of UAHs. Therefore, heritage conservation is facing a big problem related to the truly worthy values of UAH that need to be preserved to meet the development needs, society's change and the growing maturity of people's awareness. Applying Oriental theories on the code of life, in combination with some Western thoughts on human awareness process and a practical case of community's awareness of UAHs's value in Hanoi, the article explores and identifies the key value of UAHs which is expected to solve the above problem, reaching sustainable targets.

Keywords: *Heritage Key Value, Human Awareness, Awareness Levels, Heritage Conservation, Urban Architectural Heritage, Sustainable Preservation, Vietnam*

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Introduction

Preserving urban architectural heritage (hereinafter referred to as UAH or heritage) is a major concern of any urban authority wishing to build an urban image of culture, identity, and competitiveness in the context of the flat world and globalization trend. Heritage conservation solutions that focus on physical values or on the heritage object itself (preserve a physical object as an antique) have more and more revealed limitations not only in theory but also in practice. Theoretically, it is not possible to freeze physical objects forever since they inevitably suffer the destructive effects of weather and other external factors, as well as they themselves decompose over time; nor is it possible to fossilize an object that is of a living nature (The role of heritage is not just a building, a place to store the values *through physical expression* of history, culture, art, and architecture of a community, but deep inside, it is created and preserved for generations to serve the psychological needs and spiritual practices of the community. These needs are not constant but always change at certain angles, affected by the changes of the times, society, other living things in a community's urban space, the community's living needs and development as this approach leads to losing the inherent natural living value of the object. Thus these easily lead to a practical problem of the conflict between the need of urban development (towards living subjects) and the need of conservation (towards fossilizing, freezing, and preserving dead-like subjects). Only when conservation also promotes living values, can it coexist and go hand in hand with urban development.

The development and achievements of science, technology and the digital science revolution 4.0 have created a new turning point that has been changing many traditional values, knowledge as well as human awareness. Through the invention of a virtual world, human capabilities are enhanced via the ability to socially connect beyond geographical space and even overcome the challenge of limited time. The concept of community limited by geographical limits (community is people sharing the same place) therefore is no longer appropriate. Now, the concept of the community is defined by change, it is not fixed, and it can be restructured based on the change of human's ability, awareness, and community needs (community is people sharing the same interests) (Burkett, 2001; Neal & Walter, 2008; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; Waterton & Smith, 2010). It could be said that in parallel with the changeable concept of community is the changeable concept of heritage value. In other words, the idea of value characterized as fixed is no longer perfect. Besides, under urbanization, UAHs no longer keep private value for a small local community, but can also become common assets for a larger community since their value transcends geographical boundaries and even cultural boundaries. These changes also create additional challenges for sustainable UAH conservation and urban development, as well as for further human development, as a consequence.

Given this situation, current UAH conservation activities still seem to be struggling with a debate about the value of heritage. What is the real value that can be preserved? What value is worthy of being preserved? Is conservation based on values that are recognized by community (living values from life) or on criteria by city authorities such as historical, chronological, cultural, aesthetic, and architectural values? The fact that, perceived values may be different between one person

and another, between one community group and another, so the question is that whether there is an unified and representative value for all? In other words, apart from the variable or contemporary or changeable values, does the heritage have a permanent value (pure value) that can be preserved and be accepted by all communities despite differences of time, generation, or dominant culture?

In this context, it is important to deeply recognise the pure value of heritage, especially the relationship between heritage and the community in the current context, to shape UAH sustainable conservation solutions towards human development and sustainable goals.

Objectives, Methodology and Contribution

The paper contributes the findings of three in-depth studies of UAH's key values, which are (i) a literature review on heritage value; (ii) a discussion of the nature of objects through in community and human awareness in the view of Oriental philosophy and Western thinking. (iii) testing the community's perception of the heritage value in the context of urbanization in the center of Hanoi capital, Vietnam. These results help to orient the UAH preservation approach based on worthy and permanent value (key value), and can be used as a solution for UAH preservation in other urban areas in Vietnam. These results also imply solutions to encourage community engagement with UAH preservation, contributing to the goal of sustainable urban development and to the development of human beings.

Literature Review of Urban Architectural Heritage Value

Heritages are seen as cultural representations passed from generation to generation that contribute to urban identity and cultural competitiveness. Under the current uncertain and ever-changing urban development context, the evolution of community awareness and cultural exchanges, heritage value is continuously reconsidered and discussed to shape a compatible preservation approach. Different recently emerging perspectives on the value of heritage are summarized as follows.

(1) Heritage value is determined through a specific physical expression representing outstanding values identified by common, clear, static standards or criteria (such as values of science, history, and art). It means that these outstanding values are normally perceived, identified, assessed, and compared by the five human senses. In this respect, a heritage object is considered as an isolated physical entity and differentiated from other objects thanks to its outstanding, unchanged, stable, and differentiated physical features.

The definition of cultural heritage given by the UNESCO organization on cultural heritage sites refers to three physical expressions, which are monuments (separate monuments), groups (in the sense of a combination of buildings and works that present harmony between works in the complex) and sites (in the sense of an overall harmony between works created by people and nature to express harmony and unity), and states that these works should reflect the values of history, art and science (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2017). This definition is also quite consistent with the definition of ICOMOS's historic monument in the 1964

Venice Charter (Charter, 1964) on the concept of a historic monument, which was that “it not just consists of individual buildings but also the urban or rural setting, where evidence of a specific civilization is found, an important development of historic events.” (Jokilehto, 2008). The Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage 2013 also acknowledges the historical, cultural, and artistic architecture values of a monument (The National Assembly, 2013). In the recent decades, the concept of authentic value has been raised to assess the value of heritage in the context of integrating the cultural context of non-Western world countries and a growing recognition of the role community plays in determining heritage value (Boccardi, 2019).

(2) Heritage value is related to different levels of human perception and human feelings, or in another way it is compatible with levels of human beings themselves inner perceptions which are affected by personal experiences, social relationships and relations to nature and to the whole of life. In other words, the value of a heritage building corresponds to the value perceived by the individuality of observers or a community in relation to a sense of personal identity or community identity, respectively.

Human perception about an entity is normally influenced by external factors such as personal experiences and emotions, and may be affected by social change and development (in Buddhist language, this is level of normal perception or a conventional level of human mind which is always disturbed, led, and controlled by the external world. In other words, human perception is easily dominated by the ego which always wants to react or perceive the outside world by his own and different story to affirm his presence). The value of heritage buildings is therefore identified differently and changeably between one person and another (because everyone wants to build and has their own story different from other's ones); in other words, perceived heritage value is inherently mutable (Purwantiastining, Kurniawan & Sunarti, 2019). At this level, it is challenging (in a way that's both easy and hard) to convince different individuals or communities to preserve heritages through fixed criteria or common standards. That is also a current challenge in convincing different people to protect a UAH. When human perception peaks at a high level that is no longer controlled by the change of the outside world (or in Buddhist language, the human mind reaches the state of concentration or of stable or of emptiness. In this ultimate state, that is, unaffected by anything from the outside world, human beings can return to his inherent and available nature - the True Self - to perceive the world. Only this True Self helps him to perceive things without prejudice. Thus, human beings can perceive things as they truly are), a person's view will not be biased or embroiled by the limits of personal experience or emotions, and thus that person could reach the essence and the truth of an object as it is rather than the truth as I-my ego feel and want, so he could understand the object's nature via his True Self. Thanks to this ultimate level of cognition, a human can deeply understand the truth of another objects or in this case the nature, the root or the source of the heritage could be revealed. At this highest level of human perception, the key value of every heritage object will be found, recognized, and acknowledged in the same way by different individuals and communities. According to Chinese classical cosmology and philosophy, the core or pure value of an object represents the value of harmony with all surround-

ing things and become oneness with all more than individual value [reference the next part of nature of human awareness via reviewing oriental philosophy].

Also, the value assessment of a heritage object doesn't really come from the object itself (because the pure nature of every object is inherently neutral - not good, not bad. Good or bad depend on the evaluator's or observer's inner mind, which normally depends on outside conditions of the object). Therefore, the value of the heritage is recognized, felt, and perceived via the gaze of the human inner mind. One who has a pure inner mind (corresponding to a peaceful stillness and emptiness state) could see the neutral nature of the object. A person with an inner mind full of vibrations of fears or desires affected by his ego will only see everything covered in the color of the ego- thereby seeing the object in a different, biased way versus pure nature of the object.

For example, when the observer's interior is sad, this sadness becomes a sad colored glass separating him from the outside world, causing him to only see the outside world full of gloom, thereby not understanding the scene which is inherently free, freely grown and lost continuously and unrelated to his sadness. When his inner mind is positive, he sees all the positive values of things around him. When he looks at the heritage by his peaceful and free inner, his perception could not be governed by the joy or sorrow which are empty inside him at that time. In the deep emptiness of mind, with no more ego, the observer (now even disappeared as an ego- observer disappears) can reach the intrinsic pure value of things. Accordingly, the value of an object does not just lie in the fixed form itself, but broadly it lies in the process of general balance and harmony between the observer and object. So that heritage value is a continuous creative process to reach harmony generally. The following shares the same idea of heritage's value by some experts. Heritage is identified as everything that people want to save (Howard, 2003) and as a part of the cultural tradition of a society (Nuryanti, 1996). By this definition, awareness of value of a heritage is close to the value perceived by an observer's awareness. Therefore, to identify heritage value, it should be studied at the level of human perception. The meaning of heritage can be interpreted at different levels: i) the outer value layer of a heritage object that corresponds to the basic level of human perception based on physical existence (the external world); (ii) the intrinsic pure value (the inherent pure value) - an embodied value that may reflect and awaken the human's True Self.¹

Heritage is a sense of belonging and continuity. In its raw form, heritage is simply physical expression such as buildings, cultural objects, and the natural environment, while at a deeper level, heritage refers to a "place where there is joy/happiness and enlightenment" (Millar, 1989; Pothof, 2006). This definition underlines three values of a UAH which can be interpreted as follows. i) Happiness here is not only conventional temporary joy depending on external conditions, but state of bliss and deep peace in the human mind where a person feels more freedom, liberation from dependencies on external factors. ii) Enlightenment here is an awakening of the ability to perceive deeply the "truth as it is" of life or in another way the ability to perceive the spirit/source in all creations and existences in this world which is the pure nature and the living nature concealed under the visible

existence of each individual or object. To humans, this enlightenment is the capacity to reach one's true nature or True Self so that "he" can reach naturally the livings nature surroundings. iii) Sense of belonging and continuity: from the sense of the True Self or pure nature, it is easier for a person to acknowledge the sense of belonging or attachment or sense of being a part of a community and sense of oneness with all things and with the universe so that sense of continuity is built [reference the oriental spiritual philosophy in the following part].

Heritage objects are the physical representations of a community's identity that demand to be passed on to others. Heritage sites would be built expressions of a city that represent the city's identity, places where citizens could recognize themselves (Riganti & Nijkamp, 2004). In this view, the idea of self-realization is a difficult and abstract idea, which can be explained through i) the ability to recognize what is familiar and visible in life (physical recognition), and ii) unconscious awareness of what exists inside their inner minds (invisible and intuition recognition).

Heritage is also identified as a sense of the self (Porter and Salazar, 2005). Self here refers not only to the perceived dimension of an individual's inner feelings (emotions) but also to the highest perception of a human that is independent and transcendent from the impact of the outside world, where a human can be conscious of the pure nature of himself which can be understood as Tao of True self in Taoist language and Buddhist language, respectively. The awareness of True Self is a superior consciousness, where a human understands that he is not an object separated and distinguished from others. It can be said that heritage is a means or a catalyst or a door for evoking or awakening human consciousness, helping human beings to gradually fulfill cognitive processes from the level of exploring and connecting with the outside world to finally connecting with the human mind's inside world, from the consciousness of external cultural values to the knowledge of the hidden meaning of self in particular and of human society in general.

(3) Heritage value is a flexible and variable concept. The value of heritage is not only kept in a physical object (with fixed characters) but in the social process (with transformative and adaptive character, to reach harmonization with others). Heritage and community are not fixed objects, but they customize each other because they are all part of a social process (Bluestone, 2000; Crooke, 2008; Mydland & Grahm, 2012; Waterton & Smith, 2010). Heritage contributes to the resilience and sustainability of urban communities (Denes & Pradit, 2023).

The idea is that there is not any value in a separated status, or stated another way, the value is only confirmed as a whole and in a relationship with others; value is found in the living process or ongoing process. We have been taught that everything has both good and bad sides, like yin and yang. However, the distinction between yin and yang only helps make the human cognitive process simpler. In fact, these two objects cannot exist if they are separated and isolated. They have absolutely no single value. Only when yin and yang transform each other can they create different forms, so that their value is created thanks to this process - continuously transforming, continuously keeping balance, constantly recreating. In

other words, value is created in the process. Similarly, the value of heritage objects is not only in a single entity but in the harmonizing process (ongoing process). Human perception of the value of heritage can be changed by time, space, and social and cultural experiences. For example, when we access a heritage building at different moments or through different experiences, we will receive different values of the heritage. If experiencing a UAH in a normal day with no events and no activities, we only feel its raw physical value such as architectural structure, landscape, etc. in the limitation of a certain space. On the occasion of a festival with living activities, and cultural practices full of sounds, images, interaction with the local community, living stories, and nostalgia, we may experience very different views of heritage value in which both spiritual value (such as a sense of belonging) and other expanded physical value are recorded. This characteristic is often known to be a mutable value, which means that consideration should be given to the possibility of change and transformation of the heritage value when put in different spaces or periods (Dao, 2017). In Vietnam, communal houses, temples, and pagodas often have the same architectural structure (also includes 3 layers of space: public, semi-public and sacred), however the difference in use and functional arrangement based on different cultural and spiritual practices have lead to different basic function between these works.

Nature of Any Object's Value and Nature of Human Awareness of Things in the Universe, the Path of Growth of Human Awareness in Oriental Philosophy View Tao - Oriental Philosophy Of Cosmology

Oriental philosophy is best known for the I Ching (Book of changes) - the sutra of the principle of birth and decay of all things and the universe. According to the I Ching, although the universe is seen in ten thousand things and phenomena, this limitlessness (or infinite boundlessness) and extreme diversity is not born or lost chaotically, but follows an ultimate law - that is Tao (or Dao meaning the way, the path, principle, or code of life). The majority of Chinese philosophies acknowledge the presence of the Tao: Confucians call it Great Ultimate, Taoists call it Golden Elixir and Buddhists call it Complete Awareness. Everything is controlled by Tao (Reninger, 2020). Tao is oneness that includes yin and one yang (these two forces are so-called Liangyi). This means that everything exists in a unified entity thanks to 2 indivisible opposites including yin and yang. Each contains the seed of its opposite. Yin and yang are in a constant state of dynamic balance, which is maintained by a continuous adjustment of their relative levels. When either yin or yang is out of balance, each necessarily affects the other and by changing their proportion they achieve a new balance. Nothing in the natural world escapes this opposition. It is this very inner contradiction that constitutes the motive force of all transformation, birth, change, development, and decay of things.

Transformation, Impermanence are Nature of Things, Objects and Phenomena and Key Value of UAHs

Transformation in nature is manifested by two contrasting states, yin and yang (Reninger, 2017). Transformation is the way of arising and passing, birth and death, living cycle. Transformation is a process without a beginning or an end, but is a process of continuation to keep the value of the balance and harmony of life.

Looking deeply into this transformation process, we will see that all things are inherently interlinked, have mutual relationships to each other, and have a sharing with each other at a certain level.² Under this classic oriental viewpoint, when an object dies, they only die materially (forms) but an inner root (or qi or living, soul or source) is always maintained and will continue to transform, grow, reincarnate, and become a source of an emerging thing.³ In experimental science it has been found that there is an invisible material form that exists in all appearances, which is energy. According to the law of energy conversion, energy can change forms but is never lost. It also means that a physical object can disappear as a result of the decay of all material things by time but the Way (or qi or living, soul or source, Tao, Dao) of making the living, that could be so-called energy, is eternal.

In the sense of transformation to create life, the significance of living life does not lie in the impermanent existing physical objects but in the transformation process, and it also does not lie in trying to strengthen its physical appearance to strengthen the affirmation, but to strengthen the harmony with and integrated into everything around in order not to interrupt the life cycle or not break the close metabolic relationships.

The above implications are also affirmed in the ultimate law of Buddhism, the Heart of Perfect Wisdom Sutra: "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Emptiness is no other than form, form is no other than emptiness." Heart Sutra teaches us the true nature of all phenomena is "no being, no non-being" or there is no birth, no death, nothing defiled, nothing immaculate, nothing increasing, nothing decreasing. The nature of everything, objects and phenomena, is always pure and illuminating, neither caught in being nor in non-being. All things are caused by transformation and they are not always expressed in a real and static form. The nature of all (visible) things is impermanent, only the transformation is eternal. The interpretation of this sacred formula is: The outer body (form or physical expression) of a human or of anything which is considered as rupa (affirmation) is only temporary; then when this form (physical expression) dies, this affirmation will turn into negation, and this negation of the previous form is the cause/route of the next form (next affirmation). The insight of this verse is the most liberating insight that helps us overcome all pairs of separated opposites such as birth and death, being and non-being, defilement and immaculacy, increasing and decreasing, etc. and this is the way to touch the true nature of no birth/no death, no being/no non-being, etc. That is the emptiness nature of every phenomenon (Hanh, 2011; Soeng, 2010; Tolle, 2004). "It is like a flower that is made only of non-flower elements. The flower is empty of a separate existence, but that doesn't mean that the flower is not there." - Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

Looking at it from these points of view, it is impossible to grasp the value of an object (a fixed object is something that does not really exist because "its physical manifestation" is continuously formed and decayed due to transformation nature) but only the value of the whole and harmony unity. When we see a flower, the surface value of the flower consists of the beautiful color, the good fragrance, the nice shape. However the key value of the flower is to show us the beauty that comes

from nurturing and the magic of life in that moment. UAH is a special object because of its cultural depth and attachment, therefore its role is more special than an image, a material or even immaterial expression. UAH has the value of awakening the human beings' awareness about a special message rather than a surface message from conspicuous physical expression or material. The special message that we can feel and need to explore through UAH is that there is a natural cohesion or the original harmony between people and everything around them. This message is believed by Oriental viewpoints to help people towards the values of truth, goodness, beauty and a sense of peace, fulfilled in life. That is the key value of urban architectural heritage works.

Nature and Levels of Human Perception of the Nature of Objects

There are 3 stages of human perception of the world, which may be independent or follow in order. Level 1 (basic level): Awareness through 5 sensory channels (sensory perception including listening, touching, looking, tasting, smelling) to collect data information and transmit signals to the cortex to analyze. Awareness at this level is not different from that used by ordinary animals to ensure basic living needs, such as the need to identify and distinguish objects of the outside world and respond appropriately, and to establish a sense of habitat. Level 2: After being aware of the outside world, a human comes to the level of awareness of the inner world of his mind, where the information is processed to form unique values characterized by human and individual marks. At this level, people discover and perceive the outside world not only based on what they see (through outside input from the five senses) but also based on input from personal experiences and social experiences (through social interaction, social culture, education, social prejudice, etc.) as well as their desires, interests, and ambitions (At this level, human's perception of the external world or object is the result of seeing through a ego's colored prism, filled full of desires and fears that hinder wisdom about the object's truth). At this level, people perceive the world to build their own stories, to express their very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity - the ME. This perception is therefore influenced by individuality, distinctness, and the need to create good stories making up each person's image, history, and identity (conditioned mind). In Buddhism, it is called the perception of The Self - the perception influenced by the conditions of the outside world and the conditions of the inner world such as attention and the desires of each person (hence according to oriental philosophy, at this level of awareness, people are only aware of one part of the truth of the object and the living truth or even a false part of the truth, since awareness is limited and influenced by conditions and external factors). At this level, people build value for themselves, and a group builds the value of the community. The UAHs of a certain community will reflect the value of the community members who created it, preserved as well as influenced by members, culture, lifestyle, and prejudice. This community value is also harmonized with the value of the community group's awareness. Therefore, this value may differ from that of another community. The value of a community's heritage is acknowledged when it promotes a sense of belonging or sense of attachment for every member of that community. Different communities establish different heritage values. And one community may not fully feel the value of another. Awareness at this level of things or phenomena is very temporary, and can be changed in and by other dimensions,

times, contexts, or generations, or even from persuasion, manipulation, control and domination from outside life or with changes of cognitive experience.

Level 3 (The highest degree of awareness) is a human beings' ability to naturally interpret events and phenomena in their context, seeing an object as its natural being, not to be influenced by the story of the observer. It means that his perception of an object's meaning is not conditioned by external factors, or even by the observer's internal experiences or thinking. At this level, man has freed himself from the aforementioned ego's colored prism that is full of fear and anxiety. The liberation of his mind help his awareness to escape from the delusions and inferences of the ego) so he can see the truth of things as they are.⁴ This level is the so-called super-level awareness or the level of spiritual awareness⁵ as this level connects not only with the object's external physical information but also with the human True Self and decodes the information hidden deep within the object - the truth. Buddhism calls this level as enlightenment or the awakening state - Non-Self or True Self; Christianity calls it the salvation or God- liberation of awareness from dependence on external conditions. This status is characterized in Taoism by human perception merging with the Tao-source of universe life. At this level of awareness, one perfects his consciousness of the world as he can see things as they naturally are and then unconditionally accept, share these things. Thanks to this awareness, one experiences the state of absolute peace as well as the state of perfection and immortality due to the ability to open up to everything, totally interbeing, embrace everything, so can share love, compassion, gratitude, and enjoyment with objects. That is also the way he can feel oneness with the universe. The sense of belonging in this level is broadened. At this revolutionary state of human perception, the person develops his or her full intellect, intelligence, and development in harmony with life and with other objects. Also, in the theory of a hierarchy of basic human needs by psychologist Abraham Maslow, the ultimate development need is self-actualization toward self-perfection and growth. It seems that Maslow shared the same idea on the final step of human perception. At this level, the human perception of the object is a profound awareness that touches the original nature (source) of the object and life so that this knowledge will not age or become outdated with time. When everyone reaches this ultimate, there will be no more community groups with different values of benefit, but only a unity and solidarity community group sharing the common value which can develop their love, compassion and reach the values of truth, goodness and beauty in their own lives. The figure 1 below shows the 3 levels of human awareness of the outside world.

Until now, human beings see, explore and develop the physical world through levels of awareness. The first level of awareness depends on the basic needs of life for a safe living space and second level awareness depends on the desire to build one's own identity, social cohesion comes from the ego still be required and vital. More and more, people's perception of the world in its entirety - level 3 of perception - has been and is being developed through other supporting doors such as inside meditation (practices), dharma study (languages), or valuable architectural spaces, especially in the oriental UAHs. From this perspective, we can see more clearly about the noble value of heritage for human development, not only accompanying human beings for their development in the physical, social and spiritual life of individuals but even higher role, heritage helps human beings reach and

touch the beauty in true value of life, to realize the truth of the world as well as beauty of oneness (whole). UAHs preservation focusing on keeping and developing the layout, architectural organization, and decoration representative for the spirit of liberation, of freedom, of tranquility, of emptiness, of harmony- are representative for key value of UAH- could support a person to achieve mental tranquility and concentration, and help him to connect more easily with his inner mind and sometimes reveal his True Self. It can be seen that heritage is one of the important bridges to help people realize the pure value of surrounding things and their lives. That is the reason, normally and naturally, when entering the spiritual holy places or just walking through the traditional temple gate, Vietnamese people easily get rid of worries, hopes, insecurities from outside life to fall into serenity and peace of mind. In other words, it can be said that the deep and key value of a heritage is to help people touch their own purity and return to their true nature.

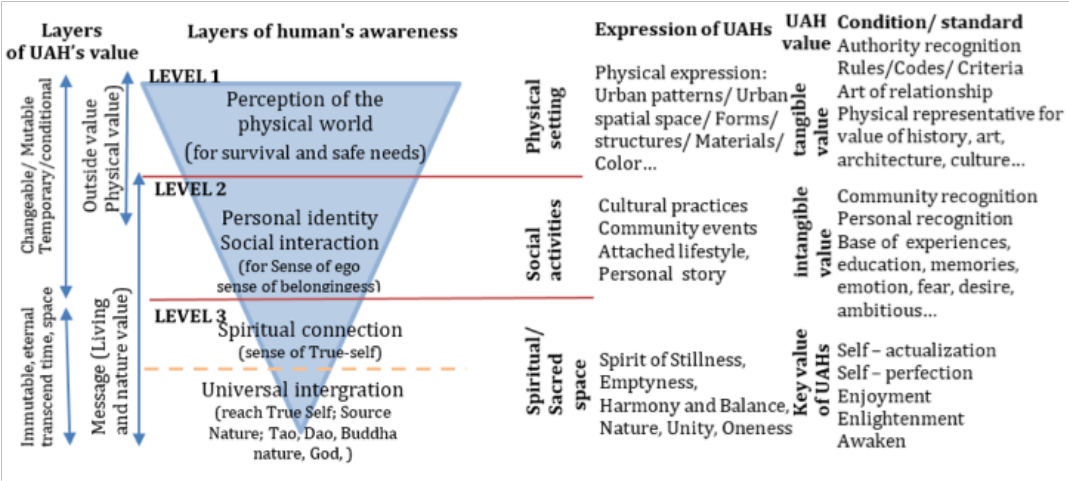


Figure 1. Diagram showing 3 layers of human's awareness and corresponding recognized value of UAHs. (Source: The author).



Figure 2. Icon of the impermanent, ever-changing nature of life- Taijitu and metaphorical representations embodied in a UAH in Viet Nam. (Source: Taijitu ,Zen_meditation, Buddha-under-the-tree, Keo Pagoda Vietnam- a special national historical site).

Field Survey on Local Community Perception of UAH in Hanoi

To explore heritage value in the present context, the survey focused on seeking UAH value in the relationship with community's awareness in Hanoi - the cultural capital of Vietnam - which owns and preserves a large number of valuable urban architectural heritage works and is under the great influence of different urbanization dimensions. The author focused on the sampling of survey sites that met the following criteria: 1) It is an area that includes many types of UAH running different functions to facilitate access to many target community groups, helping to understand the different objective perspectives of the community on UAH value; 2) The area also should represent a dynamic urban space where connect to diversely contemporary functions such as commercial activities, tourism, work, and public space, helping to meet variety of community and to able to explore different roles of UAH. So that, heritage space around Sword Lake (Hoan Kiem Lake) - a cultural center with a long urbanization process and heritage space around West Lake (Ho Tay Lake) - a cultural center with a later urbanization process were selected for the survey and community interviews. Figure 3 shows two survey sites.

Thanks to open surveys with local residents and others presenting in the two above sites, the author found a range of factors affected the community's assessment of UAH value as well as willingness to engage in conservation activities. These factors are: i) Community culture, traditional perspectives, social perspectives, or long-standing prejudices are still implemented in contemporary life; ii) Time/Experiences. The time of local community connection, degree and frequency of interactions between heritage and community, personal experiences with heritage, strong memories, nostalgia, and deeper knowledge of heritage stories; iii) The meaning of the heritage to the community and its member. The meanings of heritages are often influenced by and associated with the dominant culture. It can be messages that have been fixed, recognized, or messages that have not been officially recognized. For Hanoi UAHs, with an overwhelming amount of spiritual heritages long affected by oriental philosophy, the significance of the UAHs indicated in the survey is related to the three following characteristics. First is the ability to connect people with the local community and society. Second is the ability to connect people with nature. Third is the ability to help humans to reach a state of freedom, of emptiness, and deep peace of mind where they can enjoy permanent happiness and attain enlightenment. Heritage should awaken a feeling of belonging or a feeling of being a part of the community, society, and life and a feeling of being spiritual connection, feeling of be "fulfilled" in observer's mind; iv) The contemporary development context of urban and community areas. For example, practical and economic values have received increasing attention compared with cultural and materialistic values; actual and clear benefit values are more often mentioned rather than unrealistic or vague interest ones; v) Programs/projects that catalyze propagating and spreading knowledge of the heritage value as well as increasing the community's engagement to UAHs (Dao, 2017).



Figure 3. Survey sites in central Hanoi: left, Sword lake and right, West lake. (Source: The author).

Conclusion on the Key Value of UAHs, the Sustainable Way to Preserve UAHs and Encourage Community's Involvement

This article has used philosophical and scientific arguments of the Oriental and the Western and a practical survey case to clarify the changing and transformation nature of the world, of all objects existing in this universe, and also the changing nature of human perception. This reality has been reshaping the values of UAHs through different spaces, periods and context. Therefore, preserving the value of heritage is also an ongoing process to match the requirements of life and the beneficiaries - contemporary communities and future generations also.

At the first two levels of human perception - it can be said that the dominant awareness level of contemporary people to meet the basic needs of feeling, connecting and interacting the outside world, gathering external information then building particular social, community's and individual's stories under influence of the egos (The ego tends to be biased, changeable, and temporary). The highest level of human perception is level 3 where human perception is no longer governed by personal stories and outside influences, but by an intellectual understanding of the true nature of things, no more by ego but by true self - human cognitive ability that transcends external conditions. People takes time, maturity, and many other conditions to perfect and reach this perception level. However, only at this high level of awareness can people really know and realize the key value of heritage that is not changed, immutable, eternal despite the fact of time, space, and other conditions. And only through this level of awareness do we know that the key value of heritage is not a good or bad evaluation on an outside object, but as "the door" to help people discover and recognize and understand the ultimately sacred, spiritual nature of human beings in this life, which is strongly connected with nature and with all life.

At each stage, each society needs to clearly identify the needs and awareness levels in order to determine the appropriate methods of heritage conservation. In fact, in society, each person will reach different levels of awareness, therefore, we could consider the need for a harmony between three methods of heritage conservation as follows: i) conservation of physical values, outer physical expression - corresponding and consistent with the awareness level 1 – satisfy the need of survival and safe in the physical world. ii) preservation of intangible values - messages that reflect the ego's needs to build self-identity and a certain identity of

a community. iii) preserving and calling out the key values of the heritage – that is to support human awareness maturity to be able to see the world in its true and to strengthen the significance of truth - goodness - beauty of human beings towards harmony and balance life.

Accordingly, there is no real value in an object separate from the whole, but only value in the whole. While preserving the value of a separated object serves temporary and mutable significances, preserving value of the whole could reach more sustainable targets. The article supports UAH's key value that arouses the maturity in people's awareness. Realizing the value of harmony with the whole facilitates ideas of social cohesion, sustainable development, the more people focus on an object, the further away they are from the common value. In this paper, the key values of the heritage are suggested as expression of the spirit of emptiness, freedom, transcendence, harmony, balance, equality, transformation, impermanence etc., – metaphorical representations of the immutable principles of life. The oriental UAHs in general and Vietnamese UAHs in particular can apply this conservation proposal to not only meet people's needs in contemporary life but always ensure the key value of the UAHs that is oriented towards human beings, is "the door" to help people develop, mature in awareness ability and find their True Self. That is also the way of sustainable conservation.

Endnotes

- 1 True self is the human cognitive ability that transcends external conditions. While The self is the human perception governed by the effects of the individual's desire to build and reinforce the personal story in a desire to separate the self from the whole.
- 2 For example, we do not exist independently, but we exist because we have borrowed clean outside air to breathe, food from the soil to eat, water to drink, learning from others to live, etc... In our body, not everything belongs to us completely, but they belong to nature that has been transformed into us to nourish us.
- 3 For example, when we look deeply into a flower, we see in it there is water, there is soil, there is the care of the farmer, there is raindrops, there is sunshine of many days that have nourished and transformed into the flower.
- 4 The truth here implies that everything is neither good nor bad, but neutral.
- 5 Level of spiritual awareness or can be so-called sacred space of mind is where human awareness completely focuses, connects with the whole meaning rather than focusing on distinguishing and divisive objects.

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Introducing Creative City Factors as a Solution

in Sustainable Urban Development: A Case Study from Bushehr City in Iran

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Abstract

Bushehr city is located in one of the provinces rich in both oil and in historical sites with an international port on Persian Gulf. However, it has never been successful in terms of sustainable development and planning. Therefore, this study aims to identify the effective factors in constructing a creative city, as well as its relationship to Bushehr's sustainable urban development. The primary data was collected over the course of 18 years, and the Cochran formula was used to determine the exact size of the statistical population, which was 384 people. Pearson's correlation coefficient, path analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data with SPSS software. Creative cities and sustainable urban development have a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.468. The independent variables explain and predict 35.5% of the variance in sustainable urban development in multivariate regression analysis. The creativity and innovation variable, as well as the quality of life, have the most BETA.

Keywords: *Creative City, Sustainable Urban Development, Quality Of Life, Social Capital, Bushehr, Iran*

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Introduction

With the development of the cities and the introduction of the principle of sustainable urban development, the principle of sustainability in further development was questioned. Although in the direction of thoughts and theories related to development, aspects of sustainability were considered, the existing issues and problems, especially in the cities indicate the lack of the fulfilment of stability characteristics within them. Today, cities have been the focal points of sustainability as consumers, main distributors of goods and services. However, many cities destroy the resources around them by consuming too much of the resources. As the result of the over-consumption of resources and the dependence on the commercial economy, the environmentally destructive effects of cities extend beyond geographical boundaries. For this purpose, an important issue called sustainable urban development was considered during the 1990s up to now. And sustainable development is a general concept and it encompasses social, cultural, environmental aspects and other human needs (Kamranfar et al., 2022). The most important attraction in sustainable development is its comprehensive view on urban sustainability issues (Ghalehtemouri et al., 2021).

Sustainable urban development emphasizes sustainability and development for all and the future generation during times and economic, social, environmental, physical, and institutional aspects of the process of development in a city (Rahnamaei et al., 1998). Therefore, the main purpose of sociological explanation is the effect of the factors of the creative city and its relationship with the sustainable urban development of Bushehr. Sustainability is an issue that has been emphasized in various communities, especially urban communities in recent years. On the path of stability, the creative city and its components as life quality, creativity, and social capital play an important role. (Khansefid, 2012) these cities are built on a solid cultural and social infrastructure and due to their excellent cultural facilities; they are the centre of creating employment and attracting investments (Foroudi et al. (2016). Sustainable development has determined its role in the social environment and social capital by considering the concepts like social justice, comprehensive development, and social welfare. Characteristics of today's urban communities have led to the instability of man and the environment. (Natural environment and artificial environment) (Gilbert et al., 2022). The rapid growth of the world's urban population has faced the settlement of human societies with new problems and complexities. The complexities have transcended economic boundaries and have taken social and environmental aspects.

Economy-oriented and physical-oriented development, which were the first approaches of urban development, are not efficient enough today to be used in urban development. These approaches led to the technocratic view of the cities by emptying the cities from human and cultural aspects and without considering the needs of the city dwellers the management, planning, and urban development was considered to be the profession of the specialists who are able to rely solely on a number of limited and abstract principles of mathematics in any place and time to plan for the development of the cities. Such an issue is evident in the process of the urban development of Bushehr. Bushehr urban population ratio and average annual growth in age percentage are almost close to the rates of the whole country. The urban population of Bushehr has been growing rapidly for

several years and due to the natural growth of the population, wide immigration, expansion of services, and other issues, it has undergone many demographic and physical changes.

According to the 2016 census report, Bushehr had a 225297 population. However, cities of this province, including Bushehr, face many problems, and urban facilities and services do not suit this population. Therefore, promoting sustainable urban development in various economic, social, environmental, physical, and institutional aspects is the current necessity of this province. Bushehr has the highest population growth rate in Iran. This rate was 2.55% from 1984 to 1991. It is necessary to consider the aspects of social and cultural development of Bushehr regarding the items and components of the creative city, including social capital, human capital, social relation network, innovation, and quality of life. Due to the novelty of the issue of creative city and its relatively new ideas and that in Bushehr, no research on the creative city has been observed so far, this subject has an innovative aspect. Thus, the present article is based on the field research among people living in Bushehr and it seeks to find the relationship between the creative city and its components and sustainable urban development of Bushehr (Ghalehtemouri et al., 2020).

Study Area

Bushehr port is a port city and the centre of Bushehr province with an area of 984.5 square kilometers from the southwestern provinces of Iran. The population of this city in 2016 was 223504 people. Bushehr is a peninsular port in the central part of Bushehr city, which is limited to the Persian Gulf from the north, west and south. This port with a coastline of approximately 11 km in length and 18 meters above sea level in a coastal area of the Gulf. Located in Fars, has a warm semi-desert climate. Bushehr city is the best tourist destination (Movahed and Ghalehtemouri, 2020) in winter thanks to its mild weather. Bushehr has beautiful beaches and historical monuments which are interesting for international tourists. Also the climate related traditional city and building design make it as one of the most important tourist destinations (Figure 1).

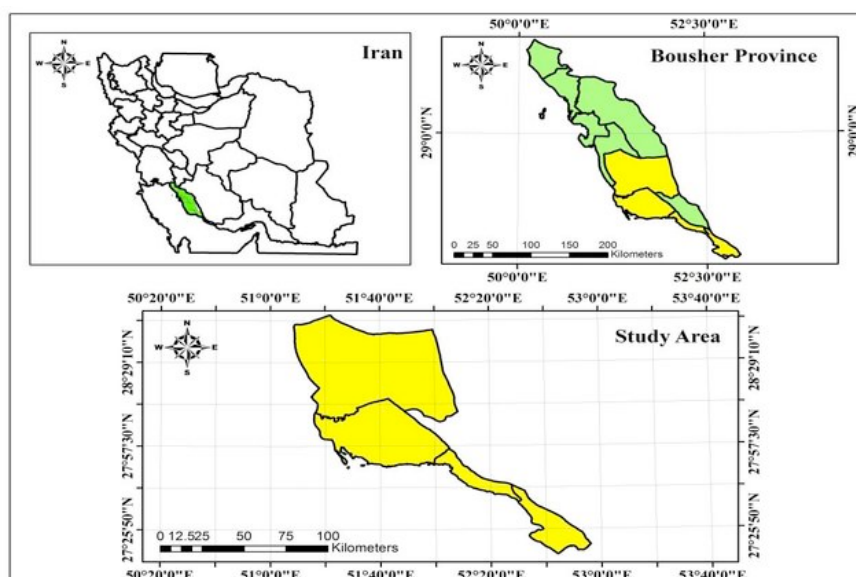


Figure 1. Bushehr City. Source: Aliani & Gorji 2018.

Theoretical foundations and Research Background

Various studies have been conducted in the field of environmental behaviors. Bagheri et al., (2020) examined the issue of spatial analysis of sustainable development indicators in order to achieve the feasibility of creative cities. (Case study: cities of Yazd province). Research findings show that the lack of the use of urban innovation components has led to a lack of creativity and reduced quality of life in public spaces of the cities of the province. Innovation can have the greatest impact on the predictability and feasibility of the creative city in the cities of the province. Mahkouii and Shirani, (2020) in their research entitled analysis of creative city indicators and its relationship with healthy urban development management, case study: Isfahan metropolis. The results of statistical analysis show that there is a positive relationship between creative cities and urban development management. Also, according to the results of regression analysis, 60% of the changes in the field of creative city development can be predicted with healthy city indicators. Darvishi et al., (2020), in an article, analyzed sustainable urban development based on the characteristics of social capital and public trust. According to the results of the research, social capital and public trust have an impact on sustainable urban development. Therefore, in sustainable urban development, two components of social capital and public trust were considered (Broska, 2021; Kamran et al., 2020). Alizadeh and Lotfi, (2019) examined the issue of explaining the impact of membership in the creative cities network on sustainable urban development. The results showed that membership in the UNESCO creative cities network has an impact on the sustainable urban development of Rasht. *"The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to foster international cooperation within and across cities worldwide that utilize culture and creativity as a strategic lever for sustainable urban development"* (UNESCO, 2004). The extent to which the social and economic components of the creative city change, the sustainable urban development of Rasht will change. The economic component of the creative city has a greater significance among the other components of the creative city in terms of influencing the sustainable urban development of Rasht. Shahivandi, (2018) in his research entitled survey and definition of social-cultural indicators of the creative city in the sustainable urban development of Isfahan. According to the results of the research, the context and the field of the achievement of the creative city in Isfahan are provided by the historical, cultural, social, and artistic background. The cultural attractions (literary forums, libraries, museums, identifying elements of cities and...), employing the creative class, and launching the creative industries corridor, it can move towards the realization of the creative city.

Hosseini et al., (2017), in research entitled the indicators of the creative city and its relationship with sustainable urban development (case study: Rasht) believe that rapid changes in technology and international competition and new urban challenges in economic, social, and managerial fields of the cities have increased the scope for attention to the issue of creativity in urban planning. Creativity in the city frees you from managerial and physical deadlocks and leads to the implementation of the two principles of participation and efficiency, which are the main characteristics in the field of good urban governance. The results show that the situation of Rasht, based on the indicators of the creative city, is as follows

(flexibility, innovation, risk-taking, and management are lower than the average expectation. In addition, there is a positive and significant relationship between the indicators of the creative city and aspects of sustainable development) (Tahiri et al., 2022).

Zarrabi et al., 2015) in an article entitled investigating the feasibility of a creative city (*A Comparative Study Between the Characteristics of Sustainable Urban Development and the Criteria for Creating a Creative City. Case Study: Cities of Yazd Province.*) believe that a creative city as a place with a strong efflorescence of art and culture, creativity, and innovation is in line with the four scenarios of creative human capital, quality of life, areas of innovation, and social capital. In order to apply the characteristics of sustainable development. The results of the analysis of the creative city criteria path show that innovation variables with the rate of 0/672 and educational variables with the rate of 0/537 have the greatest impact, respectively, on sustainable development and creative cities of Yazd province. Eventually, due to the high amount of available human capital, the high number of specialists, the high rate of growth, and the technology centers, Yazd has the potential to use the new energies (solar and wind energies) and to move towards the realization of the creative city. O'Connor et al., 2020 investigated creative cities and creative and modern world classes. They see the Developing discourse of creative cities as an organization increasingly developing organized around the block of transactional domination. It is possible to change the discourse of the creative city only after a fundamental rethinking of a modernized image and the basis of a new perception of local facilities.

Chen et al., (2014), in an article entitled a sustainable future for the village of Leiden, developed a model for promoting social capital and improving the quality of life in urban areas in order to raise public awareness and attract more participation of residents in the sustainable development of house building and neighborhood. This research states that development activities including identifying neighborhood development priorities, providing technical equipment, on-the-job training for indigenous residents in renovating new homes, new construction and cartography using G.I.S are in developing the neighborhood and its economy.

Marlin et al (2012) conducted research entitled "investigating the impacts of trust and social participation in urban sustainability. (Case study: Durban: South Africa) The findings of the research showed that the variables of trust and social participation and all its aspects had a significant impact on urban sustainability. The impact of the variable of social trust was greater than that of social participation in urban sustainability. Among the aspects of social trust, the aspects of political, institutional, generalized, and interpersonal trust had the greatest impact respectively, and among the aspects of social participation, the impact of the formal aspect on urban sustainability has been greater than the informal aspect. Also, the relationship between all contextual variables except the housing status variable with the urban sustainability was significant. Masayuki (2010) explored urban reconstruction through cultural creativity and social inclusion: reading the theory of the creative city through a Japanese case study. This article was conducted with

the aim of revising the theory of the creative city with the analysis of urban reconstruction processes in Japan through cultural activity and social inclusion.

Overall, researches on the relationship and impact of creative city indicators such as quality of life, creativity, and innovation, social capital, trust, participation, and cohesion, on development in general and sustainable urban development, in particular, have concluded a strong and significant correlation and impact (Ghalehtemouri et al., 2020). Creative cities are considered as centers of innovation, creativity, and conversion of ideas into wealth. Such cities are built on a solid cultural and social infrastructure and they attract the center of gravity by creating employment and development through their outstanding cultural facilities (Rezaei et al., 2022.). The philosophy of the creative city is that in any city, there is always a much greater capacity than it seems initially. Creative city has been one of the useful concepts in the field of urban management, which is semantically related to the concept of entrepreneurship (Rahimi et al., 2013; Pulido-Fernández et al., 2021). There are many universities institutes and scholars have made definition on the meaning of creative city which mainly believe that a creative city can solve the industrial cities problems. The creative city is brand and can solve individuality problems (Landry, 2012), a practical model boosting a culture of creativity in urban planning and solutions to urban problems which can improve the quality of the planning system (Askar, 2021).

The creative city means creative citizens in the 21st century (Kalantari et al., 2012). The creative city has various elements that can create a creative city such as people, economic enterprise, spaces, connections, and perspectives are the five main pillars of creative cities, and paying attention to these pillars will be vital for the creation and development of creative cities in the future.

There are various theories about the creative city and the modern city. George Simmel, without specifying his purpose, tried to reflect on technology, which was growing importance and explore its possibilities for the liberation of the individual and its constraints for the growth of the individual (Watier, 2004; Friedland and Boden, 2020). The growth of the metropolises for centralizing the monetary economy has improved the process of exchange, circulation and consumption of goods, promotion of leisure areas, expansion of individualism, and the feeling of privacy. By relying on this approach, Simmel achieved the tendencies of individualism, the plurality of styles, expansion of social relations, the invention of innovation, the growth of subcultures and countercultures, the emergence of new aesthetic feelings in consumption.

Daniel Lerner's theory of modernization of the city is a center of growth, mobility, integration of population and the inhabitants of cities and their suburbs experience a new style and way of life which causes the transformation of opinions and interests and taking into accounts the tendencies and beliefs of others. A city is considered a social development if it offers new cultural insights to its residents (Azkia, 2005; Gullick, 2020). Daniel Lerner is not directly involved in the creative city, but his attention to the city and urbanization, its role in the modernization

and innovation of society can be considered. In his point of view, modern and innovative cities strengthen the sense of individualism and undermine traditionalism and the city is the place of rational action, worldly thinking, and the bourgeoisie or the establishment of organic society and positivism (Shah, 2011).

Castells, 2001 is concerned with the space of currents or the dominance of mass media in new cities and the formation of public opinion. This space of currents of thought is responsible for ideas and aspirations of citizens and the way out of this rule and dominance is the attraction of the participation of citizens in the administration of city affairs and in our country, the law of the administration of city councils and council election is its objective example. Castells are now exploring new areas of research, one of which is the new forms of communication technology and threats and opportunities that have arisen through their development. Florida describes the theory of the class and the creative in his book in 2002. A creative city requires three types of rational, creative, and social investment to grow and develop. According to the creative city theory. Elites or the opposite class tend to live in cities with significant diversity, and tolerance and have a high level in terms of urban environmental quality and design standards. According to this theory, attracting creative people makes cities stronger and leads to their economic growth (Florida, 2005).

Landry 2006 believes that in modern city's creativity should be considered as a substitute for indigenous natural resources. A in a creative city, creativity is seen as new money and creative people are seen as the capital of the future city and the producers of wealth. Jean Jacobs believes that creative cities are the cities that are successful in industrial innovation. Jacobs believes that in diverse urban environments, entrepreneurship benefits through a variety of access to knowledge and skills. Instead, this interaction acts as a magnet for creative people. Among these, the combination of the new and old buildings is of great importance of creativity (Hasenpers and Van Dalm, 2005).

The theory of sustainable urban development is the result of the environmentalists' argument about environmental issues, especially urban ones which were followed by the theory of sustainable urban development to support natural resources. In this theory, the issue of resource conservation for the present and the future is raised through the optimal use of land and the infliction of the least waste into non-renewable resources. With respect to the subject of the present research, several theories have been used to achieve an accurate explanation of the research problem. (Sustainable urban development).

Sustainable development is the process of economic, social, and cultural reform that is based on technology accompanied by social justice in a way that does not contaminant the ecosystem and does not destroy natural resources. That is why sustainable development must always consider social justice in its process and eliminate social inequalities culturally and economically. The ultimate point of this definition is to increase human resources and empower society that is, sustainable urban development in the process must increase human resources to train knowledgeable, efficient, and creative human beings. According to various

researchers, cities like Sherry Arnstein and David Driskelle consider the real and comprehensive participation of the people and the citizens in various urban plans and projects as the most important principle and path to sustainable urban development. The approach that these researchers believe should be taken to increase citizen participation in urban planning are centralized planning to decentralized ones, top-down and bottom-up planning, and planning with people for people.

Sherry Arnstein believes that sustainable urban development is achieved when urban planning patterns are designed based on social capital and real citizen participation. (Arnstein, 1969) Arnstein believes that participation is basically interpreted as the distribution of power. On this basis, participation without redistribution of power is an absurd and frustrating process for those deprived of power. (Abdullah, 2021) in this regard, he proposed a theory called the "ladder of participation." Arnstein's ladder of participation consists of eight steps that include deception, treatment, notices, consulting, creating peace, partnership, delegating power, authority, and supervision of citizens. Based on these steps, the status and quality of individuals regarding participation were classified into three categories called:

1. Deprived of participation (deception and treatment)
2. Partial participation (notices, consulting, and creating peace)
3. Real participation (partnership, delegating power, authority and supervision of citizens) (Valibeigi, and Sereshti ,2022)

Arnstein believes that urban sustainability, solving environmental, social, economic and physical problems take place in a state of real participation, power distribution, trust, conversation, partnership, citizenship and supervision and activating social capital production platforms (Arnstein, 1969). David Driskell also believed that sustainable urban development, in its various aspects, is the result of participation, quantity, and quality of social capital of the citizens, level of trust, social mobilization, responsibility, transparency, and people's participation in decision-making. (Driskell, 2008) he believes that social capital and citizen's participation in urban development planning is based on three principles:

1. Development in the first place, it must benefit the local residents.
2. People who live in the planned area have the most accurate information about that region.
3. The people who make the most impact on decisions have a greater share in decision-making. He classifies different types of participation in two more general categories," participation and non-participation.

He considers that non-participation (e.g. manipulation and fraud, decoration, and dramatic egalitarianism), participation (e.g. consulting, social mobilization, people's responsibility). Therefore, he believes to have more cooperation and cohesions we need more participation from the bottom-up and this harmonization in urban decision making encourage experts and managers participate (Driskelle, 2008) (figure 2).

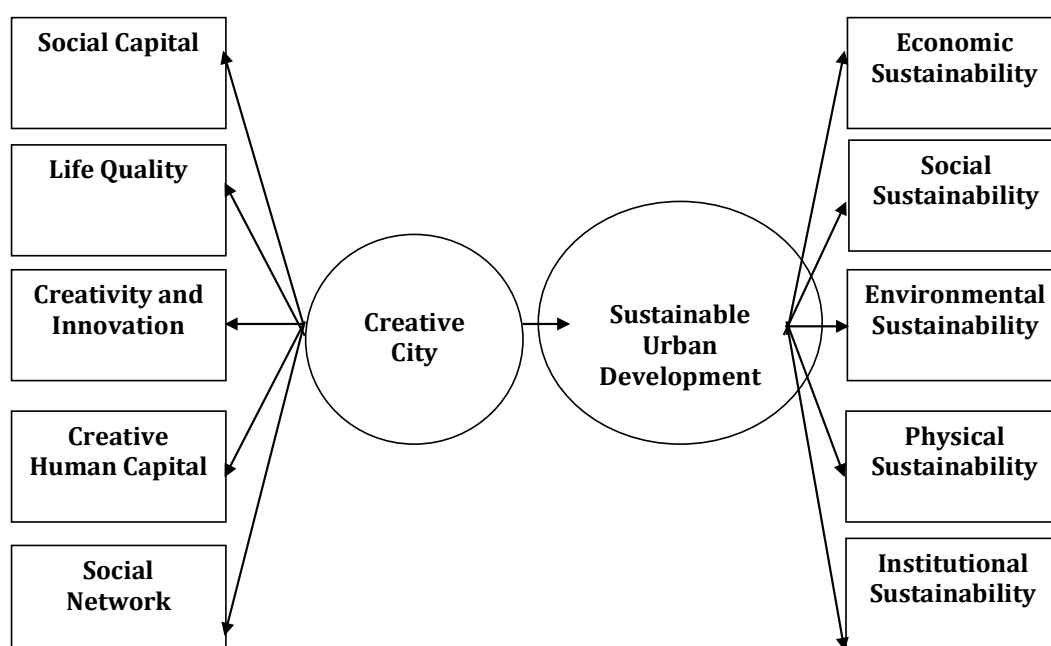


Figure 2. Theoretical diagram of the research.

Effective Variables Identification

The research method is a survey and the survey method seeks to identify the causes of phenomena by examining the changes in each of the variables and searching for the features that are regularly linked to it. Documentary (library) and field (survey and interview) methods were used to collect information. In the documentary method, to compile a comprehensive theoretical framework of the research, the background, and previous studies, and sociological theories were reviewed to analyze the issue. After evaluating previous research and related theories and understanding the current state of society, the indicators and variables of research were compiled. Finally, a research questionnaire was created using the scale item. The statistical population of the present study includes a group of people over 18 years old in Bushehr. According to the statistics of 2016, the number of people is 290359. (General census of population and housing of 2016). Among these people, 141099 of them are women and 149260 of them are men. According to Cochran's formula, the sample size is equal to 384. The sampling method is the multi-stage cluster. Pearson correlation coefficient, regression, and path analysis were used to test the relationship of variables at the distance measurement level. Formal credit is also used and the measuring instrument has the necessary reliability and the alpha value of sustainable urban development is .883 and creativity value is .897. Cronbach's alpha of all variables is higher than .70 and it indicates the reliability of the items of measurements of all research variables (figure 3).

Sustainable urban development: it is a development that responds to the needs of the people of the city, but its survival and durability are guaranteed and at the same time, water, soil, and air, the three elements that are essential for human life would not be polluted and unused. Sustainable urban development, that is, the condition in which the present citizens and the citizens of the future can live in complete peace and security and have a long, healthy, and productive life (Five

aspects of social, economic, environmental, physical, and institutional sustainability were used to evaluate sustainable urban development (Ghalehtemouri et al., 2021; Kojuri et al., 2020).

Variables	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Social capital	38	0.892
Creativity and innovation	9	0.719
Life quality	10	0.778
Creative human capital	5	0.847
Social relations network	15	0.764
Creative city	77	0.897
Economic sustainability	6	0.734
Social sustainability	10	0.768
Environmental sustainability	6	0.673
Physical sustainability	6	0.753
Institutional sustainability	4	0.789
Sustainable urban development	32	0.862

Figure 3. Reliability of variables.

Theoretical definition	Operational definition	Aspects	Variables
Income ratio of the cost of an urban household, employment status and business environment of cities, urban investment and revenue opportunities, high inflation and urban services, quality of market goods.	It is the stability and continuity of the status of optimal allocation of production, distribution and consumption of goods and service (Moghaddam and Rafieian, 2020).	Economic sustainability	Sustainable urban development
Status of social harm(addiction ,divorce, prostitution and ...)social freedom(freedom of expression, consumption of cultural goods, social relationship and ...)the extent of social justice(income ,regional and gender justice)the level of social security(life, psychological and financial security)the level of social welfare(objective and subjective)	It is the stability and continuity of the optimal state of group, collective and cultural life that leads to the excellence of social relations between individuals. (Petersen, 2020; Labonté, and Ruckert, 2019).	Social sustainability	
The extent of preservation and expansion of green space and parks, hygiene and urban cleaning, collection and disposal of municipal waste and sewage, drinking water and urban weather quality, noise pollution and urban tranquility and peace.	It is the progress in various economic and social aspects, which is accompanied by maintaining and enhancing natural renewable and non-renewable resources for the future generation (Murphy, 2021).	Environmental sustainability	
View of streets and buildings in terms of aesthetics and urban furniture, streets condition, status of urban infrastructure, quality and strength of buildings and urban housing. The status of urban transportation and traffic.	It is the stable progress in terms of façade and urban furniture, physical structure, construction and infrastructure (Furlan et al., 2019; Ghasemi et al., 2019).	Physical sustainability	
Status of health, medical, cultural and educational, and sport and recreation facilities, performance of urban services organizations	It is the facilities and services with urban stability and principled organization of structures, regulated communication between them and adoption of laws and appropriate policies (Bellew et al., 2020)	Institutional sustainability	

Figure 4. Theoretical and operational definition of sustainable urban development.

The creative city: creative city believes that the element of place, outside of the industry and as an environment that enhances the quality of human life should be emphasized. In the past, the inhabitants of the city were divided into working and capitalist classes, but in the frame of the definition of the creative city, they are divided into 2 groups of creative and non-creative. The creative class has the knowledge and the burden of a knowledge-based economy lies with the people living in the city and have sufficient expertise. The fusion of the investment, place and people must lead to a five-stage of innovation: innovation in urban management, institutional, economic, social, cultural, and artistic issues. (Gharagozlo, 2013). A creative city is a place for the growth of creativity in the city's dynamics. A creative city is a dynamic one in terms of cultural and intercultural learning. In this city, each citizen is confident in using his scientific, technical, artistic, and cultural capacities. (Rafieeyan, 2015) for evaluating this variable the indicators of life quality, human capital creativity, and social capital were used (Mousavi, 2014).

Findings

Examination of descriptive findings shows that 29.7% of people are between 30 to 39 years old which has the highest frequency. Also, 28 people, which is 7.3% of the people are 60 years old, about 24.7% of the people are between 40 to 49 years old, about 11.7% are between 50 to 59 and about 26.86% are younger than 29 years old. The average age of respondents is 38.6% years old. About 68.2% of them are married and 25% were single. About 4.9% were divorced and 1.9% of them were widows. About 33.9% had a bachelor's degree, about 2.1% had a doctoral degree and about 22.4% had a master's degree. About 68% of them were men and 32% of them were women. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their social class shows that 47.1% of them belong to the middle class and about 10.4% of them were members of the lower class. About 25% of them were lower-middle-class members and about 14.6% were upper-middle-class members and about 2.3% of them were upper-class members.

The findings showed that the average of sustainable urban development is high among people. About 12 % consider the rate of sustainable urban development to be very low, about 18.2 % consider it to be low, about 29.2% consider it to be average, about 24 % consider it to be high and about 16.6 % consider it to be very high. About 11.4 % consider the rate of the creative city to be very low, about 19.3 % consider it to be low, about 28.6 % consider it to be average, about 23 % consider it to be high and about 17.7 % consider it to be very high.

The main hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between creative cities and sustainable urban development. With respect to the level of evaluation and testing the normality of the data in the variables of creative city and sustainable urban development, for evaluating the relationship of the variables Pearson correlation coefficient was used. There is a positive and direct relationship between a creative city and sustainable urban development. Thus, as the feature of the creative city increase more in Bushehr, sustainable urban development increases as well. The Pearson correlation coefficient is .468 between the creative city and sustainable urban development. The variable of sustainable urban de-

velopment has five aspects which have a positive and significant relationship with the independent variable of the creative city. The aspect of social sustainability has the highest correlation coefficient with the variable of the creative city and the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.414 between them. Also, the aspect of physical sustainability has the lowest correlation (0.232) with the creative city.

Variables	Much	Very much	Average	Low	Very low
Economic sustainability	101	114	45	84	40
	26.3%	29.7%	11.7%	21.9%	10.4%
Social sustainability	89	126	54	71	44
	23.2%	32.8%	14%	18.5%	11.5%
Environmental sustainability	100	113	84	45	42
	26%	29.4%	21.9%	11.7%	11%
Physical sustainability	94	120	84	46	40
	20%	31.2%	21.9%	18.8%	10.4%
Institutional sustainability	77	89	80	72	66
	20%	23.2%	20.8%	18.8%	17.2%
Sustainable urban development	92	112	70	64	46
	24%	29.2%	18.2%	16.6%	12%
Creativity and innovation	105	114	68	65	32
	27.3%	29.7%	17.7%	16.9%	8.3%
Human capital	77	105	74	81	47
	20%	227.4%	19.3%	21.1%	12.2%
Life quality	81	107	72	74	50
	21.1%	27.9%	18.8%	19.2%	13%
Social capital	91	115	82	50	46
	23.7%	30%	21.3%	13%	12%
Social relation network	66	129	88	49	52
	17.2%	33.6%	22.9%	12.7%	13.5%
Creative city	88	110	74	68	44
	23%	28.6%	19.3%	17.7%	11.4%

Figure 5. Distribution of respondents based on the variables of sustainable urban development and creative city.

Dependent variable	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance level	Results
Economic sustainability	0.367	0.000	Positive & significant correlation
Social sustainability	0.414		
Environmental sustainability	0.364		
Physical sustainability	0.232		
Institutional sustainability	0.319		
Sustainable urban development	0.486		

Figure 6. Pearson correlation coefficient between creative city and sustainable urban development.

Also, there is a significant relationship between the aspects of the creative city and sustainable urban development. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.286 between the social capital of the citizens and sustainable urban development and its significance level is zero. That is, as the social capital increases, sustainable urban development increases as well and as social capital decreases, sustainable urban development decreases as well. This positive correlation is significant with a probability of more than 99%. The other aspects of the creative city have a direct and positive Pearson correlation coefficient. The aspect of creativity and innovation, with the coefficient of 0.494, has the highest correlation with sustainable urban development, and the aspect of the social relationship network, with the coefficient of 0.233 has the lowest correlation with sustainable urban development.

Indicators	Social relations network	Human capital	Life quality	Creativity and innovation	Social capital
Pearson correlation	0.233	0.274	0.428	0.494	0.286
Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Figure 7. Pearson correlation coefficient between the dimensions of creative city and sustainable urban development.

For examining and testing the main research hypothesis, besides the Pearson correlation coefficient, a regression analysis was used to determine the effectiveness of the creative city upon sustainable urban development of Bushehr. The results showed that the amount of the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.596, which is an average correlation coefficient. The coefficient of determination is 0.355, which shows that the variance of the creative city determines and predicts 35.5 % of variance and changes of sustainable urban development. The amounts of the regression coefficients showed that the variability of life quality, creativity and innovation, and the social relationship network are significantly more than 99 %. On the basis of the standard amounts of the regression coefficient, the possibility is provided to compare and determine the relative share of each of the variables in explaining the variance and the dependent variable changes. The highest amount of BETA belongs to the variety of creativity, innovation, and life quality. Therefore, as an example, on the basis of BETA for creativity and innovation, we can say that for every unit of increase in standard deviation, the amount of creativity and innovation increase as much as 0.347 standard deviations of the dependent variable. (Sustainable urban development).

As it can be seen, on the basis of the results of the path analysis, the variables of creativity and innovation, life quality, and social relationship network have the highest direct impact, and the variables of life quality and human capital have the highest indirect impact and the variables of life quality, creativity and innovation, and social relationship network has the highest total impact on the sustainable urban development.

Variables	VIF	Tolerance	Sig	T	BETA	Std.error	b
Constant amount			0.000	7.548		5.853	44.175
Life quality	1.224	0.817	0.000	5.621	0.257	0.106	0.596
Creativity and innovation	1.356	0.738	0.000	7.220	0.347	0.127	0.916
Human capital	1.210	0.827	0.297	1.044	0.47	0.145	0.151
Social relations network	1.074	0.931	0.000	4.182	0.179	0.080	0.335
Social capital	1.198	0.835	0.133	1.506	0.68	0.035	0.053
R		sig	F	Durbin-Watson		Std.error	R
0.596		0.000	41.69	1.57		12.39	0.355

Figure 8. Regression coefficient values of sustainable urban development.

Variables	Direct	Indirect	Total
Life quality	0.26	0.14	0.40
Creativity and innovation	0.35	–	0.35
Human capital	–	0.11	0.11
Social relations network	0.18	0.05	0.23
Social capital	–	0.07	0.07

Figure 9. Direct, indirect and total independent variables on sustainable urban development.

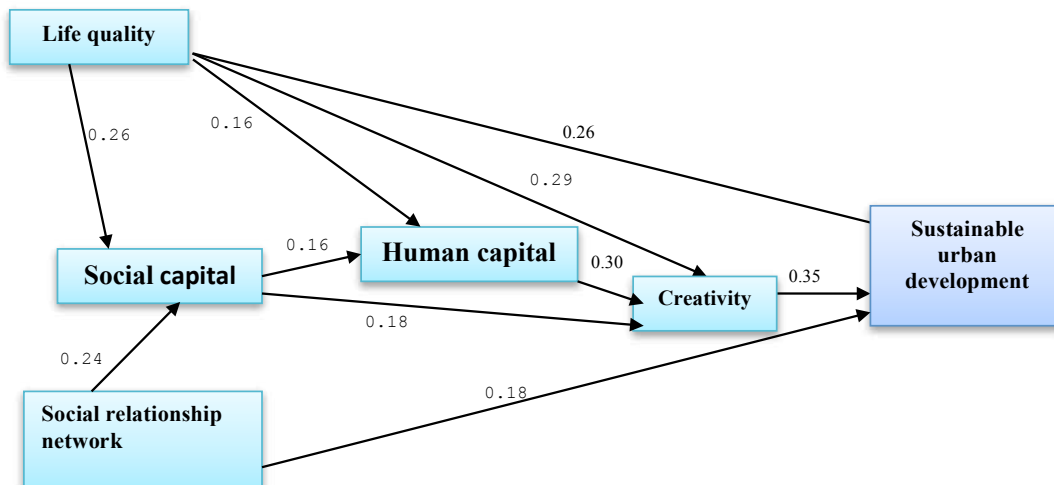


Figure 10. Sustainable urban development pathway analysis model.

Conclusion

Due to the growing attention and importance of urban development in recent years, attention to sustainable urban development has become particularly important. The main subject of the present research is a sustainable urban development in Bushehr. The social capital development aspects play a very important role in a creative city that can influence urban development and sustainable urban development. The creative cities are called the centres of innovation, creativity, and the transformer of an idea into wealth. Since idea and innovation are the main competitive elements in the age of globalization, having a creative city is the desire of every society. According to the approach of the creative city, a city should be an attractive environment for attracting and developing talents, innovations, and ideas and it should be able to benefit from ideas and creativity of the people either special people as artists, scientists authors, or the ordinary citizens in solving basic problems and establishing creative growth and development. A creative city is a sufficient environment for training, human creativity and it provides a breeding ground for the creativity of its residents.

The main hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between a creative city and its indicators with sustainable urban development in Bushehr. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.468 between the creative city and sustainable urban development. Since the level of significance in the correlation coefficient is less than 5%, so there is a direct positive significant relationship between the creative city and sustainable urban development. That is, as the features of the creative city increase in Bushehr, sustainable urban development increases as well. The variable of sustainable urban development consists of 5 aspects that have a positive and significant relationship with the independent variable of the creative city. The aspect of social sustainability has the highest correlation coefficient with the variable of the creative city and the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.414 between them. In addition, the aspect of physical sustainability, one of the variables of sustainable urban development, has the lowest correlation with the creative city. The results of the regression analysis showed that the variable of the creative city determines and predicts 20.6% of variance and changes of the sustainable urban development. If the characteristics of the creative city were not used for sustainable urban development, it would not go on well. Thus, the creative city emphasizes the improvement of the living environment and the quality of life through the new thought of the citizens. Creative cities play a fundamental role in the growth and development of each city and the existence of cultural and social infrastructure, creative leadership, and the role of the creative and innovative people is the infrastructure facilities for urban prosperity and development.

Therefore, as the rate of the indicators of the creative city increases, the rate of sustainable urban development increases as well. Accordingly, for the increase of sustainable urban development in society, we should pay attention to the rate of the creative city and its indicators and components. Planning of sustainable urban development in Bushehr should be purposeful and commensurate with the natural and human potentials and capacities and the objective and mental needs of the people in order to lead to the improvement of social capital and sustain-

able urban development. Social capital should be considered as the main goal of sustainable urban development projects. If a city succeeds in attracting creative people and employing them in management, economics, and cultural industry, it can also be successful in the field of competition and economic development. Thus, paying attention to the component of creativity and innovation among the citizens for achieving sustainable urban development is undeniable. Attracting and nurturing talented people and new ideas and paying attention to human capital as an indicator of the creative city has a direct and positive impact upon sustainable urban development. The role of the education and educational centres in development and the increase of the people's participation in sustainable urban development is significant and education can play an effective role in creating culture. If the educational system of society has proper coherence and planning regarding urban issues, we can be hopeful that the sense of social responsibility has spread in the society and participate in environmental, economic, social, and cultural activities as the aspects of sustainable urban development have increased.

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Reinterpreting Performing Arts for the 21st Century

*in Reference to the Narai Avatara
Performance*

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Abstract

This article aims to share insights gained about how traditional arts and heritage can be reinterpreted through creative performing arts to keep them vibrant in 21st century urban life. Drawn from a dissertation length piece of research: 'Reinterpreting Performing Arts for the 21st Century in Reference to the Narai Avatara Performance.' The practice-based research on which this article is based was conducted in the context of selected urban areas in Thailand, like Bangkok, by using six methods: research literature, personal experience, field study, media, symposium, and interviews. Data collection was carried out from December 1996 through April 2022. Interviews were conducted with performing arts professionals, scholars and Thai & foreign audiences. The data was evaluated via a hexagonal analysis model developed specifically for this project. This research advances the main research proposition: Provision of a model of the creative process for reinterpreting dance as part of heritage interpretation for the 21st century and how to use dance as part of arts reinterpretation to keep Thai arts alive in urbanized areas. This research found the model of using original text and mural painting sources, together with blending of techniques derived from different cultures to help emphasize the magical, facilitated the use of different elements which make the performance more spectacular, with costumes adapted, while maintaining a flavor of the traditional aesthetic, and allowed the dancers complete freedom of movement.

Keywords: *Reinterpreting Performing Arts, 21st century, Narai Avatara Performance, Dance-Drama, Thailand*

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Introduction

The development of dance forms in Thailand has been further described by Mattani Mojdara Rutnin: “The Ayutthaya kings and members of the royal family of the later period from the eighteenth century on contributed significantly to the development and refinement of khon and lakhon, which became models for Thonburi and Ratanakosin drama and theatre” (Mattani Mojdara Rutnin 1996:46) In large cities around the world traditional art forms are under threat. Bangkok, Thailand, is an obvious example of this. It is a country where foreign tourists delight in the unique artistic and cultural heritage, but where many of its traditional art forms are actually in danger of dying out from urbanized areas. The situation is perhaps most alarming in the case of Thai live performing arts. At the same time, those closest to these traditional art forms recognize the great value they continue to hold. This raises the question of how to conserve a vibrant performing arts scene which itself is a means of heritage interpretation and conservation

The dance-drama *Narai Avatara* was originally staged at Chiang Mai's Kad Theatre on the 8th and 9th November, 1996. After making its debut in Chiang Mai, six years later, *Narai Avatara* was staged again for urbanized audiences in Bangkok at the Thailand Cultural Centre, with a new all-male mainly professional cast and live narration, chorus and traditional music. The dance-drama *Narai Avatara* is an example of a work which sought to breathe new life into the live performing arts scene in Thailand. Enacting episodes from the *Ramakien*, the Thai version of the *Ramayana* and the main source for traditional Thai performing arts, the work was firmly rooted in the Thai tradition. However, *Narai Avatara* was not a Thai dance production, but an innovative contemporary dance theatre production with international appeal. Nevertheless, while it embraced modern movement and diverse international influences, its foundation in original, authentic source materials ensured that the production was very much a means of Thai heritage interpretation and conservation, actively seeking to raise awareness of the richness of the Thai arts, literary and performing arts traditions and affirm living Thai heritage.

This production has been the topic of a dissertation-length piece of research on ‘Reinterpreting performing arts for the 21st century in reference to the *Narai Avatara* performance.’ Here, some of the key findings of this research are presented. In particular, this article highlights findings which may be of interest for those concerned with the development and/or the staging of arts heritage interpretation in urbanized areas around the world.

Sadly, in modern-day Thailand, traditional art, traditional performing arts and early urban theatre entertainment in general are largely perceived as being old-fashioned, irrelevant and of little interest. It would not be an overstatement to say that traditional arts as national heritages are at risk of dying out. This situation has been exacerbated by the way traditional performing arts have often been presented or interpreted. All too often, productions which have been staged have adapted traditional forms merely by making a brief examination of traditional dance steps and then crudely ‘updating’ them. This type of adaptation invariably lacks authenticity and represents a limited, superficial approach to reinterpretation, one which often results in a finished commercial product of limited aesthetic value and which does little to communicate a positive heritage interpretation

message. Moreover, when considered more thoroughly, this type of work seems to have little in common with the tradition it is trying to duplicate.

In order to keep an 'old' form alive, it is important not just to make a quick survey of its outer form, but to remember its essential nature. In the case of Thai dance, any rigorous consideration of the tradition soon shows it to be a tradition that is actually based on interpretation. Regarding interpretation as it relates to heritage, Alpin has pointed out that: "Entertainment can certainly capture the visitor's interest and set the scene for information acquisition" (Alpin 2002:42). For Pisit Charoenwongsa, "Interpretation is a means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people enrich their understanding and appreciation of their world and their role within it" (Pisit Charoenwongsa, 2001). Siriporn Nanta provides us with an interesting definition of what heritage actually means: "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations" (Siriporn Nanta, ed. 2000:6). "The idea of the national heritage can encompass notions of landscape and, indeed, notions of race" (Schama and Wright quoted in Meethan, 200:99) "By labelling an object, building or site as part of the heritage, it is elevated above the mundane into a symbol of a nation, or people" (Meethan, 2001:99) Heritage is increasingly being drawn into a globalized tourism industry. "Like culture in its broader anthropological meaning, heritage is intimately linked to identity (personal, communal and national) and to core value systems; hence commodification of heritage as tourist 'product' is inevitably fraught with tensions" (Trotter, 2001:141) Hall and McArthur note, that performing arts interpretation represents an especially useful and versatile artistic tool, "Theatrical performance is one of the most creative and artistic forms of learning." (Hall & McArthur, 1998:178)

It is quite realistic then to acknowledge that Thai dance, even though it is quite distinct, is the result of a fusion of influences and their adaptation to local styles. This view, that the origins of Thai performing arts can certainly be traced back to foreign ideals, was firmly supported by leading 20th century Thai arts scholar H. H. Prince Dhaninivat Kromamin Bidyalabh Bridhyakorn:

"Thai dance in the past had contemporary processes of changing and adapting, H. H. Prince Dhaninivat Kromamün Bidyalabh Bridhyakorn remarked," "dramatics in our country were doubtless inspired by foreign ideals such as the Indian, the Indonesian and the Cambodian. With the lapse of centuries we have evolved our own ideals till they seem far apart from the original sources of inspiration." (Dhaninivat Kromamün Bidyalabh Bridhyakorn, H. H. Prince quoted in Dhanit Yupho, 1963: Back cover)

These comments also remind us how Thai dance, throughout its history, has remained an art form characterized by a high degree of adaptability and a willingness to use and take advantage of 'contemporary processes.' The dance forms did not develop in isolation but were and are part of a broader artistic tradition. For example, Khon (Thai masked dance-drama) developed from puppet theatre forms, and most importantly, it developed from the Ramakien. Khon, which has been

recognized by Jukka Miettinen as “one of the most spectacular forms of South-East Asian dance-drama. It can involve over a hundred actors, a large pipad orchestra, narrators, singers, and a chorus” (Miettinen, 1992:55) Examination of Thai traditional mural paintings and texts of the Ramakien suggest how the various forms interpreting the Indian epic influenced each other, but all had the Ramayana, or at least the Ramakien, as their true source.

In keeping with this tradition, the creation of Narai Avatara looked beyond previous performing arts enactments of the Ramakien to their source, taking the text as its inspiration and starting-point. Because it did this, Narai Avatara is a reinterpretation which represents a genuine continuation of the tradition of enacting the Ramakien in dance theatre form. Having gone to the source, the performance was then developed as an authentic interpretation of the chosen episodes from the Ramakien. In this way, rather than relying on traditional dance steps to guide the creative vision, by going back further, all aspects of the performance were linked to the original Thai heritage that inspired the traditional dance in the first place. This foundation in the original source text was doubly effective in that it served as a clear artistic frame for the production, a frame which assured authenticity but which allowed for a dynamic and appealing production.

In addition to the text, the guiding artistic frame was also influenced by traditional representations of the Ramakien in visual art. As dance is at once a narrative and a visual form, it was quite fitting that the performance drew on narrative and visual traditional representations as guides for its composition. In keeping with the performance’s heritage interpretation aims, these traditional representations came from the heart of the Thai arts and literary traditions. The extant Rama I version of the text was chosen as the narration to accompany the performance and this provided a startpoint for the choreography. This version was chosen not just because it is the most celebrated Thai version of the epic, but because it is the oldest ‘complete’ Thai version available and because this version has provided the foundation for classical Thai dance interpretations of episodes from the epic throughout the Rattanakosin period. Perhaps just as celebrated are the traditional Thai mural paintings depicting the Ramayana which can be seen in the galleries at The Royal Palace or Wat Phra Keaw in Bangkok. This foundation in authentic source images and representations then provided a clear basis for the composition from which the aesthetic vision could take shape.

This authentic artistic frame then had the effect of assuring that the whole performance was imbued with authenticity. Narai Avatara can be regarded as an active visual and musical interpretation of Thai arts and literary heritage as represented by the traditional mural paintings and Rama I’s poetry lyrics. These influences subtly infuse and underscore all aspects of the performance’s aesthetic: in movement, music, sound, costume and scenery. This ensures that the performance exudes a traditional flavour ‘from the inside’ throughout, even when the outer form draws on other traditions. The influence of traditional heritage is thus internalized and expressed in aesthetic forms which run much deeper than explicit visual or verbal references.

This authenticity from inside out highlights the tremendous value of a clear artistic frame. For one thing, the underlying influence of the original Rama I lyrics and the traditional paintings assures real unity in the performance, helping the various elements in the composition work together and strengthening the independent effects of the various visual and auditory elements as they communicate harmoniously to the audience. *Narai Avatara* draws on many dance and artistic traditions. Of course, this offers many rich possibilities, but also some dangers. Unconsidered juxtaposition of different styles could lead to an ineffective mish-mash. However, the clear artistic frame and guiding concept make it easier to maintain unity and coherence in the production and for audience members to engage with the multiple layers of meaning in the performance.

The underlying aesthetic cohesion in the performance also facilitates the use of different elements which make the performance more spectacular. This makes it easier for the performance to appeal to different niche audiences while never coming away from the aim of working as a means of heritage interpretation and conservation which can keep the Thai dance tradition alive and vibrant in the 21st century. Furthermore, as the performance communicates to the audience on so many different levels, it encourages much greater audience engagement with the performance: something very important when conservation and interpretation are among a performance's goals. In addition, a clear artistic frame provides a solid, identifiable base upon which it is easier to harness the effects of sudden blending of techniques derived from different cultures. The effects of such blending can then be used to help emphasize the magical, otherworldly atmosphere which is so central to the enactment of mythical episodes like those portrayed in *Narai Avatara*, without confusing the audience.

Another benefit of the authentic artistic frame is the way it can help advance heritage interpretation and conservation objectives. In *Narai Avatara*, a good illustration of this would be the costumes. For instance, the bare-chested muscular demon figures, including Nontuk with his green body paint, are a very clear evocation of the representations of these figures in traditional mural paintings. The closeness of the costume to the traditional painted image helps recall, at least in the minds of audience members who have seen such images, the original mural paintings, reminding them of the wider influence and presence of the Ramakien in Thai culture. Such costume also serves as a good practical example of 'source authenticity.' The bare-chested demons are inspired not by the way demons have been represented in previous dance interpretations, but by the source these dance interpretations came from.

Consideration of the costumes also shows how working with the heritage source or roots together with creativity and integrity can often be highly practical, particularly in terms of marrying the aims of heritage conservation and contemporary appeal. For a performance with heritage aims, some might think that everything in a performance should be subordinate to the preservation of outer traditional forms. However, such an approach can be limiting and so be counter-productive in terms of appealing to a wider audience. As has been mentioned, the *Narai*

Avatara costumes, for example, were rooted in the tradition, not of Thai masked dance costumes, but of their source, the Thai mural paintings of the Ramakien. So at once, the costumes were innovative, breaking away from the traditional forms associated with Thai masked dance, but still referencing the source. Sathaporn Sonthong, expert in Thai dance, formerly the Head of Thai Dance Division, Music and Drama Division, Fine Art Department, commented on the show.

Narai Avatara: The story was full of beautiful dance styles, new costumes and head-dress design and the characteristic of mixing Thai art, dazzling stage design as it is in the story, music and other equipment used in the performance (Sathaporn Sonthong, Interview, 2017).

Crucially, this helps advance the performance aims in a number of ways. First of all, on a practical level, the lighter, and often bare-chested costumes allowed the dancers complete freedom of movement, which made the movement much more powerful as a communicative tool (as the dancers' movements were not inhibited by thick garments they were able to move freely and dramatically around the stage). Secondly, while moving away from the thick, heavy and somewhat constrictive costumes of Thai dance-drama, but still referencing elements of this style, the costume helped convey a significant point about the Thai aesthetic tradition: that it does not need to be fixed in order to remain. In other words, if costume, or for that matter, any other aspect of performing arts composition is adapted while maintaining a flavour of the traditional aesthetic, it can bring new life to that aesthetic. Finally, in 'breaking away' from the constraints of conservative style, the costumes also have an immediate impact on the audience. Bare-chested and body-painted dancers are not usually seen in Thai dance-drama. However, while such costumes may seem at first glance to smack of a foreign influence, they also evoke traditional mural paintings. In this way, audiences are encouraged to consider the 'Thai dance tradition' in a broader context. For Thai dance aficionados this might mean looking at the familiar form from a new, different perspective. For those who may have a less than favorable impression of the genre it can change their point of view, encouraging them to re-approach Thai arts and culture without prejudice.

So here we have seen how a bold approach to working with traditional forms can be very rewarding. However, in some ways, aspects of traditional form are highly useful as they are and can be exploited to help keep the performance clear. In *Narai Avatara*, such an example was the use of split levels of stage. To illustrate, Phra Isuan's (Shiva's) ring of fire appeared at the highest level of the stage, indicating his superior status to all below. Such use of hierarchical stage space and positioning is very much in keeping with the conventions of Thai performance, but it still works very well to communicate to the audience and so was maintained.

Of course, in some instances, the source itself can provide a strong communicative device. A good example in *Narai Avatara* would be the use of the representation of Phra Isuan (Shiva) in his form as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance of the Creation and Dissolution of the Universe. The incorporation of this iconic Shiva image

serves at once to evoke the rich Indian tradition, while at the same time appealing and communicating clearly to the audience. However, as it does this in a wholly authentic way, through the use of a traditional Indian heritage image, it also draws the audience's attention to the roots of the Ramakien and associated arts heritage.

These examples illustrate another key factor when working with traditional forms: "if it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Hierarchical positioning is an example of a feature of a traditional performance which works very well to communicate meaning to the audience. As such, there is no need to change it. Another example of this was the maintenance of the traditional maebot dance steps, the Thai dance which is made up of the steps and postures which form the basis for all traditional Thai dance movements in Act One Scene Five. In this scene, the demon Nontuk, mimicking Nang Narai, makes a fatal gesture, pointing his diamond finger at his own thigh, and so causing his own downfall. During this episode, the text mentions some of the specific steps he takes. Clearly then, if the dance is to remain authentic it should include these steps; and this was the case in Narai Avatara. Nevertheless, for Narai Avatara, these steps were speeded up. This was done to allow the movement to be more evocative of the idea contained in the text, that Nang Narai is beguiling and hypnotizing Nontuk. Here then, in order to stay as authentic as possible to the source text, the traditional dance form, while preserved, was accelerated in order to make it communicate more effectively with the audience. This example illustrates another important point. When reinterpreting for a 21st century audience, the creator needs to consider the sensibilities of that audience. Arguably, for a modern-day audience conditioned by the non-stop visual changes of advertising and contemporary television, the traditional speed maebot might be too slow for them to follow, but performed more quickly, it is much easier for them to follow and assimilate the idea of Nontuk being tricked and bewildered. So while performances should stay authentic, they should also be comprehensible and appealing.

Similarly, just as traditional elements need to be managed with discernment, the same goes for more innovative elements. Here, it is also important to underline that while movement from ballet and other foreign forms were included in the Narai Avatara choreography, they were included when they contributed something to the scene. When foreign forms are incorporated well, in a way which works to make the overall communication clearer, this has a number of effects. Firstly, by involving different forms, the performance can appeal to fans of them all, helping ensure the desired wider appeal. In addition, as different characters dance in quite different styles and different scenes draw on completely different dance or music styles, the contrasts and distinctions necessary for a clear development of the narrative can be communicated very clearly. Contrasting styles also work to convey the sense of magic, malevolence or splendor associated with characters like Nang Narai, (Vishnu in the guise of a beautiful woman) Kakanasoon (a supernatural demon bird) or Phra Isuan (Lord Shiva) respectively. Another benefit is the way this juxtaposition of styles keeps the performance lively and the audience alert, more

engaged and so better able to follow the action. Finally, by incorporating elements from different styles, disciplines and traditions, the performance can help audiences become aware of things they have in common. For example, while ballet and Asian dance have obvious differences, audience members may realize that they both use movement to develop narratives and convey emotions. At a more global level, this type of open, multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary approach can then encourage audiences to recognize how different art forms are just different ways of expressing or developing similar ideas.

As it does this, it further underlines the point that while Thai art and culture is distinct, it has never existed in isolation but has stayed distinct while drawing on many other traditions. This raises another important point. Specifically it reminds audiences that foreign influences are not necessarily a threat to Thai culture or art, but can, and actually have, enriched it. Suwannee Chalanukhro, National Artist of Performing Art: Thai dance – Lakorn Ram of the year 1990 commented on the show:

I was so excited to see Western style performing art mixed with Thai dance. I was glad to see the 'fit' of dance steps, costumes, light and sound, and other special effects which beautifully encouraged each other (Suwannee Chalanukhro, Interview, 2004).

Clearly then, working with foreign influences actually continues the Thai tradition and can actually be productive in relation to the aims of preserving Thai heritage.

Furthermore, it should perhaps be further underlined that while it may appear ironic, working with all the influences which influence contemporary Thai arts – traditional and modern, indigenous and foreign - but using them to reinterpret the source of 'traditional' forms, can bring about a much more authentic product than would be possible by merely attempting to duplicate old dance routines. The need to go back to the source of the 'old', traditional forms and ensure they stay authentic creations and not mere duplications, is surely a key factor for the long term success or failure of reinterpreted performing arts as a means of heritage conservation.

This type of approach allows for the development of a spectacular and engaging performance, like *Narai Avatara*, which is much better able to leave a deep and lasting impression on a wide urbanized audience, and so have the effect of sacralizing its original text and mural painting sources than a performance which might stay truer to a traditional 'form' but which is regarded as 'boring' or 'sleep-inducing' by the audience and only appeals to a small niche anyway. Surely, it is productions which are 'authentically appealing' or which manage to combine authentic heritage and contemporary appeal, which are best placed to prove that a traditional genre like Thai dance is part of a living tradition with plenty of life left in it.



Figure 1. Act Two Scene One: Divinities go to see Phra Isuan at Mt Meru. This was originally staged at Chiang Mai's Kad Theatre on the 8th and 9th November, 1996.



Figure 2. Act One Scene 6: In 2002 Bangkok production, the collapse of Nontuk as Vishnu's trap is sprung. He falls to the floor after pointing at his own foot and badly injuring himself.



Figure 3. Act Two Scene 3: In 2002 Bangkok production, hearing the music, Phra Narai on the naga wakes up with astonishment after seeing a big group of the divinities.



Figure 4. Act Three Scene 2: In 2002 Bangkok production, Kakanasoon in the Ika form destroys the pavilion and steals half a lump of nectar.

Conclusion

The production of Narai Avatara sought to show how traditional art, the idealization of an early urban theatre entertainment, is anything but irrelevant, highlighting its value and showing how it can still be exciting and interesting among urbanized audiences. By using traditional art as its foundation, but by adding many different elements to the production, Narai Avatara aimed to alert audiences to the ongoing relevance of traditional forms and their continuing allure. In doing so, the hope was to sacralize traditional art, making audiences in a wide urban area realize that the Thai artistic heritage is something to be treasured and be proud of, and something which is still full of life. It is hoped that this work will be of use to others who wish to pursue similar aims.

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Urban Growth and Its Environmental Impacts: *Case of the Nile River, Egypt*

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization worldwide has given rise to many economic and environmental issues particularly in developing countries like Egypt. This study aims to discuss the current situation of urban growth in Egypt focusing specifically on the Nile Valley and its vicinity. Ninety-five per cent of the population lives in close proximity to the Nile River valley, which is one of the most vital non-renewable resources in Egypt. In this research, the current situation of urban developments of the Nile river in Egypt, its national threat to the Nile River valley and its rich arable agricultural lands have been examined through relevant literature review. It is known that rapid growth of settlements along the Nile has been documented since the inauguration of the high dam project in 1968, making it safer for the settlers to reside closer to the river. As a result of this review paper, we provide important recommendation on how to overcome and prevent further urban escalations within the region.

Keywords: *Urban Growth, Socio-Culture Impact, Environmental Impact, Physical Impact, Nile River, Egypt*

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Introduction

During the 1990s, the world's urban population expanded from 2.4 to 3.2 billion individuals with intensive urban development (Setchell, 1995). Up to 95% of the 800 million extra individuals migrated to live in urban areas during the 1990s are from those countries which are considered a developing nation. Not only is urban development increasing rapidly a number of the large cities worldwide have developed into Megacities (Population > 10 million residence). Megacities behave as motors for financial and social development; however, the vast majority of this development coincides with increased poverty and environmental degradation (El Araby, 2002). It is estimated that by 2050 an extra 3 billion people will be residing in urban settlements, an unmatched wave of urban development (McDonald, R. Green P. Balk, D. Fekete, B. Revenga, C. Todd, M. Montgomery, M., 2011). Urbanization of riverine areas is a common phenomenon due to the assets that they provide, which include food, water, and a source of energy, with their flood plains providing level land suitable for development and transport. However, a considerable number of the world's waterways have been negatively affected by urbanization. Such urban developments have paid little attention to their environmental impacts usually oblivious to, or neglecting their ecological functions. Thus, urbanization is viewed as one of the most dramatic modifications of the ecosystem (Everard and Moggride, 2012). This happens through actions such as; expansions for impervious surfaces, channel alteration, the detachment of rivers and flood fields, high water extraction and increased contaminant inputs. These actions have led to the deterioration of all urban river systems to such an extent that some rivers stop being a viable natural resource or providing services which first made the area attractive for settlement. As freshwater ecosystems continue to be degraded and destroyed around the world, human culture is losing the wealth of environmental benefits which a healthy fresh water system provides (El Araby, 2002).

The Nile delta of Egypt is one of the most established agrarian areas in the world and has been under ceaseless development for about 700 years. The total cultivated region of the Nile delta is 1,828,840 hectares representing 56.5% of the developed regions of Egypt (Shalaby, 2012). The historical backdrop of human settlements in the Nile valley dates back to the discovery of agriculture in the sixth millennium B.C. Since then, the locals started building and concentrating their urban settlements around the Nile valley, next to their farms and an accessible source of clean water, while in the same time creating a steady and homogenous financial and living conditions along the Valley (Figure 1).

However, these conditions have fundamentally changed during the last 200 years, with the introduction of the industrial revolution and its impacts on Egypt during the mid of the nineteenth century. From that point onwards, large scale transportation, agricultural, irrigation, industrial and urban projects have been built along the Nile Valley. One of the main projects that had unprecedented impacts on the Nile Valley was the creation of the railway line that was built between Cairo and Alexandria, followed by a second line which was built along the Nile Valley. This gave rise to 12 new Nile Valley cities, all connected by these rail links (AbouKorin, 2018). The persistent expansion of population density exerts more pressure on

territories already occupied and causes a reduction in area per capita from 0.12 ha in 1950 to 0.06 ha in 1990 and to 0.04 ha in 1990 (Ghar, Shalaby, Tatesishi, 2004). Around 95% of the Egyptian population (84 million in 2012) lives on the scarce agricultural land of the Nile valley and its delta, endangering the highly prolific agricultural land. With a population density of 1500 occupants per km², it is thus far the most populated delta on the planet (Redeker & Kantoush, 2014) (Figure 2).

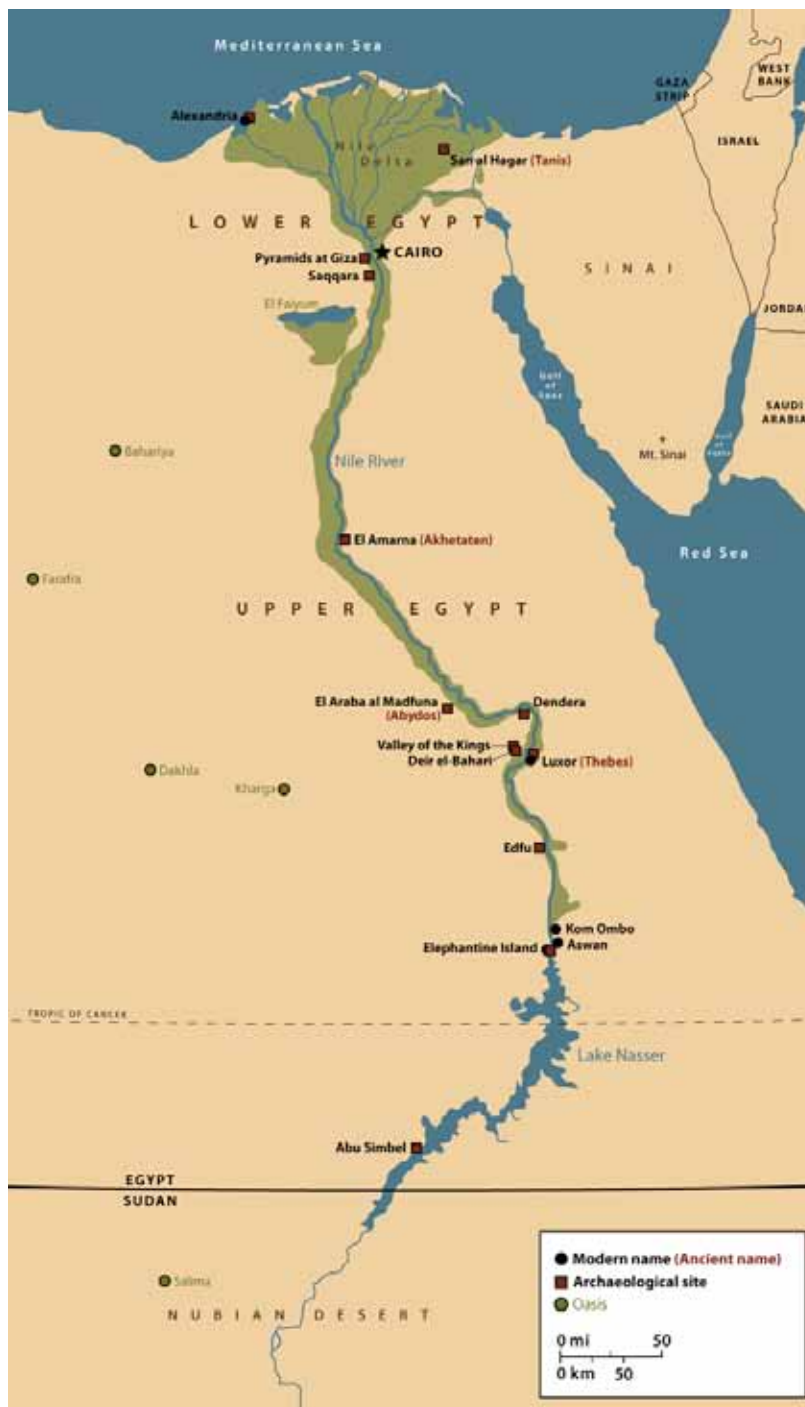


Figure 1. Main urban and regional development features of Nile Valley in Egypt (Map of Ancient Egypt).



Figure 2. Map showing the current new settlements along the Nile River on google earth map.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the rate of urban expansion along the river Nile and its effect on the environment. With this research the current situation of urbanization along the Nile River has been assessed and discussed.

Material and Methods

A literature review was performed on urban growth and environment, particularly focusing on urban rivers. A total of 16 literature items were reviewed (Figure 3). Additionally, all the relevant governmental documents were also reviewed, new settlement areas has been evaluated by using “google earth” tool.

Author's Name	Publication Date	Location	Title of Manuscript
Antar A. Aboukorin	2018	Egypt	Spatial Analysis of the Urban System in the Nile Valley of Egypt
Dona J. Stewart	1996	Egypt	Cities in the Desert: The Egyptian New-Town Program
Fekri A. Hassan	2010	Egypt	The Dynamics of a Riverine Civilization A Geoarchaeological Perspective on the Nile Valley, Egypt.
Hala, A., Effat, A., El Shobaky	2015	Egypt	Modelling and Mapping of Urban Sprawl Pattern in Cairo Using Multi-Temporal Landsat Images and Shannon's Entropy
John D. Milliman, James M. Broadus, Frank Gable	1989	Egypt and Bangladesh	Environmental and Economic Implication of Rising Sea Level and Subsiding Deltas: The Nile and Bengal Examples
Mustafa El Araby	2002	Egypt	Urban Growth and Environmental Degradation
Fahim, M., Elkhailil, F., Hawela, H., Zaki, K., El Mowelhi, M. N., Pax Lenney M.	1999	Egypt	Identification of Urban Expansion onto Agricultural Lands Using Satellite Remote Sensing: Two Case Studies in Egypt.
Mark Everard and Helen L. Moggride	2012	Worldwide Assessment	Rediscovering the value of Urban Value
Mohamed Aboel Ghar, Adel Shalaby, Ryutaro Tatesishi	2004	Egypt	Agricultural Land Monitoring in the Egyptian Nile Delta using Landsat Data

Figure 3. List of the reviewed literature items.

Author's Name	Publication Date	Location	Title of Manuscript
Mohammed E. Hereher	2012	Egypt	Analysis of Urban Growth at Cairo, Egypt Using Remote Sensing and GIS
Pranab K, Roy Chowdhury, Budhendra L. Jacob, J. Mckee	2018	Egypt and Taiwan	Estimating Urban Areas: New Insights from Very High-Resolution Human Settlement Area
Richard L. Church and Thomas L. Bell	1988	Egypt	An Analysis of Ancient Egyptian Settlement Pattern Using Location-Allocation Covering Models
Robert I. McDonald, Pamela Green, Deborah Balk, Balazs M. Fekete, Carmen Revenga, Megan Todd, Mark Montgomery	2011	Worldwide Assessment	Urban Growth, Climate Change, and Freshwater Availability
Shalaby, A.	2012	Egypt	Assessment of Urban Sprawl Impact on the Agriculture Land in the Nile Delta of Egypt Using Remote Sensing and Digital Soil Map
Yidi Xu, Le Yum Yunyuan Zhao, Duolend Feng, Yuqi Cheng, Xueliang Cai, Peng Gong	2017	Egypt	Monitoring Cropland Changes Along the Nile River in Egypt Over Past Three Decades (1984-2015) using Remote Sensing
Zhi-Yong Yin, Dona J. Stewart, Stevan Bullard, Jared T. Maclachlan.	2005	Egypt	Changes in Urban Built-up Surface and Population Distribution Patterns During 1986-1999: A Case Study of Cairo, Egypt.

Figure 3 cont.. List of the reviewed literature items.

Results

Egypt has been battling to adapt to its quickly developing population. Egypt's dense and quickly developing population is restricted to a narrow strip of arable land along the Nile River (Stewart, 1996). Based on historical research and spatial analysis, the Nile Valley gained more importance and became a vital source for agriculture and irrigation, when the high dam project was completed in 1968. It did not only affect the surrounding Nile Valley cities but Egypt as a nation. The new high dam project was the main provider of electricity for the country (54% in 1978), as well as act as a protector from occasional floods that was caused by high in water level, which became mitigated by the dam, providing a year round agriculture opportunities and more flexibility in urban settlement development regardless of the topography or proximity to the river, therefore the local inhabitants preferred to live close to the river, and this caused urban expansion along the river (AbouKorin, 2018). Even though there are joint efforts to promote decentralization towards the desert in order to protect the arable and agricultural land, a loss of 2% in cultivated land has still been seen. This shows that the urbanization efforts have failed in its main task of decreasing the loss of agricultural land, and gaining more land areas through desert reclamation projects. At the same time the land that is being lost along the Nile valley is rich arable land which should be preserved for agricultural activities, whilst the newly reclaimed land which is nutrient poor requires huge investments and inputs in order to have the same productivity as the Nile Valley arable lands (Ghar, et al, 2004).

There is high urban population density in the central part of the Nile Valley (As-suit, Sohag and Akhmim, Qena and Luxor) with around half of the urban population of the Nile Valley (48%) situated in this sector; at the same time only 37% is found in northern segment, and c. 15% in southern division. More noteworthy greater Cairo has extraordinary effect on the north of Nile Valley, stretching out for around 215 km into the valley (AbouKorin, 2018).

Nevertheless, there are laws forbidding construction on agricultural land, however, due to the fact that there was a dramatic increase in population growth and immigration, it became very hard to enforce such laws. This led to an urban sprawl in and around cities. So without proper organization and collaboration with the government, the best way the migrants or the new settlers found was to create informal settlements, which became the solution for the city's lower and middle classes. In the ten years between 1986 and 1996, the demographic growth rate of informal settlements reached 3.4% per year compared to the 1.1% in formal districts (Effat, Mohammed, El Shobaky, 2015).

Due to the lack of enforcement and the unprecedented rapid informal urbanization which followed the 2011 revolution, the Nile delta is now turning into a highly vulnerable coastal region. An assessment in one of the coastal and valley cities suggested that a sea level rise of only 50 cm would demand the evacuation of more than 2 million people who would have to abandon their homes (Redeker and Kantoush, 2014).

The cultivated area in Egypt remained more or less the same for centuries (Giegengack, 1968). Today the arable land along with water scarcity is decreasing while the population is rapidly increasing. This is opposite to the situation 60 years ago, when Egypt was more or less self-sufficient, producing almost all of its agricultural commodities apart from cereal, oils and sugar. Moreover, currently the dynamics of informal settlements exceeded the expected area of lost agricultural land induced by sea level rise due to population increase. This will subsequently cause a negative effect to the market incentives on agricultural goods. Urban expansion is projected to be more of a threat to agricultural land than climate change, and it is a threat to the entire delta, claiming from around 12,500 to 25,000 km². Almost 10% of arable land in the Nile Valley and Delta has already been lost to largely informal urban developments. If urban growth is not monitored and restricted and the developments continues as it has for the last 20 years, the arable land along the delta will be lost in less than 120 years. A huge defector on the growth of the new desert cities is public transportation, which is a key element and motivator for decentralization that is yet to receive the appropriate level of infrastructure funding (Redeker and Kantoush, 2014).

It is important to recognize the status and value of urban ecosystems and the services that they provide, as well as those adversely impacted in the per-urban region and along extended supply chains. Restoration of severely degraded urban

river ecosystems is a priority, and avoiding future harm through new development projects, which will in turn be restorative to the river ecosystems and its biodiversity, ensuring human health and wellbeing (Everard and Moggridge, 2012).

Conclusion

When we examine the articles published so far or look at the landscape matrix maps published from the past to the present, it has been determined that many new settlements have been opened along the river. A different approach can be informed to the public on the importance of safe guarding and rehabilitation of urban rivers, as a way to enhance and improve many aspects, such as health, biodiversity, value creation and broad range of policy interests, other than putting it only as an “environmental issue.”

The government needs create a powerful campaign to tackle urban growth and all the aspects that come with it, in order to solve these national problems. Another solution could be to decentralize activities that would release stress on overcrowded areas, while identifying the current urban system in order to plan correctly for the future. This can be carried out by performing a spatial analysis of Nile valley cities. However, during the process of decentralization, houses which are generally informal or poorly planned are left standing and empty. This may mislead researchers, leading to inaccurate analysis and results. To overcome such problems, a fully coordinated approach with other sectors is vital.

Starting the national physical planning program as soon as possible will prevent the loss of productive agricultural lands. It is known that the importance of protecting wetland ecosystems is increasing day by day all over the world, especially in the improvement of global climate change. In this context it is inevitable to protect the Nile River with scientifically supported initiatives and implement conscious rural development programs around it.

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Cemetery Kampung: Spatial Characteristics *and Exploration of Identity*

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Abstract

This research discusses the spatial characteristics of urban kampung (village) interaction with a cemetery by investigating the physical, social and economic effects. The snowball approach was employed to collect data from 16 key informants such as community leaders, cemetery caretakers, visitors at the Bergota Public Cemetery (BPC) and traders in the Bukit Bergota area. Primary data consisted of field notes, in-depth interviews with secondary data being historical documents of the area, government and community-based documents. Using case study research design, the study was carried out by categorizing kampungs into three different zones as analytical units to reflect its character as well as identify spatial, social and economic interactions. The areas background was gleaned from historical references and publicly available digital documents. There are three main characteristics of cemetery kampung: It is fluid space for the kampung with a memorial identity on a foundation of the economics of cemetery activities. These characteristic generate a particular and significant urban scale identity. Its distinctiveness of place identity strengthens the kampung's role. Its place identity are embodied in its landscape, history, traditional characteristics and demand for related services. The unique interaction between cemetery and kampungs can be used by urban practitioners, local governments and academics as guidelines for improved understanding of issues related to local identity and provide a better quality of life in these neighborhoods.

Keywords: Cemetery Kampung, Identity, Spatial Characteristics, Urban Interaction, Indonesia

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Introduction

This article introduces the cemetery kampung (village), a unique settlement in numerous Indonesian urban areas distinguished by its spatial features within and surrounding cemetery area. Except in the archaeological field of historical sites, urban settlements that blend with cemetery areas have received less attention in worldwide discourse over the past 20 years (Madsen, 1997; McGill et al., 2020; Midgley, 2006; O'Reilly et al., 2008; Pliberšek & Vrban, 2018). In these investigations, cemeteries and those found close to archaeological sites interact spatially. In Southeast Asia, which has a more complex cultural pattern, the problem of interaction and usage of settlement and cemetery space is not widely discussed. Cemeteries in Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam do not necessarily blend in with the surrounding environment (Afla, 2020; Hong, 2018; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018). Both of them are separated in various locations, with no interaction or peculiar characteristics to bring up as an urban issue.

Cemeteries are very synonymous with the historical background, culture and behavior of the people of a region because they have specific rituals (Dethlefsen, 1981; Miller & Rivera, 2006; Zhen, 2009). In Indonesia, especially in the Java region, the existence of settlements will be followed by the presence of graves. Graves and mosques are the background for the growth of settlements in the Java region (Yuristiadhi, 2011). Therefore, cemetery and settlement are a specific issue because the pattern of interaction between burial activities and settlements will emerge the unique spatial character of the area. The relationship between humans or individuals with the environment will bring up attributes that show the quality of the relationship between the two (Soemarwoto, 2004).

This article presents Indonesian context where different conditions are seen in certain cemeteries in Indonesia. Settlements grows in the middle of the cemetery area and forms such neighborhood called kampung (Farida, 2019; L. Larasati, 2019; Pradana, 2019; Rakhmanty, 2015; Swastika, 2007; Utami & Choiron, 2019; Winoto, 2018). Urban settlements that located within cemetery area are commonly noticed as informal settlements in Indonesia. Although urban sprawl contributes to the growth of informal settlements (Kamran et al., 2020), the case of cemetery kampung demonstrates a more fundamental cause. Pradana (2019) and Swastika (2007) reviews into Kramat Kampung, a community that had formerly housed war refugees. Other kampung investigates by (Utami & Choiron (2019) and Winoto (2018) where the poor are living in this area in slum conditions. Furthermore, L. Larasati (2019) presents other cemetery kampung that have a specific community that lives in the area, namely cemetery caretakers. Farida (2019) finds that different settlement, informal and formal, can live together within cemetery area and creates varied memories and perspectives among inhabitants. Those previous research indicate that numerous factors contribute to the growth of these settlements, but the primary driver is the need for housing, sometimes the poor can obtain illegally.

Researches that previously mentioned are spatially interact with cemetery but not in its social and economic life at the same time. This study discusses the spatial characteristics of the cemetery kampungs that interacts with surrounding urban facilities. Kampung is component of urban system (Setiawan, 2010) especially when located in the city center. It is threatened with conditions of competition for urban space with other, more modern city functions, such as commercial and trading. Kampung have experienced pressure due to the

expansion of these modern facilities (Aprianto, 2016; Evansyah & Dewi, 2014; Juwono et al., 2009), demolition and even redevelopment (Kochan, 2015; Puspitasari et al., 2018) for functions such as creation of green spaces, commercial development or high-density residential units (Guinness, 2019). In another hand, identity in resilience perspective is important in building the system cohesion (Cumming & Collier, 2005). Recent scholars also point out the significance roles of identity on community resilience (Belanche et al., 2021; Ischak et al., 2018; Waddell, 2021). This paper proposes the concept of spatial characteristics of cemetery kampung and argues that the particular characteristics strengthens the identity of the kampung and its existence amidst city development. The relationship between spatial characteristics and identity of kampung becomes a gap in this research. The case of different kampungs character surround large-scale cemetery area helps to explore the comprehensive spatial characteristics of the cemetery kampung.

The unique case of kampungs at Bukit Bergota, Semarang City, Indonesia is suitable to be investigated. Bergota Public Cemetery (BPC) is the largest public cemetery in Randusari Sub District, Semarang City which spatially interacts with the surrounding kampungs. Randusari Sub District has an area of 66 hectares with 30 hectares in which is BPC area. The cemetery, which occupies almost half of Randusari sub district's land, has an important contribution in shaping the character of the area known as the cemetery kampungs. There are several groups of kampungs located in Randusari Sub District which attached with BPC area. These kampungs survive within their limitations in the midst of development in the city center. The historical context states that the location of the cemetery and the surrounding kampungs is located in a landscape called Bukit Bergota (Budiman, 1978; Brommer, Budihardjo, & Montens, 1995; Tio, 2007; Nurhajarini & Fibiona, 2019). The area has become a cemetery area since the 16th century and adjacent to the surrounding kampung for decades, creating a unique character of life and space.

The present paper is structured as follows. First, we briefly explain the significance of Bukit Bergota that has historical background as initial form of Semarang. Then, we continue digging on empirical evidence of spatial characteristics of cemetery kampungs and discussion of how spatial characteristics contribute to kampungs identity and its existence. Finally, the paper concludes with answering the research objectives and an outlook on future work. This paper gives new perspective on unique interactions of cemetery and kampungs in the discussion of Indonesian kampung that creates life in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Literature Review: Kampung, Spatial Characteristics and Identity

There are three issues delivered in this article, kampung, spatial characteristics and how those issues strengthen the identity of kampung amidst city development. The literature review flows in discussing references of kampung in Indonesian urban settlement to frame the context of specific location, then we discuss the interaction of kampungs and other urban facilities, finally, concluding the significance of this article. Kampung in this article refers to original settlements of urban space located in the city center.

In order to determine the spatial characteristics of a cemetery kampung, we first integrate notions about kampung in urban centers "kampung kota" and provide the context of a cemetery. In the early kampung after independence, physical situations were mostly discussed such as slum, squatter, and lack of basic infrastructure. These factors also make

kampungs have a high population density of people who live in temporary or semi-permanent housing (Abrams, 1966; Turner & Fichter, 1972). Guinness (2019) comprehensively defines kampung uses the term kampung to designate to a low-income urban community in Indonesia and Malaysia. There has been a shift in terminology of kampung, but it still relates to the same image. Although the term kampung was initially associated with slum or squatter, it was later given other names such as spontaneous settlements, slum of hope, or autonomous settlements (Silas, 1983). The change in this phrase implies a shift in attitudes about the kampung, later, positive perspectives are arisen in the discussions.

Kampung has significant role in the urban development especially in Indonesia. Peters (2013) observe that half of urban population live in kampung including rural migrant, low-income people that cannot afford street-side house and someone that choose to live close to family or neighbors. It also provides human resources for formal economic sector in urban (Newberry, 2008; Peters, 2013) such as factory, commercial and business, services, and for informal sectors, precariat provides services, food and transport, recycling and sometimes sexual services. The kampung is basically a passion for living in a community in a residential environment that has neighborly relationships and knows each other. Such a strong relationship forms a community as the essence of life (Sutanudjadja & Pujiyanto, 2019).

The interaction between community and the environment formed in a socio-temporal manner creates different characters of kampung. Semarang itself has many kampungs with specific characteristics especially from its economic basis. Semarang Municipal Government has declared a program called “Kampung Tematik” (thematic kampung) in 2017 to elevate the distinctive character of the kampung which contributes to improving the quality of life of its citizens. For example, in Kampung Kranggan, most of the residents are spring roll (lumpia) skin makers (Semarang snack specialties), Kampung Bustaman is a center for processed goat food which is distributed throughout the city of Semarang, Kampung Batik is a center for making Semarang typical batik and other kampungs in Semarang with their specific character. Within these kampungs an important economic sector grows for its residents but not as a response to interactions with the surrounding urban space (N. F. Larasati, 2014; Sudarwanto et al., 2018; Sukmawati & Yuliastuti, 2016).

Those strong kampung characteristics play an important role in the contestation of urban space against the expansion of modernism. Interactions between the city and the kampung may exist in the propagation of urban activities into the kampung. The result can be a struggle of social power against capital power, hereinafter, evidence shows that the kampung lost this battle (Aprianto, 2016; Juwono et al., 2009; Pratama, 2019; Sigijateng, 2019). Ujang and Aziz describes when modern development and traditional life in the kampung collide, traditional life would be altered, and the kampung's identity may change even if no destruction occurs (Ujang & Aziz, 2016). On the other hand, characteristics on greening in kampung may also contribute the forming of identity (Putra et al., 2019). As long as the kampung is undervalued, it remain threatened with demolition and neglect (Aprianto, 2016; Evansyah & Dewi, 2014).

Kampung and identity are inextricably linked. Paasi analyzes two dimensions of place identity: the place identity of a place and people's place identification. The place identity

refers to the characteristics of nature, culture, and people that are used to identify one location from others in the discourses and classifications of science, politics, cultural activism, regional marketing, tourism, governance, and political or religious regionalization. The people's place identity refers to the association of individuals with a location (Paasi in Peng et al., 2020). This research is using the approach of place identity that related to characteristics of a place rather than people's identification. Identity can be cultivated from visual connection of building that blends with the context of neighborhood in urban fabrics (Intaraksa & Ongsavangchai, 2022). Identity is also a determinant of kampung resilience when confronted with urban life (Shirleyana et al., 2018). Shirleyana's assessment of kampung resiliency demonstrates that kampung identity is relevant to inhabitants' attachment.

Location and social interaction are also related to kampung identity (Damayanti & Kossak, 2016). Previous study on the spatial character of settlements and the surrounding urban area has not addressed its relationship to the identity of the settlements that are formed. The identity of kampung is crucial in order for it to thrive and not be overlooked due to its important function in metropolitan regions. The case of Bukit Bergota's kampungs demonstrates a distinct phenomenon. In terms of economic and social character, interaction with the urban region around the kampung creates a distinct way of life. Despite the possibility of losing the kampung in the city core, Bukit Bergota provides parts of living that metropolitan communities in general require. Finally, the purpose of this research is to investigate the spatial characteristics and their contribution to kampung identity in order to survive amid urban development.

Methodology

This study employs three theoretical underpinnings to examine the relationship between spatial characteristics of the cemetery kampung and the identity that is formed: theory of urban kampung, kampung-urban interaction and place identity. Using case study approach, this research offers an effective way to describe the actual phenomenon of a case (Yin, 1989). The observation units are kampungs in the Bukit Bergota, Randusari Sub District, Semarang City, Indonesia.

Bukit Bergota is part of the Randusari Sub District that evidenced by the settlements area on the hilly landscape (figure 1). Bukit Bergota is located in Semarang's city center, close to the BPC, heritage buildings, national hospital, and commercial corridor. There are several kampungs in the region, including Kampung Randusari, Kampung Wonosari, Kampung Bergota, and Kampung Bergota Kamar Mayat. In order to classified those kampungs into units of analysis, zoning is employed. This zoning classification is based on the distinct physical, social, and economic aspects of each zone.

There are three kampung zones as units of analysis based on the typical features of the kampungs, namely zone 1 is hilly kampung (Kampung Wonosari), zone 2 is grave kampung (Kampung Bergota), and zone 3 is trading-and-service kampung (Kampung Randusari and Kampung Bergota Kamar Mayat). Hilly kampung is famous for its kampung on a hilly landscape, grave kampung is a group of houses located on cemetery land, and trading-and-service kampung is located near trading and service facilities such as Pandanaran's commercial corridor, Randusari Market, and Dr. Karyadi's National Hospital. These qualities are processed qualitatively based on the findings of an empirical inquiry, direct observation,

and key informant interviews. The snowball approach was employed to collect data from 16 key informants who are well familiar with the area's characteristics. Primary data used field notes and in-depth interview, and secondary data uses historical documents of the research area, government-based and community-based documents. Historical background referred from historical references from the Semarang and digital documents that can be accessed by the public. There are two aspects discussed in this article, i.e., the historical background of Bukit Bergota to explore the significance of the research location and the current developing of the kampungs in Bukit Bergota to synthesize the spatial characteristics of cemetery kampung. In order to establish a picture of the spatial characteristics of the cemetery kampung, the research emphasizes the community's spatial, social, and economic relationship with the cemetery and other neighboring urban services.

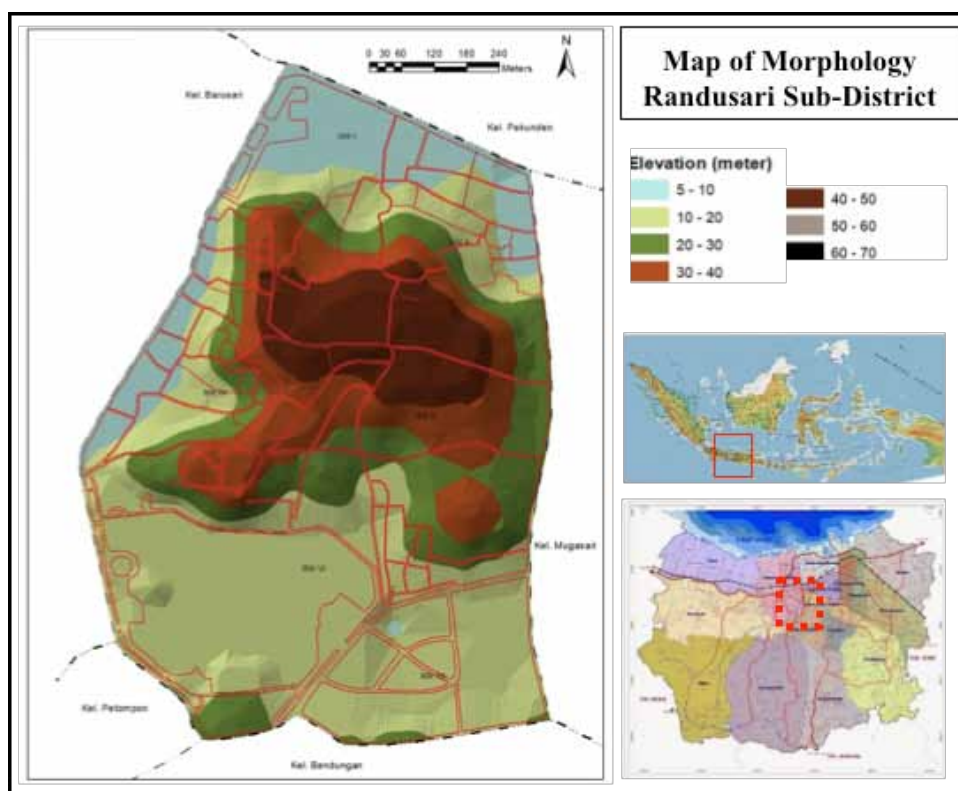


Figure 1. Research Location in Bukit Bergota, Randusari Sub District, Semarang City, Indonesia (Source: Author Analysis, 2021).

Results and Findings

Bukit Bergota's History as a Prominent Port to The Growth of Settlements

Bukit Bergota was a coastal location that became a key port on Java's North Coast in the seventh century as an important gateway for the Hindu-Javanese Mataram Kingdom (Brommer et al., 1995). The Semarang harbor was positioned below Bukit Bergota and immediately facing the Java Sea from the ninth to fifteenth centuries (Nurhajarini & Fibiona, 2019). The coastal location of Bukit Bergota caused the growth of settlements around it. This area was already crowded and be an important settlement of Hindu priests during the Hindu era (Budiman, 1978; Rinkes, 1911). Ki Pandan Arang (the first mayor of Semarang) in 1476 came to Bergota to spread Islam to people who previously believed in Hinduism.

In 1650 Bukit Bergota had developed into a settlement for Javanese traders and fishermen (Muljadinata, 1993). In 15th century, enormous river sedimentation has led the Bergota shoreline to silt, and the coastline is progressively jutting into the Java Sea (Brommer et al., 1995). The result of this silting process, Bergota was no longer a port location and the focus of Semarang's growth. The port relocated to the coast's north, specifically to the Sleko region. This new port contributed to Semarang's prominence as an important port city on Java's North Coast in the sixteenth century (Budiman, 1978). Port of Bergota's changed and its environs grew into a wide territory that formed a part of Semarang's city core, and settlements also grew.

Along the way, based on the results of the interviews with sources, the land in Bukit Bergota had become land that was controlled by the Ngayogyakarta Palace of the Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono XI era. By the Palace, the management of the land that had become a cemetery area was handed over to the community as a fief land and this was passed on from generation to generation. In 1964, the land was handed over to the Semarang Government and inaugurated as public cemetery Bergota (Larasati, 2019 and the narrative of the informant). The important point of this handover is that the community and cemetery caretakers who have lived in the BPC location for generations are allowed to build houses if they are the generation of predecessors who have lived in the area before. Currently these kampungs are growing with various characteristics but still have types of activities related to their proximity to the BPC area. The land-use surrounding Bukit Bergota is evolving into important services of Pandanaran Commercial Corridor, Dr. Karyadi's National Hospital, Cathedral Church area, various conserved heritage buildings, traditional markets, and BPC. These facilities are on an urban size and have played significant roles in Semarang's growth and historical trajectory (Tio, 2007). When city developed, Bukit Bergota's kampungs retain their own physical patterns, social lives, and economic conditions (Sunarjan, 2014; Agitha & Kurniati, 2018; Larasati, 2019; Riyulida & Sunarti, 2019).

Units of Analysis of Bukit Bergota Kampungs

The empirical procedure demonstrates that the kampungs next to the cemetery area interact in various ways. Therefore, the study is carried out by categorizing the kampungs into different zones. The kampungs were divided into three zones as an analytical unit to exhibit the kampung character and to identify the spatial, social, and economic interaction (Figure 2).

To determine the border of each kampung zone, we overlay the land use map and solid void map of settlements. Figure 2 depicts kampung, or settlement clusters, on each land use. Based on our initial observations in the area, we believe that each kampung has distinct traits that may be classified. There are three types of character: physical (hilly landscape), neighborhood (kampung settlement on cemetery area), and trading center (traditional markets, national hospital, and commercial corridor close to kampung). First, we discovered a series of settlements known as Kampung Bergota in the cemetery region, and we designated this kampung as a grave kampung. The BPC region forms the kampung's boundary. Outside of the BPC region, settlements are classified as hill kampung or service-and-trade kampung.

Zone 1 is identified as Hill Kampung because the settlements are located on the hilly part of Bukit Bergota. Zone 2 is identified as Grave Kampung because the settlements are located exactly on the BPC area. Zone 3 is identified as Trade-and-Service Kampung because the kampung was dominantly interacting with commercial activities. Although each kampung has different character, cemetery activities are elements that mostly forms the life of kampungs on Bukit Bergota. The next section goes over the discussion of spatial characteristics of kampungs in each zone.

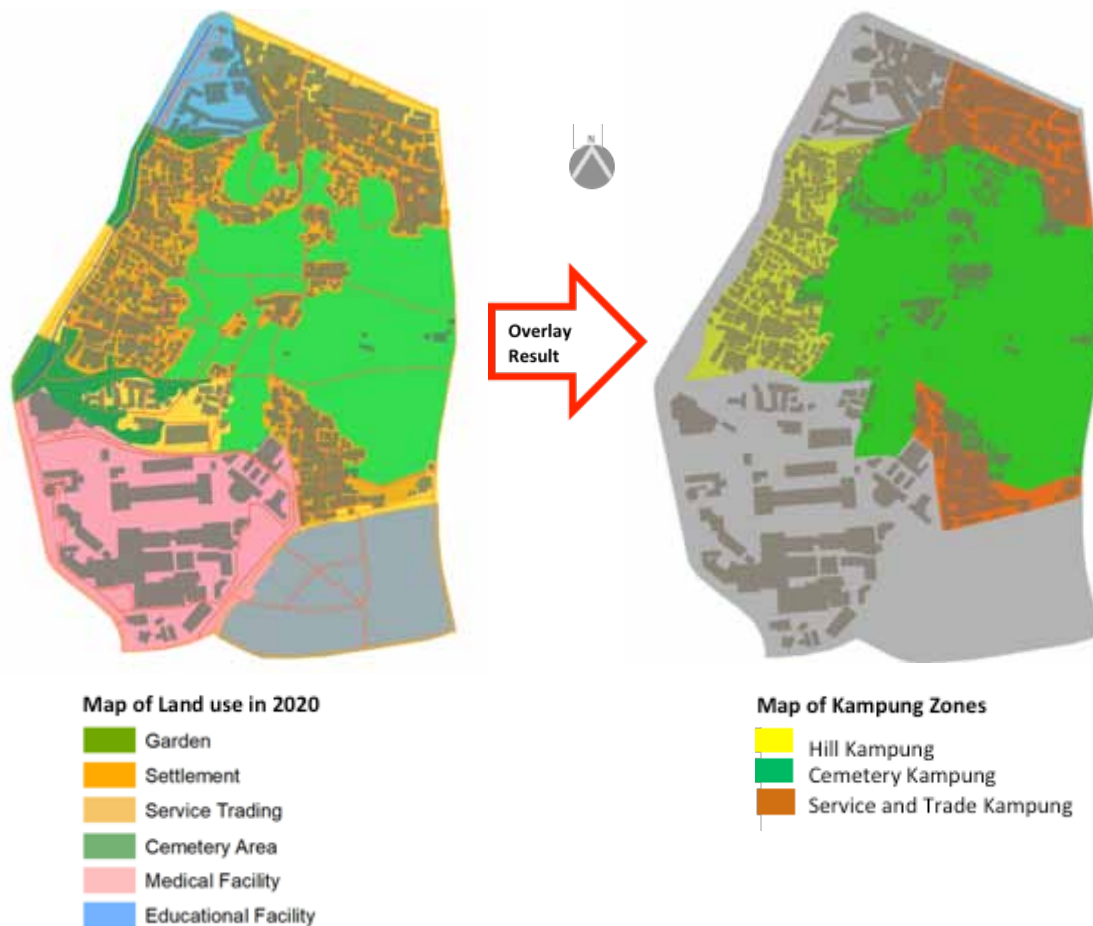


Figure 2. Overlay of Land Use Map and Solid Void Map to Determine Kampung Zoning. (Source: Author analysis, 2021).

Spatial Characteristics within Cemetery Kampung

Zone 1 Hill Kampung

Zone 1 is kampungs that are located outside of the BPC region visible from the west side of the city center. The steep environment with a series of terraced settlements distinguishes this kampung. In 2017, Hill Kampung become part of thematic kampung program held by Government of Semarang to improve the visual of the landscape. The government and community painted the houses in bright colors that creates colorful visual. That is the origin of the name Kampung Pelangi (rainbow kampung). After the establishment of Kampung Pelangi, the kampung become tourist attraction that viral around the nation.



Figure 3. Features of Hill Kampung in Zone 1 (Source: Field data, 2021).

The hilly terrain effects the nature of the living space (figure 3). First, the home is on a tiny scale (less than 50 m²) and adjacent to each other. Second, circulation occurs on narrow roads and steps that are inaccessible by motorcycle. This situation necessitates the use of shared parking spots on the sides of the road and also the available space between residences. Residents use circulation space, such as steps, for social contact, particularly on the shady side. Walking on the stairs promotes intensive social engagement among neighbors, such as speaking, welcoming, and providing a playground.

The BPC area allows for the growth of supporting activities in Pasar Kembang (Flower Market), which is located on the zone 1 bordering Soetomo Street. Pasar Kembang has evolved into a prominent flower market in Semarang. The cemetery motif is reflected in the trade of three sorts of products: flowerpot kiosks, flower board kiosks, and live plant kiosks. Although the proportion of zone 1 inhabitants who own businesses in Pasar Kembang is minimal, the contact stems from a need for labor. Furthermore, activities of paper flower producers are emerging to assist the flower board industry at Pasar Kembang. These inhabitants' items are subsequently given to collectors surrounding their houses, who eventually sell them to market dealers. Other supporting economic activities such as parking attendants, food vendors, cafés, and traditional culture activists have grown in the zone 1.

Zone 2 The Grave Kampung

The kampung in zone 2 is the one that is directly adjacent to a BPC area. Zone 2 is the kampung with the most spatial, economic, and social interactions with the cemetery. Houses on BPC region cannot be awarded land ownership rights, either as fief land or government

land. This informal status made inhabitants controlled their property from generation to generation by exploiting cemetery land as settlements. Moreover, the culture of cemetery caretaker is growing by giving the caretakers and their successors the right to administer cemetery plots. The rights that arise are limited to utilizing but not legally owning. In general, the houses of the cemetery caretakers are not far from the managed cemetery plots. As a consequence, the houses are gathered and spread out across the BPC region.

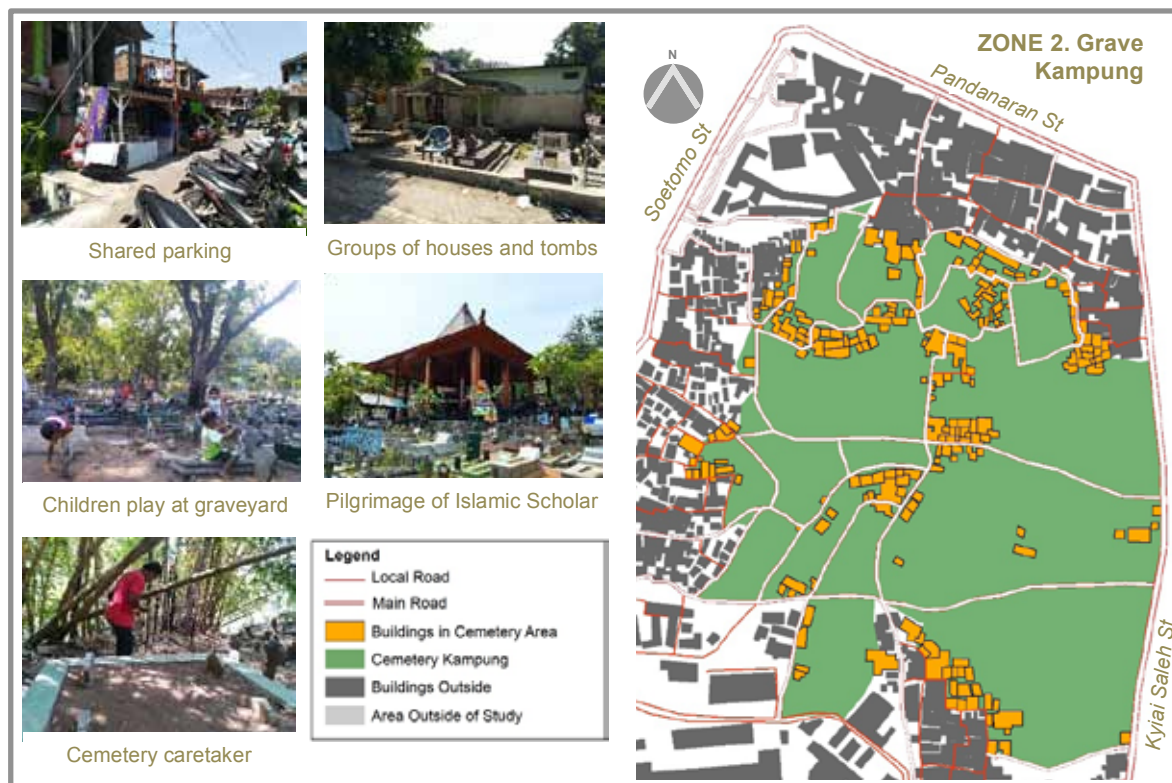


Figure 4. Features of Grave Kampung in Zone 2 (Source: Field data, 2021).

Houses and graves have become one entity with no limits other than the walls of the housing. They live in narrow house and crammed between tombs. The growth of informal settlements has taken place quite rapidly in 2010 up to present. Graves can be seen on the terraces and courtyards of houses in zone 2. The graveyard has evolved into a public park, serving as a place for social interaction, a cart vendor, a playground, and even a kitchen and drying room (figure 4). The growth of houses propagates through the acquisition of cemetery spaces into houses. This acquisition process occurred informally without legal documents especially in cemetery ground reserve. This propagation mechanism is substantial in the northern area of zone 1. This region is mostly populated by the homeless, beggars, parking attendants, and other informal laborers.

Cemetery caretakers become a distinctive livelihood of zone 2. People who wish to bury their family will communicate directly with the caretakers in charge of the plot. They will assist in obtaining permissions from the Semarang City Cemetery Office in order to supply burials at a predetermined price. This price is entirely determined by the agreement reached between the caretaker and the heirs. As a result, the majority of the residents in this kampung are extended families of cemetery caretaker. The only "outsiders" were the

daughters-in-law who married into the caretaker's family. Due to illegal land status considerations, the process of purchasing and selling houses or land has never occurred for inhabitants outside the kampung, and some individuals are hesitant to live in the cemetery region. In brief, the local government is in charge of grave taxation, while the caretaker is in charge of cemetery maintenance and rent. This income potential encourages the cemetery caretaker to continue working for generations, especially because many are from low-income families. Aside from caretakers, locals rely on the cemetery area for various sources of income, such as gravediggers, parking attendants, grocery stores, food vendors, and even beggars. More beggars and other informal workers will come when the pilgrimage season arrives.

Zone 3 Trade and Service Kampung

Zone 3 kampungs typically engage with urban trade and service sector. Kampungs in this area shows typical activities related with trading. Zone 3 is separated in two areas which is on north side and south side of Randusari Sub-District (figure 5). On the north side, kampungs mostly interacts with activities at Pandanaran Street and Randusari Market, while zone 3 on the south interacts with activities associated with National Hospital Dr. Karyadi. On northern part (see figure 6), there are the commercial corridor of Pandanaran Street which shops selling typical Semarang souvenirs, apartments, and office buildings; and Randusari Market well-known for selling fresh flowers and death paraphernalia. Furthermore, kampung contacts are stronger with commercial activities than with BPC. The owner of shops bought the second the second layer behind the row of stores to extend their storage and production space. Shop employees, hawkers, food sellers, and parking attendants are examples of economic activity associated with trading and services. Pandanaran Street is also serves as the physical boundary of the kampung located behind this commercial district. Residents of Kampungs get priority as laborers or employees at Pandanaran Street stores. Pandanaran's kampung supplies human resources for the commercial sector. This mutualistic symbiosis was expressed by the informants and activities that grow in the area.

In contrast to the Pandanaran part, the activities of the kampungs adjacent to the Randusari Market have a closer relationship to BPC (see figure 6). Randusari Market is a traditional market, but as the demand from BPC has grown, fresh-cut flower and sow-flower vendors have sprouted up around the market. In this region, a unique interaction occurs since the majority of the locals who live near the market work as traders for death and wedding supplies and floral strand manufacturers. Residents, particularly women, manufacture flower strands in their houses to supplement their income. They receive orders from Randusari Market clients and online orders via their gadgets. Randusari Market is also a hub of community activity in the surrounding area.

On the southern side of Zone 3, National Hospital Dr. Karyadi plays a key role in bringing the image of kampung. The name of this hospital's neighboring kampung is Bergota Kamar Mayat (or Bergota Morgue), which indicates this kampung is located on the side of hospital morgue facilities. Settlements in this area tend to have a more regular pattern. The hospital also contributes to the kampung's economic activity. The economic operations that sustain hospital activities are where the interaction between kampung and hospital emerges. Some of the kampung residents work in the hospital as cleaning services, parking attendants, morgue workers, and other supporting workers. Furthermore, a row of ambulances lined the side of the kampung street near the hospital every day. They provide ambulance and

driver rental services for hospital patients. This ambulance service is locally run and has a symbiotic relationship with hospital demand. Supporting activities such as food vendors, grocery stores, and photocopying can be found on the side of the kampung that borders the hospital.

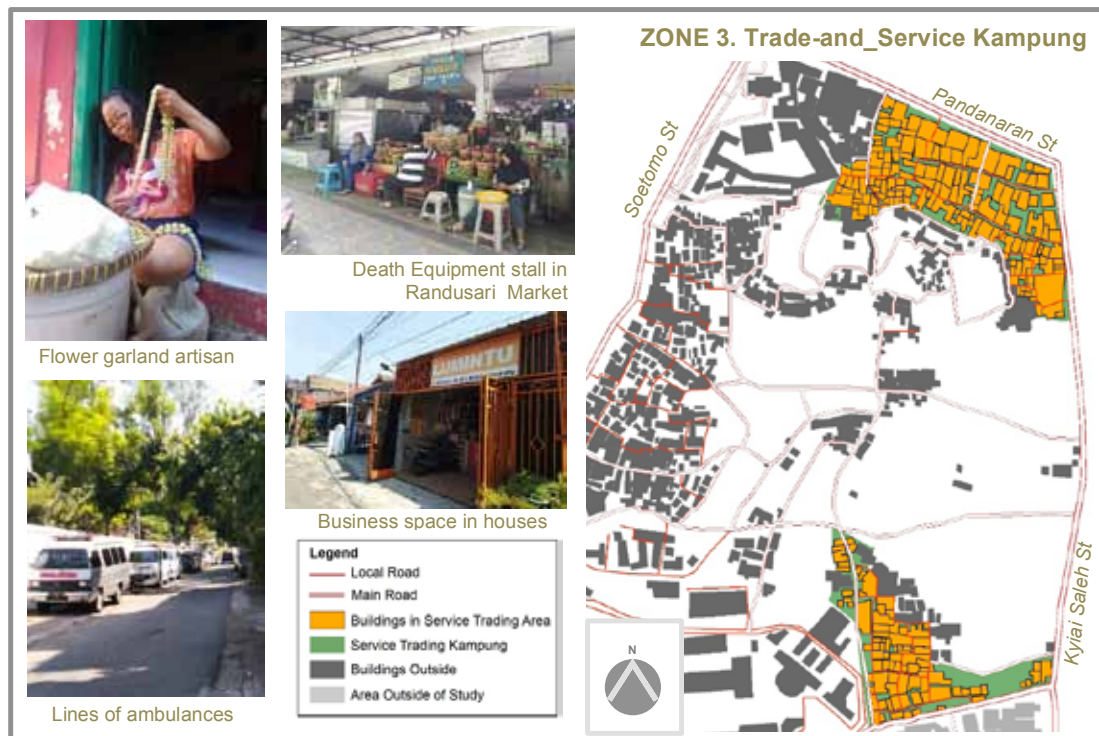


Figure 5. Features of Trade-and-Service Kampung in Zone 3 (Source: Field data, 2021).



Figure 6. Northern part of Zone 3 - Pandanaran Corridor and Kampung (Source: Field data, 2021).

From the description above, there are several typical characters of kampungs in Bukit Bergota that can be derived. There are topographic conditions, kampung pattern, use of space, circulation, economic center and activity (figure 7). These characters unite the discussion on spatial characteristics within cemetery kampungs in order to reach the concept that represents cemetery kampung characteristics.

Character	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3
Topography	Hilly	Hilly	Flat
Kampung Pattern	Dense, irregular plot	Dense, irregular plot, scattered in groups in the graveyard	Arranged in plots, getting denser closer to the cemetery area
Spatial Use	Shared parking, social interaction at the circulation path, shared space	Shared parking, shared space, cemetery as liquid space	Home space for business, shared space, circulation path for economic activities
Circulation	Stairs and motorcycle lane	Motorcycle and limited car lane	Motorcycle and car lane
Economic Center	BPC, Flower Market, Kampung Pelangi tourism spot	BPC, pilgrimage of Islamic Scholars	BPC, commercial area of Pandanaran, Randusari Market, National Hospital Dr. Karyadi
Economic Activities	Flower market traders, parking attendants, paper flower artisan, food stalls	Cemetery caretakers, grave diggers, beggars, parking attendants, food stalls.	Shop employees, food stalls, photocopiers, market traders, flower strands makers, ambulance operators, boarding houses, hospital staff.
Social Ties	Hereditary residents, social closeness due to neighbors	Hereditary residents, social closeness due to kinship of cemetery caretaker's society	Hereditary residents, social closeness due to neighbors

Figure 7. Table of Cemetery Kampung's Characteristics in Bukit Bergota.

The first characteristic is topography. Cemetery kampung in hilly terrain are kampung in zone 1 and 2. Those are zones of kampung that interact mostly to cemetery area. Graves and kampung in Java Region are closed each other (Yuristiadhi, 2011). Hilly areas are the choice for cemetery areas because hills, mountains or high places are considered sacred places. The choice of this location occurs especially in the Java area because this tradition originates from the pre-Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and has been passed down from generation to generation until now (Afla, 2020; Erniati, 2021; Juliantho & Syahrin, 2018). Bukit Bergota in its natural landscape is located in the city center. Settlements in zone 1 and 2 have been developed organically followed the terrain and available space. The demand for housing in the city center occupied the burial area especially for informal settlements. Informal settlements that grow in the cemetery area are one way out for urban marginalized people to get space to live, even with limited infrastructure (Swastika, 2007).

The second is the kampung pattern. Physically, characteristic of kampung in several studies related to cemetery kampung in other areas in Indonesia (Farida, 2019; Islami, 2019; Pradana, 2019; Utami & Chiron, 2019) is also seen in the settlements of the Bukit Bergota.

Conversely, the context of cemetery attached to the kampung enriches the uniqueness of the area. This special feature can be seen from the composition of the houses which becomes denser and irregular as the settlement approaches the cemetery area. The further away from the cemetery area (approaching commercial area), the physical condition of the kampung is even more orderly, both in terms of the arrangement of the house and the existing circulation. This phenomenon quite different with previous study (Pradana, 2019) that was not specify the morphology of kampung space. Kampung especially in zone 3 has hilly and flat part. The hilly part is approaching the cemetery and flat part is approaching the commercial area. At the other hand, kampung in zone 2 has irregular pattern and scattered. The local people unoccupied cemetery land from generation to generation randomly. As the cemetery getting denser with graves, the houses that previously build seems to be surrounded by graves. It caused to physical characteristics in the form of irregular house plots, narrow circulation and unclear legality of ownership.

The third aspect is the spatial use of kampung. The kampung space is used by residents with the concept of sharing and consensus (Kristiani & Yuliastuti, 2013; Sudarwanto et al., 2019; Sukmawati & Yuliastuti, 2016). The limited space in the kampung creates liquid spaces. This study proposes liquid space in term of cemetery space that used for various community needs, such as parking spaces, drying clothes, storing goods, playground and even trading. Liquid space refers to space that can be used informally by residents for any purpose as long as the activity does not violate community regulations. This space occurs because of the limited space for interaction within the cemetery kampung so that the space between the graves is the only available space that can be utilized. This phenomenon also occurs in the public spaces of other cemetery kampung (Utami & Chiron, 2019) and in the children's playground (Hafidh, 2016; Rakhmanty, 2015). The cemetery has become part of the kampung space that has no boundary. There is no limit for the community to use this cemetery space as long as it does not physically damage the tomb. Because the cemetery is a passive space, the heirs of the tomb hand over the management and maintenance of the tomb to the cemetery caretaker. The caretaker is responsible for the condition of the tombs on the managed plot. The spatial use in the cemetery kampung has the characteristics of kampung in general (Setiawan, 2010; Damanik, Setiawan, Roychansyah, & Usman, 2016; Widjaja, 2013), but we also argue that sharing space is also occur at cemetery.

Fourth, the physical characteristics of the kampung apart from the aspect of space use are the circulation. The process of organic and unplanned growth is also reflected from kampung irregular circulation conditions (Setiawan, 2010; Widjaja, 2013; Damanik et al., 2016). The limited public space in kampung also makes the circulation path as a common space. It is possible because the traffic conditions in the circulation space are only limited to low movements for walking and motorbikes. In addition, the average width of the circulation road is 1.5-3 meters, allowing every citizen to interact incidentally when passing through kampung roads and greeting each other from their terrace. In addition, steps that become the main circulation on zone 1 brings up uniqueness in the area.

The fifth aspect is the economic center of the kampung. Besides the interaction with the cemetery area, the kampungs in Bukit Bergota also interact with activities in the Pandanaran business area, Randusari Market, Flower Market and the National Hospital Dr. Kariadi. The urban kampung in Bukit Bergota is the embryo of the city because this is where a

city begins and develops. The research shows that urban kampung will be surrounded by strategic urban economic sectors of trade and services (Dewi & Kurniawati, 2013; Laksono, 1994; Lindarni & Handayani, 2014). Kampung that have spatial interactions with cemeteries are also developed as tourist attractions by the local government because of local potential even though they are classified as slum (Islami, 2019; Riyulida & Sunarti, 2019). The same thing happened to the kampung in Bukit Bergota. Its location in the city center allows the dwellers to interact with the city's economic center and affects the economic character of the kampung. Cemeteries of national Islamic scholars such as Kyai Sholeh Darat and other scholars have become Semarang religious tourist spot. These economic centers will support the kampung residents who depend on them.

The sixth is economic activities. The proximity of kampung with the urban center creates variety of economic sector in the cemetery kampung. The closer to the cemetery, the more specific cemetery-based economics are found (cemetery caretakers, gravediggers, parking attendants and beggars). The closer to the trade and services area, the type of economics lead to services, employees and small traders. The such urban informal sector is the hallmark of the kampung community living in the cemetery and also the image of poverty that appears in the lives of its citizens (Winoto, 2018). This research finds that a place-based economic arise as the characteristics of cemetery kampung. This finding is conforming the basic sense of place-based economics from Hildreth & Bailey (2014) and Rodríguez-Pose & Wilkie (2017). Cemetery activities in Bukit Bergota leverage the local people with specific economic condition at the surrounding neighborhood. Cemetery becomes local industry where people depend their life on. In addition to the informal sector, the process of integration with urban development also gave rise to the formal sector and subsystems within the kampung (Widjaja, 2013). Cemeteries and markets tend to affect informal economy activities and subsystems while urban facilities such as schools, hospitals and commercial facilities tend to affect formal economic activities.

The seventh is social ties. Bukit Bergota kampungs have low residents' dynamics. This cemetery kampung is located on several land statuses, including state land, individual land and foundation land (Widjaja, 2013). The land status houses and strategic locations are the background of their behavior in maintaining their land assets. Residents tend to perpetuate their property assets by bequeathing them to their descendants either on legal or illegal land status. Dwellers on average are descendants of the original owner of the house such as direct relatives or descendants from marriage. Kampungs in zone 3 that are closer to commercial facilities have social closeness as neighbors, but kampung located in the cemetery area in zone 2 have social ties to kinship. A different view was conveyed by Marshall (Marshall et al., 2001) that residents of urban kampung tend to have non-kinship social ties and are more heterogeneous. These kampungs actually have low number of migrants. Most of the individuals of cemetery kampung in Bukit Bergota are natives or descendants of the homeowners. Property control is typically conducted by kampung locals and is rarely conducted by residents from outside the kampung. This is due to the location and history of property inheritance that must be passed on to the next generation. This gives rise to strong social ties within the kampung (Sumintarsih & Ambar, 2014; Widjaja, 2013).

Cemetery kampung basically still describes the image of kampungs. Factors that mostly represents cemetery kampung are kampung pattern, spatial use and economic activities. The concept of cemetery kampung characteristics that arises in the research are cemetery

as liquid space, cemetery as place identity and place-based economics of cemetery activities. Liquid space refers to the cyclic kampung activities occur at the cemetery area. This type of space usage allows the community to engage, live and earn income. Cemetery as place identity refers to the identity of a place rather than people's identity. Although the people in the cemetery kampung live on the theme of sadness, mourn, and other minor feelings, this mutually beneficial interaction is rising the particular character that is rooted in and forms a distinguished kampung identity. This identity of place makes Bukit Bergota generate local economics that support the life of the people there. The interwoven between space usage, the identity and livelihood of local people has survived the kampung from modernism that eradicated the kampung as urban fabric.

Exploration of Identity Amidst City Development

Interactions between urban and traditional environment could exist in different manner. Ujang & Aziz discovered that as modernity increasing, the social engagement is decreasing (Ujang & Aziz, 2016). Modernity also threatens the kampung for being slowly eradicated (Juwono et al., 2009) and the loss of distinctive urban identity in a smaller scale (Shao et al., 2017). Kampung in Bukit Bergota shows a different phenomenon. The ongoing development of the city does not dampen engagement within the kampung. They have their own patterns of life and are physically unaffected by changes outside the kampung. Cemetery kampung in Bukit Bergota Semarang and the surrounding activities that grow has become the destination for Semarang residents for death supplies and also souvenirs of Semarang.

The transformation process of kampung space in Bukit Bergota differs from what has been examined. Bukit Bergota's kampung is situated on a hill, creating natural barriers to spatial changes and urban activities outside the kampung. The barriers are a river on the west side of the kampung, and the BPC region, which gives the impression of Kampung as a haunted place. In empirical investigations, river and BPC have a role in preserving the kampung space. However, the kampung surrounding the business district faces the threat of change because the tendency to convert residential areas into trading spaces has already occurred. The function of the BPC in shaping the identity of cemeteries can be recognized through specific activities there. The outcomes of the interplay between the kampung and the BPC form kampung life. The activities that spill over outside of the kampung also help to improve the area's image.

Discussion of spatial characteristics shows that local identity supports the existence of kampung at urban scale. A crucial part in developing distinctiveness with each location is to create a greater feeling of identification and to aid in the understanding of such a place's identity. However, due to the urban growth process, such identity has been lost, and the loss of distinctiveness has become a prevalent challenge that swiftly changing environments are confronting (Shao et al., 2017). Selman and Swanwick emphasized the significance of achieving landscape distinctiveness in modern landscape development procedures in order to strengthen links between residents and the environment (Selman & Swanwick, 2010). The distinctiveness of the cemetery kampung has grown organically as a result of human interaction with the surrounding environment.

The historical aspect also contributes to the identity of Bukit Bergota area and cemetery kampung. History and traditional features that are mirrored in human existence are two factors that might contribute to place identity (Deffner & Metaxas, 2007; Thinh & Gao,

2021). The history of Bukit Bergota at the first section of this article has shown the background of the area that contribute to the formation of recent features. The culture of cemetery caretakers, which has evolved through generations, contributes to the identity of the cemetery kampung.

Demand for services offered at Bukit Bergota also binds the area with Semarang locals. BPC's role is not only as a public cemetery area; it has also become a pilgrimage site for religious scholars on a national scale. Cemetery caretakers also bind the successors of the tombs with the service they rendered. Those interrelated identities of cemetery kampung reinforce the function of kampung in urban Semarang. The identities cultivated from cemetery kampung are expressions of material (physical elements) and behavioral (activities and occurrences). This finding reflects the research of Evers (2011) in urban symbolism. The context of local identity (Shao et al., 2017) is evident in the presence of local features that entail interaction between the environment and its population.

Conclusion

Bukit Bergota has been known as a kampung since the ninth century when settlement of Hindu priests existed and now evolved into Javanese settlements and cemeteries. This study classified Bukit Bergota kampungs into three unique zones, each with its own specific characteristics: hilly kampung, the grave kampung, and the trade-and-service kampung. Based on the analysis, the cemetery kampung has several spatial characteristics similar with the urban kampung in general. Urban interaction between kampung and surrounding urban space creates seven spatial characters; topography, kampung pattern, spatial use, circulation, economic center, economic activities and social ties. The concept of cemetery kampung characteristics that arises in the research are cemetery as liquid space, cemetery as place identity and place-based economics of cemetery activities. The characteristics of cemetery kampung generate a particular identity, making it significant as an urban service. Distinctiveness is the key of place identity that strengthen the role of kampung. People of Semarang identify cemetery kampung from the distinctiveness of landscape, history, traditional features and demand for services. The spatial transformation investigation of cemetery kampung can be an interesting research topic to investigate in order to uncover patterns of spatial alterations that occur. The unique interactions of cemetery and kampungs can be used by practitioners, local governments and academics as the guideline to better understanding on local identity and provide a better life for the neighborhoods.

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Reflection on Sepha Phrai: A Story of Commoners *in the City of Bangkok*

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Abstract

This article deals with a contemporary literature entitled *Sepha Phrai* written in form of *klon sepha* Thai poem by Suchit Wongthet, a well-known Thai poet. It is a reflection on the story of *Sepha Phrai* which reveals the life and spirit of commoners in the city of Bangkok, telling the story of a proletarian family, starting from the fall of Ayutthaya period in 1767 up until the bicentenary of Bangkok in 1982. The story embraces four generations with Nai Get and his wife being the first. Nai Get's descendants are of various professions including builder, musician, business manager, prostitute, lawyer and farmer. *Sepha Phrai* provides historical, legal and sociological facts sympathetically in the form of versified story.

Keywords: *Sepha Phrai, Story-telling, Thai Literature, Life in Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand*

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Introduction

Sepha, the art of singing tales in rhyme, which still exists today, was one of the most popular Thai entertainment forms during the Ayutthaya period (1438 - 1767). Its peak in popularity would appear to have been towards the latter part of this period, being performed at every kind of festivity, including weddings, ordinations and other religious ceremonies. (See discussion in the section Historical Approach to *Sepha* Recitation). To quote Bidhaya Lankarana (1941:8) about *Sepha* entertainment during the reign of King Rama V: “*Sepha* entertainments are given on occasions when large numbers of guests are gathered, such as housewarming, birthday or tonsure ceremonies.” The *sepha* singers would sing the popular tales in rhyme to the rhythmic accompaniment called *krab sepha* which are two pairs of solid woodblocks, one held in each hand. An important feature of *sepha* is that the verses are all pre-composed distinguishing them from rural rhymes¹ which are purely extemporary. Although most of the *sepha* poetic songs are in the form of fictional tales, they nevertheless include references to various aspects of Thai life during the period of their particular composer-singer: religious, traditional environmental, political, and educational.



Figure 1. Showing a *sepha* reciter, Master Siri Vichavej, holding two pairs of *krab sepha*, one set in each hand. (Source: Assistant Prof. Panupak Mokhasak).

In spite of more than one hundred years' research into *sepha*, it is still proving difficult to pinpoint exactly where, when and how it originated. Damrong Rajanubhab or Prince Damrong (1972), one of the most of Thai scholars, was the first to carry out research in this field. Since it is highly likely that any written evidence which may have existed on *sepha* was destroyed during the Thai-Burmese war in 1767, Prince Damrong had no choice but

to rely heavily on principles of deduction and supposition when reaching his conclusions, having only the actual *sepha* poetic songs themselves to go by. Since the beginning of the Rattanakosin period (1782 until present), three *piphat*² songs have existed which include the word *sepha* in their title: Sepha Nok, Sepha Klang, and Sepha Nai. This led Prince Damrong to conclude that there must be some relationship between *sepha* and these *piphat* songs, and that the *sepha* melodies might well be derived from them. This argument has, however, been rejected by some scholars, Narisara Nuvadtivongs or Prince Narisara (1972) included, on the following grounds: the vocal part was in the past not only composed separately, but also performed separately from the instrumental part, which consisted of the *piphat* and *khruang sai*³ sections. Evidence of this exists in the form of some of the *piphat* repertoire, for example Sathukan, Tra and Rua etc., which are played without any vocal part; there are also songs with no instrumental accompaniment whatsoever, such as Chom Talat, Cha Khruan and Lom Nok etc. Thai music has as a result been divided into three distinct types: Phleng Rong,⁴ Phleng Mahori⁵ and Phleng Piphat.⁶ It is only in recent times that the vocal and instrumental parts have been combined. *Sepha* singing was not combined with the *piphat* ensemble until the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824), as seen at the beginning of the *sepha wai khru*⁷ poem, composed in that period. The three *piphat* songs which include the word 'sepha' in their title probably only do so, therefore, because they were composed, especially to accompany *sepha* poetic songs. Furthermore, musicians argued that the *sepha* melodies and those of the three *piphat* songs were so divergent in their character that one could not possibly conclude that there was any relationship between them.

There are several similarities between *sepha* and the art of story-telling, suggesting that the former may have developed from the latter. The tales told by story-tellers were performed, as with *sepha*, at celebrations marking auspicious occasions, and always after sunset. Both tell the story of one particular family, including their everyday life and the society and culture in which they find themselves. *Sepha*, however, deviated from the tales in that it was always in verse form, whereas the tales are normally in prose. *Sepha* has also only consisted of Khun Chang Khun Phaen,⁸ whereas the tales have been told in several different stories. Prince Damrong (ibid.) is of the opinion that at first the art of story-telling only existed in prose form. Later on, the narrators started to embellish their stories with rhyme, probably resulting in stories combining both prose and verse.

Prince Damrong (ibid.) further stated that the tradition of *sepha* singing had been influenced by Indian singing, where the popularity of story-telling was mentioned in the Saratha Samutchai bible over 700 years ago. Since this form of entertainment has been very popular in Thailand for hundreds of years, it has been assumed that the tradition had come to Thailand from India. Wongthet (1986) has, however, proved that the *sepha* tradition in Thailand is not related to the Indian tradition – the only thing they have in common is the name *Sepha*. But nobody in fact knows the actual origin of the term 'sepha.' Wongthet stated that *sepha* performance is an indigenous tradition of those people speaking the Thai-Lao language. In this connection the word 'khab', which has been used as the title of many singing performances, including *sepha* needs to be considered. Montri Tramot (1960) mentioned that the word *khab* was included on a stone inscription of the Sukhothai period (1238 - 1438) as follows: “เสียงพิณ เสียงเลื้อน เสียงขับ.” He then gave an opinion that the term *khab* refers to the technique of singing only the melody without rhythm. The technique has been used widely amongst the indigenous peoples of Thailand, though it is known under

different names, depending on the region. Thus, in the north it is called *khav so*, whereas the northeastern people call this singing style *khav lam*.

There is written evidence from the Ayutthaya period referring to the word *sepha*, although it was used then in the title of the governor having responsibility for prisoners, rather than being used in a musical context. This led Kukrit Pramoj (1989) to conclude that the term *sepha* meant prison and that it was the prisoners who created this kind of song. Kukrit further stated that the sound of *krap*s, which are used for accompanying the *sepha* recital, is similar to those of the sound of chains when they are struck. He also believed that the *krap*'s pattern has been developed from the sound of clanking chains. However, the word *sepha* was not only used for the prison governor, but also as the title of various other officers, including the royal musicians. It would be better to say, therefore, that the word *sepha* was the title for government officials. It was later replaced, however, by the term *chao phanak-ngan*, to cover all government officials, even musicians. Nowadays the term *sepha* is used to refer to a particular style of song, though how this came about is not certain. Further to this, in the northeast of Thailand there is a performing art that is similar to *sepha* and has been performed by the indigenous people for a long time called *mo lam kap-kaep*. The word *kap-kaep* comes from the sound produced by two pieces of *krap* which are used to accompany the *khav lam*, a kind of story-telling. Wongthet (ibid.) is of the opinion that *mo lam kap-kaep* confirms the original use of *krap* in singing tradition, and that this kind of performing art has been created by people who spoke Thai-Lao language. Therefore, it would be better to assume that because of its characteristic, has been developed from *mo lam kap-kaep* rather than from the sound of clanking chains.

As stated previously, *sepha* developed from a prose form into a verse form and, eventually, into a type of song with various melodic accompaniments. The melodies are named according to the style they are in – for example, *sepha mon*, *sepha lao* and *sepha thai*. The *sepha thai* melody seems likely to be the original style as it has similarities to indigenous songs and is sung when Thai characters appear in the story. Later, about the beginning of Ratanakosin period which many of musical features were arranged and refined, the other styles were created. Whenever the story refers to the Mon or Laotian peoples the melodies turn into *sepha mon* or *sepha lao* respectively. It should be noted that only the Thai, Mon and Laotian styles are still in existence. This is, presumably, because the main characters in the Khun Chang Khun Phaen, are from these three groups, and that, in fact only this, the most popular of *sepha* stories, has been consistently recognized and performed. Other styles, such as the Burmese and the Khaek (Indian) were only been sung or performed rarely and, consequently, through time, have become all but extinct.

The *sepha* melodies consist of an introduction part, a main part and a cadence which is repeated continuously throughout the work. There are several variations on these components, and multiple interpretations of the main parts. The melodies are, in fact, sung in such a way that they reflect the changes of mood within the story, veering from tenderness to anger and from happiness to violence in accordance with the piece. All of this is revealed through the singer's use of variations in speed, scale and ornamentation in order to create sometimes very subtle distinctions. This diversity in *sepha* performance grew out of a keen competitiveness amongst the singers, ever eager to impress their audience, and extended to differences in emphasis in the spoken words, phrases and conversations of the story. The

wittiest and most versatile interpretation would win the day. All of this, was, in the most popular *sepha* performers, allied to a beautiful voice and well-honed style of speaking.

In the late of Ayutthaya period, the performance of *sepha* was very popular amongst the common people of every part of Thailand. It was performed, in particular, at celebrations or auspicious occasions such as wedding ceremonies and the shaving of the top-knot.⁹ *Sepha* entertainment was comparatively cheap, requiring, as it did, only one reciter, as opposed to the multiple performers required in, for instance, a play. This contributed to its wide popularity. However, Simon de la Loubère (1969:68), the French ambassador to Thailand during the reign of King Narai (c.1678) wrote on his diary: "... The singing accompanied with *krap* [presumably *sepha*] which are played by the singer himself ... is performed together with many other instruments." It should be noted that the "many other instruments" mentioned by La Loubère are still unclear what exactly they were. We must, therefore, remain aware of the fluid and unfixed nature of *sepha* performance, which was the case also with other forms of commoner entertainment.

Sepha Literature

When a *sepha* performance became very popular – with the performers or the audience – it may have achieved written form. All physical evidence of this, however, is likely to have been destroyed almost completely during the great Thai-Burmese war of 1767. This literary form of *sepha* would have differed from plays and sermons in that there was no fixed reliance on the text (Prince Damrong, *ibid.*). The singers would have consulted the written form only when their memory failed them, and, further, would have jealously guarded their own favored text from their rivals (Prince Narisara, *ibid.*). Consequently, if these examples of *sepha* literature ever existed they were largely unknown on a wider scale, and ultimately disappeared. At the beginning of the Rattanakosin period there was only one *sepha* story still recognized: Khun Chang Khun Phaen. Some parts were in verse and others in prose, but all had been kept alive through an oral tradition with little written down. This changed as singers began to record the poetry in writing, and abandoned the extemporized forms. These written verses were then refined, and the prose elements changed into verse form also. It became popular amongst poets to write *sepha* literature, and they plundered the Khun Chang Khun Phaen, taking from its great length favorite episodes and embellishing and expanding on them, resulting in the great variety of versions still extant. Many of the poets remain anonymous, and Prince Damrong (*ibid.*) presumed that this was due to shame at the rude nature of their material (though this is traditional) being at odds with their elite status in society. He said one of these poets was, in fact, King Rama II who wrote such episode as "Phlai Kaew makes love to Nang Phim" and "Khun Phaen forces his way into Khun Chang's house and makes love to Nang Kaew Kiriya. Additionally, apart from writing himself, King Rama II encouraged the royal poets to compose *sepha* verses which were sung to him by his singers while he was having his hair cut. In due course, the extemporized forms of *sepha* waned in popularity, to be replaced by such written versions as the above, perceived as they were, to be more beautiful in rhyme and meaning. Later, other *sepha* stories were composed, such as Phong Sawadan, Si Thanon Chai and Chiang Miang, but none rivalled the popularity of Khun Chang Khun Phaen.

Prince Damrong (*ibid.*) said that the Khun Chang Khun Phaen achieved its popularity due to the story's closeness to everyday reality of commoner life. Prince Narisara (*ibid.*) felt that its attraction lay in the unwillingness of its theme to yield to the wishes of the audience.

Since the theme of the story of Khun Chang Khun Phaen is widely known by the audience, they, however, may not be attracted simply by this, but the art of the singer and his powers of story-telling when describing popular episodes such as love-making couples, beautiful descriptions of nature, comic scenes, quarreling rivals and even departure speeches. So, on the one hand *sepha* entertainment developed as a written form and was refined in terms of rhyme and the use of words; and on the other hand its attraction as extemporized entertainment faded away.

Whatever the case, it reflects, as other *sepha* tales and, indeed, other story-telling forms do, Thai society in all its myriad manifestations: cultural, religious, political and traditional. In the precise evocations and everyday details of Khun Chang Khun Phaen it is possible to hear the story of the Thai people, and to believe that it has been passed down unbroken from generation to generation of *sepha* singers. Indeed, some believe that it is here that anyone seeking insights into Thailand's social and cultural history should look and not in the libraries of academic studies and other such ideologically distorted treatises.

Nowadays, *sepha* has evolved into different forms such as *piphat sepha* and *sepha mahori*. *Piphat sepha* shows the primary evolution of *sepha* from vocal to instrumental style. *Sepha mahori* portrays the secondary evolution of *sepha* and the use of *sepha* from literature to a musical entertainment. Since it was changed into written form, *sepha* stories have been acted out in different forms as well, appearing in the current forms of *sepha ram* and *sepha* recitation. *Sepha ram* or dancing *sepha*, is combined with *piphat sepha*, in the form of a musical play. *Sepha* recitation, which is still performed at the present time, is not extemporized any more, but is sung either from old *sepha* literature or from a recent composed work. Although there are many kinds of *sepha* performance still being recognized, their popularity seems to be diminishing.

In 1982, Suchit Wongthet,¹⁰ a well-known poet, wrote a *sepha* story called "Sepha Phrai" (*Sepha* of commoners) to contribute to Bangkok's bicentennial celebrations. It was later reprinted in a special edition of Silapawattathanatham Journal entitled "Phrai Khab Sepha" (A Commoner recites a *sepha* story) in 1986. *Sepha Phrai* was not only a contribution to the Bangkok's bicentennial celebration, but also a milestone of Thai contemporary literature, contributing an applaudable new *sepha* poem to the society.

Sepha Phrai is not very long, consisting of 2028 lines of *sepha* verse within 35 sub-headings and 29 lines of *aew khlao so*, another kind of extemporized song. The poem was composed in the old *sepha* traditional way, where, according to the poem, "... every verse is entirely spontaneous." The poet refers to both starting and completion dates which reveal that it took him approximately one year to complete the poem and get it published. The title of the work reflects both the subject and the style of the piece in that it is a song of the common people written in their own tradition. The chosen meter is the *klon sepha* which follows the general rules of *klon*, the eight syllables per line and the use of particular opening words for each section: for example "klao thueng" (hear about), "khra nan" (at that time), and "ma cha klao thueng" (I'll tell you about").

Although the poem thus uses story-telling forms and traditions, it is, in fact, a history of real-life events. It uses as its starting point the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, and continues with the Thonburi period (1767 - 1782) and the setting up of Bangkok, historical events run-

ning parallel with the ebb and flow in the fortunes of a family of proletarian commoners or peasants, following them right up until modern times and ending with the bicentenary of Bangkok in 1982.



Figure 2. Cover of Silapawattananatham Journal, "Phrai Khab *Sepha*". (Source: Author).

Story of Sepha Phrai

We start with Nai Get recalling the fall of Ayutthaya and its conquest and demolition by the Burmese during the great Thai-Burmese war. He has fled together with his wife, E-Ga, and five children to the new city of Thonburi which the king of Thailand has established as the capital. When the capital city moves to Bangkok, he and his family follow and work as builders of the new city's palace. Of Nai Get's five children, only two sons, Ai Oep and Ai Joi, and a daughter, E-Yen, are mentioned in the story; Ai Oep, married to E-Pin, follows in his father's footsteps as a builder; Ai Joi does nothing but sing and play music; E-Yen, whose husband has died in battle, has a daughter called E-On who, is later, to be brought up by Ai Oep. E-Yen is sold to Seng, a Chinese man and eventually becomes one of his wives and gives birth to his two sons, in the process becoming his favorite wife and then business manager.

Not long after the completion of the Bangkok palace the Burmese troops return and Nai Get is killed in the ensuing war while Ai Oep loses his eye. He comes back home to discover that his newborn son is dead and his wife married to another. Ai Joi meanwhile has avoided

the conflict and has been increasing his prowess as a musician, teaching his many children to play music too; one of them, Ai Thap, becomes a brilliant ranat (xylophone) player and eventually a court musician of very high rank.

E-On, the daughter brought up by Ai Oep, marries a fisherman's coolie and gives birth to three girls. After her husband vanishes at sea, E-On sells herself to Seng, the Chinese owner of a Sampheng brothel. Her eldest daughter is then abducted by the song of a powerful and feared local personage never to be seen again. The other two are raped by criminals and with their honor lost, are persuaded to join their mother in prostitution. Although apparently forsaken in this shameful profession, they gain spiritual redemption by instituting the building of a temple dedicated to their mother, a temple in which her ashes will later lie.

Ai Joi, the feckless musician, has two sons, Ai Jom and Ai Jan who lead wicked and disruptive lives. One day, they go to the brothel and, drunk, quarrel with E-On's daughters who are, unbeknownst to them, their own cousins and eventually kill them. Consequently, they have to flee to the countryside to evade arrest. This, however, leads to the revenge massacre of their entire family by the brothel guards.

The dead prostitutes have one child each: one is a boy named Chu and the other is a girl named Choi. They are taken to the temple that their mothers have built and are brought up there by monks, nuns and the other prostitutes. Choi is later brought up by the wife of a consul from abroad and learns to speak foreign languages. Chu becomes a popular monk and eventually leaves the order to enter the nobility; he studies law and marries the daughter of a lawyer, rising in his profession.

The fugitive brothers change their names into Ging and Garn, learning music and becoming good citizens. They forget the past, marry and become farmers: Ging has a son named Ai Plian and Garn has a daughter named E-Plaeng. E-Plaeng works for a refugee family from Bangkok, and when they return to their home city she follows them, later becoming the mistress of a chef and giving birth to a child. She then marries a builder, live with him on a boat and gives birth to another child, a girl. Her cousin, Ai Plian, meanwhile has been working in the paddy-fields, following his parents. When circumstances make farming impossible, he too, goes to Bangkok, staying with E-Plaeng and becoming a builder also. The story ends with the two of them working on the renovation of the Grand Palace, which their ancestors have built and with which the poem began.

Evaluation

In the Sepha Phrai, Wongthet reveals a close knowledge of the history and social situation of the Thai people. He has successfully married literature and social history, poetry and social event. The poem is studded with milestones in the Thai history such as celebration marking the birth of the new capital city in 1782, the conscription of the Cambodian and Laotian peoples into slavery etc. and with graphic descriptions of the poverty and anguish which characterized the lives of prostitutes at the beginning of the Rattanakosin period. In contrast with much other modern Thai literature, including Wongthet's own other works, this work deeply involves itself in the essence of the common people and their situation rather than concerning itself with the political perspective of the major figures of history.

Wongthet has set out to write the story purely in the spirit of a commoner and his writing style reflects this: the use of simple words and peasant vernacular, everyday speech and earthly expression. He never allows himself the pity of an outsider but rather, the fellow feeling and stoicism of one who is himself a commoner, of someone who seeks to understand and is, '*phrai*.' In contrast to classical *sepha* literature, the Sepha Phrai has no immutable standard of human perfection, with which it sets out to judge its protagonists, but, instead reveals and understands the difficulties inherent in the life of ordinary people. He doesn't rely on the stock scenes of romantic love, punning or set piece argument to court popularity and the approval of his readers as traditional poems did, but believes wholeheartedly in the power, truthfulness, and quiet dignity of his material. The result is a poem not just of value for its content, but also for its remarkable technical beauty: the lives of the commoners are contained within a complex web of rhyme, metaphor and aural harmonies, all of which seduce the listener into entering the very essence of what it is to live life as a common man –

... the noise of the tug boat is so loud it is
as if the river were being consumed, mountain uprooted.
The tug pulls the wife, the child and their grief forward
and also pulls him to wards Bangkok ...

However, in one matter, that of describing sexual love, Wongthet does adhere to the precedents of classic Thai poetry, by couching his seduction scene and the ensuing sexual act in the allusive language of the natural world and by using the extended metaphor of a boat sailing down a water way, with all the variations that this entails:

... the boat lowers its sails, speckled black,
enters the canal, takes a shortcut:
the canal isn't wide, nor narrow, it is just right –
right for the passage of a Chinese junk boat.

The term '*phrai*' itself, according to the dictionary edited by George Bradley McFarland, means a 'citizen' or a 'commoner.' It is often misunderstood amongst present-day Thais, who think that it means 'slave', in Thai, '*thas*.' This is because, in the past, both terms sometimes overlapped. In the strongly hierarchical society of old Thailand, the term *phrai* denoted a social position fixed by law: namely, the lowest freeman above a slave. Slavery at that time, however, was a kind of profession which nowadays would be called being a servant and it was common for *phrai* to sell themselves, their wives or children into slavery as mentioned in the poem that:

Nai Get ... sold his wife into slavery,
To save money – just enough for the basic necessities.
...
The three daughters were of great help.
He sent them to work as slaves, to earn money.

This tradition has carried on right up until now, particularly in the north of Thailand; people still sell their children illegally to work in factories or the brothels. Wongthet describes the feelings of the slaves in dispassionate terms, telling us that Nai Get's ancestors were: "never thinking about being free, never dreaming of being anything other than slaves." But 'phrai,' could upgrade themselves in order to escape from the lower class into the higher stratas which Ai Thap and Maha Chu manage to do in the poem. There were, as Wongthet also points out, the *phrai* who remained poor and were never able to escape the hard life, people such as Ai Plian and E-Plaeng. Slavery was abolished at the beginning of the 19th century in Thailand, and the term *phrai* is no longer in official use; it is, however, still used by the Thai elite to discriminate socially against poor people.

Wongthet presents substantiated historical, legal and sociological facts sympathetically in the form of his versified story. For instance, Wongthet's depiction of temple life is historically valid: temples were centers of society where people were educated:

Wat Mai Yai-On (the name of temple) increases its generosity,
It provides for the homeless orphans and
they also study with the monks ...

There was and is, constant movement between society and the temple and the story of Maha Chu (in the poem) is a typical illustration of the problem of ridding oneself of worldly desire as a monk, or having to rejoin and make your way amongst the ranks of the ordinary people. Wongthet also accurately displays the status of musicians in the Rattanakosin period: how they learnt music, how they earned money, who their audience and patrons were, and how they got promotion. He uses many Thai musical terms and takes it for granted that the reader will understand them. The similarity between the life of Luang Phairo Siang So, the most skillful fiddle player in Thai music history and Ai Joi's story in the poem, makes the reader believe that Wongthet has taken the information from Luang Phairo Siang So's biography. Playing music in the gaming house, for example, was a common means of making a living and giving popular performances at the end of the 18th century. His use of a sociological framework is not moralistic but depends on the simple recounting of the facts: the evil guys are not condemned, but nor are the good guys elevated. Wongthet does not sing the praises of the poor or other unfortunates in this life. The prostitutes earn 'merit' just like the nobility, crime remain unatoned and the culprits become respectable citizens. In his depiction of the modern period, however, he allows himself the ironic observation that despite Thailand's advances even now: "the government is heartless, uninterested, ignores the lives of the people, dislocating the subjects from the King, but seeing to the foreigners on the street." Expanding on this he also explains the status of the builders metaphorically as the scaffolding which is ignored and thrown to the ground:

... like the bamboo pole which are tied together
in order to build the scaffolding,
when the hall and the jedis were finished
they dismantled the scaffolding, threw it to the ground –
rotting bamboo right across the road.
No one pays attention to it.

Conclusion

Wongthet shows the full range of Thai society while concentrating on the fate of the many who remain poor. Fatefully, blindly, event upon event happens, turning poetically into stories and in the end becoming, so to speak, 'history.' Nothing, in the end, being beyond the scope of the poetic imagination. The boundaries of reality and song are constantly blurred and in reading the poem, one learns more not only of the social conditions of the commoners of Thailand's past but also of their tenacious spirit and its legacy for the Thailand of the future. *Sepha Phrai* might not archive the popularity of other *sepha* stories; it does, however, reflect the genuine endeavor of a writer who would like to bring back the *sepha* heritage and the knowledge it contains to Thai society.

Acknowledgements

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Endnotes

- 1 An old kind of rhymes composed in free verse.
- 2 A type of Thai musical ensemble where percussions are the main instruments.
- 3 A Type of Thai musical ensemble where strings are the main instruments.
- 4 Songs without an instrumental part.
- 5 The repertoire played by only the *mahori* ensemble which contains the stringed instruments mainly.
- 6 The repertoires played by only the *piphat* ensemble.
- 7 *Wai-khru* means to pay respect to teachers.
- 8 The most famous story in the Ayutthaya period until the present time.
- 9 This signifies entry to adulthood for both male and female.
- 10 Office of the National Culture Commission granted Suchit Wongthet the title "Artist of the Nation" (Silapin Haeng Chat) in 2002, but he declined it.

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Arts-Based Interventions to Enhance the Quality of Life

and Cognition of the Elderly with Mild Cognitive Impairment

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Abstract

This art activities program was designed to enhance the aesthetics, mood, cognition, and quality of life (QoL) of elderly patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI). The control group was given a single session of MCI knowledge, whereas the intervention group attended weekly art activities, based on visual thinking strategies, combined with cognitive development of aesthetic experience and contemplative arts for six weeks. There was no difference between the Thai Geriatric Depressive Scale (TGDS) scores or Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) scores between the two groups. However, the intervention group showed statistically significant improvement of Quality of Life, compared to the control group ($P < 0.01$), as did the letter fluency, delayed recall, and World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) scores ($P < 0.05$). Famous paintings used in the study included: *Painting Breathes Life into Sculpture*, v.1, *Snap the Whip*, and *The Hunters in the Snow* (Winter).

Keywords: *Art Program, Aesthetics Inquiry, Quality of Life, Mild Cognitive Impairment, Visual Thinking Strategies, Transformative Art Learning, Elderly, Geriatric, Thailand*

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Introduction

Art Activities and Mild Cognitive Impairment

It has been projected that the number of elderly in Thailand (age 65 or older) will increase approximately 17.5 percent from 2019 to 2050. Elderly with amnesia are at risk of developing dementia, with an increase from 617,000 in 2016 to 1,350,000 in 2037 expected, with Alzheimer's being the majority (Guidelines for Civil Service Inspection of the Ministry of Public Health for the Fiscal, 2020).

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) is the transitional stage, before a full diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). According to the diagnostic criteria of The International Working Group on MCI, the elderly with MCI will have a significant subjective and objective impairment of memory, or other aspects of the cognitive domain, with either preserved or minimally impaired instrumental ability, which, overall, is inappropriate and insufficient for a diagnosis of full dementia. Cognitive training in the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (ADL or IADL) has been found to be effective in preventing or reducing the risk of conversion to dementia (Bherer, 2015).

Art can be thought of as soft power. It is an important thing for life. It helps reflect emotions, values, and opinions. Moreover, art is a tool for communicating, to reach and connect with people in various ways (Binson, 2022).

Aesthetic inquiry is one tool for investigating and appreciating oneself. In addition, it may transform people's thoughts, emotions, and motivation (Thoresen, 2017). Cowl and Gaugler (2014) indicated that creative art activity helps balance the behaviors and mood of both the elderly and their caretakers, since it engages the function of both hemispheres of the brain, which then affects aesthetic development. This is in line with Edwards' study (1999), which reported that a person understands and recognizes beauty and different forms of art in different ways, because of his experience and ability to remember and understand the concept of beauty.

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is one method for developing aesthetic skills. Another technique is Aesthetic Thinking, developed by DeSantis and Housen (2000), which categorizes processes into five stages: the accountive, constructive, classifying, interpretative, and re-creative. Housen (2007) used this technique with individual learners, through speaking, thinking, providing information, and written records of their observations about a piece of art, and their expressions about what they had learned. This is in line with Parson's concept of cognitive development of the aesthetic experience (1987), which categorizes the aesthetic concept into five stages, which are favoritism, idea of subject, expression, formal properties, and judgment, which, it has been shown, can be trained. Patterson (2015), however, claimed that doing drawings from observation (e.g. blind contour, contour, shape, perspective, value, or texture) prompted learners to be more attentive, as they had to look at the model while drawing. This helps develop their consciousness, observation, thinking, and drawing skills.

In addition, Gibbs (1988) mentions that the reflecting cycle consists of description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and making action plans. Some of these are in line with Johns (2013), with regard to the reflections related to aesthetic development, which were 1) description of experience, 2) reflection, 3) influencing factors, 4) could I have dealt with it better, and 5) learning personal ethics and aesthetics. This aesthetic reflection corresponds to the concept of contemplative art, which combines different art activities with the devel-

opment of experience in contemplating a certain thing, to reflect the thoughts and feelings of a person. These bring about hidden potential through artistic work, using the Buddhist concept of "Bhavana Four," or the four developments, which are: 1) physical development, 2) emotional development, 3) moral development, and 4) intellectual development.

The development of both brain hemispheres is achieved when one looks at a picture and thinks, as is done with various art activities. Neuroplasticity is enhanced when one coordinates the use of the neural visual pathway, the central nervous system, and the hand and finger muscles, to create various works of art. Such activities prompt the elderly to express their thoughts, mood, and spatial imagination. Moreover, they help them explore their own mood and thoughts, and relieve stress, which are important factors for aesthetics development in the elderly, and which also lead to pride in themselves and discovery of their other potential.

This pilot study was aimed at developing an art group activities program to improve the aesthetics, cognitive function, mood, and quality of life of those elderly who were diagnosed with MCI in the outpatient setting of King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, and which would then be implemented later as a treatment program, as part of the regular, routine services in the hospital.

Methods

Participants

The study protocol was approved by the Committee on Human Rights Related to Research Involving Human Subjects, based on the Declaration of Helsinki, and was performed at the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University. This study recruited 30 elderly participants from King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital between January to August 2019. Their average age was 71 years and 4 months old (6.28%). They were screened using the Thai Mental State Examination (TMSE) and Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA). Inclusion Criteria were 1) men and women, 55 years old, 2) diagnosed by a psychiatrist or neurologist with MCI, 3) MoCA score > 23, 4) able to travel back and forth on one's own, 5) understand, read, and write in Thai, 6) willing to join the research program, and able to participate in all activities over the full six weeks.

Research Instruments

Quantitative data were collected with a questionnaire concerning the participants' demographic and clinical information. The main outcome was assessed by using The Thai Geriatric Depression Scale (TGDS) for depressed mood, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) for cognitive function, and the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHO-QOL) Brief for quality of life. The Aesthetic Assessment scale was used to rate the aesthetic skills learned during the experiment. The qualitative data were collected from six art activity plans, and qualitative interviews were also held, which were validated in terms of content, language, content coverage, clear questions, and objectives congruence. The results of the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of the activity plans were at 1 at the maximum, followed by 0.8 and 0.6, respectively. The statistical analysis of the quantitative data was performed using STATA, version 15.0. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis.

Preparation for Arts-Based Interventions

After informed consent by all participants, a baseline assessment was performed for all subjects, who were then randomly assigned into either the control group or the experimental group, consecutively.

This pilot study took place from January to August 2019. Each group activity, whether of the control group or the experimental group, consisted of five participants. Each participant was required to attend three study periods in order to accomplish the pilot study. Upon completion of the six weeks of art activity sessions, a post-test assessment was given. The Thai GDS, MoCA and WHOQOL were used by trained clinical psychologists to evaluate mood, cognitive status, and quality of life, initially at the recruitment period, and then again after six weeks of study (Figure 1).

Participant & Screening (N=30)						
Pre-test (N=30)						
Control group (N=15)			Intervention group (N=15)			
Health education about MCI 60 mins.	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Post-test (N=30)						

Figure 1. Overview of methodology.

Program Design and Implementation

The 15 subjects in the control group received the standard of care from the attending physicians, plus one group health education session on the topic of MCI, which lasted 60 minutes. The 15 subjects from the experimental group, on the other hand, attended weekly art group activities continuously for 6 weeks (hereafter referred to as A1-A6), which were conducted by the researcher. The art activity program to develop aesthetics in the elderly with mild cognitive impairment consisted of the six art activity plans. Each plan lasted 60 minutes. There were four stages, as a cycle, in each activity (Figure 2), which were:

1. Mental images,
2. the main activity, which was divided into two parts:
 - a) Visual thinking, focusing on using eyesight, and
 - b) expressing opinions of an artwork by answering three main questions, which were:
 - i. What happened in the picture,
 - ii. What made them think it corresponded to what they said, and
 - iii. What else they saw in the picture
3. Reflection, and
4. a reflective sketchbook journal.

The art activities for the experimental group consisted of six activities, A1-A6, which were:

- A1. "Chan Chan Chan," a contour drawing of their own faces.
- A2. "Sensai Suesan," listening to a song and drawing lines from imagination, and coloring a blank space.

- A3. “Pan Pan Hansa,” molding a sculpture from their imagination.
 A4. “Miti Sangsan,” designing a two- or three-dimensional artwork from waste materials.
 A5. “Phanphang Kanduenthang,” creating a simple map.
 A6. “Chuek Ruamjai Saiyai Thankthor,” working together with natural materials to create an artwork for the public, community, and society (Figure 2).

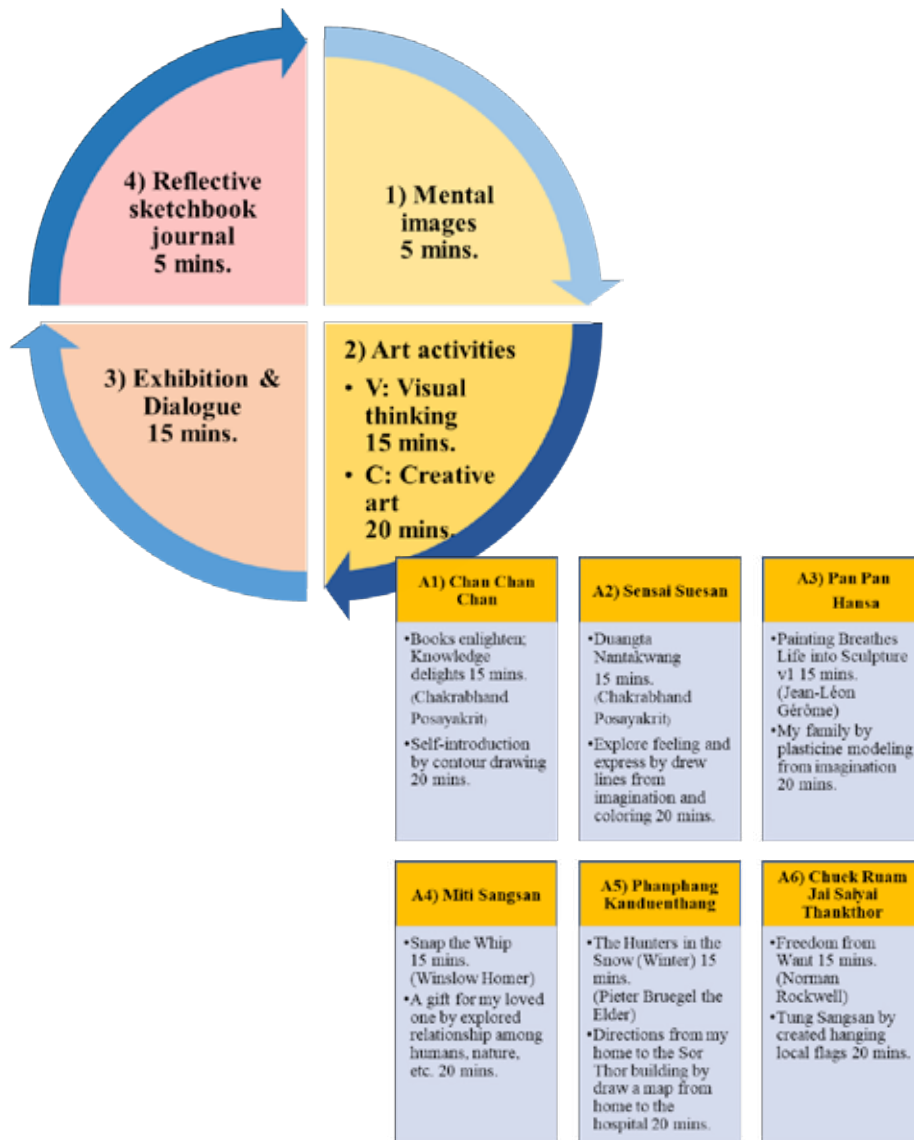


Figure 2. Structure of Arts-Based Program for Quality of Life & Cognition.

Six famous (i.e. highly recognizable) paintings were employed in the study: ‘Books Enlighten; Knowledge Delights’, by Chakrabhand Posayakrit; ‘Duangta Nantakwang,’ by Chakrabhand Posayakrit; ‘Painting Breathes Life into Sculpture, v.1,’ by Jean-Léon Gérôme; ‘Snap the Whip,’ by Winslow Homer, and ‘The Hunters in the Snow (Winter),’ by Pieter Bruegel (the

Elder). Each activity plan (i.e., A1 to A6) combined the four stages. The cycle began by working with one of the famous paintings as the springboard, then visual thinking, focusing on using the eyesight, and finally expressing opinions of an artwork by answering the three main questions, e.g. line, dimension, contour, etc. Finally, the task was to make one's own art production, emulating the various criteria that were studied in the original springboard painting, such as line, dimension, or space, etc.

Results and Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the implementation is as follows:

Background Characteristics and Context

The baseline results from the MoCA and Thai Geriatric Depression Scale (TGDS) showed that both the control and experimental groups had cognitive impairments. There were problems generally related to concentration and memory, which included forgetfulness, wrong working steps, inefficient planning, bad concentration, slow thinking, forgetting words, getting lost, and confusion of directions. The other problems related to depression included losing interest in what they used to like doing, having no concentration, an inability to come up with ideas, tiredness, lack of energy, and feeling worthless and guilty. However, there were no participants with any desire to die or commit suicide. In addition, there were no relatives or family members with Alzheimer's or mental illness.

All participants' educational level was recorded. Nine of the participants (30%) had graduated with a bachelor's degree. Six participants had graduated at the primary school level, and another six participants had graduated from high school or with a vocational certificate (20%). The final two participants had graduated from secondary school (6.67%).

The participants' financial means and resources were noted. Sixteen participants used to have a job (53.33%). Four used to be businesspeople or vendors (13.33%). Twenty-two participants had an income (73.33%). Of these, 17 had adequate income and savings (56.67%), whereas two participants did not have enough income (6.67%).

The participants' state of health was noted. Thirteen had hyperlipidemia (43.33%), followed by 12 with high blood pressure (40%). One participant each had thyroid, allergy, hepatitis B, or bone disease (3.33%). No participant was a drug user (Figure 3).

Characteristics	Art (n=15)	Control (n=15)	P-value
Age (years)*	69.47 (6.98)	73.33 (5.01)	0.092
Female	15 (100)	10 (66.67)	0.042***
Married vs. others (single, separated, divorce, widow)	8 (53.33)	10 (66.67)	0.456
High level education (more than high school)	7 (46.67)	9 (60.00)	0.464

Figure 3. Table of Baseline Characteristics and MoCA Scores. ***Fischer's exact. Continued on the next page.

Characteristics	Art (n=15)	Control (n=15)	P-value
Currently working	2 (13.33)	4 (28.57)	0.390***
Having Income	12 (80.0)	10 (66.67)	0.409
Living in Bangkok	13 (86.67)	10 (66.67)	0.39***
Having a caregiver	4 (26.67)	3 (20.00)	0.5***
hypertension	5 (33.33)	7 (46.67)	0.456
DM	4 (26.67)	3 (20.00)	0.5***
DLP	5 (33.33)	8 (53.33)	0.269
Heart	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	0.759***
CA breast	2 (13.33)	0 (0)	0.241***
Drug abuse	0 (0)	0 (0)	NA
MCI	15 (100)	15 (100)	NA
inattention	8 (53.33)	11 (73.33)	0.450***
Poor memory	8 (53.33)	7 (46.67)	0.715
disorganized	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	0.759***
poor concentration	2 (13.33)	4 (26.67)	0.326***
Slow of thought	4 (26.67)	7 (46.67)	0.225***
Word finding problems	6 (40.00)	9 (60.00)	0.273
miss direction	2 (13.33)	1 (6.67)	0.5***
depression	15 (100)	15 (100)	NA
feeling sad	0 (0)	1 (6.67)	0.5***
loss of interest	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	0.759***
poor attention	4 (26.67)	2 (13.33)	0.326***
Low energy	1 (6.67)	2 (13.33)	0.5***
appetite change	3 (20.00)	0 (0)	0.112***
sleep disturbance	4 (26.67)	3 (20.00)	0.5***
agitation	1 (6.67)	2 (13.33)	0.5***
feeling worthless	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	0.759***
thinking of death	0 (0)	0 (0)	NA
family history of dementia	0 (0)	0 (0)	NA

Figure 3. Cont. Table of Baseline Characteristics and MoCA Scores. *Mean (S.D.), Student T-test, **Median (range), ***Fischer's exact & ****Wilcoxon sign rank test.

From the analysis of the six art activities, it was found that the participants observed and expressed their opinions about the content of a picture, its beauty, mood, ideas, feelings, and other aspects of aesthetics.

The analysis was concluded and presented in three parts, as follows:

Visualization

All participants were asked to give a detailed description and observation of an artwork, by describing a picture, and answering three main questions, which were:

1. What happened in the picture,
2. What makes you think it corresponds to what you said, and
3. What else do you see in the picture?

Most participants had no prior experience in visualizing, or in thinking and speaking about what they saw in a picture. Therefore, during the first period, they were not confident in sharing their opinions. In the first stage, most of the participants merely looked at the picture, and simply explained its story and obvious content, rather than observing its technical details, such as drawing technique, color choice, or other techniques related to art creation.

However, from the third stage onwards, they began to express more opinions about the content, story, and details of what they saw in the picture. This was evidenced by what they shared. Good examples can be found in A3 “Pan Pan Hansa,” from the picture, ‘Painting Breathes Life into Sculpture, v. 1,’ and in A5 “Phanphang Kanduenthang,” from the picture, ‘The Hunters in the Snow (Winter),’ and in A6 “Chuek Ruamjai Saiyai Thankthor,” from the picture, ‘Freedom from Want’.

Aesthetic Inquiry

The participants were eager to join the program, and think about art activities which were related to observing a picture. Most of them had no previous experience with artwork. They were, therefore, interested and enthusiastic, yet doubtful about their abilities to create such work. However, having been assigned a topic, they were able to work with interesting prominent features (See Figures 4, 5, and 6).



Figure 4. A3 Inthanin's work.

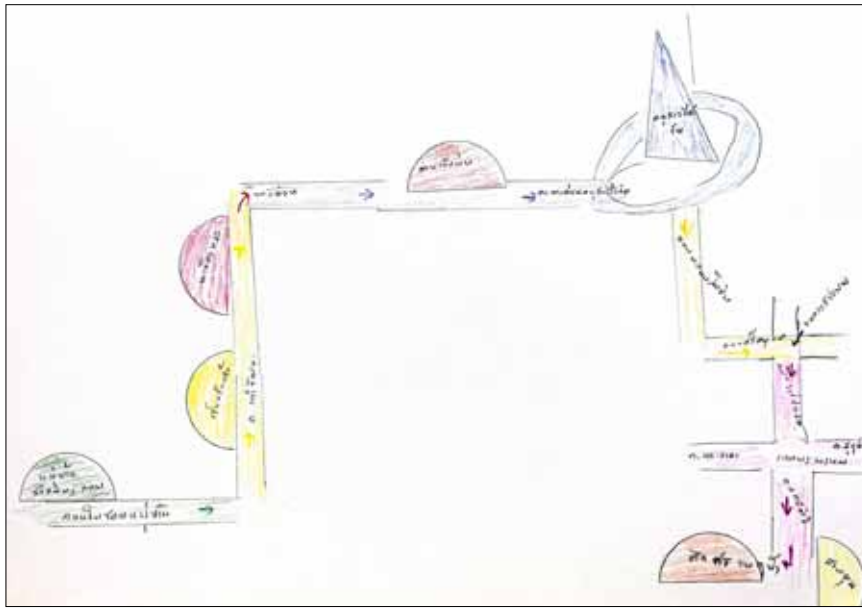


Figure 5. A5 Saiyud's work.



Figure 6. A6 group 2's work.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 show the participants' work, and their determination to complete an artwork. Although they did not have any experience in doing any of the kinds of artwork in any of the six activities, they showed some progress as they completed each new activity, and demonstrated an ability to finish the work, both individually and in groups, within the time.

Reflective Thinking and Expression

In their reflective sketchbook journals, most participants wrote that they had no experience of the six activities, whether in terms of observing, or thinking about art, or other related artwork experience. Some of them had had prior experience as children, but they

were not sure whether they could complete the assigned work now. However, once they started doing the activities, and found that they could do them based on their own ability, they were happy, and proud of their created work pieces.

In A6, "Chuek Ruamjai Saiyai Thankthor," which was working together with natural materials to create an artwork for the public, community, and society, the participants gave presentations of their works to the group.

"... There are many colors in my work. The work needs help from everyone. Each person does their own work and combines their work with others. This means it needs cooperation and unity to complete a Tung. Whether it is beautiful or not is up to each one of us. Our work may not be as beautiful as the common Tungs, but everyone is determined, cooperating, and united to make this beautiful Tung..." (Khem)

(Tung are flags in the northern Thai style, and are mainly used to celebrate auspicious events in Buddhism, such as weddings. Various materials, shapes, and sizes are seen, and they include various details in the designs).

Some participants used their reflection on their own work, mood, and other feelings as information for creating new works of art.

Cognitive and Quality of Life Results

There were no significant differences in the baseline MoCA scores or QoL scores between the control group and the experimental group at the outset. Participants in the art activity group ultimately showed higher improvement of MoCA than the control group, with a statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). Letter fluency and delayed recall showed greater significance than other cognitive domains ($P < 0.05$). Figure 7 shows the baseline MoCA scores. The detail of the other cognitive domain scores can be seen in Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9.

	Art (n=15)			Control (n=15)		
	Pre	Post	P-value	Pre	Post	P-value
MoCA (visuospatial/executive)	3.6 (1.24)	3.5 (1.60)	0.818	3.2 (1.37)	3.7 (1.45)	0.169
MoCA (naming) 3 animals	2.7 (0.59)	2.7 (0.72)	0.334	2.8 (0.56)	2.9 (0.35)	0.334
MoCA (attention) 1 digit						
forward/backward	1.9 (0.35)	1.8 (0.56)	0.67	1.7 (0.59)	1.9 (0.35)	0.499
MoCA (attention) 2 vigilance	1 (0.38)	0.9 (0.26)	0.582	1 (0.53)	1 (0)	1
MoCA (attention) 3 serial 7s	2.5 (0.92)	2.4 (1.18)	0.792	2.4 (0.83)	2.5 (0.70)	0.7179
MoCA (language) 1 repetition	1.1 (0.70)	1.1 (0.70)	1	1 (0.65)	1 (0.65)	1
MoCA(language) 2 letter fluency	0.4 (0.51)	0.7 (0.49)	0.041	0.3 (0.46)	0.5 (0.52)	0.271
MoCA (abstraction)	0.5 (0.64)	0.7 (0.82)	0.384	1.1 (0.88)	1.1 (0.92)	0.774
MoCA (delayed recall)	1.3 (1.18)	3.3 (1.63)	0.001	1.7 (1.54)	3.1 (1.53)	0.011
MoCA (orientation)	5.6 (0.74)	5.7 (0.62)	0.582	5.7 (0.62)	5.7 (0.59)	0.751
MoCA score (Total)	20.7 (3.99)	23 (4.41)	0.01	20.9 (2.84)	23.3 (4.62)	0.012

Figure 7. Table of baseline characteristics of both art activity and control groups.

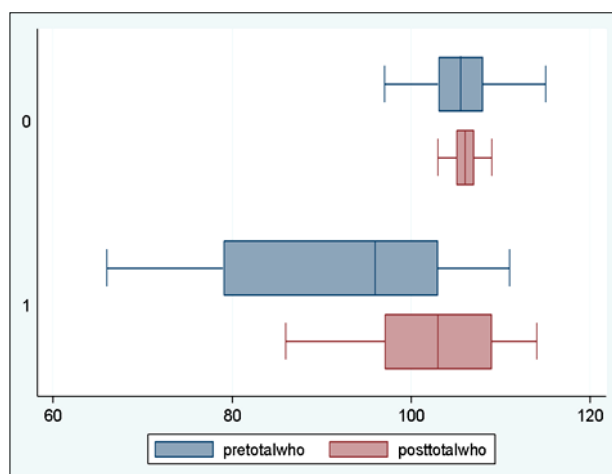


Figure 8. WHOQOL of both art activity and control groups (Pre Total WHO - Green, Post Total WHO Red).

The WHOQOL questionnaire was evaluated initially at baseline, and then again six weeks apart. The scores indicated significant improvement in quality of life for the participants who engaged in the art activities, as compared to the control group ($P < 0.05$). Significant differences in the mean scores were observed in the physical health, psychological health, and environmental domains ($P < 0.05$). (See Figure 9)

	Art (n=15)			Control (n=15)		
	Pre	Post	P-value	Pre	Post	P-value
WHOQOL	91.7 (13.11)	102.4 (8.38)	0.001	104.2 (6.69)	104.2 (5.97)	1

Figure 9. WHOQOL between art and control groups.

Dialogue from MCI Participants

In each activity, the participants had a chance to explore, observe, and reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, work process, artwork, and other requirements, etc. At the end of the program, the cognitive skills of the participants in the experimental group were significantly higher than those in the control group, $p = 0.012$.

This corresponds to the feedback from the interviews, in which participants said that they liked all the activities, as they were good and appropriate.

There was a variety of activities, including listening, thinking, and speaking activities, done both as individual and group work. These made them proud of themselves, as was claimed by Khem and Wassana, who said that “... the art program is appropriate ... We did what we had never done before. We try our best, whether it comes out beautiful or not, but we are proud of ourselves”

The findings suggest that the experimental group's cognitive MoCA scores were significantly higher, $p = 0.01$. This is in line with the research findings, which showed that activity A5) “Phanphang Kanduenthang,” which was creating a simple map, helped train the

participants' concentration, and also helped them reflect and recall their daily routine of traveling from their homes to the research location. The participant, Mali, confirmed that *"... I really like this activity, because I feel that my thinking skills and brain are developed. I also gain new knowledge...."*

The Prasat Neurological Institute of the Department of Medical Services (2014) reported that reminiscence therapy, or the training of perception and interaction with different aspects of making art or other activities, can stimulate memory and mood. This can be done by encouraging a person to recall his past experience, or a particular event. This is conducted through different forms of media that are related to a person's memories. Thus, activity A5) "Phanphang Kanduenthang," the map activity, was a task to exercise their thinking and creativity, based on their past experiences.

Moreover, the activity helped the participants develop their visuospatial skills. The MoCA scores of the experimental group had significantly improved after the activity, at the level of 0.01, which supports what Pipitthanaban et al. (n.d.) and Sittironnarit (2011) suggested about prevention and treatment guidelines for patients with different levels of cognitive impairment. They indicated that there should be activities that enable the elderly to recall their past behaviors. Organizing activities that recall past behaviors will help the elderly practice thinking. Reflecting on oneself in everyday life also develops skills related to cognition, because this is training in thinking about original experiences, thinking in chronological order, and so on. This is easy to achieve in daily life, which Farran and Formby (2012) referred to as the ability to perceive and interact with what is related to eyesight, or to complete activities that require daily life skills. Such activities are also a method to promote visuospatial perception. They have to do with the ability to perceive and interact with things that relate to vision or touch. The various experiences that require daily skills are consistent with encouraging Alzheimer's patients, and understanding and using symbols. By visiting museums and displaying maps or images of various symbols, patients cultivate their visuospatial perception (The Museum of Modern Art, 2016).

The findings of the aesthetic self-assessment also indicated that the program helped promote better mood, calmness, relaxation, and confidence ($p = 0.083$). This was supported by the participant, Nonsri, who reflected that *"... before the program, I felt pressured from different things. I saw things negatively. After the program, I feel that there are still ways for the emotion to be drawn out and see things more positively. The activity makes me feel relaxed with what I find stressful, so I feel less stressed ..."* Likewise, Wassana noted that *"... mood, aesthetics, and thinking are better ... It is like the activity prompted me think, and makes me feel happy and have more imagination ..."*

This supports Havsteen-Franklin and Altamirano's study (2015), which showed that different forms of art affect mood and the mind development process. This can lead to various psychological changes, which support clinical treatment. In the present study, it was found that, after the program, the sad mood scores of both the experimental and control groups were lower (Art, $p = 0.304$; Control, $p = 0.769$). However, the depression test scores between the two groups were not significantly different. This might be due to the short duration of the present study, and to the fact that there is no record of depression prior to the program.

Nevertheless, some participants stated that this program helped elevate their mood, calmness, relaxation, and confidence. They reported that they felt relaxed, as they were able to vent their thoughts and feelings through the artwork. Nonsi said, *"...Before studying, I felt that there was a lot of pressure and pressure on many things, and I looked at things very negatively. The activities we do make us feel more relaxed about the things we stressed before, making it less stressful..."*

And, as Saiyud said, *"...going to work is happier. Happy to go to the gym, work, socialize, chat with friends around the environment, the atmosphere is good, most of them cause positive thinking..."*

They also had a chance to try new things, which boosted their happiness and creativity. As Vasana said, *"Emotions, aesthetics, and thoughts will be better after learning... just like doing activities. This will make you happier and more imaginative."*

Moreover, this study gave evidence of improvement in communication between the brain hemispheres and hand-eye coordination. When completing the work, the participants needed to be mindful, concentrate, and focus on hand-eye coordination. The use of thinking skills, hands-on experience, and creating their own work utilized both the left and right brain hemispheres. This supports Edwards' study (1999), which claims that to complete an artwork, collaboration between the two hemispheres is needed, and this enables the participants' perception of visuospatial skills, feelings, structure, and patterns. The use of art in clinical treatment, which is related to the development of determination and satisfaction, helps develop the nervous system, social skills, and self-confidence (Chancellor, et al., 2014).

The findings of this study also suggested that the experimental group had significantly higher levels of aesthetics, cognition, and quality of life than the control group, $p = 0.001$, 0.01 , and 0.012 . This is in line with Heilman and Acosta's study (2013), which reported that doing artwork affects an individual's brain and quality of life. Completing an artwork is related to the use of the right brain hemisphere, which is connected to doing the work, as well as to the understanding of a pictograph. Therefore, doing an artwork can improve the brain, and the development of a person's quality of life, since art work is related to the use of the right hemisphere, which is linked to working with and understanding artistic visual language. Therefore, working with art promotes the link between neuroscience and art, while the ability to perceive, and the interaction between the eyesight and the motions necessary to completing an activity that is related to daily life skills, are enhanced (Farran & Formby, 2012).

In addition, the feedback from A6) "Chuek Ruamjai Saiyai Thankthor," which was working together with natural materials to create an artwork for the public, community, and society, showed that most participants liked this activity, as it gave them the opportunity to design their own section, and integrate it as a part of the group design as a whole, under the topic "Tung Sang San," which was to create flags in the northern style. As this activity required collaboration, it brought unity. Many participants reported enjoying and liking it the most.

In the reflective journal, Angkarb said that *"... this gives us the opportunity to unite and collaborate. I really like it ..."*

Lamduan asserted that *“... after looking at the picture and explaining ... I could use my brain and use it to bind the Tung. We use our brains to collaborate ... that makes me know my brain is still working ...”*

In general, both the individual projects and the group work encouraged the participants to use various skills, including socializing, listening, thinking, speaking, and group presentation skills. This matches the treatment guidelines from Prasat Neurological Institute, Department of Medical Services (2014), which specializes in curing patients using different types of treatments and healing modalities.

The “Tung Sang San” (flag) activity also helped train cognition-oriented skills, both individually and in groups. It focused on stimulation-oriented skills, using recreation therapy through working with art, which helped stimulate cognition and understanding of their new roles and responsibilities, and developed their self-reliance, as they designed their individual Tung. They then had to change roles, from being self-reliant to being members of a group, when creating the group’s Tung.

The difficulty in creating the group Tung was in the assembly of the individual Tungs to form one group Tung, such that it could be hung or presented as one piece. The idea that this type of activity can develop both hemispheres of the brain (when one is in the process of learning about aesthetics) corresponds with Edwards’ concept (1999), which explained that observation affects decision-making and visuospatial understanding of different types of relationships, and how to carry on with the task. The right hemisphere is responsible for understanding feelings, the ability to observe overall images, and the perception of related patterns and structure.

This concept is in line with the concept of the development of aesthetic thinking by De-Santis and Housen (2000), who suggested that looking at a picture and thinking about it is an activity that can encourage further thinking skills. This was supported by the results of the present study, in that most participants had significantly higher scores on aesthetics, $p = 0.001$. It corresponded, for example, with the self-evaluation on aesthetics of the participant, Wassana, as she described that *“... mood, aesthetics, and ideas were better after the program. This is because, before the program, I never looked at a picture and thought. After learning, I look at a picture and think more. When I join the activity ... It makes me think and be happy, and have more imagination. For thinking, when we look at a picture, we think and think of how to draw and it makes us be more careful ...”*

Angkarb also said that *“... aesthetics before the program ... is at intermediate level ... after the program, it has improved ...”*

Similarly, Inthanin evaluated herself, writing *“... before the program, I would give two points for my aesthetics, but I give myself a four after the program, because I did not know how to draw before that ... my works are colorless. I did not know how to use colors. After the course, I know how to do artwork, how to choose and use colors ...”*

Chamchuri evaluated herself in the same way, by recording *“... in the past, I liked to think and speak out right away. After the program, I think before speaking ... about aesthetics, I would give myself three points before the program and four points after the program; for example, I am more detailed, especially on behaviors like funny, strange, or on colors ...”*

In Khajorn's self-evaluation, she concluded that *"... I give myself three points before the program, as I was sometimes moody, but, after learning, I understand and try to adjust myself, so I would give myself four points ... about aesthetics, before the program, I give myself three points, and, after the program, four points, as I feel more enjoyable about thinking. My scores are four before and five after the program. My ideas are better after listening to what the instructors explain ... I have the idea of doing better work ... about quality of life, I give myself four points before and five points after the program, because it is better ... I listen to the instructors ... observe others ..."*

In A1), the participants were asked to do a "self-introduction," by doing a kind of self-portrait, using blind contour. They needed to focus, as they had to look at the model (which was, of course, themselves), and draw from their feelings. This promoted observational skills, and the action of doing line drawings affected the development of thinking skills. Patterson (2015) found that blind contour, contour, shape, perspective, value, and texture are all aspects that require focusing, as the artist needs to look at the model, (which, in this case, was oneself), and draw from one's feelings. This helps train the consciousness, and develops observational and line-drawing skills, which also promotes the development of thinking skills, stable moods, and overall learning. Such improvements were strongly implied in the results of the present study, which show that the participants' MoCa scores were significantly higher than pre-test, $p = 0.01$.

The practice guidelines for dementia of the Prasat Neurological Institute of the Department of Medical Services (2014) suggest that doing crafts and artwork helps stimulate cognition in the elderly, and helps them to understand their new roles and responsibilities. Both art therapy and music therapy (including journal writing) can delay dementia. This study's art activity program helped the participants look at a picture and think, observe, analyze, criticize, imagine, and express mood and feelings, and then relate this to the creation of the various works of art in the six activities.

This allowed the experimental group to improve their aesthetics. For example, initially, in A1, the participants merely talked about the picture, and described the content in detail. There was no language related to art techniques, aesthetics, or their mood or imaginings, as they looked at the picture. However, by Activities 5 and 6, the participants were using more words related to aesthetics, and to details with regard to the beauty that they saw in the picture. There included explanations and comments on the use of colors, interjections, feelings, and expressions of mood, while they looked at the picture.

The self-evaluation of the participant, Inthanin, supported this: *"... before the program, I give two points for my aesthetics, but I give myself a four after the program, because I did not know how to draw before that ... my works are colorless. I did not know how to use colors. After the course, I know how to do artwork, how to choose and use colors ..."*

Looking at the picture and thinking actively not only improved observation, and confidence in thinking and speaking, it also boosted the participants' self-confidence and socializing skills.

Inthanin said that *"... to socialize and talk ... I am more confident. In the past, I was not that confident ... to stand, answer or talk ... I was not confident at all ... after learning with the instructors, I*

am more confident to stand up and express the picture. I never did this. I was not good at this. Now I am more confident ... I think it is good ... everything is good ... before the program, I give myself just one point ... after the program, my score is five ..."

This supports Housen (2007), who suggested that the strategy of looking at a picture and thinking can encourage the thinking skills of everyone from every level, especially those with Alzheimer's. Likewise, Demarin et al. (2016), which was a study on experiential training and observation related to working in the arts, found that visuospatial perception of the damaged right hemisphere affects the left hemisphere, and affects the individual's creative responses to art and quality of life.

Conclusion

The design of this art activity program to develop the skills needed for handling dementia and quality of life of the elderly through collaboration, art education, and neurology was just the first phase of a proposed much longer project. The results of the present study indicate that the participants' cognition, aesthetics, and quality of life were quantitatively and qualitatively higher than before joining the program, and higher than those of the control group. Specifically, according to the qualitative data, the participants' art skills and aesthetics were improved. This was evidenced by their completion of all six activities. The higher quantitative and qualitative scores in the data analysis corresponded to the participants' self-evaluations that their cognition, perception, aesthetics, and quality of life all were better after the program.

However, due to such limitations as the number of participants and the short duration of the experiment, these results might be limited. The current research was also constrained by a lack of experience on the part of the researcher and the medical professionals who collaborated with the researcher on the project in conducting this particular type of study. The two sides were unfamiliar with one another's procedures and work processes, so the current study suffered from logistical inefficiencies.

Implications for the Future

Whereas art and medicine rarely meet, future researchers will want to make sure that they have good background training in, or exposure to, clinical medical practice, in order to collaborate with medical staff efficiently, and understand clinical procedures and work processes, and design the study with those in mind. Insofar as art can be considered soft power, it is further suggested that further research be conducted with integrated monitoring, with precise medical measurements of cognition, mood, and spatial imagination, throughout the progress of the six art activities in the program. The program should be designed for portable activity, so that it can be carried to a larger population, or made longer. Planning for additional time to be spent on ethics in research training, clinical research procedures, and medical-related documents is also encouraged. Increasing the duration of the program, and further development of aesthetics test scales, are also recommended. Finally, it is recommended that arts-based activities, based on the concept of transformative art learning, be designed to enhance not only cognition, but also emotion and motivation. The incorporation of transformative art learning into the program would give more promising results in different dimensions, and would be more beneficial for the elderly.

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Henri Lefebvre's Spatial Theory as Methodology – *A Methodological Reconsideration of the Spatial Triad*

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Abstract

This article presents a methodological toolset for qualitative socio-spatial analyses based on sociologist Henri Lefebvre's spatial theory (Lefebvre, 1991). While Lefebvre has been extensively treated as an urban theorist, his work has not been widely explored from a methodological perspective. In the article, Lefebvre's spatial triad is particularly used to develop a concrete methodology for qualitative socio-spatial analyses. While simultaneously focusing on general methodological aspects, this article draws on how the author applied Lefebvre's spatial theory in a sociological study about intercultural engagements in Shanghai in the context of China's opening up reforms. More specifically, Lefebvre's spatial triad is discussed in relation to a bodily engaged research practice, ethnography and four theory of social science approaches.

Keywords: *Henri Lefebvre, The Spatial Triad, Methodology, Qualitative Methods, China*

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Introduction

[a] criticism of Lefebvre's analysis is that it does not provide sufficient illustrative and substantial detail of the operation, the workings, of each of his dynamic elements. It is an abstract theoretical analysis that identifies a number of macro and micro social factors without specific consideration of the implications and applications of each of his elements. (Zieleniec, 2007:93)

In this article, I present a methodological toolset based on my application of sociologist Henri Lefebvre's spatial theory (Vaide, 2015). Lefebvre has been extensively treated as an urban theorist, but his work has not been widely explored from a methodological perspective. Particularly, I use Lefebvre's spatial triad (Lefebvre, 1991) to develop a concrete methodology for qualitative spatial analyses. While simultaneously focusing on general methodological aspects, I address how I applied Lefebvre's spatial theory in my own work. Conducting ethnographic fieldwork and analyzing my empirical material on intercultural engagements in the context of Shanghai's opening up, I recognized that China's societal changes (since its inception in late 1970s) are highly spatial and I therefore needed a sociological approach that considers socio-spatial relations. While struggling with the theoretical framing of my study, Lefebvre's spatial theory – and particularly the spatial triad and related concepts in *The Production of Space* (1991) – helped me to arrange and analyze my collected empirical material. What I encountered during my ethnographic fieldwork was a seemingly rapidly changing urban space, modernizing identities, and the country's re-globalization rhetoric.

As Lefebvre's theory has received criticism for being too vague and abstract, applying his theory is indeed an interesting challenge. Several theorists have stated, such as Andrzej Zieleniec (2007) above and Setha Low (2017), that Lefebvre does not provide enough details for how to conduct spatial analysis using his framework. Low (2017:18) suggests that Lefebvre is unclear about how the different parts of the spatial triad interact and work empirically. However, others, such as Andy Merrifield (2006), have pointed out that Lefebvre's way of writing opens up for different interpretations of his theories. Regarding the spatial triad, Merrifield (2006:109) writes that Lefebvre “sketches this out only in preliminary fashion, leaving us to add our own flesh, our own content, to rewrite it as part of our own chapter or agenda.” Although Lefebvre's spatial theory has been widely used as an analytical tool, there are surprisingly few extensive methodological considerations of the spatial triad (Carp, 2008; Pierce and Martin, 2015). While Carp (2008) provides a description of how to use the spatial triad in planning education, Pierce and Martin (2015) argues for a contextualization of the triad in relation to relational understandings of place as to enable a more concrete use of Lefebvre's theory. With above in mind, the operationalization of Lefebvre's spatial triad that I present here is an exploratory open endeavor.

An Interpretative Approach and Urban Space as a Backdrop

Working with an interpretive approach and immersing myself in Shanghai through ethnographic fieldwork, I came to notice early on that “space” is essential to China's development through the vast changes of the city's urban fabric. To get to know the city, the immersion consisted of extensive walks, visits to several places and neighborhoods, and colloquial talks and interviews with local Shanghainese and Chinese from other parts of the country. Along the long walks, I registered a highly changing urban space. Some neighborhoods were under demolition, while others clearly were newly redeveloped. Shanghai's space was seemingly reconfigured to host the re-globalization (and thus modernization) of the city. Through colloquial conversations and formal interviews, I listened to stories about the city,

people's intercultural experiences, and how these experiences relate to Shanghai's semi-colonial past and contemporary openness towards the outside world. By this practice, the city emerged as a material and storied contact space of Chinese and foreign cultures. As an example, Mr. Zhao, a local Shanghainese white-collar worker, elaborated on the grounds for Shanghai's contemporary openness:

You know, Shanghai was very westernized in the 1920s and 1930s. It was the place in China that got the most influence from Western countries. A lot of countries made concessions in Shanghai. At that time, Shanghainese got more influence from Western people and Western companies. There were a lot of Western companies, and a lot of Western people came to Shanghai. And so, the Shanghainese can accept the Western way very easily. And, about thirty years ago, Shanghai open to other countries, so it is more open. And nowadays, it has become a finance and economic center, and more and more Western people come to Shanghai, and a lot of Chinese people go abroad and come back to China. So they can easily understand the Western way. And some people work in Western companies, foreign companies. So they get a lot of contact with foreigners, so they can easy understand the Western way.

In Mr. Zhao's depiction, Shanghai is described as a city grounded in its historical openness towards foreign cultures as a result of Western colonialism and today's opening up reforms. I will get back to how I unpacked this story applying Lefebvre later in the article. With an interpretive approach, I strived to be sensitive to the social life of the city and to provide myself with first-hand knowledge and ultimately to contribute to a flexible and open understanding of Shanghai and contemporary China.

As I made ethnographic descriptions of intercultural engagements in Shanghai and embarked on analyzing the interviews, I was not analytically satisfied. Lacking appropriate theoretical tools, I focused on activities and experiences in and across space, such as what they were doing together, where the interactions took place, how they detailed their experiences through different examples and how these activities and experiences of intercultural contact unfolded in the interviews. Although intellectually experiencing that "space" was an issue (and obviously experiencing the change of the city's urban space), I still treated the space(s) of Shanghai as a mere backdrop to the interviewees' intercultural engagements. While getting to know the city through walks and people's stories, I started to experience the need to connect and analyze my collected material to wider parts of the city (the implementation of the opening-up reforms through urban planning) and the country as a whole (the opening up reforms). Examining the interviews from an exploratory spatial perspective, such as Mr. Zhao above, I concluded that I required a social theory that connects situated individual stories with wider socio-spatial changes. At this point, I decided to work with Lefebvre's spatial framework. (Lefebvre, 1991)

Grounding Lefebvre's Spatial Triad in Research on Intercultural Engagements in Shanghai and China's Opening Up Reforms

Reading *The Production of Space* (1991), I was intrigued by Lefebvre's social theory of societal spatial production that covers an integrated understanding of society and space. Within Lefebvre's theory lies a critique of how the relationship between society and space has been conceptualized and examined (in the West). Principally, this conceptualization produced a separation between society and space, which shaped how research was conducted

historically, and formed theoretical approaches and ways of producing knowledge (Lefebvre 1991; Kinkaid 2019; Soja 1996; Watkins 2005). In this context, Lefebvre (1991) suggests that modern societies have been producing a specific understanding of societal spatial production, which he labels abstract space. Crucial to the development of modern sciences and the creation of the researcher as a seemingly objective disembodied knowledge producer, this understanding of socio-spatial relations laid out the contours of the separation, dichotomization and hierarchization of natural and social/humanist sciences and, quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Kinkaid 2019; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996; Watkins 2005). Based on cartesian logic, the dichotomy between society and space was manufactured by and enacted through Western sciences, nations, bureaucracy, capitalism, warfare, and colonialism. While temporality became the structuring principle for modernizing societies (symbolizing progression and development), abstract space produced an understanding that space is empty, given, objective and neutral, and ready to be filled, exchanged, and exploited. Treating space as a mere backdrop to social life (here exemplified by intercultural engagements in Shanghai) as I did at an early stage in my research is arguably grounded in the philosophical separation between society and space. At this point, I clearly was not accustomed to socio-spatial thinking. Given this, my fieldwork in Shanghai and Lefebvre opened up my thinking to go beyond the dichotomy of society and space.

While others have written extensively on Lefebvre (Elden, 2004; Fraser, 2015; Goonewardena et al, 2008; Harvey, 1989; Merrifield, 2006; Schmid, 2008; Shields, 2013; Soja, 1996; Stanek 2011), I will summarize his key ideas on socio-spatial production. To establish a non-dualistic understanding of society and space, Lefebvre introduces the concept social space. Lefebvre (1991) suggests that societal production is fundamentally spatial, and that society and space should instead be understood as an integrated whole. Lefebvre (1991:411) states "space can no longer be looked upon as an "essence," as an object distinct from the point of view (or as compared with) "subjects," as answering to a logic of its own." Instead of analyzing "things in space" (treating space as objective), it is crucial to analyze the actual "production of space" and illuminate how space is integral to societal production. (Lefebvre, 1991) While space has been understood as passive and a container of social relations in Western philosophy, space should be understood as relationally produced. Principally, society is produced (and reproduced) through the creation of built and landscaped environments and activities in and through (a socially produced) space, dominant representations of space, and lived experiences. Thus, Lefebvre (1991) argues that societal spatial production can be understood through a three-way process. Through what Lefebvre labels "the conceptual triad," social space is produced by the integrated means of spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. Firstly, the concept spatial practices involve material space and what uses and movements it enables (space as perceived, built, and landscaped, and enacted through everyday practices). Secondly, the concept representations of space involve dominant conceptualizations of space, such as plans, maps, visions, policies, strategies, and research (space as conceived and imagined by politicians, planners, architects, and researchers). Thirdly, the concept representational spaces involve people's situated understandings (and negotiations) of space.

As I approached Lefebvre's theory, I began to analyze my collected material along the spatial triad. Through this process, I became aware of the importance of different levels of social space (thus societal spatial production) and illuminating the levels analytically.

Re-listening to and re-reading my interviews, I started to understand the interviewees' accounts as representational spaces and thus partly constitutive of social space. Similar to Lefebvre's definition of representational spaces, the interviewees applied "associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre, 1991:39) to describe and construct their own intercultural engagements in relation to the city's historical and contemporary openness. Centering on their personal intercultural engagements, the interviewees often used the economic reforms and opening-up, particular places in the city (international companies and leisure and entertainment venues) and Shanghai's history as reference points while detailing their own intercultural experiences.

Applying Lefebvre's framework to my reading of Mr. Zhao, I identified several levels of the spatial triad. By doing this, I realized that the interviewees' accounts (representational spaces) could be analytically related to the city's space (spatial practices) and dominant representations of the city's and country's history and development (representations of space). At the level of representations of space, Zhao addresses Shanghai as the most westernized city on the Chinese mainland. By doing this, Zhao evokes the idea of the city's Haipai culture, which indicates the culture of openness that developed out of the colonial presence in Shanghai (Gamble, 2003; Greenspan, 2012; Shih, 2001; Zhang, 1996 and Zhong, 2012). At the level of spatial practices, Zhao mentions the city's concessions, which refers to the colonial enclaves established by several foreign powers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Abbas 2000; Bergère 2009; Lee 1999 and Zhu 2009). At the level of representational spaces, Zhao also addresses the city's inhabitants of colonial Shanghai as people that could easily understand Western culture (Lee, 1999 and Shih, 2001). Moreover, Zhao also addresses contemporary Shanghai by referring to the opening-up of the city in the 1990s and its status as a finance and economic center (Wu, 2000 and Wu, 2003). Due to these changes, Zhao also highlights that people (representational spaces) are more accustomed to "the Western way."

As several interviews focused on colonial Shanghai, as exemplified by Zhao, I decided to situate the study in relation to postcolonial studies and Shanghai's colonial heritage to address the historical context of the city and the country as a whole. As also indicated, the interviewees used the city's newly produced material space, and particular places in the city as reference points. To address this through Lefebvre's spatial triad, I included material that details the emerging (material) space in Shanghai mentioned by the interviewees. This material consisted of official, public, and corporate representations, and my own descriptions of certain places.

As Zhao and other interviewees highlighted the city's opening up, I included an analysis of how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the local Shanghai government envisioned, implemented, and promoted the opening up reforms. Understood as constitutive of representations of space, the material consisted of CCP political rhetoric (Deng Xiaoping speeches) and official spatial planning discourse (diverse material from the Shanghai Municipal Government). By including this material, I was able to analyze the broader ideological and discursive features of the opening-up reforms within an interpretive framework as to understand how the personal intercultural engagements were emplaced in and constructed through official visions regarding the emerging society. Thus, I was able to analyze the CCP ideology that has been endorsed since late 1970s. Interestingly, this material consisted of

details of the emerging society's production in terms of encouraged ideologies (opening up rhetoric), spatialities (special economic zones, open coastal cities, free trade zones) and subjectivities (educated urbanities).

As illustrated, conceptualizing intercultural engagements as socio-spatial phenomena allowed me to relate the interview content to intercultural features in urban space (spaces of contact and the city's semicolonial past) and political rhetoric (the opening up policy). Realizing that the interviewees' accounts could be understood as partly constitutive of social space was an important moment. While previously treating space as a backdrop to the interviewees' accounts, I could understand them as integral and crucial to socio-spatial production.

In the remainder of this article, I further explore how Lefebvre's spatial theory can be applied as methodological tool for engaging in socio-spatial production from an ethnographic approach.

Embodied Research Practice and Immersion

"Western philosophy has betrayed the body; it has actively participated in the great process of metaphorization that has abandoned the body; and it has denied the body." (Lefebvre, 1991:407, italics in original)

From a methodological perspective, Lefebvre's understanding of modern socio-spatial production and situating researchers as part of representations of space become crucial as to understand how scientists should engage with society. With Lefebvre's spatial framework, it becomes clear that scholars cannot engage with urban space from a distant, disembodied, and objective position. The embodied subject is crucial in Lefebvre's understanding of societal spatial production. While bodies, senses, emotions, and experiences have been rendered obsolete by abstract space, social space proceeds from the body, Lefebvre (1991:405) argues. While space is experienced through every part of the body, Lefebvre (1991:162) claims that "it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived – and produced." Drawing on Lefebvre, it becomes possible to state that our analytical understanding of social space should also proceed from the body, the scholar's embodied research practice. Similarly, Lefebvre's position aligns with my own approach to conducting fieldwork. Immersing myself in Shanghai through ethnographic fieldwork was crucial as to get a profound and embodied understanding of intercultural encounters within the context of the changing city. As an individual trained in qualitative sociology, I embraced an approach where my initial focus was conducting on-the-ground fieldwork, prioritizing firsthand experiences over relying on maps and official rhetoric. Within the wider social science debates on positionality, the embodiment of research practices has been raised by scholars within the fields of gender studies (Haraway, 1988), critical phenomenology (Kinkaid, 2019), ethnography (Crang and Cook, 2007; Low, 2017) and multisensory ethnography (Pink, 2015).

While Lefebvre does not detail the researcher's own embodied position in *The Production of Space*, he does explore this in *Rhythmanalysis* (Lefebvre, 2004). In this book, Lefebvre (2004) envisions a sensing and immersive researcher – a rhythm-analyst – using his/her own body to "listen" to the everydayness of space. By paying attention to one's own bodily sensations, a rhythm-analyst "thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality" (Lefe-

bvre, 2004:21). According to Lefebvre (2004), the researcher should make use of all his/her senses while analyzing the rhythms of everyday life by being attentive to his/her own body and his/her surroundings. Rhythms exist in the "interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy" (Lefebvre, 2004:15). A rhythm-analyst, Lefebvre (2004:19) writes: "listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome." In terms of the spatial triad, the rhythm-analysis mobilizes particularly the interplay between spatial practices (the built environment and its uses) and representational spaces (lived experiences), as Lefebvre focuses on how rhythms are bodily created and experienced through the use of physical space. In the end of *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991:405) briefly envisions the rhythm analysis as the finishing touch "to the exposition of the production of space." Moreover, Lefebvre's rhythm analysis has been widely applied as a methodological tool (Lyon, 2019) and exhibits similarities with auto-ethnography and sensory ethnography (Adams, Jones and Ellis, 2015; Pink, 2015). Auto-ethnographic accounts centers on the researcher's experiential engagement with society, and how this personal engagement illuminates cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences. Making use of a careful and deep self-reflexivity, auto-ethnographic researchers identify and interrogate the intersection of self and society (Adams, Jones and Ellis, 2015). Meanwhile, sensory ethnography focuses on how the researcher is "self-consciously and reflexively attending to the senses throughout the research process" allowing the researcher "to re-think both established and new participatory and collaborative ethnographic research techniques in terms of sensory perception, categories, meanings and values, ways of knowing and practices" (Pink, 2015:7).

Ethnography and the Spatial Triad

Lefebvre (1991:116) argues that it is important to consider the entire spatial triad while analyzing socio-spatial production. This statement opens up for a mixed-methods approach that acknowledges and combines each level of the spatial triad. As demonstrated by my own study earlier, it is central to include a diverse set of empirical material as to establish a more thorough and comprehensive understanding. Given Lefebvre's embodied research practice and definition of the spatial triad, it is crucial to identify specific methods that support an understanding of materiality and its uses (spatial layouts and the bodily engagements they create), people's situated understandings of space (human experiences) and spatial representations (textual documents, plans, pictures, visualizations), and their intricate interplay. Thus, the researcher cannot rely on one isolated method but is required to engage in collecting different kinds of empirical material to understand a given social space. For this purpose, I broadly situate Lefebvre's immersive approach in relation to ethnography. Lefebvre's approach necessitates an ethnographic starting point in which the researcher immerses her/himself in a designated social space. Enabling immersion, ethnography "is a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience" (Willis and Trondman, 2000:5). While not centering specifically on Lefebvre, Low (2017:4) suggests: "Conceptualizations of space and place that emerge from the sediment of ethnographic draw on the strength of studying people in situ, producing rich and nuanced sociospatial understandings." As ethnography mobilizes several methods at once, spatial practices can be analyzed primarily through a range of observational methods, representational spaces by people-centered methods, and representations of space by textual, discursive, and visual methods.

Spatial Practices and Observational Methods

Considering Lefebvre's rhythm-analysis and definition of spatial practices, observational methods are crucial to establish an understanding of designated social spaces. As noticed before, I began my immersion into Shanghai by extensive, exploratory walks. While observational methods conventionally treat space as a taken-for-granted setting (Low, 2017), observational methods can also be applied to analyze how space is built, landscaped and organized (how space appears to the researcher) and how space structures people's activities. Through my extensive walks, I got to know a city consisting of dynastic and colonial built environments (Shanghai Old City and former colonial settlements) and Shanghai's more recently constructed urban spaces and redevelopments. Through my walking practice, I also got acquainted with the spaces of contact (often housed in renovated colonial built environments), which later became central to my analyzes. With Lefebvre's critical approach to socio-spatial production, it is possible to suggest that a reflective approach to observing and mapping spatial practices is fundamental. Instead of a distanced and disembodied observer, a reflective approach acknowledges the positionality of the researcher and supports a bodily engaged mapping of space by the use of participatory observation. As a white and Swedish foreigner in the city, my positionality is informed by my interest in East Asian urban cultures, and academic engagements in urban China studies, cultural studies, interpretive sociology, gender studies, urban sociology, and postcolonial studies in Asia. This provided me with a curious, reflective, and open-minded approach grounded in sensitivity for urban China, yearning to understand others, and knowledge of China's historical encounters with colonialism. To avoid early theorizing (and enforcing Lefebvre's spatial triad) or abstracting one's experiences through the use of maps, it is important that the researcher bodily engages her/himself, observes and establishes an understanding of the concrete workings of spatial practices – i.e., the interplay between materiality and the uses it enables/disables. This is supposedly done most effectively by extensive walks and immersing oneself in particular spaces. Whereas the researcher is fully engaged in space, the researcher experiences, explores, details, and maps the materiality and how people enact it through notes, sketches, photos, and videos. After the extensive walks, I often recollected my experiences by taking notes in a notebook and on a computer. Together with the collected material, this recollection was later central to my analytical process as to recall the experiences that emerged during the fieldwork. While the practice of walking has been central to urban sociology since Georg Simmel (1971/[1903]) and Walter Benjamin (1999), auto-ethnography (Adams, Jones and Ellis, 2015), rhythm-analysis (Lefebvre, 2004), sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015) and deep mapping (Roberts, 2016) are useful methodological tools.

Representational Spaces and People-Centered Methods

While exploring and getting to know a designated social space through observational methods, it is crucial to deepen the understanding of social space by engaging with people in different ways. Engaging with people, the researcher must first uncover her/his positionality. Similar to what is discussed above, the researcher needs to acknowledge her/his situatedness vis-à-vis the researched subjects (Adams, Jones and Ellis, 2015; Haraway, 1988; Lefebvre, 2004; Pink, 2015). During interview engagements, the interaction is also characterized by the representational spaces of both parts (as two subjects with respective expectations taking part in a hierarchized research engagement) and the spatial practices of the engagement (its material or digital situatedness). While studying intercultural engagements in Shanghai, I was also in the midst of China's changes. Consisting of one individual

from China and Sweden respectively, my interviews were indeed intercultural engagements too. With the aim to understand intercultural engagements in Shanghai, the interviews were temporary intercultural encounters in selected spaces of the city (such as Starbucks). While I understood the content that emerge from the interviews as representational spaces, the interviewees also referred to physical spaces in Shanghai (spatial practices) as well as representations of the city (representations of space). As I took part in intercultural engagements daily in Shanghai, it is difficult to say that I was a complete outsider in relation to what I was studying. As the interviewees for my previous study understood themselves as "open to foreign cultures," I can be understood as "open to Chinese cultures." Numerous interviewees, colleagues and friends positioned me as a "good foreigner," as they understood me as being interested in listening to their stories and perspectives and having a genuine interest in China and East Asia.

Through immersive informal conversations and ethnographic interviews (O'Reilly, 2012), guided conversations (Rubin and Rubin, 1995), one-to-one and groups interviews (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), and go-alongs (Kusenbach, 2003), it is possible to focus on how interviewees understand and construct their own lived experiences vis-à-vis their immediate surroundings, and, subsequently, how their emplaced experiences are connected with wider societal, cultural, imaginative, political, economic, ecological and material aspects. Through this broader thematic combination, it is possible to grasp how the interviewees understand how their lived experiences are emplaced in and through spatial practices and representations of space. During the interviews, I relied on the general theme "intercultural communication in Shanghai" and the associations that the interviewees drew from this broader theme, and what I found relevant in each interview situation. In this associative space, the major conversational topics were culture and language exchanges, the city's history and the colonial built environment, places, working in international companies, the city's opening up, consumption, food, restaurants and nightlife, music, and literature. While above interviewing methods are co-created situations between the interviewer and the interviewee, the researcher can also make use of existing material produced by people, such as content at diverse online platforms (Kozinets, 2020), which oftentimes depict people's own lives and their immediate surroundings (Schwartz and Halegoua, 2015). Meanwhile, interviewees can also textually and visually represent their lived experiences through several analogue and digital means, such as diaries, sketches, maps, photographs, videos, blogs and vlogs. (O'Reilly, 2012; Przybylski, 2021)

Representations of Space and Textual, Discursive, and Visual Methods

Through the immersive methods presented above, the researcher also uncovers how spatial practices and representational spaces are related to and bound up with dominant representations of space. While first exploring and detailing spatial practices and engaging in people's situated understandings of space, the researcher is also required, using Lefebvre's approach, to explore and analyze relevant sources of official and corporate representations of space. They may be maps and plans, laws and regulations, archive materials, mass media and online platforms, research, official and commercial informational and promotional materials, and other textual and visual artefacts. Similarly, through my fieldwork and incorporating Lefebvre as my analytical framework, I realized the necessity to connect my interviews to official rhetoric of the opening up reforms as to understand people's intercultural engagements more thoroughly. By this, I obtained a close understanding of the

opening up processes, and how the re-globalization of Shanghai and people's intercultural engagements were guided by government policies. It is crucial to mention that the relevant sources may vary depending on what it being addressed while conducting observations and interviews and thus relevant sources should not be chosen beforehand. As representations of space contain both textual and visual elements, textual, discursive, and visual methods are useful methodological tools. (Cloke et al., 2004; Dühr, 2015; MacCallum, Babb and Curtis, 2019)

The Spatial Triad and (a few) Theory of Science Approaches

Given the nature of Lefebvre's spatial theory, it is possible to situate the spatial triad in relation to interpretive/hermeneutical, constructivist, critical theory, and postmodern approaches. In my work, I combined the analytical vocabularies of these approaches.

With Lefebvre's approach, I suggest that an interpretive/hermeneutic position is a suitable starting point as this approach "involves the recovery of the meanings present (or presumed to be present) in written texts, human utterances and in other kinds of human artifacts and activities" (Cloke et al, 2004:310). Grounded in sociologist Max Weber's *verstehen*, an interpretive/hermeneutical approach refers to "understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view" (Ray, 2007:5195). Similarly, an interpretive/hermeneutical approach denotes an attempt to get 'inside' the concepts people use to organize their understanding of the world (David, 2010). While Lefebvre's spatial theory helped me to put the interviews in a larger socio-spatial context at a later stage in the research process, the interpretive/hermeneutical approach largely influenced both my fieldwork and analysis, as I strived to comprehend intercultural engagements and China's opening up reforms through the lens of local Chinese perspectives. Moreover, Zieleniec has proposed that Lefebvre's theorization of social space exhibits similarities with a hermeneutic approach. Briefly situating Lefebvre in the context of hermeneutics, Zieleniec (2017) writes:

To understand the whole [social space], it is necessary to understand the parts [of the spatial triad]. Space is produced in a dynamic relationship between all three parts. The whole [social space] can be deconstructed to its constituent parts [spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces] to reveal the influence of each to the whole, and vice versa. There is thus a reciprocal relationship between the elements involved in its production. (390)

With Zieleniec's elaboration in mind, an interpretive/hermeneutical approach to Lefebvre's spatial triad includes an immersed understanding of the interplay between spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. Applying Lefebvre in my analysis, I came to treat Shanghai's opening up processes as an integrated socio-spatial phenomenon comprising official ideology, particular spatialities (spaces of contact in the city) and people's experiences of the opening up reforms through intercultural engagements. Moreover, the interpretive/hermeneutical approach to Lefebvre can benefit from being situated in relation to social constructivism (Low, 2017), critical theory (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000 and Brenner, 2019), and postmodern discourse analysis (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000 and Soja, 1996).

Spatial practices can be studied by focusing on how material space is constituted and how it enables certain activities (in space) and movements (across space). Combining men-

tioned approaches, it is possible to understand how meanings, ideologies and discourses are materially constructed. Similarly, it also allows for analysis of how meanings, ideologies and discourses in material space are produced through representations of space, and constructed, upheld, negotiated, or challenged by people. Representational spaces – or people's understandings of space – are analyzed by centering on how people understand and construct their experiences, and how they potentially relate to spatial practices and representations of space. Similarly, representational spaces can also be examined by focusing on how people uphold, negotiate or challenge ideologies and discourses produced through representations of space. Lastly, representations of space are studied by focusing on understanding how diverse societal actors, such as governments and companies, construct representations of particular cities, places, and people. Similarly, it is possible to analyze how governments and companies endorse certain ideological visions of spatial practices and representational space. In relation to this, representations of space could be analyzed through the lens of discursive practices, as the use of language and visual means is central to how governments and companies represent cities, places, and people in particular ways.

Conclusions

With this article, I have contributed to how Lefebvre's spatial triad can be developed into a methodological tool. Through a methodological reconceptualization illustrated by my application of Lefebvre, I have situated his spatial theory in relation to a bodily engaged research practice, ethnography as an immersive tool for conducting fieldwork and four theory of social science approaches. By applying Lefebvre's spatial triad, it is possible to identify and analyze socio-spatial topics in diverse empirical material. Realizing that the interviewees' accounts could be understood as partly constitutive of social space was a defining moment. While previously treating space as a backdrop to the interviewees' accounts, I could understand them as integral and crucial to socio-spatial production. By making use of Lefebvre's spatial triad, it is possible situate interviewees' experiences in a wider socio-spatial context. As illustrated, I was able to analyze the interviewees' utterances (representational spaces) about the country's and city's development, and particular places in the city, and analytically situate them in relation to the opening up reforms (representations of space) and the city's built environment (spatial practices).

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Journal Policies

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About JUCR

The Journal of Urban Culture Research is an international, online, double-blind, peer-reviewed journal published biannually in June & December by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University in conjunction with the Urban Research Plaza of Osaka City University, Japan. JUCR offers its readers two categories of content. One is a window into the latest international conferences and reviews of related sources – books etc. along with guest articles, special features and case studies. Secondly, its main core is a range of peer-reviewed articles from researchers in the international community. No fees are charged.

The Aims of JUCR

This journal on urban culture aims at establishing a broad interdisciplinary platform for studies of cultural creativity and the arts that brings together researchers and cultural practitioners to identify and share innovative and creative experiences in establishing sustainable and vibrant, livable communities while fostering cultural continuity. The journal embraces broad cultural discussions regarding communities of any size as it recognizes the urban community's rural roots. JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual art, design, music, the creative arts, performance studies, dance, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and related disciplines such as creative arts therapies and urban planning. Articles related to either the academic or wide vernacular interpretation of urban culture and the arts as a tool promoting community and individual well-being, health, and diversity are welcome.

JUCR has the objective of stimulating research on both the theory and practice of fine and applied arts in response to social challenges and environmental issues as well as calling for solutions across the creative realms. Moreover, JUCR supports advocacy processes, improvements in practices, and encourages supportive public policy-making related to cultural resources. JUCR intends to offer readers relevant theoretical discussions and act as a catalyst for expanding the knowledge-base of creative expression related to urban culture.

Review Process

1. JUCR promotes and encourages the exchange of knowledge in the field of fine and applied arts among scholars worldwide. Contributions may be research articles, reports of empirical studies, reviews of films, concerts, dances, and art exhibitions. Academic papers and book reviews are also acceptable. Articles are typically only considered for publication in JUCR with the mutual understanding that they have not been published in English elsewhere and are not currently under consideration by any other English language journal(s). Occasionally, noteworthy articles worthy of a broader audience that JUCR provides, will be reprinted. Main articles are assessed and peer reviewed by specialists in their relevant fields. Furthermore to be accepted for publication, they must also receive the approval of the editorial board.

2. To further encourage and be supportive of the large diverse pool of authors whose English is their second language, JUCR employs a 3-stage review process. The first is a double-blind review comprised of 2-3 international reviewers experienced with non-native English writers. This is then followed by a non-blind review. Thirdly, a participative peer review will, if needed, be conducted to support the selection process.

3. All articles published in the journal will have been fully peer-reviewed by two, and in some cases, three reviewers. Submissions that are out of the scope of the journal or are of an unacceptably low standard of presentation will not be reviewed. Submitted articles will generally be reviewed by two experts with the aim of reaching an initial decision within a two-month time frame.

4. The reviewers are identified by their solid record of publication as recommended by members of the editorial board. This is to assure the contributors of fair treatment. Nominations of potential reviewers will also be considered. Reviewers determine the quality, coherence, and relevancy of the submissions for the Editorial Board who makes a decision based on its merits. High relevancy submissions may be given greater prominence in the journal. The submissions will be categorized as follows:

- Accepted for publication as is.
- Accepted for publication with minor changes, no additional reviews necessary.
- Potentially acceptable for publication after substantial revision and additional reviews.
- Article is rejected.
- A notice of acceptance will be sent to submitting authors in a timely manner.

5. In cases where there is disagreement between the authors and reviewers, advice will be sought from the Editorial Board. It is the policy of the JUCR to allow a maximum of three revisions of any one manuscript. In all cases, the ultimate decision lies with the Editor-in-Chief after a full board consultation.

6. JUCR's referee policy treats the contents of articles under review as privileged information and will not be disclosed to others before publication. It is expected that no one with access to articles under review will make any inappropriate use of its contents.

7. The comments of the anonymous reviewers will be forwarded to authors upon request and automatically for articles needing revision so that it can serve as a guide. Note that revisions must be completed and resubmitted within the time frame specified. Late revised works may be rejected.

8. In general, material, which has been previously copyrighted, published, or accepted for publication elsewhere will not be considered for publication in the main section of JUCR.

9. The review process shall ensure that all authors have an equal opportunity for publication. The acceptance and scheduling of submissions for publication in the journal shall not be impeded by additional criteria or amendments to the procedures beyond those listed above.

10. The views expressed in articles published are the sole responsibility of the authors and not necessarily shared by the JUCR editors or Chulalongkorn University.

Submission Requirements

- Worthy contributions in the urban culture arena are welcome from researchers and practitioners at all stages in their careers. A suggested theme is announced prior to each issue.
- Manuscripts should generally not exceed 7,000 words including the abstract and references. Tables, figures, and illustrative material are accepted only when necessary for support.
- Manuscripts need to use our template for submission. Please download from our website's submission guidelines page. Details are described in the top half of the first page with sample text following. Documents not using the template will be returned for reformatting.
- All manuscripts are required to include a title, abstract, keywords, author's byline information, an introduction and conclusion section along with a Chicago formatted reference list. Manuscripts with existing footnotes and in-text references may retain them as a resource for readers, but are not required. Footnotes are to be relocated as non-standardized endnotes listed before references.
- Manuscripts should have all images, figures, and tables numbered consecutively. Reference lists need to conform to The Chicago Manual of Style (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org) as detailed in our template. We recommend the free online formatter for standardizing ones references. See www.bibme.org.
- Each author should send with their manuscript an abstract of 150 words or less together with a submission form providing their biographical data along with a maximum of six keywords.
- All manuscripts submitted for consideration need to be accompanied by a completed and signed Manuscript Submission form found on our website.
- Authors authorize the JUCR to publish their materials both in print and online while retaining their full individual copyright. The copyright of JUCR volumes is retained by Chulalongkorn University.
- Authors should strive for maximum clarity of expression. This point cannot be overstated. Additionally, authors need to bear in mind that the purpose of publication is the disclosure and discussion of artistic knowledge and innovations that expands the realm of human creativity and experience.

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Criteria and Responsibilities for Editorial Board Membership

Overview

The Editorial Board is comprised of members who have significant expertise and experience in their respective fields. Editorial Board Members are appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of at least 60% of the Editors and Editorial Board.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for appointment shall include:

- Demonstrated scholarly expertise and ethical leadership in an area not over represented on the existing Editorial Board.
- Published three or more papers in scholarly publications.
- Demonstrated excellence in the review process, based on independent evaluations of the Editors and Associates.
- Stated commitment to contribute to issues affecting the management of JUCR.

Responsibilities

Members of the Editorial Board are directly accountable to the Managing Editor.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Provide input on editorial needs and review manuscripts as requested.
- Complete assigned reviews in a timely fashion. Offer mutually respectful and constructive review of manuscripts to assist in providing the highest quality of papers.
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity with regard to manuscripts and the JUCR review process.
- Participate in the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of JUCR so as to help sustain the highest level of excellence.
- Once appointed to the Editorial Board, members are encouraged to submit at least one paper during their tenure.

Nomination Process

Nominations are submitted in writing (via email or post) and addressed to the Editor in Chief or any member of the Editorial staff. Candidates/applicants must submit a CV including a statement addressing her/his interests and suitability for Board membership. JUCR assumes the general readership would be able to identify the candidate by her/his reputation for scholarship in an established line of inquiry.

When a candidate is approved by majority vote of the current JUCR board members, she/he will be invited to serve by the Editor in Chief for a specified term of three years. The Dean of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in turn will finalize the appointment. Continued membership of the Editorial Board will be reviewed every three years by a member of the Editorial Board with a decision about candidates submitted annually. The number of Editorial Board members will not exceed 20 unless otherwise agreed upon.



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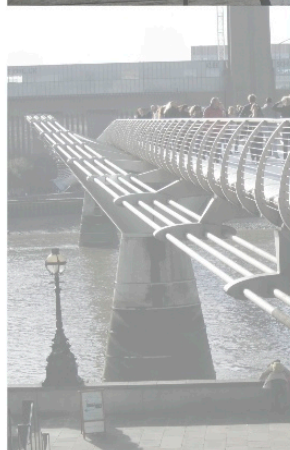
JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual arts, creative arts, music, dance, theater together with those in urban studies and planning to seek cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural practices.

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