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



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# Beyond Conditionality: Community Placemaking in Taiwanese Social Housing Management

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## ABSTRACT


Taiwan's social housing has concentrated on the physical provision of housing and pays little attention to questions of social inclusion in neighbourhoods. However, placemaking practices in other countries have triggered a flurry of experimentation in social housing in Taipei. We evaluate the performance of placemaking efforts aimed at enhancing tenant participation in social housing management. The rapid and selective transfer of social housing policy approaches from the West has led to problems in implementation and management. However, we found that community placemaking involving planners as facilitators fostering partnerships significantly enhances tenant participation in the provision and management of social housing.

## KEYWORDS

Policy mobility; placemaking; conditionality; social housing management; tenant participation

## 1. Introduction

Exploring changes in the dynamics between tenants and institutions (e.g. the state, housing providers) is common in research on social housing governance, especially in Western European countries with substantial social housing programmes. On the one hand, dysfunctional social integration brought about by the deterioration of living spaces and public spaces alongside poverty and ethnic segregation has resulted in social housing challenges (Bolt, 2018). On the other hand, social housing policy has changed as a result of welfare reforms, with new policies reconsidering the role and composition of tenants (e.g. the UK's 'Right to Buy' policy and its marginalisation of problematic estates [Simmons & Birchall, 2007]). Key research has focused on the various mechanisms of tenant participation and the creation and operation of tenant organisations (Caimcross *et al.*, 1992; Scott *et al.*, 2001; Hickman, 2006; Simmons & Birchall, 2007; Bradley, 2008; McKee, 2009). One recent research trend has been the focus on conditionality (Flint, 2003, 2004; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020a), whereby tenants are given obligations and are only eligible for welfare privileges once they have fulfilled these obligations (Deacon, 2004). In this way, tenants become more than mere occupants of social housing; they have responsibilities in terms of property maintenance management and supervision (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020b).

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The development of social housing over the last decade in Taiwan is generally considered to have been influenced by Western Europe – the Netherlands in particular. However, Taiwan's ostensible policy mobility in social housing is not entirely reliable, as it does not rely on cooperation between housing associations and municipalities like in the Netherlands. Taiwan established direct government intervention without any hesitancy. As Taiwan's social housing policy is less than a decade old, it has not yet expanded to the austerity of social welfare as those of some Western European countries have; thus, the tenant-landlord relationship is in its infancy. Additionally, Taiwan does not have the same problem of socially segregated housing associated with mass immigration as Western European countries. Also worth noting is that the physical space of social housing has yet to show any signs of deterioration, as it is less than ten years old. Furthermore, as the political climate in Taiwan called for social housing as a quick response to urban housing crises, 'build first no matter what' is the standard top-down ethos, prompting direct state intervention despite official delegations being sent to the Netherlands to assess the country's housing association system. Effectively, Taiwanese social housing policy is centred on 'hardware': the government builds housing units but outsources their operation and management to others. This neglect of tenants' participation in social housing and the exaggerated emphasis on the 'hardware' aspect of social housing policy has caught the attention of a group of Taiwanese planners with experience in placemaking. Through policy advocacy, this group has successfully convinced the municipality to launch an experimental project in social housing that employs placemaking as its 'software' aspect: the Youth Innovation in Social Housing (YISH) programme.

In this paper, we observe this experimental approach to social housing, aiming to assess the performance of placemaking in strengthening tenant participation in social housing management. Furthermore, we ask how placemaking and partnership building can encourage tenants to identify with their active role in the living environment of social housing and how collaboration between professionals and municipal social landlords can enhance tenant participation? We argue that, through placemaking, social housing participation constitutes a partnership rather than a mere tenant-landlord relationship, implying greater overlap between the roles of tenants and other stakeholders. The above concept encourages tenant participation – the use of tenants as partners – instead of employing the concept of individual responsibility, which is emphasised by the concept of conditionality. Furthermore, it is important to note that, in the case of placemaking, the co-creation of goals relies on professionals transcending their inherent roles as architects and planners to produce relatively even interaction patterns. In this light, we do not frame our study in terms of a tenant-landlord relationship or a bottom-up-top-down dichotomy; we frame it in terms of dynamic interactions between actors.

We explore the policy mobility and local adaptability of social housing management. Despite Taiwan loaning the concept of social housing from Western Europe, its implementation and management were derived from public needs. Placemaking was introduced as a social housing experiment to boost social inclusion and reduce tenant segregation. Placemaking was localised in Japan decades prior to Taiwan's adoption of the concept, and there had already been many cases of collective action to enhance the spatial quality of Taiwan. However, Taiwanese collective action only began to focus on social housing in the last decade. As placemaking in Taiwan exhibits elements gained from the experiences of various other countries, it is difficult to clearly categorise it.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. [Section 2](#) summarises this study's theoretical background. [Section 3](#) explains the background of the case study and details the employed research methods. [Section 4](#) presents the results of the study. Finally, [Section 5](#) offers a discussion and a summary of the main lessons from the case in Taipei.

## 2. Theoretical Perspectives

This section describes the concepts of both conditionality and placemaking in social housing. We then demonstrate the importance of understanding community placemaking as a collaborative planning practice that takes place alongside partnership building. Finally, we delineate the borrowed constitutive elements of Taiwan's placemaking efforts.

### 2.1. Conditionality in Social Housing

In the post-welfare system of Western Europe, a focus on the relationship between tenants and institutions (the state or housing providers) emerged as social housing faced welfare reform, leading to a greater concentration of low-income residents in low-quality social housing (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020a). Policies were established to address the tenant-agency relationship in social housing. The concept of tenants being responsible for their own behaviour has been highlighted in new management schemes since the 1980s (Flint, 2003, 2004; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020a). Flint (2003) reveals that social housing management in post-welfare UK has been transformed to address the 'problem behaviours' of tenants living in deprivation. This new agenda draws on community identity and the assignment of responsibility for community tenants— 'responsibilisation' (Jacobs & Manzi, 2014; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020b). This term entails the encouragement of tenants to take proactive and voluntary action on community matters. Tenants in social housing are seen more as a community in need of participation – as an agency-based, self-regulating group. They are no longer merely recipients of social welfare; instead, they are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their communities (Flint, 2004). Social housing policy fosters responsibility by recognising 'responsible' behaviour and situating it within purportedly shared community values and mutual obligations. Costarelli *et al.* (2020a) compare two other social housing cases in Italy and the Netherlands, revealing how the responsibilities assigned to tenants in social housing are shaped based on conditionality – tenants must first commit to providing community services to be eligible for welfare privileges (Deacon, 2004). According to the study, conditionality-based governance is two-fold. The first element is *ex-ante* conditionality: the policy of selecting resourceful tenants with strong potential. The second element is *ex-post* conditionality, a strategy to evaluate tenants' performance and accountability (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020a). After years of policy practice, conditionality has become a strategy to address welfare dependency; social housing tenants must commit to obligations, including community activities and a more active role in curbing anti-social behaviour (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020b).

Conditionality, a key feature of welfare reform in Western Europe, appears to have given tenants a greater management role. However, there has been little investigation into social housing management and its organisation in Western Europe; questions remain over whether resourceful tenants actually possess greater decision-making

capacities as a result of their responsibilities. In fact, Krantz's overview (Krantz, 1999) of large-scale social housing management practices in Northwest Europe found that physical improvements to social housing were independently insufficient to address emerging socio-economic challenges. Social housing is intended to be communal; it requires the participation of tenants. Therefore, the involvement of social landlords, policymakers and other stakeholders in the formulation of strategies to develop management agents (Krantz, 1999; Gruis & Nieboer, 2004) is crucial. The emphasis on software aspects – rather than hardware aspects – must be expanded to include more stakeholder roles, though not necessarily through increased tenant responsibility for anti-social behaviour or technical asset management. Additionally, as outlined by Priemus *et al.* (1999), social housing management should entail: (1) communicating with different stakeholders and stimulating tenants through participation; (2) decision-making in tenancy and mutual living agreements for both short-term 'day-to-day' and long-term strategies; and (3) tenure management through the adoption of mixed and experimental tenures.

## 2.2. Placemaking in Community and Partnership Building

Placemaking is a multilateral approach to the planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces that seeks to promote well-being using attributes tailored to local residents through their participation (Friedmann & Douglass, 1998; Salzman & Lopez, 2020). The process is tactical, usually requiring a long-term implementation plan with clear initial objectives. While the scale of placemaking can vary in scope – branding can be done at the city level (Friedmann, 2010)—there are far more examples of placemaking at the community level. Communities are where unplanned informal interactions take place. As Friedmann argues, communities are where 'habitual encounters' occur (Friedmann, 2010, p. 154). Additionally, Friedmann points out that 'being lived in is an important aspect of urban communities that can be modified and transformed by their inhabitants (Friedmann, 2010, p. 154). In this sense, the processes and products of placemaking create a sense of place by linking communities to the space they inhabit. Placemaking can be seen as an inclusion scheme (Strydom *et al.*, 2018), bringing about participatory approaches to public space (Fincher *et al.*, 2016; Salzman & Lopez, 2020). By engaging residents, placemaking enables local action to improve physical public spaces, enhance community members' sense of belonging and develop social capital among residents.

In this sense, placemaking constitutes the aggregate actions of residents – the shared governance of space through collaborative planning. McCarthy (2007) emphasises that collaborative planning requires 'a framework related to governance, the use of partnerships and networks, and the use of collaborative planning techniques to provide a more inclusive and effective approach' (McCarthy, 2007, p. 25). This idea links collaborative planning partnerships to a governing perspective echoing Healey (2003, p. 104) view of collaborative planning as an interactive process (Healey, 2003, p. 104) focused on the interaction between institutions and individual agencies (Healey *et al.*, 2001). While it must consider varying social, economic and environmental elements across different contexts, a planning process with communicative features and a commitment to social justice has the potential to reform power relations and create an inclusive and practical approach to decision-making (Healey, 1999, 2006; McCarthy, 2007). Therefore,

collaborative planning can be viewed as generating, reintroducing, restructuring, decentralising and expanding (Elander, 2002) partners' relationships through a strategic approach to local governance (Bailey *et al.*, 1995; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) that addresses both quality of place ('good city') and processes ('good governance') (Healey, 2003, p. 116). While the literature on collaborative planning is instructive, it tells us relatively little about how the concept can be tactically applied to placemaking, especially across specific contexts, such as social housing placemaking, which may possess highly unique elements.

### **2.3. Placemaking in Social Housing: Mitigating Stigmatisation**

Stigmatisation is a common international phenomenon experienced by residents of social housing (Hastings, 2004; Wassenberg, 2004a, 2004b; Flint, 2004; Warr, 2005; Wang, 2011; Kearns *et al.*, 2013; Arthurson *et al.*, 2014). This stigmatisation is two-fold. First, the physical environment is poorly maintained, meaning it relays a severely negative image of a dilapidated environment. Second, social housing residents are viewed as struggling welfare recipients who have lost their motivation to 'go back to the housing market and pursue better living conditions for themselves'.

Social housing placemaking is similar to other placemaking practices in that it seeks to enhance community identity through the creation and management of space. However, social housing placemaking is often more blatant in its intention to mitigate stigma, which is both difficult and paradoxical: the more visible the community identity is in a stigmatised area, the more tightly the stigma may be attached. As shown by Blokland (2008) investigation of a housing project in the U.S., collective identities attached to social housing communities result in the designation as 'those people' who live in subsidised housing. As a result, residents refuse to engage in community activities. This case serves as a reminder that placemaking in social housing is not the responsibility of the tenants themselves. Professionals (experts and planning consultants) and social landlords must be involved to achieve the goal of placemaking and expand the partnership to residents in neighbouring communities.

### **2.4. The Adoption of Community Placemaking in Taiwan**

To align with the global policy mobility of community placemaking (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009), Taiwan borrowed the concept of community placemaking from the Japanese *Machizukuri* approach and American tactical urbanism (though at different times). Modern Taiwanese placemaking has moved beyond centralized, authoritarian planning guidance to a more local, community-based framework (Raco *et al.*, 2011).

Initially, community placemaking in Taiwan was inspired by the Japanese *Machizukuri* approach, which was first pioneered in Japan in the late 1970s before expanding to Taiwan and Korea. This approach entails small-scale and bottom-up civic engagement and community movements (Watanabe, 2016; Aiba, 2020; Satoh,

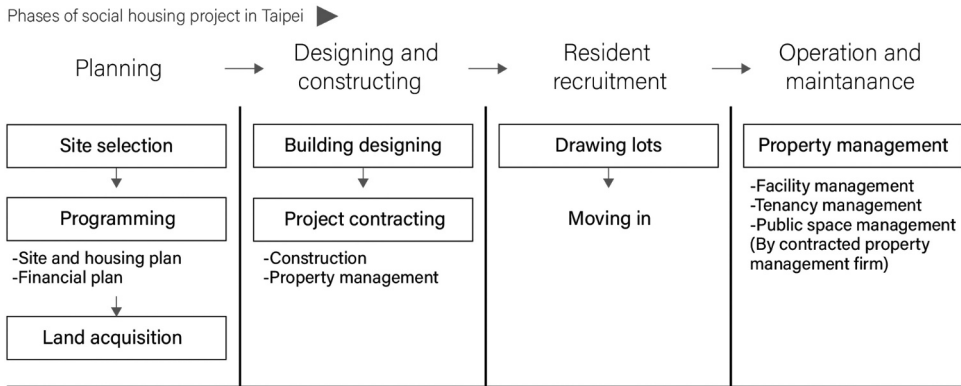
2020). The Japanese experience is a shift from Taiwan's traditional top-down structural planning to strategic planning and placemaking achieved through community participation (Hein, 2002). Unlike Japan's *Machizukuri*, Taiwan's community placemaking practices (also known as *She-chu Ying-tSao*) were initially launched by the central government with a focus on cultural matters; as democratization intensified, NGOs and bottom-up initiators gradually assumed greater roles and demanded more room alongside the government.

Lately, community placemaking in Taiwan has been influenced by American tactical urbanism, also known as grassroots urbanism (Pagano, 2013), guerrilla urbanism and insurgent urbanism (Hou, 2010, 2020; see also Jackson & Marques, 2019). Tactical urbanism is rooted in self-action among minority communities aimed at improving their physical environments and promoting their well-being (Jackson & Marques, 2019). It stands in stark opposition to traditional top-down planning processes (Talen, 2015), as its decision-making process stems from a collaborative relationship between communities that bypasses bureaucratic institutions. As a result, those who advocate for tactical urbanism tend to be reluctant to fully trust urban planning, opting instead to develop their own public space for their community (Jackson & Marques, 2019). Unlike *Machizukuri*, it embraces the spirit of 'guerrilla' tactics and rebellion, meaning that the results are sometimes temporary. Examples include occupying a vacant lot and transforming it into an urban garden, creating a temporary park over a parking space and occupying a driveway and making it a sidewalk (Hou, 2010).

The influences of both *Machizukuri* and tactical urbanism are clearly intertwined in Taiwan's placemaking practices. This has become increasingly true as political democratisation and the need for planning participation have increased. As a result, various placemaking projects have adopted a hybrid of the two approaches. Taiwan boasts organised community mobilisation (in line with Japan) alongside interactions with state planning systems and subsidies. At the same time, however, while many community placemaking activities are state-funded, the organisers do not necessarily share the government's goals; they use the government budget for what they view as essential for their community (Lien & Hou, 2019), embracing some of the defiant elements of American tactical urbanism.

In summary, in contrast to the focus of conditionality on tenant responsibility, this study assesses the role shifts brought about by community place-making processes in social housing. More specifically, it focuses on the creation of partnerships that may redefine the relationship between tenants and social landlords to achieve more effective social housing management. Meanwhile, the international hybrid of approaches exhibited by Taiwanese social housing practices provides a stable balance that positively influences community placemaking. In fact, the YISH programme is promoted by professionals who have been practising community placemaking for years. This is explained in more detail in the following section.





**Figure 1.** Social housing phases in Taipei (redrawn by authors based on CPAMI, 2018).

### 3. Case Study Background and Methodology

#### 3.1. Social Housing Policy and Implementation in Taiwan

The housing crisis triggered massive urban social movements, which have influenced political agenda-setting since 2010 (Chen, 2011, 2020; Lin, 2011). Politicians routinely make commitments regarding housing stock increases during their time in office, and municipalities and the central government have initiated social housing projects at an unprecedented scale.

In terms of implementation, however, social housing was quickly seen by national policymakers as a supplementary solution for those who could afford to neither buy nor rent in the housing market, as made clear in government documents: ‘Helping to cross the bridge, so that people can reach the shore of the market’ (CPAMI, 2018)<sup>1</sup>. Evidently, the Taiwanese government views social housing as a temporary solution for those experiencing housing difficulties. After renting, families who cannot move out of social housing are not considered to be capable of self-help and are considered to no longer be worthy of state benefits (see Doling, 1999; Ramesh, 2004; Kim & Lee, 2015; Sep & Joo, 2018). The policy sets a fixed tenancy period with a maximum of six years for ordinary households and 12 years for low-income and special households – a limitation that creates uncertainty for tenants.

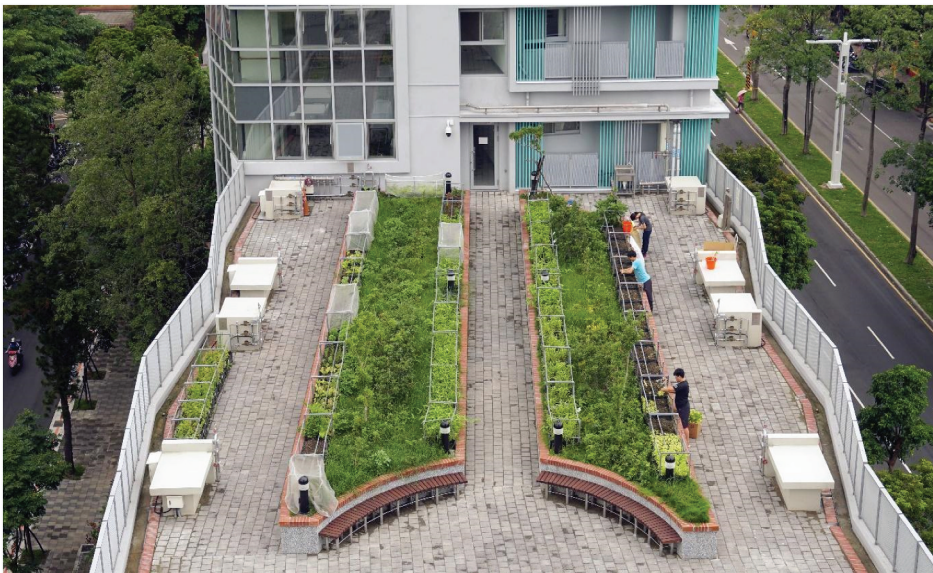
In addition, to build social housing as quickly as possible, municipalities contract social housing arrangements as regular public buildings – a traditional top-down system through which the municipality lists requirements and commissions architects and engineers to fulfil them. Additionally, municipalities outsource social housing management to property-management firms (Figure 1). This property management is technical and ‘hardware-oriented’, including the daily maintenance of buildings, security, and facility management.

This focus on ‘hardware’ and top-down management may result in social housing being a mere container for occupancy. While this may partially address the housing crisis, it may also pose challenges in terms of social inclusion and stigmatisation. The mere perception of social housing as a community to which tenants belong is difficult for tenants, as social housing is generally perceived as temporary accommodation over the course of a fixed tenancy period.

### 3.2. The Youth Innovation in Social Housing (YISH) Programme

Taiwanese advocates with experience in community placemaking efforts have identified the aforementioned challenges in social housing policy and proposed further placemaking efforts to the municipality (see Figure 3). They successfully convinced the municipality of two things: first, when there is a community in social housing, the municipality can share the burden of management with the community; second, the creation of communities and public spaces mitigate the stigmatisation of social housing.

The YISH programme's goal is experimental in its pursuit of placemaking and community. Instead of the traditional hardware-oriented social housing management style, this programme blends the idea of addressing the housing pressures of young people with their potential to play an active role in community affairs. In fact, the



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Figure 2.** YISH programme activities in social housing projects: (a) community roof-top garden managed by a YISH team; (b) YISH team members working with tenants to improve social housing's public space; (c) physical therapy courses offered by a YISH team (photos by authors).



**Figure 3.** Timeline of social housing provision and the placemaking framework.

municipality hopes to fill the gap in social housing management through the YISH programme via day-to-day on-site management. Rather than selecting tenants using a lottery, YISH applicants are offered tenancy based on their proposals for community projects. Unlike conditionality, applicants must tailor their proposals to the unique needs of each specific housing location. The YISH programme launched in 2018. According to the official statement by the Urban Development Department of the Taipei Municipality (2019, p. 1), the project has three main objectives (see Figure 2):

- Curating community activities as the start of social housing services: community exchanges, social work (e.g., art courses, gardening) and other mutually beneficial activities that encourage a common willingness to participate.
- Strengthening the network and dialogue among residents: the development of community newspapers and other forms of media provides more opportunities for daily contact among residents.
- Enhancing public space and management: social housing projects are built before residents move in; through activities, residents are encouraged to express their unique personal needs and desires to the community.

**Table 1.** List of interviewees.

A1	Social housing tenants and YISH team member
A2	Social housing tenants and YISH team member
A3	Social housing tenants and YISH team member
A4	Social housing tenants and YISH team member
A5	Social housing tenants and YISH team member
B1	Head of the Housing Services division in the municipal planning department
C1	Head of the Housing Services division in the municipal planning department
C2	Municipal social housing advisory committee member
D1	Planner at Classic Design, programme manager in the YISH programme
D2	Founder and director of Classic Design, initiator of the YISH programme

### 3.3. Research Methods

We investigated how the YISH programme was initiated and practised by multiple roles in the planning process. We first introduced the initiator and elaborated the evolution of planners’ roles in the placemaking process. We drew upon empirical research into the development of the YISH programme from 2016 onwards. We collected data via qualitative methods – primarily ten semi-structured qualitative interviews. The interviews were complemented by participatory observation in public and advisory committee meetings and YISH activities. We conducted the interviews in 2020. The interviewees included public servants, social housing advisory committee members and residents who are also YISH team members. Additionally, we interviewed a group of planners and designers who work at a consultancy firm called Classic Design, as they play essential initiator and facilitator roles in the YISH programme. Classic Design fosters placemaking projects with residents and advocates for bottom-up, community-driven projects through traditional municipal planning institutions (see Table 1).

The YISH programme is divided into three phases: proposal, implementation and evaluation. This study’s meeting types and researcher roles are summarised in Figure 4. We closely observed how different roles collaborate in the YISH programme in 2019–2021.

	Proposal	Implementation	Evaluation
Meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selection meeting</li> <li>2. Workshops for selected YISH teams before moving into social housing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bimonthly meeting (hold by YISH teams)</li> <li>2. Advisory meetings to revise the mechanism of YISH</li> </ol>	<p>Evaluation meeting</p>
Roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect proposals from potential YISH team; collect opinions from MYAC/MHC</li> <li>2. Organize workshops for selected YISH teams</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informing YISH teams for administrative affairs; providing advice about practicing placemaking to the teams</li> <li>2. Organizing issues to discuss in reviewing meetings</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect reports from YISH teams</li> <li>2. Collect opinions from MYAC/MHC and calculate scores for each team</li> </ol>

**Figure 4.** List of meetings in which we participated.

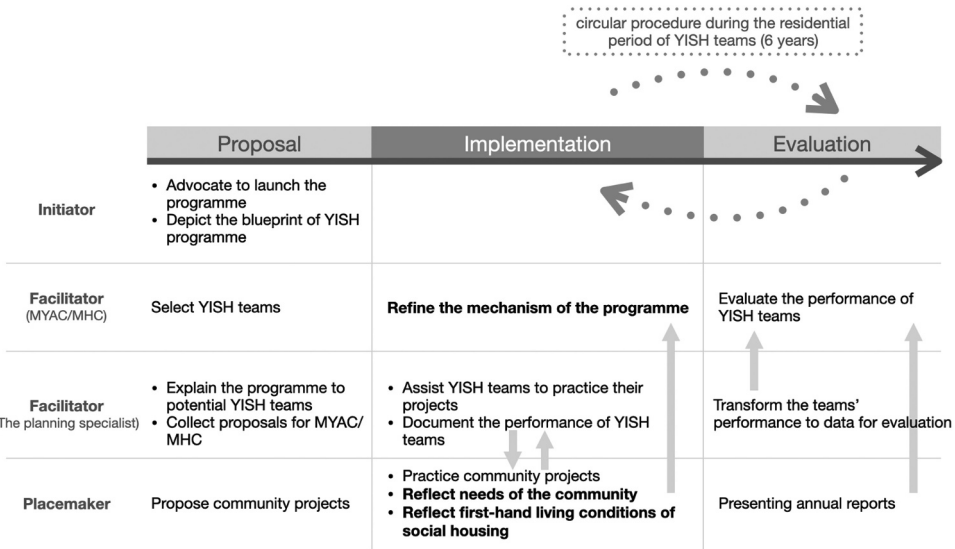


Figure 5. The roles of placemaker practices in each social housing neighbourhood under the YISH programme in the text.

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Three Roles in Placemaking

Three roles contribute to placemaking in the YISH programme, some of which do not typically stem from the social housing authority. This dynamic may encourage a more progressive, broad and dynamic management structure in placemaking. The three roles are as follows (see Figure 5):

(a) The role of professionals in the private and public sectors: *initiator*

To launch placemaking plans in a top-down institutional setting – such as the one in Taipei – initiators from both the state and civil society must serve the following early-stage functions:

1) Build awareness of the need to repair the fragile relationship between the municipality (the landlord) and residents (the tenant) in social housing (*Respondent C1*). 2) Advocate for the role of young people in promoting access to social housing. Civic groups that argue for ‘the right to live in affordable housing’ recognise the importance of placemaking in social housing to resolve tensions between the municipality and residents. Hence, advocacy groups in Taiwan have largely merged their discourse with young people’s promotion of housing rights to enhance cooperation with the Municipal Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) (*Respondent D2*). 3) Establish a main outline of the YISH programme. This function was largely performed by MYAC by selecting social housing sites and determining the details of the target groups. After the MYAC’s plan was approved by the mayor, the municipal planning department kicked off its implementation.

b) The role of planning specialists: *facilitator*



Facilitators are crucial actors during the execution and management phases. Early-stage initiators sometimes became facilitators as the programme progressed. A few MYAC and MHC (Municipal Housing Advisory Committee) members were assisted by the Classic Design team in executing the programme, including in the selection of local YISH practitioners and the revision of operational mechanisms. The team's previous experiences with placemaking in Taipei's communities helped to inform the YISH programme's mechanism. Unlike most stakeholders, who served as initiators (MYAC and civic groups), the team adopted the unique role of facilitators during this process. They insisted on continual revision of programme mechanisms through a 'learning-by-doing' approach to fulfil the programme's goals.

c) The role of conditional tenants: *placemaker*

This role refers to 'practitioners on the frontlines' of the implementation of the YISH programme. This role was played by selected local YISH practitioners. These practitioner teams carry out community projects in three categories: community service; neighbourhood activities; and tenant networks. Their performance and expertise represent diverse approaches that embody the idea of placemaking in social housing. The approaches can be categorised in the following types that target nearby residents in social housing: social media management, healthcare and social services for the elderly and other vulnerable groups and hobby/interest-oriented clubs (e.g. gardening, sports, handicrafts, parenting). The practitioner comprises social housing residents, creating a sense of ownership over the performed community services. Practically engaging with the programme enables them to be thoroughly familiar with their neighbourhoods, later helping them to comprehensively identify and address community issues (*Respondent A1*).

YISH teams reflect the process of placing responsibility on tenants as part of the conditionality; the teams are required to engage in community affairs and establish a positive neighbourhood network to gain access to social housing. Hence, their performance is annually evaluated by representatives of both MYAC and MHC (initiator). These representatives review teams as a committee to assess community projects and their performance. The evaluation criteria include resident satisfaction, number of activities, reach and engagement. YISH teams are generally required to prepare an annual report for the committee that details their efforts and observations.

#### **4.2. Value Sharing: Milestone to Create Partnership Building**

Our observations and interviews with stakeholders enabled us to identify the factors that facilitate partnership building, which is essential for a placemaking scheme like YISH. Value sharing can be interpreted in a straightforward way: sharing viewpoints and achieving common goals. However, institutional structure and appropriate actions are critical to the possibility of value sharing and the establishment of a trusting partnership. Although placemaking constitutes the core value of the YISH programme, the stakeholders involved differ in their interpretation of this value. We perceive there to be progression in the making of shared values – in the alignment of performances and follow-up actions.

First, at the proposal stage, to tackle the neglected social aspects of social housing (as it is designed as a temporary solution to accommodate tenants), these programme initiatives establish the goal of social inclusiveness. They pursue this goal by producing

activities that encourage casual encounters and strengthening social networks among tenants (*Respondents C1 & D1*). The criteria of YISH team-member selection are based on this goal.

Second, at the implementation stage, the municipal planning department expects the programme's practitioners to serve as local agents who assist the municipality in revealing, reflecting on and resolving issues of social housing management and community affairs to alleviate residents' concerns and mitigate the stigma of social housing. Local practitioners (placemakers) are incentivised to improve their living environments while, at the same time, stimulating and engaging the community in placemaking. Additionally, given the political aspect, the municipality must pursue greater support from young people and obtain a reputation for innovative and inclusive policies. Despite the fact that the municipality remains the highest position in the top-down institutional arrangement of social housing management, placemakers have room for their practice alongside initiators and facilitators (*Respondent B1*).

Third, shared values are transferred to feasible action plans. This is important, as YISH team members are also tenants with limited knowledge. One of the motivations for YISH team members to be enrolled in the programme – beyond the affordable housing – is the presence of a public spirit. They expect a warm and friendly living environment, one that drives them to be highly involved in community affairs (*Respondent A2*).

The integration of various interpretations, dialogues and collaborations into a deliberative planning process is critical to partnership building.

### **4.3. Deliberation: Communicative Strategies**

We identified 'consensus building' as the main feature of the programme's deliberative process. This feature is critical to the integration of different interpretations of the value of placemaking. Throughout the deliberative process, facilitators operated as providers of 'channels to communicate' with the primary aim of balancing the diverse interests of stakeholders and mitigating conflicts among them. This bridging role proved to be key to the implementation of the YISH programme, as there was a lack of direct interaction between bureaucrats and citizens (*Respondent D1*).

A counselling group was set up by the company to establish connections with local YISH practitioners. These connections enabled the identification of several tensions that arose while implementing the programme. These tensions mainly stemmed from two sets of dynamics. First, there was a conflict between property management agencies and local YISH practitioners, representing the principles of social housing management and community actions, respectively. Second, the implementation of the YISH programme as part of the placemaking process was hampered by the lack of a specific mechanism to allow for adapting solutions to individual social housing neighbourhoods. The primary strategy that the Classic Design team applied was 'targeting'; by acknowledging different standpoints among stakeholders, the planner group categorised issues and sought suitable ways to address them. For instance, issues related to housing would be presented to the housing department, while those related to programme mechanisms (e.g. revising the standard of annual evaluation) would be discussed in meetings with MYAC and MHC, which would likely relay the matter to the municipality (*Respondent D1*).

In practice, the Classic Design team documented the performance of local YISH practitioners, assisted them in administrative work and reflected on their challenges. Strategies employed to communicate with the teams varied based on how intensive the interaction was between the Classic Design team and the local practitioners (*Respondent D1*). Overall, however, the strategies can be categorised as ‘counselling’ and ‘accompanying’. While the former involved emotional connections, the latter focused on the provision of advice and a ‘problem-solving’ approach.

Maintaining an effective channel between the municipality and local YISH practitioners required a repetitive and time-consuming deliberative process to create a value-sharing environment. What planners ultimately sought were not legitimate solutions to the programme’s practical challenges but ways to implement social reform in social housing. While the Classic Design team could acknowledge difficulties in promoting the deliberative process, deliberation was hampered by inefficiency stemming from rigid bureaucracy, causing a feeling of ‘powerlessness’ among planners (*Respondent D1*). Nevertheless, the focus on the value of placemaking still fostered partnerships among the key YISH actors. Moreover, the municipality recognises the programme’s political benefits, and local YISH practitioners have created valuable community bonds with their neighbours.

Overall, by practising the placemaking programme of social housing through a democratic governance model, the practices of initiators, facilitators and placemakers can promote placemaking in a top-down management structure. However, structural challenges in the institutional setting can still limit flexibility among practitioners and hinder the collaborative process. Hence, partnership building, which entails value sharing and deliberation, requires practitioners to apply multiple strategies to identify and pursue common goals and pave the way for placemaking to function as an element of social housing management.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper assessed the performance of placemaking efforts aimed at enhancing tenant participation in social housing management. Our findings suggest that placemaking can significantly improve tenant participation in social housing management. Taiwan’s experimentation in social housing through placemaking was drawn from its past experiences with community engagement and placemaking. We found that placemaking and partnership-building approaches provide a more software-based approach to social housing management.

This section compares the differences between the conditionality approach and the YISH approach and discusses how these approaches to community placemaking emerged.

Efforts employing the YISH approach selected tenants based on their potential contributions to placemaking through partnership building; this stands in stark contrast to the conditionality approach, which selected tenants based on their potential and resources. We identified the impact of the three stakeholder roles on partnership building – initiator, facilitator and placemaker – redefining the relationship between tenants, professionals and social landlords. Importantly, we found that these three roles apply to more than one stage of the placement process. Stakeholders with different roles



constantly interact with one another, and these roles evolve over time, making the tasks and actions of stakeholders diverse and flexible. These interactive role dynamics stem from past experiences with community placemaking in Taiwan: experienced professionals typically take on the role of initiator, the public sector provides resources as the facilitator and local residents serve as on-site placemakers. In a sense, the YISH approach incorporates past Taiwanese experience with community placemaking into the social housing system, boosting the communal nature of social housing.

Furthermore, our research suggests that bureaucratic institutions like MYAC can work with citizen groups or adopt board people's policy suggestions, which is critical to initiating placemaking programs such as YISH in a top-down institutional setting. This study highlights the fact that planners are more than mere evaluators; they proactively serve as policy facilitators and improvers, fostering partnerships to put core values into practice, as tenants cannot always understand policy and communicate effectively with the government. Additionally, planners are more likely to mobilise community placemaking programs, provide adequate institutional support and maintain collaborative networks in ongoing social housing programs. Thus, planners must also act as co-practitioners. This reflects the idea of proactive roles for planners, such as those achieved through 'dialogue spaces' (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995; Forester, 1999) and 'discursive participation' (Carpini *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, given that placemaking is a dynamic process in both theory and practice, the past experiences of community placemaking in Taiwan enabled a recognition that the role of professional planners who promote YISH is versatile. Beyond simply planning on behalf of the government, planners initiate placemaking programmes (initiator role), facilitate the implementation process (facilitator role) and lead and stimulate the day-to-day activities of social housing areas (placemaker role) while employing guerrilla tactics, working through public-space issues outside the scope of formal state institutions. In the conditionality approach, conversely, the above roles are not perceived as proactive, as the assessment of tenant performance (practitioners) in terms of their responsibilities (*ex-post*) is the main task of planners.

From the perspective of policy mobility, Taiwan's social housing policy constitutes a fairly rushed response to an urban housing crisis despite its borrowing of Western European concepts through the government's reliance on the 'learn from the Netherlands' approach. Given this rushed adoption, the Taiwanese government was unaware of the problems that could arise from a hardware approach to social housing policy; it certainly had no intention to fully adopt the continually evolving social housing-management strategies of Western Europe, such as conditionality. Nevertheless, professionals with significant experience in placemaking were able to identify the problems underlying the hardware-led social housing policy. They succeeded in convincing the municipality to undertake the experimental YISH programme. YISH links the emphasis on community organising and community networking from the Japanese *Machizukuri* with the informality and spontaneity – the 'do-it-yourself public space approach' – from the U.S. In this regard, the YISH approach in Taiwan effectively comprises both American and Japanese elements.

The goal of current social housing policies in many cities is to provide a quick and practical solution to the emerging housing crisis by simply increasing the supply of social housing. The mass production of social housing often entails functionally homogeneous 'dormitories' or 'bed communities. However, this 'hardware'-oriented

approach has been shown to have the potential to create many social problems. As a result, Taipei's YISH programme entails a software-oriented approach, meaning it is more likely to enhance social inclusion and mitigate the stigma associated with social housing. We propose placemaking and partnership building as new pragmatic approaches to strengthening the management of social housing. At the very least, there is a clear need in Taiwan to move beyond conditionality, which focuses on individual behavioural prescriptions, actions in occupancy and tenants' obligations to their living environment and community. Meanwhile, Taipei's social housing policy and YISH programme can be cited as an example of local practice in policy mobility, where its needs and local professionals' experience can influence the pathway to policy learning. Additionally, despite its different context, the YISH project in Taipei can serve as an alternative reference for social housing management; by emphasising the cooperation of different actors, it is possible to move beyond the relationship between tenants and social landlords and achieve more active social housing management through placemaking.

Finally, there are two potential directions for future research. First, researchers could conduct an ongoing study of YISH. While YISH already constitutes a bright spot in social housing policy, it is still a municipal experiment at its core – its longevity and sustainability remain unknown. The YISH programme's potential to produce self-organised tenant communities following the departure of professional planners is something that must continue to be assessed. Second, researchers could compare Taipei's placemaking experience with that of cities with abundant experience in social housing, such as those in Europe. Such a study would provide an understanding of how placemaking in different contexts responds to social housing as a socially inclusive policy. After all, policy mobility can be a two-way learning route.

## Note

1. CPAMI: Construction and Planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

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