

Space, Time, History: Case Study of the Heterogeneous Space in the Central City of Taiwan

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Abstract. The study adopts the “Generate three, becomes different” concept that is proposed in modern geographical studies as the base concept, and returns to look at the interchange between time and space which is used as the theoretical framework, and used in conjunction with the field research to extract the characteristics, spirit and traits of the scattered communities in central city of Taiwan, and consider again the theoretical dialectics and discussion platform for the city and space research.

1. Introduction

This research picked up Zhongyi Village in Taichung city of Taiwan as the analytical site for its marginal state in the city development, and the researcher took this as the microscopic picture of the city space. At first, the researcher traverse to the “Heterotopology” (Zhongyi Village) through the apparatus of “Thirling”. Then the researcher interpreted this topology through the idea of “home” and take it to the trip of seeking for the archetype, and further estrange elements such as community characteristics, spirits and genes. Finally, the researcher resemble these data to make a conclusion and dialectal thinking with the perspective of urban space, and make continual suggestions for the urban space development (Fig. 1).

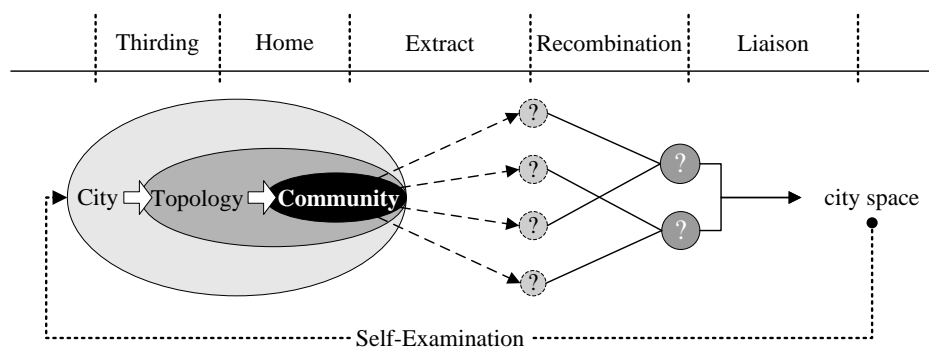


Figure 1. Flowchart

2. On “Thirling”

This essay cites what Lefebvre (1976) said: by introducing an Other entry to raise the third possibility or “element” to break the dichotomized categorization. What Lefebvre said is not a simply affixation, neither a rift inside a universal continuum. The researcher intend to recombine Lefebvre’s production of space (1976), Foucault’s alternative space (1986) and Soja’s the third space (1996) together, and take the “Trialectics” discourse as my departure point. The route of “Thirling-as-Othering” is taking “the third space” as an example of utopia, and grab the idea of “Heterotopology” as my way to Zhongyi Village.

2.1 Beginning

“I enjoy my life that is between the center and periphery; I am both in the periphery and the center, but I stand on the side of the periphery (Lefebvre 1975).” Thinking from this periphery perspective (the

idea of center- periphery relation), we can clearly define Zhongyi Village as the periphery area of the city core (the margin of Taichung city). Nevertheless, if we take the military camp and “Dependent’s Village” as a community, Dependent’s Village is sheltered and controlled by the military politically and it forms a class system. The relationship of military camp-Dependent’s Village can be seen as center- periphery. On the side of living, military camp needs supports from Dependent’s Village, and the relationship is upside down. The definition between “center- periphery” is blurred at this point.

Lefebvre firmly tries to transcend the dichotomy structured by Marxist historical materialism and Hegelian spiritualism with his own tolerating dialectical materialism (trialectics materialism) (1980). That is, when it comes to space (materialism) and culture (spiritualism) or both, we usually neglect people, activities. It would be a discourse without any essence. Therefore, this project regards the city space from the perspective of “human, architecture and environment” (Fig. 2.). This trialectics thinking apparatus is not restricted in a certain field, but a “trans” of things other than itself. It is an interdisciplinary discourse, and the city space is not the exception. Here, The researcher will take Soja’s words as the beginning of the liberating route. “The knowledge of the production of space takes the practical theorization as the core to remold ontology, epistemology and achieves the liberating social practice (Soja 1996).”

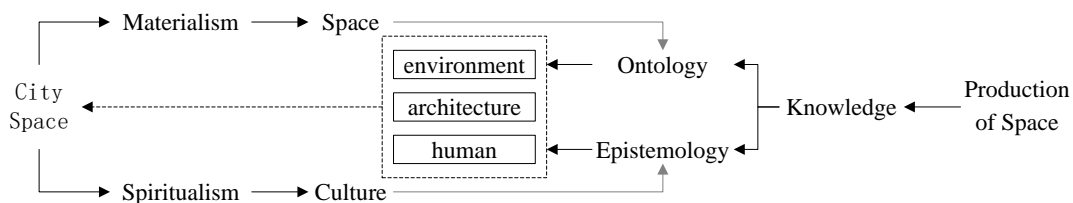


Figure 2. Trialectics thinking

2.2 Route

“This critical heterogeneity of Thirling-as-Othering is the first and the most important step to transform the close circuit of “either/or” to the open logic of “both/and also” (Soja 1996).” In the “Dependent’s Village”, culture identity is regarded as the stable object with specificity of territory, which is filled with community and nationality—a sort of strong combination of “blood and soil.” This ethic nationalism demonstrates that “the culture is equivalent to the space, and the space is equivalent to the people (Mike 2003).” The people in the “Dependent’s Village” came from different origins at first, but since they were all controlled by the military, their identity is situated by its military mark. Through the proliferation, expansion, the core value of people in the “Dependent’s Village” is blurred (decentered) gradually. At this time, the aborigines were attracted by the capitalistic type of life (job offers, markets and marriage). The main reason of these two phenomena is because Zhongyi Village belongs to the type of scattered community, and different from others that is mostly restricted by walls. The intersection between the “Dependent’s Village” and aborigines is their attitude of slow fusion, which is under the silent logic of “them-us-you”, and this finally ends with the identity of “Zhongyi Village.” In the mutation of ethnic culture, this is “heterogeneous to homogeneous”, but in the space of identification, this is “homogeneous to heterogeneous” .

The early development of Zhongyi Village is the scattered community constructed by dependent wives (airforce and marines) from important military sites of Chin Chan Gang in Taichung. They had strong consciousness of temporary living, but after proliferation and increasing amount of retired soldiers, this consciousness collapsed. Then the village expanded according to two military principles: one is dependent belonging in its own domain (the wall of the military camp) and the other is the exclusionary identity that formed strong ethnic awareness (the railway of the military camp). However, the researcher don’t think this negates the possibility of resistance of the other (the aborigines), instead it formed the coexistence of two cultures—i.e., the third culture. This process is going from the “Dependent’s Village” parasite awareness to the permanent inhabitation and achieves a certain balance. The researcher would argue this is the evolvement of the sociality, historicity and spatiality of its culture, or the first step of “impending” to the utopia (Fig. 3.).

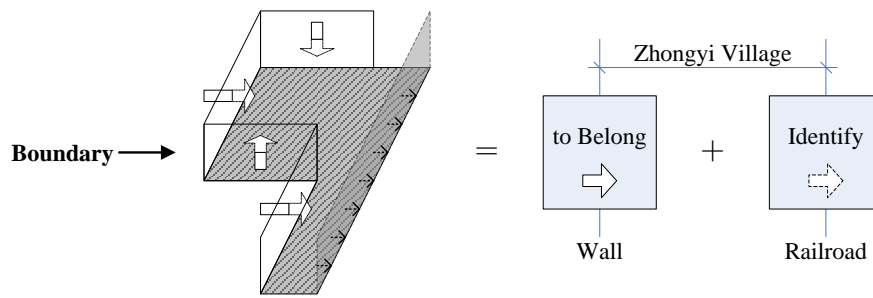


Figure 3. Boundary

2.3 Impending to

“Every “Thirthing” and every trialectics dialects is therefore a chance to “impend to”; the production of knowledge has its practical continuity as it is constructed on the previous approaches (Soja 1996).” Foucault (1986) thinks contemporary society is situated in the synchronal and juxtaposing moment, and the world we feel is probably the intertwined network. When it comes to the network in the Zhongyi Village, the most important thing is the local connection (reality) and relationship (conceiving).

This topology proliferated not only according to the two principles, but also according to the main lifeblood—the big drench (Da She Zhi Pai)—that connects the “Dependent’s Village” southern-northern development and basic needs. In addition, there is a traffic network under the policy—the main road (Yue Xiang Road). It not only provides the military deployment and information connection, but also represents the limit of the proliferation of the “Dependent’s Village”. Of course the process of the proliferation includes the local community sites (points). We cannot neglect the network structured by these basic points and the community senses after the ethnic fusion (shapeless lines). When both the concrete and imaginary dimensions are fulfilled and intertwined, we kind of approach what Saja argues the space that contends reality and imagination—the third space. In this way, the researcher think Zhongyi Village is the epitome of network development of city space.

2.4 Arrive

Heterogeneous space is typically connected to the clips of time (heterogeneous time). When time is isolated, the flow of space is undoubtedly turned to the empty shell. Space cannot say anything to the life. “Taking time vocabulary to be the transformation of metaphoric discourse must results in the employment of personal consciousness and its stable time model. On the other side, the devotion to explain the discourse through the metaphors of space and strategy could aid us to handle points of discourse in and through the power relationships (Foucault 1980).”

The power of discourse in Zhongyi Village could be traced to the origin of Dependent’s Village. That was the biggest population and culture moving in Taiwan society and all the Dependent’s Village were formed with the deployment of the military. The power relationship in that time could be explained as “government-military-dependent’s village-dependents.” People in Dependent’s Village, under such strong state power that took them to a temporary inhabitation, could not help to have resistance of the difference that is from the nostalgia and isolation with this land. At that time, the heterogeneity was furious, though the relationship between space and power was not distinctive; it became strong senses of identity and belonging when it was tested by the time and the consensus of return to the homeland. This is an example of trialectics: space-time-power. It was because they thought they would live there temporarily that the buildings were all barracks. But it evolved into the clustered space—heterogeneous space (public space). The development of Zhongyi Village could be seen as what Foucault said “heterotopology” that contends multiple possibilities and tolerates confrontations (Fig. 4.).

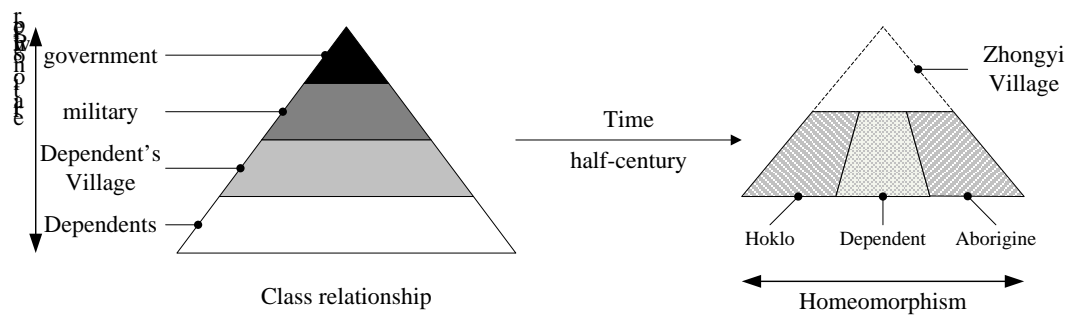


Figure 4. Power vs Space

The dominance of space order and power is part of Dependent's Village culture. The researcher intend to interpret this order and dominance with the spatiality. The researcher quote Foucault to symbolize the arriving of Zhongyi Village and the beginning of alternatives of reading topologies. "Space is the foundation of any type of community life; space is the foundation of any type of power operation (Foucault 1986)."

3. RETHINKING CITY SPACE

When we try to understand the harmony of human and nature, we would consider the human culture, beautiful environment and community setting to make people enjoy fresh air, convenient traffic, elegant culture, prosperous commercialism and beautiful environment. This essay does not discuss the problems in the city development but explore the influence of "heterogeneous topological space" in the development of "city space." Taking Zhongyi Village as the example we may learn that the mutation from the traditional to the modern and from single economic growth to whole-scale social development should notice the humanity is the core of all the social changes and the theme of modern city. City space as the space for communication only functions when specific social consciousness and acts correspond to the human regulations. That is, the "city" in New Urbanism is the modern city instead of suburban. Though the time changes, Zhongyi Village's function as thirding has not changed when the village is transformed. Thirding itself has not been different through evolution and mutation. Therefore, the basic needs for Zhongyi Village do not change a lot. The traditional community apparatus filled with affinities that connect social lives is still the privileged living condition for human beings.

Finally, when we discuss Zhongyi Village as the trend of city evolvement and its impact and influence, the divide of social space is inevitable. All the conflicts between city core and its margins, city exploration and environmental protection, rich class and minority poeple would reveal when the issues of land deployment, environmental and resources control are raised. Therefore, authorities concerned should make the resource charge as clear as possible by making public exhibition, people participation, market control and governmental management. All these things are supposedly reduce illegal conducts to keep the steady development of cities.

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