

Political Process of Cultural Heritage Preservation: A Case Study of the New Tile House Hakka Cultural District in Hsinchu

Hang Li*

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology,

Hong Kong Shue Yan University

This article adopts a political process approach from social movement studies to explain the successful conservation of the New Tile House in Liujia of Hsinchu which was originally planned to be demolished to make way for the Taiwan High Speed Rail. Based on interview and archival data, this article shows that the community-making movement and the implementation of environmental impact assessment have opened up political institutions for the concerned individuals in Liujia to negotiate with the government. Against this open environment in the 1990s, the culture and history workers seized their perceived opportunity and successfully demanded for the preservation of a Hakka cultural heritage.

Keywords: Political Process, Cultural Heritage, Community Making, Hsinchu

* E-mail: hli@hksyu.edu

Date of Submission: June 11, 2020

Accepted Date: October 23, 2020

文化遺產保育的政治過程： 新竹新瓦屋客家文化保存區個案研究

李鏗**

香港樹仁大學社會學系助理教授

保育文化遺產常會在社會與政治上掀起爭議。然而文化遺產研究卻很少從社會運動研究的角度去探討在產生文化遺產的過程中所出現的政治角力。本文以社會運動研究中的政治過程論作框架，解釋因受臺灣高鐵計劃影響而原定要拆毀的新竹六家新瓦屋之成功保育個案。本文的研究資料來自曾參與保育過程的人士和受高鐵計劃影響的六家居民訪問，輔以文本資料。本研究發現，在九十年代的臺灣民主化進程中，出現了各種有助促進文史工作者或受高鐵發展影響的居民與政府進行溝通的條件，如社區營造計劃及環境影響評估。在有利客家文化保育的環境下，文史工作者把他們感受到的政治機會成功轉化為實際的保育成果，讓新瓦屋客家文化保存區得以成立。

關鍵字：政治過程、文化遺產、社區營造、新竹

** 投稿日期：2020年6月11日
接受投稿日期：2020年10月23日

Introduction

Liujia Village was a Hakka indigenous village in Zhubei, Hsinchu. In the mid-1990s, the coming of Taiwan High Speed Rail (HSR) had changed the fortune of the people of Liujia as the proposed railway would cut across the village from north to south. Not only were houses and farmlands demolished but cultural heritage were also uprooted simultaneously. In the midst of some inconspicuous resistance, the Bureau of High Speed Rail (BHSR) finally managed to begin the construction of Hsinchu HSR Station in 2000 with a minor concession to preserve some of the historic structures in the area. Owing to the endeavors by the culture and history workers and some local Hakka people, the first Hakka Cultural Reserved District in Taiwan was established at Liujia in order to host the preserved Hakka houses, the New Tile House, in 2006 (Chang 2018).

Heritage formation is usually a socially and politically contested processes. Despite its contentious nature, heritage studies seldom address the processes of heritage formation through the lens of contentious politics¹ (Jones et al. 2018). This study aims to examine the formation process of New Tile House Hakka Cultural District by adopting the political process model (McAdam 1999) from the social movement studies as the overarching theo-

¹ Despite a general lack of concern by the scholars from heritage studies, there are a number of studies from Taiwan researching the political dynamics of heritage formation, see Jou et al. (2016) and Wang (2020) for examples.

retical framework. In this paper, I argue that an opening political opportunity structure during the first decade of the democratization in Taiwan helped to lay the ground for the successful conservation of the Hakka heritage in Liujia. Against this open socio-political environment in the 1990s, the culture and history workers seized their perceived political opportunity and successfully demanded for the preservation of the New Tile House which was originally planned to be demolished in the name of development.

The article is structured as follow. First, I review the literature on heritage conservation and contentious politics that will guide my analysis, and then discuss the methodology employed by this study. Second, I offer background describing the changes in political opportunity structure of Taiwan during the 1990s. Third, I present the history of Hsinchu's urbanization which will be followed by an examination of the political process for the preservation of Hakka heritage in Liujia.

Contentious Politics in Heritage Conservation

Development and redevelopment of landscape over the past century have induced both expert- and community-driven movements to conserve cultural and built heritage across different countries (Tung 2001; Zhang 2013). The meaning and value of cultural and built heritage are often contested among politicians, planning professionals and the general public (Byrne 2014; Wang 2020; While 2006). The evaluation of conservation proposal is also usually

characterized by the interaction among a variety of organizations and interest groups (Belcher et al. 2019; Yung and Chan 2011). The process of heritage conservation is thus best conceived as a political and multi-scaled activity (Harvey 2015). Despite the recognition of the politicized dimension of heritage conservation in heritage studies, only few heritage researchers have examined the process of heritage formation through the lens of contentious politics and social movement studies (Jones et al. 2018; Robertson 2015). Beyond heritage studies, however, the application of social movement theories to understand and research contentious dynamics in a wide range of socio-cultural arenas has become a burgeoning research area in sociology (Fligstein 2001; Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Moulton and Sandfort 2016; Taylor et al. 2016). Conceptualizing all kinds of power dynamics as contentious interaction between incumbents and challengers, this new perspective urges sociological inquiry to move beyond the traditionally fragmented domains (e.g. social movement, organizational theory, and economic sociology) towards a meso-level theorization of social order and change (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 4-5).

Among the few exceptions in heritage studies, Jones and colleagues argued that there are at least three key benefits of using a social movements approach to analyze contentions revolving around heritage formation (2018: 20-1). First, social movement theories could extend the conventional understanding of heritage practices and formation beyond heritage sites, and thus enable researchers to explicitly examine the interaction between state,

quasi-state institutions, and various interest groups which often resembles the dynamics in activism and contentious politics. Second, social movement approaches could allow a more nuanced account of heritage formation process by highlighting the agency of many different groups from various structural positions which are shaped by heritage and also actively shape heritage. Third, social movement theories provide the theoretical framework to analyze not only the strategies employed by those groups which are lacking in material and political resources but also the contingencies of different moments throughout the heritage formation process.

In this paper, I approach heritage formation process through the lens of social movement studies with a particular focus on the political process of contention (McAdam 1999). In general, the political process model argues that a social movement emerges in response to expansion of political opportunities and declines when opportunities disappear. By political opportunity, it means “the consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political environment or of changes in the environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 2011: 32). In contrast with the conventional application of social movement theories, the outcome of interest of the present study is not about mobilization nor emergence of protest; rather, the central thesis of this paper is to examine the outcome of heritage formation through the lens of political process theory.

Early version of political process approach paid more attention to the

structural dimensions of political opportunity. Social movement researchers such as Goodwin and Jasper (Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Jasper 2012) have criticized the political opportunity model for its structural bias and failing to recognize that structural factors are filtered by cultural and cognitive lenses. They contend that the perception of the activists determines whether there are or are not opportunities and threats. “Perceptions are not only necessary for potential protestors to recognize opportunities,” but in many occasions, “perceptions can create opportunities” (Goodwin and Jasper 1999: 52). In this paper, I will address the limitations of the structural political process approach by examining the perceptions of opportunities among the key interest groups involved in the case study of the New Tile House Hakka Cultural District. Traditional political process approach was also criticized for its myopia in the variation of political opportunity with regard to the types of contender (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). According to Meyer and Minkoff, political opportunity should not be assumed to be available equally for all contenders. Rather, it is an empirical question to ascertain “opportunities for whom and for what?” (Meyer and Minkoff 2004: 1461). Through the current case study, this paper also aims to demonstrate such differentiated availability of political opportunity across different contenders and activists.

Methodology

Interviews were held with informants who had participated directly in,

or had knowledge about, the contentions over the New Tile House controversy and the land use disputes associated with the HSR development. The interviews served two purposes (Blee and Taylor 2002). First, they provided information on the actual political process of the controversy. Second, they also provided information on how villagers and activists perceived the political opportunity available to them. I conducted nine interviews with activists, villagers, village heads, university professors and researchers, and a provincial government official respectively in 2011 (see Table 1 for the list of informants). This study draws on archival data to triangulate evidence collecting from the key informant interviews (Bosi and Reiter 2014). The archival documentations include journal articles, books, master's and doctoral theses, personal records, and government documents. Besides, major newspapers and magazines also had significant coverage of the case of HSR development.

Table 1 List of Informants

Names [#]	Date of interview	Roles in the HSR Controversy
Chen Ban	25 th May 2011	The founder of the Atelier Third Workshop. He had facilitated the preservation of Xinwawu in the Hsinchu Station Special Zoning District.
Chen Qing-jing	27 th May 2011	He was the village head of Aikao Village during the HSR controversy. He also participated in the Hsinchu HSR Self-help Association.
Huang Yun-shi	27 th May 2011	He is a professor at Hsuan Chuang University. He was responsible for writing the section on local cultural heritage for the EIA report of the Hsinchu Station Special Zoning District.
Lin (Tenant farmer)	29 th May 2011	He was a tenant farmer living in Liujia.
Lin Bao-yan	26 th May 2011	He used to live in Xinwawu. He collaborated closely with Chen Ban in preserving the culture of Liujia.

Liu Min-yao	27 th May 2011	He provided assistance in a commissioned research about the traditional architecture in the Hsinchu Station Special Zoning District.
Lo Lieh-shih	29 th May 2011	He is a professor in the College of Hakka Studies, National Chiao Tung University.
Shen Wei-qi	26 th May 2011	He is the Chief of Local Governance Section in the Civil Affairs Department of the Hsinchu County Government.
Wu Qing-jie	27 th May 2011	He was the village head of Jinshan Village.

The Romanized names are all in pinyin which may not be used in some official circumstances.

Source: Made by authors.

Political Opportunity Structure of Taiwan in the 1990s

Consistent with the structural political process approach, I begin by placing the current case study in its larger historical perspective. After around three decades of authoritarian rule by the Kuomintang (KMT) regime (Winckler 1984; Gold 1986), the KMT government started to introduce incremental institutional changes from the mid-1980s as a response to the demands from the society. The lifting of martial law in 1987 marked the beginning of these changes. It was then followed by the open election for the Legislative Yuan in 1992, the provincial governor in 1995, and president in 1996. The victory of Chen Shui-bian from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the presidential election of 2000 marked the first peaceful regime change in the history of Taiwan.

From 1987 to 2000, the political system became increasingly penetra-

ble partly because of the KMT's strategy to defuse different challenges from the society through democratization, but also because of the DPP's efforts in challenging the KMT hegemony through both extra-institutional and institutional means. The initial result was a surge in the number of protests which alarmed the KMT so much that it reverted back to the use of authoritarian control. Despite the increased level of repression, it could not completely halt the eruption of social forces in Taiwanese society especially after the consecutive victories of the DPP in several national elections. Since then, further democratization has brought about subtle changes in the political opportunity structure. In particular, the KMT government had tried to incorporate the concerns of the social movement sectors and opened up more institutional terrain through procedural reforms. Two relevant changes, the implementation of the Community Empowerment Project and the environmental impact assessment (EIA) legislation, will be discussed in more details below.

Formalization of Community Movement

Apart from the significant reduction of repression of protests in the 1990s, the KMT party also learned to incorporate the demands of the social movement sectors into its policies through reforms or some innovative programs, particularly prior to 1996 because it was the time when Lee Tang-hui had to boost his pro-reform image in order to win in the unprecedented presidential election. A prominent example of this kind is the 'Community Empowerment Project' which was initiated in 1994 by the Council for Cultural

Affairs (Huang and Hsu 2011). The project directly sponsored the community movement organizations and encouraged them to rediscover their communities together with local residents through promoting local culture and historical heritage. As argued by Ho (2005), the so-called ‘love for homeland’ attitude was actually a salient part of the mobilization potential for many grassroots protests in the 1980s. With the influx of resource from the Community Empowerment Project, many local culture and history workers began to establish culture and history workshops around Taiwan. ‘Return to homeland’ became the zeitgeist of the new social movement in Taiwan of the 1990s. In particular, seizing the rapidly growing political opportunity after the lifting of martial law, the 1989 Return My Mother Tongue Movement also crystalized the development of ethnic identity among Hakka people and then manifested in the form of local culture and history workshops in the 1990s.

The facilitation from above has amplified the bottom-up process of community revitalization, including various Hakka communities in Taiwan. With the support from the state, local culture workers could engage in wider spectrum of activities, such as environmental protection, rebuilding after disasters, and promotion of local industry. One of the significant but indirect consequences of the Community Empowerment Project was the formalization of some existing local social movements. For instance, the acceptance of funding from the Community Empowerment Project marked a crucial turning point of the Meinung Anti-Dam Movement. Although the activists did not identify the movement as ‘community-making’ at the beginning, they

discovered that this was an opportunity to connect to more local people and to build a broader organizational network outside the Meinung community. By cultivating linkages with other social movements, the Meinung Anti-Dam movement broadened its appeal to more audiences, such as community organizers, Hakka cultural activists, and even the independent rock artists. With the support from legislators, most of the budget for the dam was cut and the Meinung dam proposal was finally shelved in 1997 (Hou 2001).

Institutionalizing Dissent through Formal Policy Channels

During the 1990s, accessibility to the institutionalized political system in Taiwan gradually increased as more policy channels were opened to diverse sectors from society. The very first step of the institutionalization was the establishment of the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) in 1987, which was then followed by promulgation of a series of regulations (Ho and Su 2008). In 1994, another political institution, EIA, was enacted which was intended to incorporate views from different sectors of the society towards new infrastructural development projects. The codified EIA opened the hitherto closed door for social movement sectors to advance their interests through institutionalized means. With the help from scholars and professional experts, EIA review process has become a possible, though not always promising, channel to voice out any objections or other opinions regarding new infrastructural plans. For example, in the case of Hsianshang Tidal Flat Development in Hsinchu city, the Wild Bird Society of Hsinchu and other local

civil groups were able to exert great influence on the decision-making process through the EIA review and even to put a stop eventually to this state's project (Tang 2003).

Despite the institutional terrain was gradually opened, anti-infrastructure demonstrations could still be seen in some controversial development projects. During the controversies over the development plan for the Binnan Industrial Park, for instance, because the opposition coalition could not gain the DPP's support after the first stage of EIA review, the activists decided to mobilize support from the mass public through taking to the streets (Hsieh and Ho 2011). Finally, the EPA had to postpone approval of the Binnan project for four years due to extensive media's attention to the development project. The case of the anti-Binnan Industrial Park movement illustrates the fact that even accessibility to the institutionalized political system increased, extra-institutional political action was still an important movement strategy to be kept in reserve by the activists. Nevertheless, these oppositions have become "more predictable and routinized" as most of the protest activities have been structured according to the agenda of EIA review or other related legislative procedures (Ho 2004).

To summarize this section, the political opportunity structure was expanding from a closed to an open configuration in Taiwan during the 1990s. Since the lifting of martial law, Taiwan has experienced periods of liberalization and democratization. The state responded to the social movement sectors with less repression and more concession, for instance, through the imple-

mentation of the Community Empowerment Project. The institutionalized political system was also increasingly accessible to social movements through various formal channels such as the EIA so that they could participate in the decision-making process in a larger degree. Against this backdrop of an opening political opportunity structure, the following sections will first offer a historical account of Hsinchu's urbanization between 1970s and the early 2000s, and then explicate the political process of heritage conservation in the case of Hsinchu HSR development.

Contentions over Urbanization in Hsinchu (1970s-2000s)

Hsinchu is located in northwest Taiwan (See Figure 1 for the map of Hsinchu and the location of Liujia Village). It is adjacent to Taoyuan in the north and Miaoli in the south. The Hakka people and Minnan people first came to settle in Hsinchu during the Ming dynasty and began cultivating the area from the plain along the coast toward the river valleys and hills. After the establishment of the Hsinchu Science Park (HSP) in 1981, the population of Hsinchu increased drastically due to an influx of employees of the HSP's high-tech manufacturers who chose to reside near their workplace. Owing to the increased population, Hsinchu City was merged with Hsiangshang Township and officially became a provincial city in 1982. Zhubei was then selected as the next administrative center and new capital of Hsinchu County. The

Hakka people today constitute over 70% of the population in Hsinchu County. Other ethnic groups include Minnan people, aborigines and new immigrants.



Figure 1 Map of Hsinchu County and the location of Liujia Village

Source: Homepage of Hsinchu County Government.

Of all the urbanization projects, the establishment of HSP in Hsinchu City has brought about the greatest changes to Hsinchu in terms of landscapes, social relations and environmental quality (Chiu 2011; Hsu 2018; Lin 2015). In 1976, the Executive Yuan announced that land expropriation for the HSP should begin as soon as possible. The Hsinchu County Government

then officially started the task of expropriating farmland and small villages in 1977. Nevertheless, two of the biggest clans in Hsinchu, the Hu and Hsu clans, were reluctant to have their homes demolished. It finally led to violent confrontation between the villagers and the police (Luo 2004: 43). The construction work could eventually begin under the control of the authoritarian state. The establishment of the HSP had not only resulted in the demolition of the farmland and families of the Hsinchu residents, it also destroyed the historical heritage and culture of the original inhabitants (Chen 2000a).

Moving northward from Hsinchu Science Park to Zhubei, the first urban planning was announced in 1972. With the Zhubei railway station as the urban center, the total area of this first urbanized zone is 518 hectares. After Hsinchu City had become the provincial city in 1982, Zhubei City also began the second stage of urban planning in order to prepare for the foreseeable demands of more urban space to build the new administrative offices for the new Hsinchu County Government. This second stage was also known as 'Hsinchu County Government Phase I' (1,119 hectares) and 'Hsinchu County Government Phase II' (2,324 hectares). As both the Phase I and Phase II were developed according to the 'zone expropriation scheme,' part of the land was redistributed back to the original landowners and the redistribution was finished at 1990 and 2002 respectively.

In the meantime, the plan for Taiwan High Speed Rail Hsinchu Station Area (309 hectares) was announced in 1999 which marked the beginning of the third stage of urban planning in Zhubei. The Taiwan HSR cuts across

Liujia of Zhubei from north to south and 309 hectares of farmland have been expropriated for the development of the Hsinchu HSR Station Special Zoning District. This special district was expected to accommodate a population of 45,000 people. Apart from the HSR Hsinchu station, this special district would be divided into a commercial area, industrial area, residential area, green space, and cultural preservation zone. The urbanization process of Hsinchu from the first phase to the third phase took place over a 30-year period, and as part of this process a vast area of rural farmlands was demolished from the west to the east of Zhubei.²

Political Process in the formation of the New Tile House Hakka Cultural District

Liujia is an agricultural village located in Zhubei, Hsinchu. It is actually composed of six smaller villages, Aikao Village, Donghai Village, Dongping Village, Luchang Village, Shixing Village, and Zhongxin Village. People living in Liujia community were mainly Hakka people. The Lin family is one of the major Hakka clans rooted in Liujia. Their ancestors migrated from Guangdong to Taiwan and settled in the farmlands of Zhubei during the Ching

² In 2001, the last piece of rural land in Zhubei was also planned for development. Adjacent to the north and east of the Hsinchu HSR station, land with an area of 1,235 hectares was to be expropriated under the so-called 'Puyu (literally jade) Development Plan.' In 2004, the plan was recognized by the Executive Yuan as one of the nation's major public construction projects and was renamed as the 'Taiwan Knowledge Economy Flagship Park.' After more than a decade of negotiation between the landowners and the Hsinchu County Government, the revised plan was finally approved in April 2020 with concessions from the County government. Also see Hsu 2018.

Dynasty. Agriculture has been the core economic activity in Liujia. Rice and sugar cane were the two main crops that Liujia people used to produce. However, owing to state-led urbanization and industrialization, agriculture gradually became a sunset industry from the 1970s. The coming of HSR during the 1990s marked the greatest transformation ever of the Liujia community (See Table 2 for the list of major events).

Table 2 Chronology of Events

1991	Executive Yuan approved the High Speed Rail (HSR) project
1992	Executive Yuan approved the route and stations of the HSR project
1995	Environmental Protection Administration, Executive Yuan, reviewed and approved the environmental impact assessment for the HSR project
1996	The plan for the HSR station special zones was approved The High Speed Rail Preparatory Office announced the tender invitation for private participation through Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) in the HSR project
1997	The Taiwan High Speed Rail Consortium and the Chunghwa High Speed Rail Consortium both submitted bids for the HSR project The selection committee evaluated the Taiwan High Speed Rail Consortium as having the best application proposal
1998	The Taiwan High-Speed Rail Corporation (THSRC) was formally established Chen Ban promoted “Writing Everybody’s History” at Liujia
1999	Hsinchu County Government promulgated the “Hsinchu HSR Station Special District Project” (total area of 309.22 hectare)
2000	The construction of HSR began
2001	Contentions over the problems of land acquisition at Hsinchu
2002	The construction of viaducts was finished The construction of HSR Stations began
2004	The construction of tunnels was finished
2005	The first Hakka Cultural Reserved District was set up at the New Tile House
2007	The Taiwan HSR began operation

Source: Made by authors.

People in the Liujia community held disparate views regarding the coming of the HSR. Yet they did not choose to confront with the state directly nor

remain completely silent, as their concerns over the HSR plan were addressed to a degree by the state. There were roughly three different types of opinion (Chen 2000b). One third of the villagers welcomed the coming of the HSR; one third had no opinion; the rest were opposed to it for various reasons. According to a survey conducted by the ‘HSR Hsinchu Station Zone Expropriation Self-help Association’ (hereafter HSR Self-help Association) organized by the people living in Liujia in March 1998, concerns relating to their immediate interests ranked higher than all other sorts of opinions, but 25% of the households were still opposed to the expropriation. Other opinions involved the concerns over the rights of tenant farmers and the demand to preserve the cultural heritage in Liujia (less than 10% respectively) (Luo 2004). In sum, the opinions of Liujia people towards the HSR plan were already divided from the beginning. In the following, I shall examine these divided opinions according to their different identities, namely, (1) culture and history workers; (2) concerned scholar; (3) Lin family; (4) other landowners; and (5) tenant farmers (see Table 3 for a summary of informants’ views). This analysis is mainly based on my interviews with the respondents and also field notes from my fieldwork in Liujia complemented by secondary data, such as research reports, and related newspaper and journal articles.

Table 3 Summary of Informant's Views

Types of Informant	Perceived Political Opportunity	Demands
Culture and history workers	Perceived a favorable political climate, particularly through the participation in the Community Empowerment Project	Preservation of Hakka cultural heritage
Concerned scholar	Perceived a favorable political climate, particularly through the participation in the EIA review process	Preservation of Hakka cultural heritage
Lin Family	Perceived a favorable political climate, particularly through the participation in the Community Empowerment Project	Preservation of the New Tile House and their way of life
Other landowners	Perceived a favorable political climate, particularly through protest and the organization of self-help association	Fair compensation
Tenant farmers	Dependent on the majority of the community (mainly the landowners)	Fair compensation

Source: Made by authors.

Culture and History Workers

Chen Ban, the founder of the Atelier Third Workshop, and his team began the work of video documentation in Liujia from 1992. Chen has also published a book entitled *Local History of Liujia Village* (《六家庄風土志》) (Chen 1998a) under the auspices of the National Culture and Arts Foundation. He then cooperated with the Council for Cultural Affairs and the Society of Community Empowerment³ in 1998 to launch the campaign ‘Writing Everybody’s History’ at Liujia. During the period when he was conducting fieldwork, land expropriation for the Hsinchu HSR Station Special Zoning District also began. As a culture and history worker, Chen was disappointed

³ The Society of Community Empowerment is an official organization established in 1996 which works closely with the Council for Cultural Affairs in providing trainings for government staff and community workers (Huang and Hsu 2011).

by the BHSR's lack of interest in valuing and preserving the local culture and natural environment of Liujia. However, he was also very careful not to intrude into the disputes between landowners and the government over the issues involving monetary compensation.

While Chen did not join forces with the HSR Self-help Association, he did pursue his own interest to save the cultural and historical heritage of Liujia. According to my interview with Chen (interviewed on 25 May 2011), he characterized his own interaction with the state as 'communication' (溝通) but not 'confrontation' (抗爭). First, using what Chen termed as the 'hard' approach, he attempted to criticize the planning of the HSR in the public sphere, for instance, in the mass media and on the internet. Chen also formed the 'Formosa High Speed Rail Consortium' to arouse public attention to the HSR's negative impacts on the environment and culture. Second, and more importantly, he has engaged in the 'soft' approach and negotiated with the BHSR by providing his fieldwork data for BHSR's reference and consideration (Chen 2000b: 72).

The major contribution by Chen in preserving the Liujia's heritage was employing the 'soft' line approach. He was successful in making the BHSR alter the Special District Zone planning in order to preserve the cultural heritage in Liujia. From the very beginning, Chen's fieldwork data and suggestions were already considered by the BHSR review committee. Chen's best-known achievement was the preservation of the New Tile House. The New Tile House was built by the Lin family ancestor 200 years ago with typical

courtyard house structure, including one main hall and two wings on the two sides. It represents the significant and unique features of a Hakka village. The New Tile House and the nearby farmland were initially included into the urban planning of HSR Station Special Zoning District. The whole area was planned to be demolished, except the Zhongxiao Shrine (忠 考 堂) of the New Tile House. In 1999, Chen and some Liujia villagers from the Zhongxing Community Development Association first heard of this planning, and demanded that the whole New Tile House should be preserved. After a series of negotiations with the BHSR and the Department of Cultural Affairs of Hsinchu County Government, the entire New Tile House was finally preserved. Apart from the New Tile House, Chen also successfully convinced the BHSR to keep fifteen bak-gongs (伯公) intact, with a park to be built at the location of one of the preserved bak-gongs.

During my interview with Chen, he mentioned the term ‘climate’ (氛 圍) quite often when he attempted to explicated his successful access to the institutional channels during the HSR controversy. He asserted that the socio-political climate during the late 1990s was rather open partially because of the Community Empowerment Project. Chen’s perception of such climate is actually a vivid illustration of the fact that political opportunity must be perceived in order to bring about social change. After the first few meetings with the responsible officials, Chen was invited to the subsequent meetings held by the BHSR and the County Government regarding the planning of the Hakka Cultural District at Liujia. In sum, the perceived openness of political

opportunity structure, or ‘climate’, did provide incentives for Chen to seize the chance to alter the HSR plan within the institution.

Concerned Scholar

Apart from the negotiation between the BHSR and the culture and history workers, EIA has been another channel that allowed local voices to be heard by the government. However, the institutionalization of public opinion does not at the same time guarantee democratic participation in the decision-making process, as it will be revealed in the example below. Huang Yun-shi (interviewed on 27 May 2011), a professor from the Department of Religious Studies at Hsuan Chuang University, was one of the informants who had participated tangentially in the EIA review process. Apart from his professional training in History, Huang is also a local resident at Liujia after his marriage to a local woman. In March 1998, Huang was invited by the consulting firm commissioned by the government to conduct independent EIA for the Hsinchu Station Special Zoning District, to write the section on local cultural heritage for the EIA report.

Based on Huang’s fieldwork study at Liujia, he proposed preserving over 20 places and houses because of the high historical value. He then submitted his part of the report to the consultant firm. Without informing Huang, however, the consulting firm revised his report substantially and also deleted his suggestions for preservation. The development plan for the Hsinchu HSR Station Special Zoning was clearly initiated without any major changes in its

planning. It was until 2002, after all the EIA review processes were finished, that Huang first discovered that his suggestions were revised and distorted by the consulting firm (Huang 2005). Despite there was a perceived opening of the political opportunity structure through the participation in the EIA review process, Huang's case demonstrated that EIA was not yet a genuine political opportunity as such⁴. In other words, although the local perspective was incorporated into the review process at the very beginning, this did not guarantee an effective participation by stakeholders throughout the review process. Local culture and environment were still considered to be of secondary importance vis-à-vis development despite the existence of the EIA law.

Lin Family

Liujia used to be a single-surname village since the Lin clan migrated from the mainland and settled in Zhubei. During the modern era, although Liujia was no longer a single-surname village, the Lin clan could still exert certain political influence on local elections (Chen 1998b). Moreover, the core of the Liujia community also changed from the Lin ancestral hall to different community development associations. Village heads have also substituted for the role of the Lin family in representing the interests of the Liujia community. Nevertheless, the connection between the Lin family and Hakka culture and history has never been severed.

With the facilitation of the culture and history workers, the Lin family

⁴ See Ho (2004) for more discussion on the implementation of EIA during the early 2000s in Taiwan.

could have the opportunity not only to rediscover the importance of their own history but also to promote Hakka culture. Some Lin heirs, including one of my informants (Lin Bao-yan, interviewed on 26 May 2011), also collaborated closely with Chen Ban. These Lin heirs reformed the ‘The New Tile House Folk Drum Group’ with Chen’s help. The first appearance of Folk Drum Group could be traced back to 1947. In order to celebrate Taiwan’s Restoration, the residents of the New Tile House volunteered to form a 16-member folk drum parade. These 16 men, dressed in women’s clothes, danced in a comical way to celebrate the event. Forty-five years later, it was Chen who brought the revival of this local folk culture back to the Liujia community. Since 1997, the dance has become a special folk art of the Liujia village and is also considered as one of the best performances representing Hakka culture in Taiwan.

However, people in the New Tile House were also facing the same problem, land expropriation, as all the other people in Liujia. There were around 20 households residing in the New Tile House before land expropriation. Among them, seven households were initially reluctant to move out. After around three years of resistance, all the Lin heirs finally left their ancestral land in 2004. The New Tile House was finally handed over to the Hsinchu County Government.

Other Landowners

Although Liujia’s landowners were usually portrayed in the mainstream

media as greedy individuals who were only after more compensation from the government, it actually overlooked the fact that sentiments of Liujia's people towards their homeland were much more complex and subtle. Some of the villagers had deep affection for their homelands. However, no one would dare to talk about such sentiments openly in the public hearings organized by the BHSR in Liujia because they knew that such attempts would be in vain. Consequently, the one and only legitimate claim left for the landowners in Liujia to fight for was a fairer compensation scheme from the government through organizing a self-help association.

In March 1998, village heads from Aikao Village, Donghai Village, Dongping Village, and Shixing Village decided to establish the HSR Self-help Association in order to organize the landowners in Liujia to strive for a fairer compensation scheme. Under the zone expropriation scheme, landowners in Liujia could opt to take back part of the land or receive monetary compensation. Those who choose to receive monetary compensation could also buy back their land with higher priority. The major basis for the landowners' discontent was with the area ratio of the so-called 'offset land' to the original land. Generally, landowners may retain around 40 percent of their land through retrieval of the offset land, while the government could obtain around 60 percent of the land for the construction of public infrastructure. In practice, however, there were some cases of retrieval that could be higher than 40 percent.⁵ The basic intention of the Liujia's landowners to organize the

⁵ The highest ratio is 50%, while in some occasions it could be 42% or 45%.

HSR Self-help Association was thus to fight for a higher and standardized retrieval ratio but not to stop the land expropriation per se. On 7 April of 1999, the HSR Self-help Association allied with other HSR self-help associations from Taoyuan, Taichung, Chiayi, and Tainan and organized a protest at the Executive Yuan in Taipei. After the Executive Yuan had offered some limited concessions (e.g. standardize the offset land area ratio to 42%), the ad-hoc coalition of all the HSR self-help associations in Taiwan disbanded (Huang 2005).

During its inception phase, the HSR Self-help Association had already solicited support from many politicians regardless of their party-affiliation (Luo 2004). In the midst of the electoral competition, popular support and opinions carry a lot of weight with publicly elected politicians. Local politicians would usually choose to support the public, despite the fact that public demands might sometimes stand directly against the central government policies. In this case, Lin Kwang-hwa from the DPP showed a sympathetic attitude towards the HSR Self-help Association when he was in office, however, he still lost in the election of county magistrate in 2001 because the land-owners in Liujia were dissatisfied with the prolonged negotiation between the County Government and the HSR Self-help Association. Zheng Yong-jin from the KMT was then elected to be the next County Magistrate after Lin in 2001, partly owing to his supportive stance towards the HSR Self-help Association.

Tenant Farmers

The tenant farmers who were still leasing farmlands from landlords under the term of 'Rent Reduction to 37.5 Percent' had no option but to receive one-third of the land price as their compensation (the other two-thirds goes to the landlords). Moreover, they also had to pay income tax on their monetary compensation. In 2000, 159 tenant farmers in Liujia village received income tax payment notifications from the National Tax Administration.⁶ The tenant farmers thought that it was unfair as they not only had to leave the lands where they used to make a living but also had to pay tax on the monetary compensation received. However, this group of deprived tenant farmers could not organize themselves to become an independent oppositional force. According to my interview with an ex-tenant farmer Lin (interviewed on 29th May 2011), the tenant farmers did join the HSR Self-help Association soon after they were asked to leave their homes. Lin recollected that the HSR Self-help Association was quite loosely organized. The only common objective for both landowners and tenant farmers to organize together was to fight for higher compensation. Although some of the farmers were reluctant to give up their farmland and lifestyles, the desire to maintain their way of life could not become the overarching demand of the HSR Self-help Association. The HSR Self-help Association dissolved soon after all of the farmers received compensation.

⁶ *China Times*. 14 December 2000.

Development of the First Hakka Cultural Reserved District

Although the construction of the Hsinchu HSR station could not be altered, the New Tile House was still preserved through the efforts of the Liujia villagers and the local culture and history workers. Owing to the financial problems of the Hsinchu County Government, however, the New Tile House was left unattended for almost four years 2000 to 2004. Meanwhile, professors from Chung Yuan Christian University were commissioned by the Hsinchu County Government in 2002 to conduct a feasibility study of restoring the New Tile House. Finally, the Hakka Affairs Council under the Executive Yuan took on the responsibility to manage and develop the conserved area in 2005. The Hakka Affairs Council also announced the New Tile House as the first Hakka Cultural District in Taiwan in the same year. The Preparatory Office of the Hakka Cultural Center was then established at the New Tile House in 2006. The New Tile House Hakka Cultural District also allied with the College of Hakka Studies of National Chiao Tung University to form a 'Hakka culture learning centre' in the northern part of Taiwan. After the establishment of the Hakka Cultural District at Liujia, it became the platform for a wide variety of cultural activities such as the Hakka Cinema Festival and the International Folk Drum Art Festival which are held in Liujia annually or bi-annually. In April 2010, the Preparatory Office of the Hakka Cultural Center

was moved out of New Tile House owing to some disputes between the Lin family and the Preparatory Office. The New Tile House is now managed by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Hsinchu County Government (Chang 2018).

Conclusion

This article has contributed to the heritage studies literature by demonstrating the theoretical values of the social movement approach in exploring the process of heritage formation through the case study of the conservation of the New Tile House Hakka Cultural District in Hsinchu. This study also aligns with the calls from heritage studies (Jones et al. 2018) and sociology (Fligstein and McAdam 2012) that the insights from the social movement theories are not only relevant but also important to our understanding of the power dynamics occurring in other social situations including heritage contests. Adopting the political process approach, I have demonstrated that the political opportunity structure of Taiwan was changing from a closed to an open configuration from 1987 to 2000. Such changes in the configuration of political opportunity structure opened up formal channels and informal opportunities for the general public to advance their demands regarding a wide range of social and political issues. In the case of the New Tile House Hakka Cultural District, the implementation of the EIA legislation and the state-sponsored Community Empowerment Project have laid the foundation for the Liujia villagers and the concerned individuals to formally or informal-

ly participate in the negotiation with the BHSR. Although not all voices were heard, the opening of political opportunity structure during the first decade of the democratization in Taiwan has defused a wide array of social dissent towards the land use disputes associated with the HSR development in Liujia. These findings demonstrated that political opportunity was indeed unequally distributed across different types of contenders (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). More importantly, I revealed the critical importance of the perceived political opportunity in the case of the conservation of the New Tile House. The shifting configuration of the political opportunity structure was the major cause that led to the successful conservation of the New Tile House, but the corresponding perceptions by the culture and history workers and the Liujia villagers also played a significant role in “seizing” the opportunities that allowed their voice to be heard by the government (Goodwin and Jasper 1999).

There are several limitations of the study. First, the conservation of the New Tile House is not entirely successful in hindsight as the area is not fully preserved in the ways as what the culture and history workers wished. In some sense, the current case study thus does not serve as the perfect springboard for testing the political process approach in studying cultural heritage conservation. Second, the current analytic approach also placed Taiwan’s electoral competition largely behind the scene. Voters’ preferences may possibly lend most political leverage in cultural heritage conservation. As Hakka voters often play a critical role in determining the results of elections, their preferences may thus directly influence conservation outcome. Future re-

search should explore how voters' preference among the Hakka community would have any direct impact on other cases of Hakka heritage conservation.

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