



## **Urban Transconfiguration of a Colonial-Modern City: Towards Inclusive Historical Metamorphosis**

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Many Asian cities are characterized by rapid 'urban metamorphosis' directly analogous in evolutionary organicism that loosely refers as phenomenal 'urban evolution'. These terms, describing progressive urban transformation originated from biological science transcended unto planning mechanism, made explicit by modernist spatial and land use methodology in pattern sing urban morphological changes. Urban transformations in historic and heritage sites are of evolutionary relevant and observed an aspect of urban-cultural morphology, arguably conceiving theoretical polemics between 'functional-historical determinism' versus 'cultural evolutionism'. Sovereignty in deterministic modernist institution inherited by town planning professionals and associates continuously transforms urban space and place in monopolized acculturation. It is argued to reinforce deconstructing historical continuity and cultural subjectivity for political 'nationality' through exclusive planning boundary delineation. It restricts tangible and intangible interactions in the ontological representation and epistemological formation of configuration in urban form. It is argued the nature of knowledge in official planning history may continue to undermine representation and inter-trafficking of the embedded 'historic structure of the conjuncture' in the way urban-cultural space is transformed. Thus, human ideas transmitting cumulative and culturally acquired characters during reticulate process of transforming urban form configuration are ignored. The paper is scoped within the discourse of urban morphology, in relation to urban transformation and planning history, in the context of colonial-modern cultural heritage sites in Taiwan. It aims to re-examine representational and formational knowledge of modern town-planning history towards shaping 'reflexi-syncretic' base of urban transconfiguration. Case study focus on sites surrounding designated Da-Dao-Cheng Historic District in Taipei that are significant and contested signifiers representing variegated types of urban configuration cumulative from cultural evolutionary inheritance. Moreover, Taipei was historic significant being the last geomancy based fort city, progressively coupled with 'near modern' infrastructural transformation established by Qing imperialist. It was followed by Japanese colonial modernity that transconfigured the city, adopting 'biological principles' in urban governance from 1896 to 1923. However, reading official modern planning history, one is not contended in how those 'biological principles' proposed during early phases of colonial-modern governance got transcended through major periods of urban restructuring and actualized in the planning of Taipei historic urbanscape. It implies that representation and formation of embedded 'objective knowledge' on and via heritable patterns of urban configuration are significant aspects to sustain historical continuum and to re-construct cultural subjectivity as in procedures and products of morphology. Methodologically, metaphorical concept referred from biotechnical reticulation is cautiously applied to urban-cultural morphological study couple with architectural anthropology that minimizes potential inductive biological fallacies in both functional and historical determinism. Significance of the paper suggest the type of urban form as a morphological outcome manifested in historic urbanscape hypothetically be understood from the disembedded structure of the conjuncture to be a basis for managing strategic urban transformation. It is deeming equally applicable for spatial-heritage planning that recognizes the uniqueness and 'coevalness' in diverse strands of architectural cultures and historic structures. Therefore the paper postulates a parallelistic specificity in planning mechanics, networking in non-binary urban transconfiguration in an Asian colonial-modern city.

**KEY WORDS:** Urban-cultural morphology and colonial-modern planning history, urban transconfiguration and spatial-heritage strategy.