Nation Branding and the Creative City, Tokyo

Introduction

Cultural policy as practiced by nation-state governments, international non-government organizations such as UNESCO, or as an academic discipline, has a relatively recent history in the post-World War Two era. Yet it has a long pre-history which can be traced back to the international expositions of the mid 19th century. International expositions provided displays of the latest industrial, military and communication technologies along with art, crafts, folk cultured exotica from Western nations and their colonies. Japan quickly saw the importance of using the international expositions not only to learn about western civilization, but also as an opportunity to display and legitimate a particular image of Japan to the rest of the world,[1] especially as it had been long closed off from the West in the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868). More importantly, to avoid the threat of Western invasion and keep its independence, the new Japanese government after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, decided that rather than attempting a military defence, a cleverer strategy could be to become seen as a civilized nation-state by the West that was worthy of equal treatment. This was because 'the best defence against the Western nation-state was the construction of a modern, legal state of its own' (Najita and Harootunian 1990:716). It must be noted that to follow the Western nation-state model also involved colonialism; hence Japan developed a policy of endorsing its civilizational credentials by showing its national power and colonial ambitions to the rest of East Asia.

Prior to the emergence of the twentieth century mass media and the revolutions in communication technology, which are powerful devices to influence not only people's view of everyday life, but also public opinion, one of the most effective political devices to bolster a nation's image, in order to enhance its political influence, was international expositions. This is what we would now call public diplomacy. Public diplomacy can be understood as a political strategy entailing cultural practices/activities which are framed by cultural diplomacy. While public diplomacy is always associated with a certain political objective, cultural diplomacy does not opt for mere political propaganda-driven campaigns, rather it fosters the intention of winning 'hearts and minds' and establishing mutual trust. It is implemented by establishing 'a selected national image by exporting appealing *cultural*

[1] In fact Japan was one of the first to present itself to the world with a national pavilion at 1867 Paris Exposition. This was followed by the participation of the new Japanese Meiji nation-state at the 1873 Vienna International Exposition.

products' (Iwabuchi 2015:419, emphasize added).

These cultural products are usually categorized as 'soft power' (Nye 2004), a term which has frequently been used in the context of 'Cool Japan'.[2] In the Japanese context, soft power has often been equated with Japanese popular culture, such as manga, anime, video game and fashion. Following Nye's concept, it can be understood that the soft power works in creating 'more receptive to Japan's positions through the dissemination of the country's cultures and values' (Iwabuchi 2015: 419-420). The growing consciousness of the significance of cultural power in the context of contemporary cultural diplomacy, and the potential of Cool Japan as a new cultural policy, can be seen as a strategy that developed since the year 2000, in order to draw attention from consumers around the world and make Japanese popular culture not only a globally successful popular culture for revitalizing the economy, but also as an effective vehicle for soft power and cultural diplomacy. The idea of creating positive image of the nation so as to sustain or improve its privilege or advantageous position in the global national ranking can be seen as closely bound to that of nation branding. Whereas conventional public diplomacy targeted the creation of amicable international relations between nation-states, the new cultural policy and nation branding via soft power, sought to appeal to both ordinary people who were their own national citizens, and people in other countries.

Although nation branding aims to cultivate a better image of Japan among Japanese people, initiatives such as the Cool Japan one, are not necessarily the most successful ways to cultivate consciousness of national belonging and a positive image of Japan. Rather, a positive image of one's own nation with nationalistic sentiments might be stimulated by global mega-events, such as the Olympics and International Expositions. Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, has been elected as the host city for the next Olympic and Paralympic 2020 Games. There has been considerable concern in Tokyo about how best to present and stage itself to promote a positive image of contemporary Japan; one which should be significantly different from that of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The image of Tokyo inevitably stands for the national image of Japan. In this sense, Tokyo can serve as the most effective cultural diplomatic device. The device could also work to cultivate Japanese people's positive self-esteem, as well as to heighten other counties' perceived image of

[2] Soft power - The term, soft power was coined by Joseph Nye (1990) reflecting to the Cold War context, it was believed that 'cultural diplomacy may well be a more appropriate weapon than warfare' (Anholt 2015:194). This development was further fuelled by the Bush Administration's response to the September 11 terrorist attack in 2001. It must note that Cool Japan was not only prompted by nation branding, but also by the spreading 'soft power paradigm' (see Fan, Y 2008).

Japan.

The idea of city as 'cultural powerhouse' (Yeoh 2005:945) has been discussed in debates about creative cities (Kong 2014). Although Tokyo has been widely acknowledged as a huge economic and political centre and mature consumer city, it has been far behind in becoming a world-class creative city. To improve the current situation, a new cultural urban plan has been proposed since 2014. Contrasting the dominant image of cultural richness in south central Tokyo (e.g. Aoyama, Roppoingi and Ginza), the proposal highlights the rich traditional cultural resources of north central Tokyo (e.g. Ueno, Hongo, Akihabara, Kanda, Jimpocho and Yushima). Through an attempt to re-activate, re-discover and re-connect traditional cultural assets in these regions, the new cultural urban plan, 'the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision' proposes to create 'a cultural unit'. This idea could be expanded to apply to all regions throughout Tokyo. Each cultural unit can be seen as composed of diversified local/regional cultural assets. Then eventually all cultural units of the various communities/locals/regions could transform Tokyo into a 'cultural museum' (Yoshimi 2016).

This paper attempts to briefly outline how Japanese cultural policy has developed in its political and economic environments from the early 20th century to the present. This can illuminate the complex relationship between the political objectives of public diplomacy and various practices of cultural policy. Focusing on contemporary cultural policy in Japan, the paper also examines the Cool Japan initiative and the ways in which it has been expected to be a vital cultural device for creating a new image of Japan as a pioneer of soft power, and a political device for improving Japan's self-esteem and reputation for other countries. In this light, the Cool Japan initiative can also be closely related to the principle of nation branding.

Since Japan has been elected as the host city of the next 2020 Olympics, the paper also locates the effort of nation branding within the context of creative city policy in Japan, drawing on an on-going city project, the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision. The paper argues that this can be seen as a new type of urban reform to challenge conventional mega-scale city planning and creative city policy. By proposing the re-connection of cultural assets to enhance cultural value, and connectivity of people to pick up as many voices as possible, the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision emphases the importance of creating networking not only as top-down cultural resources used at the regional level, but also among cultural specialists, local communities, NGO, the government institutions and various civic groups. In this light, the paper asserts that the Cultural Resources District Vision can

be viewed as a good speculative case to suggest that crucial elements of the *lived* cultural policy can be brought together to work as a practice of re-vitalization of cultural values and a consensus-making process to enhance mutual understanding, collaboration and active participation.

The Backgrounds of Japanese Cultural Policy

The concern with the promotion of cultural value, its positive reception by both domestic and foreign audiences, and enhanced national image have become pivotal components for contemporary cultural policy. Although today's Japanese cultural policy is highly institutionalized, the field of cultural policy was neither systematic nor regulated until the late 1980s (Kawashima 2012: 296). The early steps forward the development of Japanese cultural policy can be traced back to Japan's greater involvement in the emerging international community of nations which gained momentum after World War One.

Important impetus was proceeded by the needs of many countries to observe U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's diplomatic communications about the need to stabilize the international order after World War One which eventually led to the formation of the League of Nations, the interwar forerunner to the United Nations. A key experience of the Japanese has the eloquent Chinese delegation against Japanese expansionism in China at the Paris Peace Conference followed by systematic anti-Japanese sentiment on the part of Chinese intellectuals. This prompted a Japanese reaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affair (MOFA) establishing the Department of Information in April 1920 and a new policy of cultural exchange with China.

In 1934, the Society for International Cultural Relations was established (incidentally, the British Council was also established the same year). This was the time 'Japan become the first and only non-Western nation to establish a modern international cultural exchange organization' (Ozawa 2009:273). Such imitations had to be suspended following the invasion of Manchuria and China War after 1931, following by the Second World War in 1939.

After World War II, Japan as a defeated country was under the unconditional occupation of the Allied Forces and effectively under the control of the United States. Japan was required to abandon its state-controlled cultural policies and needed to transform itself from its self-image as a militaristic, semi-feudalistic and authoritarian state to a peaceful democratic

and liberal state by creating a new vision guided by cultural related policy. Hence 'Prime Minister Tetsu Katayama, in an important speech, advocated the "construction of a culture state" in order to restore national pride and international credibility' (Ozawa 2009: 274). The Korean War (1950-53) proved to be a key event in the reconstitution of the Japanese economy and gradual rehabilitation and reintroduction into international affairs.

In 1964 the Tokyo Olympics followed by the 1970 Osaka Expo, were global mega events that helped Japan to deliver evidence of its fully recovery from the devastation of the war, as well as demonstrating its potential to becoming a world-class economic power with advanced science and technology. Yet there was still considerable ambivalence. On the one hand, Japanese economic success drew attention from the West with books like Vogel's *Japan as Number One* (1979), showing how the United States could benefit from the lessons of Japan, such as meritocratic practices, corporate organisations, basic education, welfare and so on (see Sugimoto 2014: 201). On the other hand, Japanese businessmen were still negatively called 'economic animals', and seem as seriously over-dedicated, over-loyal and dutiful to their own companies. One of the consequences was the establishment of the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1968. Reflecting the anti-Japanese sentiments and increasing attention to economic success and 'suffering from Japan-U.S. frictions over trade imbalances and the Nixon Shocks[3], the Japanese diplomatic community began to recognize combating misunderstandings about Japanese culture and behaviour as an urgent diplomatic agenda' (Ozawa 2009: 275).

The Foreign Minister Takeo Fukuda also took an initiative to create the establishment of an international cultural exchange organization which initially focused on relations with the United States. This plan led to the seting up the Japan Foundation, which operated under the supervision of the cultural division of MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan) in October 1972. The foundation dealt with the exchange of leading academic and cultural personal, the promotion of Japanese studies overseas and Japanese language education, and the organization of workshops and seminars to introduce Japanese culture and so on. The objective of the foundation today is the promotion of international cultural exchange through a comprehensive range of programmes in all regions of the world. The foundation's global network consists of its Tokyo headquarters, the Kyoto Office, two

[3] U.S president Richard Nixon stopped the direct convertibility of the U.S. dollar to gold in 1971 ('dollar shock') and cancelled the Bretton Woods system in 1973. Nixon also terminated the U.S. confrontational policy toward China without consultation with Japan, in 1972. 'These shocking experiences reminded the Japanese leaders of their catastrophic isolation in the 1930s and 1940s' (Ozawa 2009:274).

Japanese-language institutes and 24 overseas offices in 23 countries (The Japan Foundation official home page). The foundation become as an independent administrative institution in October 2003.

Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita spoke of his 'international cooperation initiative' in London in May 1988. The plan was consisted of three major themes: cooperation for peace, enhancement of ODA (official development assistance) and strengthening international cultural exchange. At this point, cultural exchanges became the first priority issue in Japanese diplomatic strategies. After his speech, the Advisory Group on International Cultural Exchange was set up. The period between in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was one in which Japanese global economic power became more salient. This economic success drew much criticism in the United States, regarding the huge trade imbalances, and relatively closed market conditions in Japan. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the sense of irritation and fear of the United States towards Japan helped 'Japan bashing' to grow. Reflecting on this condition in 1991, the advisory group emphasized Japan's greater contributions to the international community and established the Japan Foundation Centre for Global Partnership (日米センター literally mean in Japanese, the Centre for Japan and U.S Partnership). The mission of the centre was 'to promote collaboration between Japan and the United States with the goal of fulfilling shared global responsibilities and contributing to improvement in the world's welfare and to enhance dialogue and interchange between Japanese and U.S. citizens on a wide range of issues, thereby improving bilateral relations' (Ozawa 2009: 277).

The 1990s was also the time when other East Asian countries began to become acknowledged as global economic powers, which started to generate a sense of regionalism and created a new identity "We Asians" (Ozawa 2009: 277). Under the changing Asian communities, the second report of the Conference for the Promotion of International Cultural Exchange in 1994 started to underscore the importance of fostering a sense of the Asian communities' spirit for the future. This was the time, the new cultural diplomatic strategies made an important shift from the conventional idea of introducing Japanese traditional culture and value, to the new direction of responding to the need of Asian identity formation.

Yet in the 2000s, the actual diplomatic situation between Japan and the rest of East Asia, especially Korea and China had begun to increasingly deteriorate with events such as the

controversies surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine[4] and subsequent controversy about the Japanese school history textbook problem flared up[5].

In response to the criticism, the Council for the Promotion of Cultural Diplomacy was launched by Prime Minister Koizumi in December 2004. The council suggested that it was important to promote a better understanding of Japan and improvement of Japan's image (toward both those inside and outside Japan), and that the '(better) understanding of Japan by the public of foreign countries may be the most influential factor for the government of that country in deciding policies and actions towards Japan' (Ozawa 2009: 278). This improvement of the nation's image through appealing to the wider public (people) both inside and outside the nation can be understood as a new initiative of cultural diplomacy in which is the now so-called 'nation branding' became a central strategy for cultural policy.

Cool Japan and Nation Branding

The Japanese government has been promoting nation brand with the slogan 'Cool Japan' since the beginning of the present century. This new initiative sought to capitalize upon Japanese popular culture such as manga, anime, video game and fashion, which have drawn attention consumers around the world and has become one of the globally successful popular cultures. The aim of 'Cool Japan' is not only to expand creative industry market to the global level, but also to replace the dominant 'uncool' images of Japan as a highly regulated society with rigid hierarchal working practices. This was influenced by the American journalist Douglas McGray's report (2002), in which he coined the term 'Gross National Cool' to expressed the increasing popularity of Japanese popular culture as the Cool Japan phenomenon.[6] Such international endorsement of valid Japanese cultural presence created the hope and expectation that Japan could recover from the prolonged

[4] Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the shrine for praying for those who died in the service of Japan. Among the 2.4 million souls of dead soldiers enshrines, some of those included were, however, World War II war criminals. The visit of the prime minister was seen as violating the principle of a pacific nation and provoked memories of Japan's military/fascism past. This is the reason the prime minister was strongly criticized by China and South Korea.)

[5] The problem was the recognition of the historical past by the Japanese government. There are strong discrepancies in the war history between Japan and other countries, which Japan occupied during wartime, such as China and Korea. This has led to a long debate since the 1950s, yet it became more serious at the time of Prime minister Koizumi government.

[6] It should be noted that Japan has proved to be attractive to the West with the forms of Japonism appearing in the Western imagination several times in the past. In the 19th century, the French Impressionists were influenced by Japanese art, and Japanese pottery and ornaments also become popular consumer goods in the U.K. In the 1980s global success of Japanese business organizational systems and marketing strategies also drew much attention from the world. 'Tentatively, it appears that "Japan" has been either admired or feared and hated in "the West"' (Valaskivi 2013, 501; see Sugimoto 2014, Napier 2007 and Sugiura 2008).

economic stagnation since the late 1990s, which was often called 'the lost decade'. Interestingly, the high esteem for Japanese popular culture was not only the result of diplomatic efforts on the part of the Japanese government. Here a number of factors can be identified: the culture-related industries sought overseas markets because of the stagnating domestic economy; the Internet and other information technologies helped create a greater receptivity for other cultures, including Japan; there were visibly more economic, educational and cultural exchanges in what became termed the 'Asian Union' (Gresser 2004 cited in Sugiura 2008:137).

It is often suggested that the idea of Cool Japan came from 'Cool Britannia', which was associated with Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour's political campaign in the 1990s. The aim of the campaign was to promote national pride, enhance cultural industries and improve the national reputation and image, through supporting and embracing British popular culture. Even though the campaign had a mixed reception with positive and negative reviews, 'the Cool Britannia campaign was studied closely by the Japanese actors involved in nation branding' (Valaskivi 2013:492). With a need for greater competitiveness to response to more intense market pressure in 'the age of the global economy', nation branding became seen as a powerful strategy to enhance the nation's global economic power through appealing to its innovative, creative, aesthetic, and authentic characteristics. Hence, nation branding became an important issue.

Yet, nation branding has been always already exercised in the context of public diplomacy, since the very aim of public diplomacy is to improve national image in order to create or to sustain privileged or advantageous nation's status in the global ranking. But this was generally mobilized by the governmental apparatus delivering diplomatic messages, and was largely conducted at the inter-state relations level in order to maintain smooth international relationships. But as mentioned earlier, contemporary nation branding seeks to create a positive national identity both for its own national citizens, and those in other countries (see Fan 2010). Furthermore, given the situation of the expanding networks and links between civil societies; the growing influence of non-governmental actors/agents; and the increasing visibility of diverse individuals through social media, nation branding as a components of cultural diplomacy has gained more weight. In the new phase of global network communication, Cool Japan, then, became a more significant strategy of nation branding.

In the speech of the Foreign Minister Aso (who become the Prime Minister in 2008 to 2009)

in 2006, he expressed his views about the attractiveness of the image of Cool Japan, and its role as a key element in Japanese cultural diplomacy (see Iwabuchi 2015:424). He also emphasized the effectiveness of popular culture and its capacity to increasing influence ordinary people.[7]

> What we have now is an era in which diplomacy at the national level is affected dramatically by the climate of opinion arising from the average person. And that is exactly why we want pop culture, which is so effective in penetrating throughout the general public, to be our ally in diplomacy. To put this another way, one part of diplomacy lies in having a competitive brand image, so to speak. Now more than ever, it is impossible for this to stay entirely within the realm of the work of diplomats. It is necessary for us to draw on assistance from a broad spectrum of people who are involved in Japanese culture. (Aso, 2006 at Digital Hollywood University "A New Look at Cultural Diplomacy: A Call to Japan's Cultural Practitioners")

In the wake of the rising competitiveness of Japanese popular culture, the Japanese government made sustained efforts to bring it into the sphere of cultural diplomacy. It became firmly institutionalized under Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi (2001-2006). He actively planned to improve Japan's attractive image and soft power by encouraging the development of the cultural industries. This initiative led to establish various committees and councils since at the beginning of the 2000s, such as the Division of Culture and Information Related Industries (2001), the Headquarters for Intellectual Property Strategy (2003), the Japan National Tourism Organisation (2003), and the Research Committee for Content Business (2005) (see Iwabuchi 2015: 423). Although the Cool Japan policy has been taking placed in different ways through the strategies of a numbers of relevant ministries, offices, local governments, and other organizations, following the Proposal by the Cool Japan Advisory Council in May 2011, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) took charge of directing the 'Cool Japan/Creative Industries Policy' initiative (METI official webpage).[8] The goal of the policy is to 'promote overseas advancement of an internationally appreciated "Cool Japan" brand, cultivation of creative industries, promotion of these industries in Japan and abroad, and other related initiatives from cross-industry and

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[7] See Hirai (2015) and Huang (2011) for a detailed account of the reception of Japanese popular culture in East Asia.

[8] http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/mono_info_service/creative_industries/creative_industries.html (accessed 20 Sep 2016).

cross-government standpoints' (METI office web page).[9]

The Cabinet Secretariat has also started the 'Cool Japan Promotion Council' in 2013. In his speech in the first meeting of the "Cool Japan" Promotion Council at the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, he stated that 50 billion yen will be submitted to the Diet for promoting 'Cool Japan'.

He remarked

> It [Cool Japan] is one of the important policy issues for the Abe Cabinet to break through the stagnation that hangs over Japan and to develop the country further from now on, *have the Japanese people feel confident of the greatness of Japan* including its tradition and culture, and make all people realize that *things from Japan are great,* which will also lead to the burgeoning of a sense of respect for Japan (Abe, 2013, emphasizes added – Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet official home page).[10]

Cool Japan's Internal and External Projection

Abe's political intention in the speech is clear: Cool Japan was understood not only as nation branding to boost Japan to a higher position in the Nations Brands Index, but also to act as a domestic political device to reinforce the sense of positive self-esteem for Japanese citizens. Drawing on Simon Anholt's theory of branding in the context of marketing, (2007:6), Valaskivi correctly points out that establishing a strong internal culture sharing the same values and 'the spirit of the organization' is a crucial factor for building a powerful reputation. The better nation brand needs the better perception of itself. Since 'branding is nevertheless first and foremost directed inward, towards the nation itself, aimed at creating a stronger, more coherent sense of the national "self" and building self-esteem' (Valaskivi: 490). The Cool Japan initiative with its various governmental activities could help to fashion a new narrative the nation and to reinforce of a sense of national belonging. Such self-internalization of the nation's brand image could be constructed by the process of re-discovering Japan and re-valuing cultural heritage and tradition, and re-articulating the 'taken-for-granted' social and cultural values and meanings, at the same time as recognizing 'new' Japan by using carefully chosen symbols of politically invented new

[9] http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/mono_info_service/creative_industries/creative_industries.html (Accessed 20 Sep 2016).

[10] http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/actions/201303/04cooljpn_e.html (accessed 20 Sep 2016).

narratives and meanings.

However, how far the Cool Japan as nation branding actually affected to Japanese citizen's perception of Japan and actually nurtured national pride, remains an open question. According to the report of the public opinion survey on social awareness conducted by the Government Public Relations Office in the Cabinet Office in 2016, o answer the question of what thing is the most you can be proud of in Japan and the Japanese people, the highest percentage were those who thought that Japan is 'good public safety (a high security society)' (56.6%). The second highest percentage group was those who were proud of 'beautiful nature' (55.4%) and the third highest group was those who were proud of 'excellent culture and arts' (49.9%). The 'excellent culture and arts' group has never been the leading category for more than 23 years. (Overview of the Public Opinion Survey on Social Awareness, 2016:13)[11]

The supplemental public opinion survey which was conducted in 2009 also further detailed people's opinions about Japanese culture. To answer the question of what is the most you can be proud of in 'Japanese culture and the arts' towards the rest of the world, the highest percentage of the group was those who were proud of traditional art (64.7%), the second highest was a group who were proud of historical architecture and spots/remains/ruins (56.4%) and the third highest was those who a proud of Japanese food culture (31.5%).[12] What these statistics illuminate is that Japanese citizens think that both culture in general and contemporary popular culture, involved in Cool Japan in particular, are not necessarily the things one can be the most proud of. This is to say, that the Cool Japan initiative along with the other new narratives and images of Japan driven by political imperatives, fail to reinforce Japanese identity.

There is a belief in 'culture' as a means to help nurturing Japanese pride though embracing Japanese traditional and contemporary culture. However, it seems that 'culture' can only work to create 'imaginary Cool Japan' or works as the rhetorical power to create an imaginary Japan. Since, Noriko Aso claims that '[I]n Japan, when the going gets tough - too

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[11] http://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/pdf/summarys15.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).
The survey was conducted in the period 28 January - 14 February 2016. It covered more than 10,000 individuals (comprised of adults over 20-year-old) from all over Japan and the response rate was 58.8% (5,877 individuals). Multiple answers were allowed.

[12] http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h21/h21-bunka/2-5.html (Accessed 24 Sep 2016). The survey was conducted by the by the Government Public Relations Office in the Cabinet Office in the period 5-15 November 2009. It covered more than 3,000 individuals (comprised of adults over 20-year-old) from all over Japan and the response rate was 61.8% (1,853 individuals). Multiple answers were allowed.

much international scrutiny, failure to achieve domestic political goals, loss of confidence in political economic institutions - a common response is to bring up "culture"' (McVeigh 2004: 198; see also Aso 2002 cited in Dalio-Bul 2009: 260-261). Dalio-Bul concludes that 'culture' (bunka) is thus often positioned at the rhetorical core of national renovation projects' in the context of Japanese politics. Daliot-Bul also elaborates on the national renovation project, Cool Japan. No matter how 'culture' can help to reinforce a sense of national identity, the Cool Japan initiative can be seen as a political attempt of re-discovering 'Japan's national cultural power, and a reflection of the requisites of disseminating influential message for creating national identity which formed "national pride"' (see Dalio-Bul 2009: 259).

In the Intellectual Property Strategic Programs in 2005,

> [t]he authors encourage the Japanese people to sufficiently 'utilize [their] *outstanding* capabilities in inventing and creating' (Nihonjin no mottmo sugureta sozoryoku sosakuryoku) and on contributing to the development of the world's futures and civilizations with the inventions and creations of Japanese people, aspiring for Japan to '*uphold an honoured position in the world'.* (Intellectual Property Strategic Program 2005: 2 cited in Daliot-bul 2009: 260 emphasis added)'

This suggests that there are 'recurrent self-congratulatory and ethnocentric assertions embedded in it' (Daliot-bul, 2009: 260). Daliot-bul concludes that 'the Japan Brand Strategy is thus also seen as a means to revitalize patriotic pride and recruit those patriotic feelings for national ends'. Hence, it can be viewed as a rhetorical imaginary of Japan in the domestic political context.

So far there is, however, no clear evidence indicating that the Japan Brand Strategy, in other words, Japan's nation branding equipped with the Cool Japan initiative, has helped to revitalize patriotic pride or a sense of love for the country. The question of Japanese identity for ordinary Japanese people, then, cannot always be seen an imminent issue in everyday contexts, since such consciousness often arises in the context of non-ordinariness, including the case of encountering situations which makes Japanese people feel alienated or disorientated through the unfamiliar (e.g. going abroad or being in a non-Japanese community). Evoking such feelings can always be seen as dependent on particular contexts. Amongst those that centrally emphasize national identity and belonging are global mega events, such as the Olympic Games or International Expositions. There are situations that place nations in 'the same time and place' as they are invited to compare and compete

with each other. Joining in such politicized games, means that nations are required to win in the sporting game, as well as in the political and economic game among nations.

Here, it is worth noting that there is an interesting public opinion survey on patriotic sentiment/spirits conducted by the Cabinet Office Minister's Secretariat Government Public Relations Office. This annual survey shows that Japanese people's social awareness, includes a question about the feeling of love for one's country, by asking people to respond in terms of whether their feelings are: 'strong/do not know/weak'. In the period of more than three and half decade when the surveys were conducted, the highest percentage (58%) is for the group of those who answered that they have much stronger/relatively stronger feeling of love for the nation than other people; this occurred February 2013.(Overview of the Public Opinion Survey on Social Awareness, 2016:1).[13]

This was at the time, 7th September 2013, when Tokyo was elected as the host city for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The campaign to host the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics had started a few years before the survey. Many committees and organizations had been established, such as the committee to campaign to host the Olympics in 2011 and it has been now taken over by the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games since 2014. The Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) organized a series of campaign activities, such as a parade of the 71 London Olympic medallists at Tokyo Ginza street in August 2012 which attracted a crowd of more than 500,000 people. (Japanese Olympic Committee official webpage).[14] These campaigns did not just aim to appeal to IOC, but also to create excitement amongst Japanese people. They also help to develop an atmosphere conducive to supporting the national project and generate patriotic pride.

City as a Cultural Imaginary Device

Accordingly, Tokyo as the Olympic city, has become an important platform for Japan to create a new image of Japan. Today the city can be seen as a main cultural powerhouse often discussed in the context of growing Asian cities in the age of globalization (see Yeoh, 1999; 2005) and seen as of the most important component of cultural policy (Lim 2012: 261). Cities then, should not be seen as just a vital place for the concentration of financial and political power, but also vibrant spaces for the display of cultural capital and emblematic

[13] http://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/pdf/summarys15.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

[14] https://tokyo2020.jp/en/news/bid/20120820-01.html (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

spaces for national image - nation branding. The idea of city as a 'cultural powerhouse' (Yeoh 2005: 945) engendered "'Asian mega projects' such as Tokyo's Teleport Town (*Toukyo rinkai fukutoshin keikaku*) and Yokohama Minato Mirai 21 Project' (Yeoh 2005:947). Both can be seen as creative city projects which were part of 'a new strategic urban planning method to reinvent the city as a vibrant hub of creative industries with the potential to improve the "quality of life" for citizens' (Landry 2008 cited in Kim 2015:1) and to enhance the national image.

According to the report of Policy of Cultural Affairs in Japan, Fiscal 2015 the Creative City Network of Japan was established in January 2013 so as to improve and enhance the network of creative cities all over Japan. 'The Agency of Cultural Affairs supports this network in order to promote the Cultural and Artistic Creative City throughout Japan' (Agency for Cultural Affair, The Policy of Cultural Affairs in Japan, Fiscal 2015: 33)[15]. The purpose is 'to be a foundation to construct a peaceful and symbiotic *Asian creative city network* as well as to contribute to the reconstruction and regeneration of Japanese society by spreading and developing creative cities in our country' (Creative City Network Japan English homepage emphasizes added).[16]

Similar statements, targeting 'the development of a cultural and artistic creative city' throughout Japanese cities in order to create network with Asian cities, can be also found in 'the Creative Tokyo Proposal' announced by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry' in 2012. The proposal manifests a vital role of the capital city, Tokyo. The proposal has a subtitle saying 'Moving towards Creative Tokyo - Transforming Tokyo into a Creative Hub' which assures that Japan today should build a new society through the combined power of its industries, economy and culture, and that Tokyo become 'the most prominent creative hub in Asia' by fostering the development and diversity of Japan's creative industries (The Creative Tokyo Proposal homepage).[17]

One of the major tasks is,

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[15] http://www.bunka.go.jp/english/about_us/policy_of_cultural_affairs/pdf/2015_policy.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016). The Agency of Cultural Affairs also established 'the Office for Promotion of the Creative City, the Agency for Cultural Affairs in April 2014, which provides advice to local government in order to promote the creation of the Cultural and Artistic Creative City' (Agency for Cultural Affair, *The Policy of Cultural Affairs in Japan, Fiscal 2015*: 33).

[16] http://ccn-j.net/english/ (Accessed 20 Sep 2016).

[17] http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/creative_tokyo/about/sengen_en.html (Accessed 20 Sep 2016).

> With the support of Tokyo districts, *Japanese creativity will be conveyed across both internationally and domestically.* Through this, we will seek to bring in talented human resources, relevant information and funds from all around the world. We will also aim to establish Tokyo as a leading creative hub (The Creative Tokyo Proposal, emphasis added).[18]

In this light, Tokyo is the main platform to expand Japanese creativity both externally and internally and is expected to be become the leading creative city in Asia. This can be seen as a reflection of Japan's concerns about losing its prominent position and its presence in Asia, since the rapidly growing Chinese economy and expanding Korean cultural industries, generated fears of being overtaken and threaten Japan's pride in Cool Japan. Such concerns for revitalization of Tokyo's brand competitiveness had already been expressed in the Creating a New Japan Proposal (*Atarashii nihon no kozo*) produced by Cool Japan Advisory Council in May 2011. More precisely, the council proposed that one way to enhance the creative industries and the content industry, was to collaborated with the tourist campaign in order to increase Japan's presence and attractiveness. It also suggested that making links between the Aoyama, Roppongi, Ginza and Sumida regions (where 'the Skytree' was built) would help to create a diversified Tokyo brand ('Creating New Japan' 2011:10). Except for the Sumida region, Tokyo's northwest city districts, Aoyama, Roppongi and Ginza have been internationally well acknowledged as 'innovative', 'creative', 'fashionable', 'trendy' and 'sophisticated urbane modern' city areas.

Cultural Resources in the Central Tokyo North (CTN)

To challenge the current dominant image of cultural richness of south-central Tokyo, (Aoyama, Roppoingi, Ginza et al), the new urban cultural plan (proposed in 2014 and currently being implemented), has re-discovered the rich cultural resources of north-central and eastern Tokyo (Ueno, Hongo, Akihabara, Kanda, Jimpocho and Yushima). The districts have been characterized as follow,

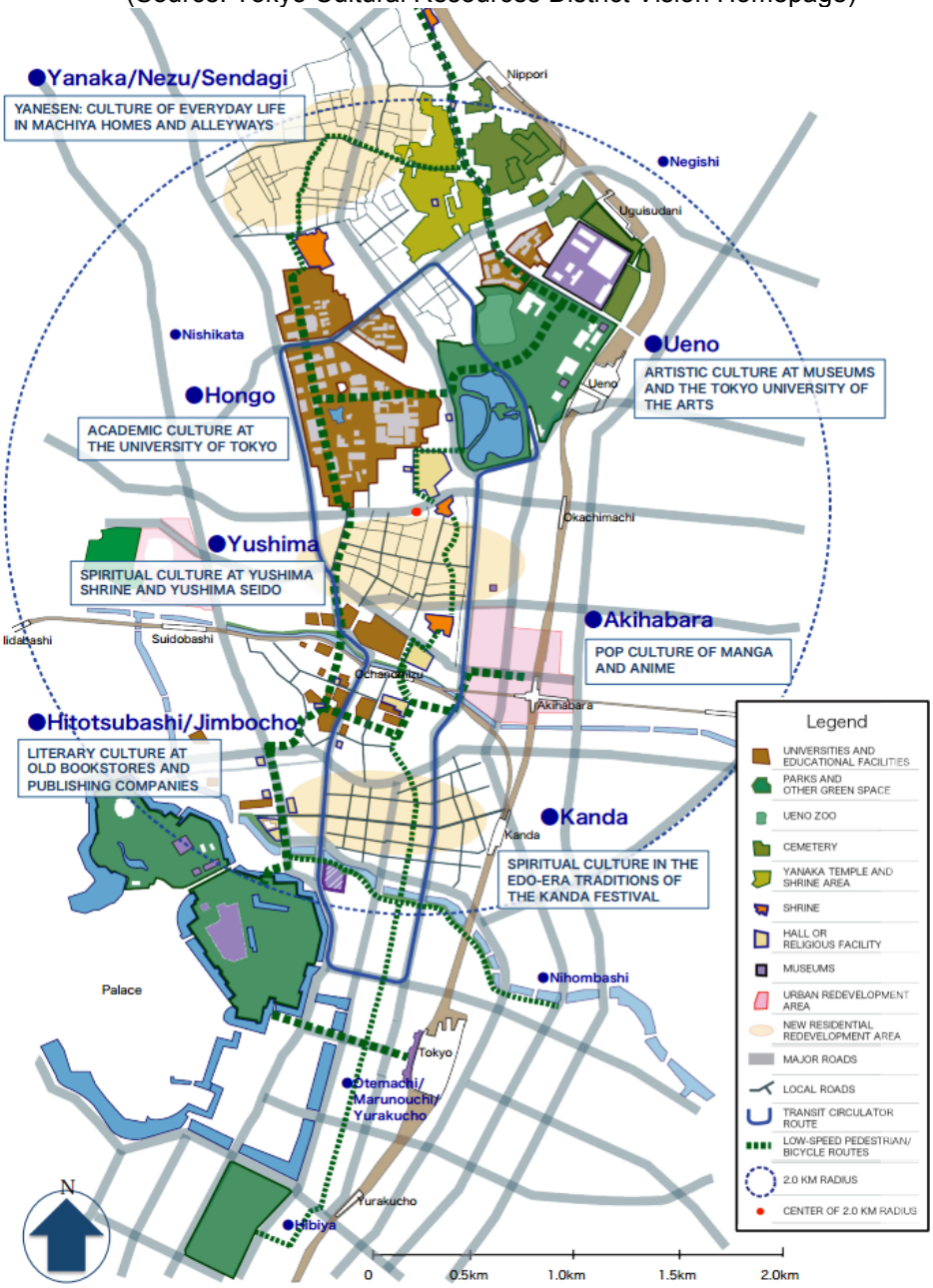
> 'This area is composed of Ueno, home of Japan's largest concentration of history and art museums, as well as the Tokyo University of the Arts; Hongo, a centre of academic learning home to the University of Tokyo; Yanesen, a popular spot among foreign tourists filled with old shops, alleys, row houses, and temples; Yushima, a

[18] http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/creative_tokyo/about/sengen_en.html, (Accessed 20 Sep 2016).

neighbourhood of religious and culinary culture entered on the axis stretching from Yushima Seido, a Confucian Temple, and Kanda Shrine to Yushima Tenjin Shrine; Jimbocho, the birthplace of modern learning in Japan once familiar to Sun Yat-sen, Lu xun, Zhou Enlai, and other young leaders of Aisa, and Today a district of private universities, publishers, and bookstores; and Akihabara, known today across the world not only as an electronics town, but also as a mecca of manga, anime and game culture' (the Report of the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision 2016 :2).[19]

[19] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 20 Sep 2016).

Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision
(Source: Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Homepage)



This project has been driven by the Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance, which was founded as a result of preliminary discussions by the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision in June 2014.[20] The participants consist of 'practitioners and specialists belonging to the

[20] Note: 'The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance and the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Promotion Committee (tentative name), a public-private-academic-industry organization envisioned to be established in 2018, will take the lead in realizing the Tokyo Cultural Resources District vision' (the Report of the Tokyo

cabinet, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, Cultural Agency, universities, private research organizations and companies' (Tokyo Cultural resources District Vision Homepage: 3).[21]

The Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision emphasizes the importance of Tokyo's historical tradition of cultural and intellectual creativity in order to increase competitiveness in the global nation brand market and enhance Japan's presence in the world. They postulate that although Tokyo has enormous potential to develop its rich cultural resources, it has remained far behind in its efforts to become a world-class creative city. Since the Edo period (1603~1868), the north-central and eastern areas of Tokyo, which were the main commoner neighbourhoods, did not become subjected to large-scale redevelopment and so *survived* relatively intact the past half century of prioritization of motorway construction and high-rise buildings. This city planning phase is epitomized by the 1964 Olympic Games Metropolitan Expressway, Aoyama Boulevard and Olympic facilities, such as Yoyogi National Gymnasium and Komazawa Olympic Park Stadium. After that, many high-rise buildings in West Shinjuku were increasingly constructed in the 1970s. Since the 1980s, Roppongi, Ebisu, Shingagwa and Shiodome in south-central Tokyo have become the main areas to create a fashionable cultural centre relying on large scale city planning (see Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 1).[22]

The Central Tokyo North's Cultural Resources and an Idea of 'Tradition'

The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance declared that the 2020 Tokyo Olympics should not repeat the same scale of city planning as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The Alliance emphasizes that large-scale redevelopments and the 'scrap and rebuild' format are dated principles. The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance also argues that Tokyo's distinctiveness is not because of its huge population, economic power, political centre or advanced technology and mature consumer culture. The Alliance explains that looking back to the 17th century, Edo, as Tokyo was known until 1868, was already the world's largest city and the place that prompted Japanese modernization. In fact Edo was a multicultural metropolis which was created by the *Sankin Kotai* system (the feudal lords with his retainers were

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Cultural Resources District Vision 2016: 23). see http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 20 Sep 2016) .

[21] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

[22] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

required to spend every other year in residence in Edo. The system created chances to bring many local cultures from all over Japan to Edo and took back Edo culture to their regions). Accordingly, Edo was a cultural powerhouse, which developed with a flourishing cosmopolitan culture among commoners, such as *Kabuki* theatre*, ukiyo-e* prints, *haiku* poetry and Dutch learning. Following the Meiji Period (1868-1912), many other cultural fields, such as architecture, literature, painting, and film were also largely cultivated in Tokyo. Hence, The Alliance concludes that Tokyo has always already been a city encompassing a huge cultural heritage with clear world competitive value (see Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report: 1-2).[23]

It is worth noting that a good deal of the traditional cultural assets cultivated over the last several centuries in Tokyo, as explained earlier, are still to be found in the Central Tokyo North (CTN) district, the areas which The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance wants to revitalize. This focuses on the discourse of Japanese tradition as an unchangeable authentic cultural asset, has also been used in expressing the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision's of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic. In its report, The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance claims that 'with 2020 Tokyo Olympic in mind, Tokyo should improve its attractiveness by promoting the uncontested value of Central North Tokyo, which has long been cultivated through Edo and Meiji's culture and life (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 4). The discourse of Japanese tradition portrays a 'ahistorical Japanese national character that is radically different from anything else and is expressed in a diversified range of symbolic forms, old and new' (see Moeran 1996 TCS cited in Daliot-Bul 2009:253). This is why Japanese tradition has often been used and re-used as an effective means to create an ahistorical image of Japan.

One of the core members of The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance, a professor of University of Tokyo, Shunya Yoshimi, advocates that Japan as the 2020 Olympic host country should pursue new values and social perspectives which should be different from those of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Rather than executing a large-scale city infrastructure and prioritizing motor car culture (which were central to the plans for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics), Japan today should pay more attention to revitalizing and recreating something which has been damaged, destroyed, and 'disconnected' at the expense of urbanizing process in Tokyo. Cultural assets in the Central Tokyo North districts are mostly survivors, irreplaceable cultural resources created in the past - Japanese tradition. Hence, Yoshimi's

[23] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

proposal further emphasizes the importance of the revitalization and sustainability of 'tradition' as the main vision of the Alliance.

Tokyo as a Cultural Device for Nation Brand

Recently, Central Tokyo North has been also acknowledged as an ideal place to realize the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's Tokyo Vision for Arts and Culture. It outlines the idea of 'Tokyo as a city of individuality and diversity, born of the coexistence and fusion of traditional and modern culture' (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 2).[24] Both Japanese traditional culture and contemporary popular culture lie in the Central Tokyo North area. The Alliance believed that this principle is congruent with a fundamental idea of the creative cities movement that cities 'must be rooted in cultural tradition, creative talent and tolerance of diversity' (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 2).[25] In line with this definition, the Alliance asserts that 21st century leading cities will be those cities, which respect cultural tradition with open-mindedness to diversity. These cities can also attract gifted creative people from around the world.

Therefore, there is the need to reassess and revitalize the cultural resources a city has accumulated over its history. The Alliance emphasized the significance of 'restoring the unity of the Tokyo Cultural Resources District in Central Tokyo North in order to renovate the region as an epicentre for culture, arts, and science', s district which 'connects' Ueno (arts culture), Yanasen (community culture), Hongo (intellectual culture), Yeshiva (religious and spiritual culture), Jimpocho (publishing culture) and Akihabara (popular culture). This can 'produce the space where people enjoy walking, dwelling and living. This will be a vital strategy to create Tokyo's 'legacy' in the world' (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 4). This view can also resonate with the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s principle for the Olympic Games in the 21st century - 'sustainable legacies'. Hence, The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance concludes that '(all these processes) will promote not only the 2020 Olympic city, Tokyo's cultural presence, but rather Japan's cultural presence in the world' (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016:3).[26]

Here, we can see Tokyo has been cast as a nation-branding device. There are a plethora of

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[24] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

[25] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

[26] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

attractive spots which can be 'connected' to each other in various ways to create Tokyo Central North as a cultural unit. An artist, art producer, and professor of Tokyo University of the Arts, Katsuhiko Hibino observes that 'Tokyo is constituted of various different regionalities/localities.' (Asahi Newspaper, evening paper, 6 January: 4). This suggests that each communities and regions in Tokyo could possibly become 'a cultural unit'. This is what Yoshimi calls 'community as a cultural museum'. This means that each region contains various cultural entities, which can be represented as unknown/forgotten narratives, which should be revitalized by rediscovering traditional cultural connectivities and networks existed in the past. This idea can also be further stretched to the whole of Tokyo. Accordingly, the attractive 'cultural units' throughout Tokyo can be connected to each other to create a wider cultural constellation. Eventually Tokyo as a creative city and a device of national branding, could become an influential world class cultural centre, Tokyo as a cultural museum, which is therefore able to represent and enhance the distinctiveness of Japan's cultural presence in the world.

Conclusion

In the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision, it says that 'The 2020 Tokyo Olympics will take place roughly 150 years after the Meiji Restoration (1868). The first half of this period encompassed the 75 years of modernization and militarization, and the second half was the 75 yeas of recovery, high growth, and maturation of society' (The Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision official homepage: 6)[27]. In the second half period of the 75 years, Japan also had to develop its cultural diplomacy for promotion of its international presents in order to make a better economic and political relationship with the west and the rest of Asia. With the increasingly concern for cultural diplomacy, cultural policy gradually became a central issue and firmly institutionalized. Promoting the various culture exchange programmes was seen as an effective way to further mutual understanding between Japan and the United States and the rest of Asia (especially Korea and China). In the 2000s under the Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, cultural policy was firmly institutionalized along with a new initiative, 'Cool Japan'. The increasing global popularity of Japanese pop culture, such as manga, anime and TV games, the so-called soft power, became tightly incorporated into nation branding. Cool Japan as part of the Japan Brand Strategy, became carefully embedded into the broader political message and diplomatic rhetoric which attempts not only to improve Japan's image toward external nations, but also to reinforce the sense of

[27] http://tohbun.jp/wp-content/uploads/Homepage-Tokyo-Cultural-Resources-District-Vision.pdf (Accessed 24 Sep 2016).

national belongings and patriotic pride for Japanese people.

Although there is no clear evidence that can be marshalled to assure Japan's nation brand strategy worked to create a new image of Japan and reinforce the sense of national identity, there is some evidence which indicates that the 2020 Tokyo Olympics campaigns seem to have stimulated Japanese people's awareness of 'Japan in the world' and of being Japanese. In this light, Tokyo as a creative city is now expected to play a vital role in promoting Japan's nation branding with a new image of contemporary Japan. In 2014, launch of the Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance drew on people who not only came from the government, but also universities, private research organizations, and companies. These groups were involved in taking the initiative to revitalize the regional cultural assets, which have survived and enhance Japanese cultural distinctiveness over the radical urbanization, which had been taking place since the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The areas of Ueno, Hongo, Yanesen, Yushima, Jimbocho and Akihabara, combine as centres of cultural capital with the cultural differences and values; they used to be connected in the past, but are now disconnected. The Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance seeks to re-connect these areas to create a walkable and accessible concentrated cultural capital zone, which can empower and increase the attractiveness not only of the local communities, but also of Tokyo as a whole.[28]

Today it is hard to see the inter-connectivities between regional/local cultures which once were more interwoven. Yet, in the past, there exist a walking route from Hongo to Ueno, Yanaka, Yushima, Akihabara and Jimpocho. There was a daily walking route for Mori Ogai who is one of the most famous novelist in the Meiji and Taisho periods. He walked around nearly the entire areas of the Central Tokyo North where resides the academic, literary and spiritual legacies of Edo culture. (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016:14). This suggests that there might be invisible paths, which could be possibly be made visible again. The district has a notable concentration of traditional buildings from the feudal era and Meiji period. Some of them are registered as cultural heritage properties. Part of the planned cultural programme of the Tokyo Cultural Resources Alliance is to preserve them to re-activate and re-use for cultural practices in communities (Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision Report 2016: 29). The preference for conservation of local vernacular styles through the reactivate of traditional buildings also helps to create new urban designscapes.

[28] This process can also create new channels for flows of information, knowledge and experiences in Tokyo. In the past, cities were often seen in terms of an organic metaphors (See Tamari 200) and many have argued that '[h]istorically the city grew organically' (Landry 2000:58). The city has never developed in a linear way, but is continuously changing and transforming to adjust to ever-changing environments.

These buildings provide distinctive aesthetics to reinforce local identities and attract both cultural consumers and producers. A good example is the contemporary art gallery, SCAI Bathhouse in Yanaka, which was an old public bath in the past. All these process are a meaning-making involving the re-discovery traditional local stories and creation new cultural narratives through offering new urban experiences.

These practices are often carried out by cultural specialists. They are able to extract new values from existing information, knowledge and experiences along with new ways of interpretations and meanings. Cultural specialists are usually people who work in creative occupations, such as artists, cultural practitioners and cultural entrepreneurs. This links to the debate on the two sides of their socio-cultural influence. On the one hand, 'artists and cultural producers, often called the 'creative class' (Florida 2002), are seen as triggering gentrification processes, since their presence attracts affluent consumers and dwellers who are supposed to share aesthetic value and lifestyle with the creative class (see Gainza 2016: 2). The subsequent environmental changes can eventually lead to the evacuation of the lower class original inhabitants from the communities. On the other hand, they also have the capacity to revitalize forgotten cultural capital in communities in order to stimulate economic value and improve the habitants' quality of life. The debate is still oscillating between cultural innovation for people and its negative effects in terms of gentrification (see Gainza 2016: 2).

Yet, public institutions with their rigid regulations and often highly hierarchically structures, tend to fail to fully deal with vital points of city life in terms of the people's lived everyday practices, such as the capacity for old people to walk easily to shops, for children and mothers to walk safely to nursery, and for inhabitants to live in a good secure environment. Whereas, cultural specialists with more extensive webs across the various local sectors could make crucial links between cultural practices and lived experience though working with community-based networks through collaborative projects and participatory initiatives. Hence, with more self-governing administrative structure, their activities can offer more practical and realistic solutions for many problems.

Here, we can see what is the most important component for creative cities is collaboration among cultural specialists, local communities, the private sectors, Non-Profit Organizations, governmental institutions, and various civic groups. With this in mind, all the practices of the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision should not be univocal, but should endeavour to pick up as many voices as possible, and incorporate their various visions and practices.

This resonates with the Japanese cultural policy scholar, Yasuo Ito's definition of cultural policy. He asserts '(Cultural policy) serves to clarify a consensus building system which sustains the activities of various cultural entities (the government, local communities, artists, art practitioners, corporations and citizens)….It also helps people to share the same assumptions [value] in the outcome/product of cultural activities in order to pass them on to the next generation' (Ito 2008 translated by me). Hence, this definition can echo with the practices of The Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision, since the Alliance seeks a wider open network of business, government, universities and the private sectors, by emphasizing the importance of collaborative and participative cultural practices in order to produce a 'new version' of creative Tokyo.

In the 2000s, Japanese cultural policy had become weighed down heavily than before and subjected to the state's policy by the keyword, 'creativity'. (see Valaskivi 2013: 495). In the *Creating a New Japan* proposal in 2011 by the Cool Japan Advisory Council, the panel suggested 'Creative Tokyo' which is the idea of branding Tokyo by combining several areas to orchestrate different pieces of pre-existing cultural assets. In this context, creativity can be understood not as a principle to seek for something new, but rather as a strategy to extract value from the existing, the original, or tradition, to create new narratives. Thus, the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision can be seen as strong evidence for the potential to explore and experiment with 'creativity': how to extricate values and meanings from existing (traditional) cultural assets; in what way to re-construct cultural practices with and for people; how different people's voices are in play; how these re-discovered cultural assets can create a new image and enhanced cultural presence for Tokyo; and how all these re-constructive processes can help to promote the Japan brand. In line with this, it can be conceived that some of the oft-cited critical factors for nation branding and cultural policy (often characterized by keywords, such as: attractiveness, distinctiveness, and competitiveness), could only be realized though interactive, participatory, incorporative and self-governing activities with both the public and the private sectors over time. Hence, the challenge of the Tokyo Cultural Resources District Vision continues to open up new horizons for future cultural policy.

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