

**DIVERSE HERITAGE IN THE MATSU ISLANDS,  
TAIWAN: LINKING A FRAGMENTED  
MANAGEMENT**

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

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*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

*Master of Arts in “Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management”*

Supervisor: Alice M. Choyke

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Chair, Examination Committee

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External Reader

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# ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I show the way fragmented heritage management can occur because of particular geographic characteristics, historic contexts, and institutional factors. The Matsu Islands in Taiwan, close to mainland China, was chosen as an example of such fragmentation. It is shown that heritage matters play an important role in the place-making processes and local development of the community in Matsu. I propose several measures to help the population of Matsu reach a compromise concerning shared heritage and a more consolidated cultural identity. In order to figure out the core of the problem, I adopted participatory observation in heritage affairs on the spot and conducted semi-structured interviews with critical stakeholders within the community. My results show that facilitating information integration and internal communication would be a priority for improving the fragmented way heritage is approached on the islands based on models of heritage practices inside and outside the islands.

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# Table of contents

ABSTRACT.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
Table of contents.....	iii
List of Figures.....	v
List of Tables.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Research Question.....	1
Methodology.....	4
Introduction to the Field.....	7
Literature Review.....	12
Heritage, Community and Place-making.....	12
Cultural Heritage Preservation in Taiwan and Matsu.....	15
Chapter 1 – History.....	18
1.1 History of the Islands.....	18
1.2 Identification of Cultural Heritage.....	22
1.3 Establishment of Heritage Preservation.....	29
Chapter 2 – Stakeholders.....	33
2.1 Overview of Stakeholders.....	33
2.1.1 Different government agencies.....	34
2.1.2 Outside stakeholders and their attitudes.....	35
2.1.3 Landowners and traditional local representatives.....	36
2.1.4 Heritage activists and the community network.....	37
2.1.5 External academic and professional groups.....	37
2.2 Ongoing Heritage Projects.....	38
2.2.1 Government-owned cultural heritage properties.....	38
2.2.2 Private properties and government subsidies.....	40
2.2.3 Revitalization projects and the Operate-Transfer model.....	42

2.2.4	Village-based community empowerment .....	42
2.2.5	Promotion of war heritage as World Heritage .....	44
2.2.6	Local-inherited intangible cultural heritage .....	45
2.3	Disagreements between Stakeholders .....	47
2.3.1	Overview of the community network in heritage preservation .....	47
2.3.2	Disagreements across government agencies .....	49
2.3.3	Disagreements between residents and the government .....	51
2.3.4	Disagreements between internal and external experts .....	53
2.3.5	The unstable social structure of the islands .....	54
2.3.6	Tensions between Mainland China and Taiwan .....	56
Chapter 3	– Fragmented Management .....	57
3.1	Heritage Interpretation .....	57
3.2	Heritage Value .....	63
3.3	Heritage Management and Policy .....	68
Chapter 4	– Solutions .....	74
4.1	Better Practices Based on Community Needs .....	75
4.1.1	Restoration of Jinbanjing Mazu Temple .....	75
4.1.2	Restoration of Zhuluo Elementary School .....	78
4.2	Wider Participation and Mutual Understanding Between Stakeholders .....	79
4.2.1	Information integration: archive and assembly .....	79
4.2.2	Internet-based platform inside and outside community .....	81
4.3	Reorganization of Government Agencies and Public Bodies .....	85
4.4	Defining Cultural Landscape for the Future .....	88
Conclusions	.....	92
Reference List	.....	96
English Literature	.....	96
Literature of Foreign Languages	.....	99
Appendices	.....	105

# List of Figures

Figure 1: Three stages in the research process.....	4
Figure 2: Taiwan in East Asia and Matsu during Cold War.....	8
Figure 3: Location of the Matsu Islands within Taiwan and overview of the Matsu Islands.....	8
Figure 4: Employed Persons by Industry in the Matsu Area .....	9
Figure 5: Number of estimated incoming tourists in Matsu (2000~2017) .....	10
Figure 6: Timeline of Matsu Islands and Taiwan after the 17th century.....	18
Figure 7: Population of the Matsu Islands (1956~2010) .....	22
Figure 8: Projects of cultural heritage preservation on the Matsu Islands.....	28
Figure 9: The overview of stakeholders in heritage affairs in Matsu .....	49
Figure 10: Blueprint of Matsu Casino designed by Weidner Resorts .....	65
Figure 11: Banli Mazu Temple built by the Armed Force and soldiers participating in the Mazu pilgrimage festival .....	67
Figure 12: Pictures of Jinbanjing Mazu Temple in the 1960s and after restoration .....	76
Figure 13: Pictures of the abandoned Zhuluo Elementary School and its present appearance after the restoration by Matsu Youth Development Association .....	78
Figure 14: One Eleuthera Web Portal Site Architecture.....	83
Figure 15: One Eleuthera Web Portal Site Map .....	83
Figure 16: Example of the thematic website of a World Heritage site: Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region .....	84

# List of Tables

Table 1. List of cultural heritage in Matsu (Lienchiang County) .....	24
Table 2. Different interpretations of cultural heritage across categories in the Matsu Islands.....	61
Table 3. Heritage values from different points of views on Matsu .....	68
Table 4. Potential solutions to fragmented heritage management .....	91

# Introduction

## Research Question

People, even in academia, often consider heritage as being shared within homogenous communities. Everything runs in a positive and hopeful manner, with proper allocation of resources, a common local identity, a glorious long-lasting past, and a consolidated group of people. However, sometimes the situation is very different – unsatisfactory, competing relationships between stakeholders, an irritating bureaucracy, contrasting ideologies, and invented traditions, each serving different agendas. Such a situation can become very serious with regard to ethnicity (see the case of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in Hartmann [2016]), national identity (see the case of Mauritius in Boswell [2005]), local identity (see the case of the Riau Islands in Indonesia in Moser and Shamsa Wilbur [2017]), intangible cultural heritage (see the case of Taketomi Island, Japan in Chao C-F [2018]), and island development (see the case of the Con Dao Islands, Vietnam in Hayward and Tran [2014] and finally, the case of the Setouchi Islands, Japan in Lee T-P [2019]).

These disparate case studies show that when a region is culturally hybrid, undefined or peripheral, without proper management, a kind of heritage imbalance might impact negatively on heritage identification and preservation. For example, Lee T-P (2019) argued that rural revitalization initiated by an outside stakeholder might be unhelpful in the local community and even increases the burdens and discord among community members. As an example, she mentioned the contemporary art festival supported by a private company on the Setouchi Islands. Although the festival is highly valued by tourists, scholars and politicians, islanders typically feel alienated from the festival. Chao C-F (2018) discussed the symbolic meaning of a certain ritual performance on a remote outlying island in Japan during the process of modernization, nationalism, and globalization with respect to heritage preservation. She argued

that the community's core identity never disappeared although the practice of ritual itself keeps evolving (59). In contrast, the concept of heritage is itself always changing and debated.

If there is a place that exemplifies the characteristics of hybridity, uncertainty, and periphery, it is the Matsu Islands (馬祖列島) in Taiwan. These islands represent the perfect environment for presenting the phenomenon of fragmented management of diverse heritage. Although cultural heritage in Matsu looks rich in content, people's attitudes toward heritage as a concept and various aspects of heritage are very diverse resulting in inefficient fragmentation of efforts. During my fieldwork in Matsu, I found that fragmented management is the best starting point from which to analyze heritage affairs on the islands and figure out the reasons for the complexity of heritage efforts in Matsu.

The heritage discourses and preservation measures taken in Matsu are so varied and complicated that it can hardly be presented with a few examples. It is straightforward to simply praise Matsu's cultural diversity as most tourists learn on the islands, but the thoughts behind the heritage are far more intriguing. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this research is to figure out how heritage emerges and functions in recent place-making processes (Pierce, Martin, and Murphy 2010) in the Matsu Islands over the past two to three decades. In place-making processes, heritage discourses often play an important and persuasive role, all the while being intentionally generated for various purposes. In order to reflect on the way fragmented heritage functions on the islands, I will combine critical heritage studies with this concept from geography to contextualize all the stakeholders, measures taken and various discourses around heritage affairs, and finally show the multifaceted nature of heritage and its impacts on landscape and place-identity using Matsu as a case study.

In order to answer the research question, I will first clarify how heritage is identified and how various stakeholders strive to preserve heritage in Matsu. I will present the attitudes of three

stakeholder groups – government agencies, islanders, and bridging entities. What are the disparate motivations for preserving heritage? I will also contextualize the community heritage network in Matsu, where the concept of heritage has been adopted and agreed upon. Focus will be placed on stakeholders' recognition of heritage and the outcomes different groups expect from heritage preservation. The issues of institutional bureaucracy, local development, and cultural identity, etc., on various spatial and temporal scales will be examined. Among these issues, heritage becomes a medium of expression for conflicting ideas adopted by stakeholders, although stakeholders often disagree with the real concerns of the other.

After scrutinizing disagreements among stakeholders within three aspects of heritage – heritage interpretation, heritage value, and heritage management, I propose that cultural heritage preservation in Matsu is fragmented among stakeholders because of ambiguous understandings and different goals, resulting in contrasting actions. This situation is serious but implicit because the archipelago is very rich in financial resources with a small population that is familiar with each other. On the other hand, the relatively short history and uncertain place-identity also strengthens this tendency. That is, beyond the spectacular appearance of heritage properties in Matsu, there are many disagreements and compromises that must be made that are not evident for outsiders.

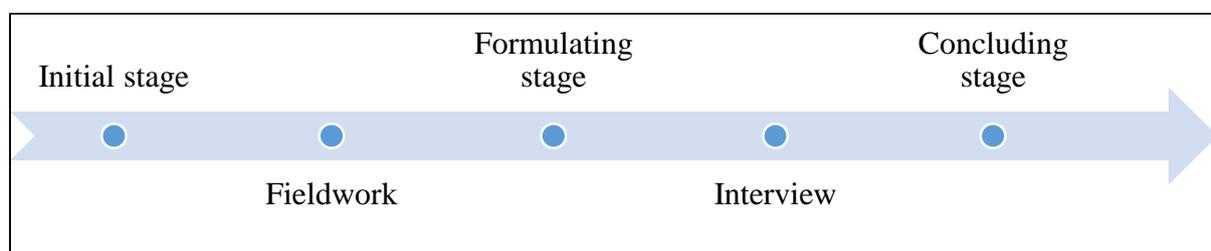
The aim of this research is not to criticize one particular position or advocate a certain principle. Rather, after clarifying why fragmentation of heritage preservation occurs in Matsu, I will try to provide some solutions to make heritage affairs function in a more consolidated and harmonious manner. The key point of divergence in heritage affairs lies in the varied ways stakeholders imagine the future of the islands and how heritage in turn is imagined to contribute to that future. That is, what kind of place Matsu stakeholders want the islands to be in the future? If heritage is to be inherited for the future of a group, people first need to exchange and respect

others' opinions on what they expect the future should be. So far, very few scholarly works pay attention to this temporal tension.

This research aims to raise various stakeholders' awareness of this fragmented management issue in Matsu as well as stimulate academic attention on ways to deal with this problem. In the end, I will provide some suggestions based on inside and outside experiences on ways to bring heritage attitudes of various actors together and facilitate mutual understanding through more sophisticated communication and information integration. As an academic contribution, I would like to argue that in some special cases, "shared heritage" (Labrador 2013) is very difficult to achieve or create. Heritage as a discourse of place-making processes does not always go smoothly. More harmonizing measures would be helpful in consolidating place-making goals and the essence of diverse heritage. Similar situations can be frequently observed in Taiwan because it is such a young nation-state. Hence, I hope the work will also encourage more discussion around such issues of heritage management elsewhere in the country.

## Methodology

This research examines both what has already happened and what is happening now with regard to cultural heritage preservation in the Matsu Islands. To approach information in a variety of ways, I divide the process of this research into three stages (Fig. 1).



*Figure 1: Three stages in the research process (created by the author)*

The initial stage of the research includes discourse analysis and a literature review of available materials such as official publications, media reports and academic research in the related field

as well as cultural anthropological research previously carried out on the islands. The main purpose of this stage of research was to prepare for the follow-up fieldwork in Matsu and formulate awareness of potential problems.

After the aforementioned preparation, in July 2019, I conducted a month's long fieldwork in Matsu, mostly on the main island, Nangan. I worked as an intern in a local heritage non-governmental organization. In addition to assisting in the operation of a local museum, the Matsu Battlefield Culture Museum (former Shengli Fort; 勝利堡), I also took the opportunity to participate in many heritage activities and observe how heritage discourses present and function in heritage activities and in islanders' daily conversation. This method is referred to as participatory observation in the methodology of cultural anthropology but is not as far-reaching as formal ethnographic fieldwork. This one-month-long stay on the island was really helpful for confirming the validity of research question concerning fragmented heritage attitudes and figuring out the most needed and meaningful concerns in heritage affairs in Matsu.

After delving into more materials and literature, I proposed a series of questions to clarify how stakeholders consider heritage and act on these notions in Matsu. Stakeholders, who were expected to be influential in heritage affairs in Matsu, were chosen based on previous contacts during my stay and other informants' recommendations in particular fields. These thirteen interviewees included representatives of government agencies, heritage activists on the islands, landowners of heritage properties, etc. Forming focus groups was considered but turned out not to be so appropriate in this research because practically it is difficult to gather people together and different stakeholders might be reserved in sharing perspectives in front of others.

The aim of the individual interviews was to grasp stakeholders' practices, perspectives, and real concerns in the heritage preservation of Matsu. Altogether, eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted in December 2019 and the following month in Matsu or Taipei

depending on stakeholders' locations at a given moment. Based on the spirit of semi-structured interviews, although questions were designed individually beforehand, conversations were quite flexible so that interviewees could share their opinions whenever they felt it to be relevant. After interviews, interviewees decided whether they wanted to remain anonymous in the text or not. Besides interviewees, other anonymous informants mentioned in references are people I encountered when I conducted my participatory observation work. For the full list of interviews and a sample of the questions asked, see Appendix 1.

After collecting stakeholders' opinions, the final stage in this research was to place the various stakeholders into the whole picture so that the real problems could be identified and analyzed. Further reasoning was based on data from the literature and the general conditions on the islands. Solutions practiced in other comparable places are provided at the end of the main body of this research.

The disciplinary position of this research rests on a geographical framework and anthropological thinking. Throughout this research, I was aware of my double position of observer and simultaneously being part of the heritage community on the islands. Anthropology offers the basis for understanding the concept of "place" in this research. Marcus (1995) proposed multi-sited ethnography as new solutions to respond to the fluidity of the world today. Applying the principle of multi-sited ethnography, research on the Matsu Islands should not only be limited to the archipelago. Another precondition of this research, which is highly influenced by anthropology, is the questioning of locality. Appadurai (1996) suggested that locality in global society should be no longer considered inherent and natural, but a process involving people, objects, capital and information itself. After I start to learn more about Matsu, I realize that Matsu presents a perfect place to show how problematic claiming to be traditional in heritage discourse can be.

## Introduction to the Field

The Matsu Islands, an archipelago governed by Taiwan, is famous for its distinctive history and outstanding cultural and natural heritage. Its work in the field of cultural heritage has been on-going and promoted for more than 30 years. At first, the focus of cultural heritage preservation lay on protecting Eastern Fujian (閩東) folk culture and traditional settlements. Over the past decade, Cold War heritage on the islands gradually gained in importance. Although Matsu is the smallest county of Taiwan, because of its specific location, Matsu's cultural life is unique and quite different from what can be found on the island of Taiwan. For example, Matsu islanders' native language is Fuzhounese (福州話), a dialect which cannot be heard in other parts of Taiwan, although Taiwanese Mandarin still dominates. Compared to other regions in Taiwan, heritage affairs in Matsu hold a very prominent and important place in local development. The entangled relationships between government and islanders in the discourses and processes of heritage preservation on the islands makes it a good place to conduct critical heritage studies in Taiwan.

Although Matsu is adjacent to Fujian Province (福建省) in Mainland China, it was politically separated from mainland China in 1949 as a result of cross-strait conflicts (See Chapter 1.1 for a detailed description of the historic contexts of Matsu.) As shown on the map (Fig. 2 and 3), Matsu is not the only archipelago of Taiwan possessing this enclave characteristic. During the Cold War, both Kinmen (or Quemoy; 金門) and Matsu became famous globally for marking the frontier in the battle to defeat communism (Lowe and Joel 2014, 179-81). After the 1990s, when the tension between Taiwan and mainland China gradually ebbed, the two archipelagos started to build intense relationships with Mainland China. Meanwhile, they also faced identity issues in the formation of Taiwan as a new nation-state (Chen T-N 2010). Recently, these

archipelagos have been absorbed into modern Taiwan, resulting in substantial differences in the social and political life of neighboring regions on Mainland China once similar to them.

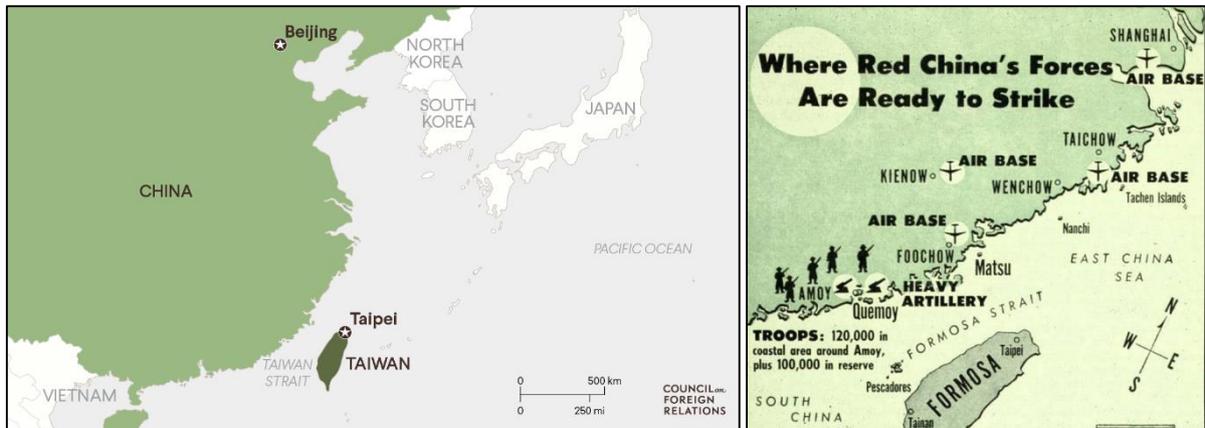


Figure 2: Taiwan in East Asia (left; Maizland [2019]) and Matsu during Cold War (right; Wolfe [2010])

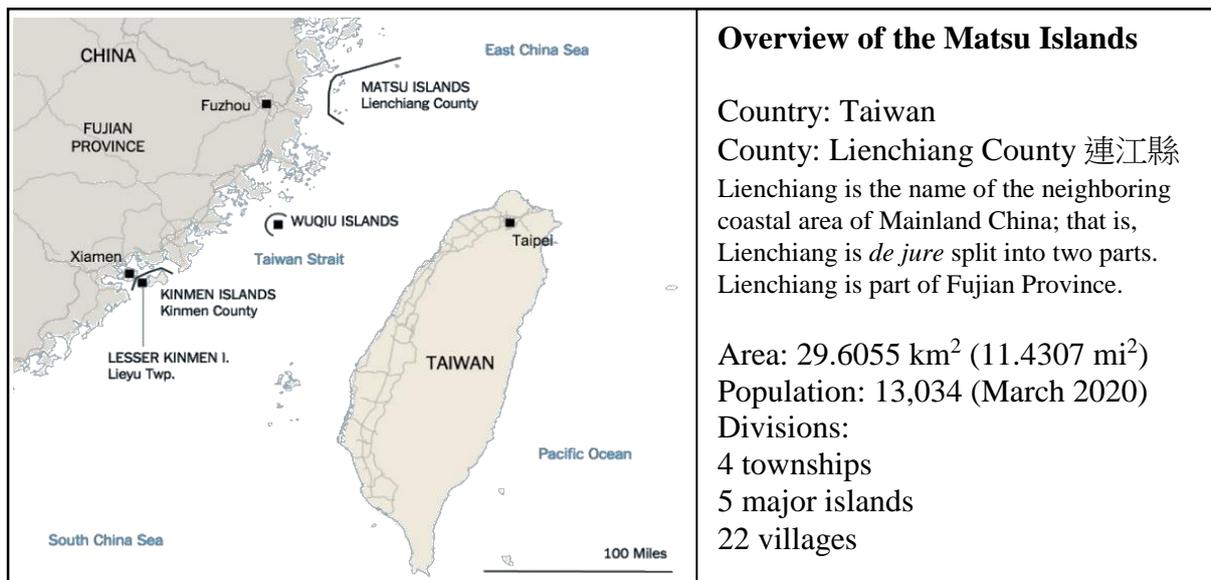
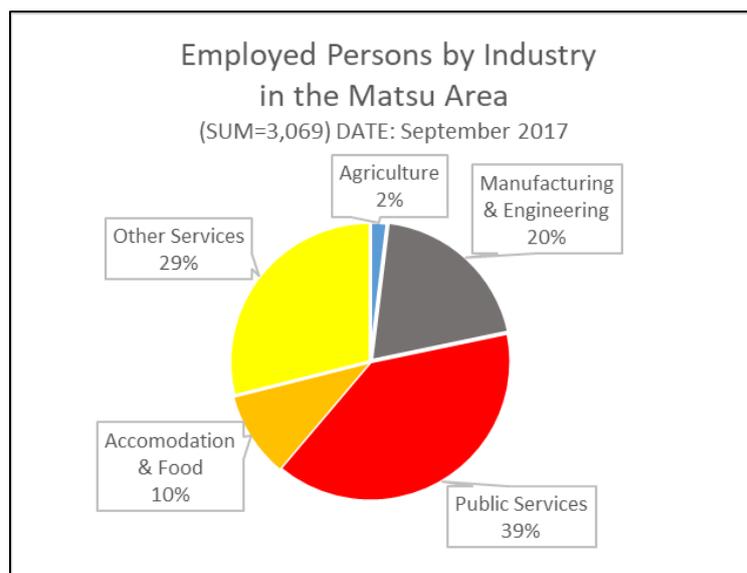


Figure 3: Location of the Matsu Islands within Taiwan (left; Forsythe [2016]) and overview of the Matsu Islands (right)

Before entering the discussion on heritage, it is important to recognize that the population composition in residence on the islands and patterns of employment are very unusual compared to other areas in Taiwan. Although statistics show that the population on the islands numbers around 13,000 souls, only sixty to seventy percent of the population actually live on the islands. The remainder of the population live and work on the island of Taiwan but retain their household registration in Matsu (Bureau of Health and Welfare, Lienchiang County n.d.). Not

counting children and the elderly, there are only around 3,000 people actually working on the Matsu Islands.

Economic activities in Matsu are highly dependent on public services funded by government agencies as shown in Figure 4. Thus, most remaining islanders are as wealthy as the urban population of Taiwan (EBC Financial News 2018), although Matsu is considered a remote rural region in the country. Most people on the islands have some kind of connection to the government. Consequently, everything going-on in the islands has something to do with the government, and the government penetrates many aspects of the islanders' daily lives. Besides public services, the most important industry on the islands is the tourism industry, stimulating a need to help tourists discover local cultural heritage.

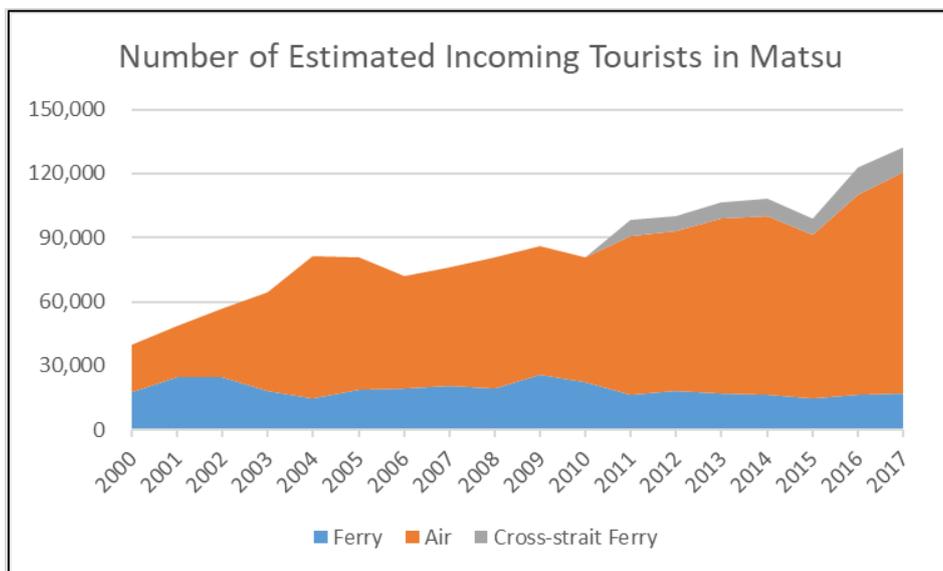


i. Public service includes four categories: public administration & defense, compulsory social security, education, and human health & social work activities in the original data. Other categories are based on the tenth revised edition of Taiwan's standard industrial classification system.

Figure 4: Employed Persons by Industry in the Matsu Area (Lienchiang County Government 2017)

The prosperity brought by the tourism industry on the islands is significant. It is estimated that the number of incoming tourists doubled from 1999 to 2003 and tripled from 1999 to 2016. In 2017, there were altogether 132,479 incoming tourists (Matsu National Scenic Area Administration 2010; 2012; 2018; refer to Fig. 5). Compared with the population of the islands,

tourists comprise around ten times more than the number of people in household registrations, showing the increasing importance of the tourism industry in Matsu. Besides cultural heritage sites, Matsu is also famous for its geological landscape and coastal ecology. Many tourists travel to Matsu to see glowing waves on the sea caused by a special sea alga. This unique scenery is generally promoted as “blue tears.” Thousands of Taiwan islanders are attracted by these spectacular tourist resources (Appendix 2).



i. Ferry refers to the domestic route from Taiwan Island to Matsu, and cross-strait ferry refers to the route from mainland China to Matsu

Figure 5: Number of estimated incoming tourists in Matsu (2000~2017)  
(Matsu National Scenic Area Administration 2010; 2012; 2018)

The most renowned cultural heritage site on the islands is Qinbi Village (芹壁聚落), which is called the “Mediterranean of Matsu.” Another distinguishing characteristic of Matsu which is highly promoted to tourists is the legend linked to Mazu, a Chinese sea goddess celebrated in the past by the Han Chinese living along the southeastern coast of China. Actually, the name of Matsu (馬祖) derives from Mazu (媽祖) herself. Legend has it that Mazu was driven ashore and buried in the place where Magang Mazu Temple (馬港天后宮) is now located.

Although some smuggling and other illegal activities went on in the late twentieth century during the military period (Wang H-D, pers. comm.; Chen J-M 2009, 61), legitimate interactions between mainland China and Matsu started in 2000. With the *Offshore Islands Development Act* (離島建設條例; announced in 2000, last amended in 2019) announced by Taiwan, formal transport links were finally launched between Matsu and mainland China (Article 18). Since 2003, the county government has been legally permitted to have limited official contact with corresponding local governments in mainland China, mainly Fuzhou (福州) City Government (*Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area* [臺灣地區與大陸地區人民關係條例], Article 5.1; announced in 2003, last amended in 2019). Later, after the end of 2004, tourists from mainland China were allowed to travel to Matsu (Chen J-M 2009, 69). Since then, governments on both sides have regularly granted incentives to encourage residents to travel back and forth between Taiwan and Matsu. Recently, as Taiwanese identity has gradually come together with increasing hostility toward mainland China, Matsu's self-identity remains ambiguous and troublesome (Chiu Y 2018, 128-9). The islanders' relationship with mainland China is greatly impacted by the politics of the two sides. To be honest, there is no good reason to be optimistic concerning the continuous tension between China and Taiwan. The future of Matsu is still very uncertain, an issue reflected in its history that I will present throughout the thesis.

# Literature Review

## Heritage, Community and Place-making

Since the establishment of critical heritage studies in an interdisciplinary context, heritage has gradually been considered a subject not just concerning material objects, but rather a negotiated process for the needs of the present (Smith 2017, 20). One pioneer in this field, Svensson (2006, 2), raised concern about “identity, representativity, ownership, and access” when describing cultural heritage as a social construct. Based on this evolution of the concept, in this section, I will first review academic arguments for place-making processes, especially on a local scale, in the field of human geography. Combined with the concept of “community” in the discourses of heritage, I would like to provide a variety of ideas in the discussion on local heritage which this research will frequently refer to.

In Pierce, Martin, and Murphy's (2010) work, the place-making process is defined as “the set of social, political and material processes by which people iteratively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live,” which are activities related to place, social networks, and politics, making it a core topic in human geography. They further introduce the notion of “relational place-making” which integrates place, politics, and networks to show the way networked politics influences place-making decision within a population. They indicated that a place, in a political sense, is formed by the interactions and communications within a community network. Such a network lies “somewhere in-between these extremes, shaped by power structures and individual choices, but stabilized by the reciprocity, mutuality, preferentiality and/or interdependencies of or between the actors involved (56).” Prior to this work, Martin (2003, 730) proposed “place-frames” as a motivating discourse to “unite residents for a neighborhood-oriented agenda.” In practice, Bull (2008) suggested urban planning should align place-experience and expressions with all of the place-making processes. Here, I consider

heritage as a “place-frame” in the place-making processes of the Matsu Islands. Interaction and communication on heritage among stakeholders is, thus, key to fragmented heritage management in Matsu in this research.

From this point of view, critical heritage studies can be applied to the entangled relationships between heritage, community, and place-making to analyze the vigorous scenes and debates generally characteristic of local heritage. Crooke (2010, 19) first proposed the political consideration of “community” which he described as “a label that has been created for expediency and purpose” and explored the implications of motivation, authority, and control in community heritage. Kuutma (2013, 27-30) noted that community and its heritage are not homogenous, and disagreements commonly occur in heritage claims. Therefore, studying how political power is exercised is also important in heritage studies. By providing a case study of a Spanish town along the Camino, a Catholic pilgrimage route in Northern Spain, Sánchez-Carretero (2013, 141-2) argued that the absence of the concept of heritage in the village’s daily life shows the heritage regimes’ unexpected silence within the local society and the gap between policies and grassroots understandings. The logic of the market, mainly comprising the demands of the tourism industry, and the logic of identity politics concerning the sense of place, are often contested in heritage discourses. A more detailed chronology on the evolution of discourses within community heritage can be found in Mulligan's (2018) latest work.

The problem of different scales of place and heritage also started to catch the attention of scholars. Svensson (2006), conducting fieldwork in mainland Chinese rural villages, had already argued the importance of considering who benefits from a certain heritage policy (4), the differences in legal status and people’s emotions attached to a particular site (5), and the contradictions inherent to local and external needs which are unavoidable but equally indispensable (29). Observing hierarchical bureaucracy in heritage preservation, Tauschek

(2013, 201) claimed that different levels of central or local government would compete based on their degree of authority, thus, potentially causing conflicts between government agencies at any given heritage site. Afterward, Harvey (2015, 588-9) called attention to the legitimacy of local heritage, in that “local decision-making and a local performance within a local public sphere is always a good thing; more real, more authentic, more democratic,” although, obviously, this notion is not absolute.

Twenty years after the Nara Document on Authenticity, in 2014, Nara+20 (Heritage & Society 2015, 146) extended the interpretation of heritage and pointed out the imbalanced involvement of “a broader range of communities.” In such a situation, “credible and transparent processes are required to mediate heritage disputes,” to ensure the full and equitable participation in socio-economic benefits. To fulfill sustainable development strategies in cultural heritage preservation, “cultural values, processes, community concerns, and administrative concerns” should be taken into consideration. To heal the over-romanticized notion of community which never existed in the past, Labrador (2013, 15) proposed an anthropological theory of “shared heritage” where a community should mediate the past, the present, and the future with ethical practices to avoid a rigid understanding of heritage. She further developed a web-based communication platform for the Eleuthera islanders in the Bahamas to put the theory into practice, which I find to be very useful in the Matsu Islands. I will present more details about this platform as a possible solution in Chapter four.

Besides the cases of heritage imbalance provided at the beginning of the research question section, the Japanese case of the Goto Islands (literally “Five Islands,” 五島列島) near Kyushu Island has a number of points of comparison with the Matsu Islands. Some villages and Catholic churches that were established in the nineteenth and twentieth century on these outlying islands were inscribed as World Heritage (Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki

Region) because of the unique history of oppressed Japanese Christians hidden on the islands. (See Fig. 16 in Chapter 4.2.2 for the website of this site; see Conclusion for its preservation and management plan.) These villages are also located in a drastically depopulated region in a developed country which is searching for paths to sustainable development. Cultural heritage has thus become a solution, although some issues such as the neglect of values on intangible practices (Fukushima 2015), residents' attitudes to tourism (Ishino T 2018), and the spatial management of the village community (Kikata J et al. 2010) were observed. A further detailed analogy with Matsu might help in developing a concrete solution to fragmented heritage management in both places.

## **Cultural Heritage Preservation in Taiwan and Matsu**

Before delving deeply into the story of the Matsu Islands, the story of cultural heritage preservation in Taiwan is already very intriguing due to historical factors and political realities vis-à-vis the mainland China. (See Chiang et al. [2017] for a detailed description) Taiwan has been a developing nation-state. Much effort has gone into in 'discovering' its history and heritage since the second half of the twentieth century. The institutionalization of cultural heritage, namely, the announcement of *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* (文化資產保存法; last amended 2016) in 1982, is actually part of cultural agendas embedded in the purpose of nation-building and de-Sinification in Taiwan (Wang 2004; Chang 2004). Although the act seems sufficient after several revisions, the operations of particular categories which were introduced to Taiwan rather late, including cultural landscapes (Wang C-H 2014), archaeological sites (Lin F-Y 2015), groups of buildings [or settlements] (Wang P-Y 2017), and intangible cultural heritage (Hsu Y-D 2016; Kuo H-Y 2017), have been questioned by scholars both from the viewpoints of regulations and heritage values. Generally speaking, the

core problem can be summarized as a lack of citizen participation as these categories are more related and sensitive to the local community inheriting heritage.

In parallel with cultural heritage, community empowerment programs (社區總體營造; also translated as community engagement, community mobilization, community development, community building, etc.; or in Matsu's context, village empowerment.) also plays an important role. In Chinese, "community" is the combination of physical neighborhood and common identity and is even important in recognizing the locality. Lu (2001) demonstrated that this program, supported by the central government, is aligned within the larger context of nation-building. Taiwanese believe that every place has its own culture, as Taiwan has its own "exclusive" culture to replace the Chinese paradigm. The practice of community empowerment is also evolving in Taiwan. Huang and Hsu (2011) argued that, years later, the central government's policy on the community developed an "economic turn" so that elements of the infrastructure, service, administration, and tourism are increasingly encouraged. Local community organization acts as an agent between the government and its citizens.

There are also some case studies showing how community functions in cultural heritage preservation in Taiwan. Comparing a Chinese village and a Taiwanese village, Chan (2011) argued that communal relations and local networks are more active in heritage villages in Taiwan by examining the respective sociopolitical contexts. From a positive point of view, Den (2014) suggested a community-based heritage model which "adopts bottom-up and cyclic approaches in the process of heritage formation." He concluded by emphasizing the importance of community empowerment, public participation, and cultural consensus in urban heritage preservation using the experience of Beitou (北投) in Taipei as an example. In this case, the local community in Beitou continuously expanded their engagement in heritage preservation after they initiated a restoration project on a historical building in the area. Davis, Huang, and

Liu (2010), however, discovered that striking a balance between local heritage activists and the wider community is difficult. During their fieldwork in Matsu, they observed that what heritage activists consider beneficial for heritage is to some extent, different to what the residents in a village might deem it (85).

Another interesting and unfortunate fact is that Taiwan is unable to ratify the *World Heritage Convention* because of China's continuous suppression. Therefore, Taiwanese officials have very limited opportunities to participate in worldwide discussions on heritage preservation. In order to follow global heritage trends, the Taiwanese cultural authority started to list "Potential World Heritage Sites" (世界遺產潛力點) in 2002, although it did not know much about how the system of world heritage works. In 2009, the Matsu battlefield landscape was inscribed on the list of Potential World Heritage in Taiwan. Sadly, Matsu will still be absent from the world map of world heritage for a certain period although it is recognized within English academic circles shown in the following paragraph.

From a scholarly point of view, Fu (2011; 2012; Fu C-C 2011) has already demonstrated the value of Matsu as a battlefield heritage site from the period of the Cold War as well as its potential as a tourist island relying on heritage. Lin (2014; 2017; 2018), a Taiwanese anthropologist, has conducted research on the present-day social transition of Matsu concerning religion, heritage and community. She focused on how the geo-political role of Matsu shifted in different periods and how the shared identity of Matsu islanders is gradually being shaped by the mobilizing power of religion. It is noteworthy that place-identity in Matsu is a quite new phenomenon. Before the Cold War, islanders had more connections with their places of origin on the mainland rather than with other villages on the islands. Therefore, the so-called cultural heritage of Matsu, especially the intangible one, is actually a very innovative and changing notion. Temples are new; festivals are invented (Huang K-Y 2017); everything

about place, identity, and belonging is ambiguous (Chen T-N 2010). These phenomena have indirectly revealed how complicated cultural heritage preservation in Matsu is.

## Chapter 1 – History

In the first chapter, the thesis will start with a brief introduction of the history of the Matsu Islands, presenting the islanders’ short period of permanent residence on the islands and the impact of modern history on heritage and memory (Fig. 6). Next, heritage categories will be identified by providing the narratives of history and memory, the properties on the current list of cultural heritage and the government’ policies throughout history. The last section is to analyze the discourses of heritage preservation on the islands, including aspects of demilitarization, village empowerment, national policy, and place-making.

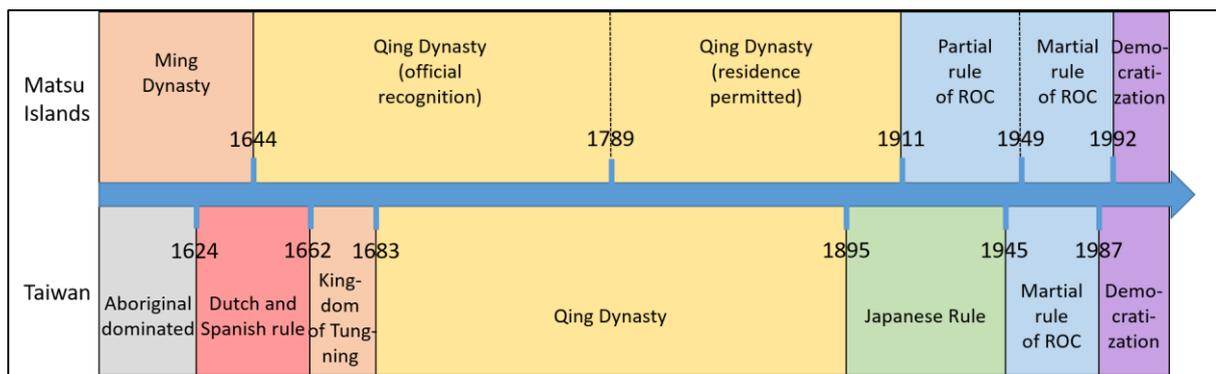


Figure 6: Timeline of Matsu Islands and Taiwan after the 17th century (created by the author)

### 1.1 History of the Islands

The duration of the history of Matsu has long been questioned. The discovery of Liangdao man (亮島人), skeletal remains dating to around 6000 BC in an outlying island of Matsu, was excavated in 2011. Based on Archaeogenetic evidence, the Liangdao man might be a common ancestor of the Austronesians (Ko et al. 2014), something which greatly aroused the islanders’ pride. However, although there is such a time-honored archaeological site, contemporary permanent residence can be dated no earlier than 1789 (Wang H-D, Wang J-H, and He G-Y

2016, 50). Before that, the Matsu Islands were recognized by Chinese imperial power and temporarily settled by coastal pirates, tradesmen, or fishermen in different periods. There are archaeological excavations, temple remains, official chronicles, and old marine charts to prove their existence.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the composition of islanders did not change much, while many of them started to permanently immigrate to the islands from the nearby coastal region of mainland China. They mainly relied on fishing with a few plantations on the islands. It was also the time when Western imperialism began to have an impact on the islands, the most visible of which was the construction of two lighthouses. When Fuzhou was one of few official trading ports during the late Qing Dynasty since 1842, the Matsu Islands were used as depots by Western merchant ships before their arrival at their final destination, Fuzhou. In 1884, the French Navy even occupied Matsu Bay for several months during the Sino-French War. (Wang H-D, Wang J-H and He G-Y 2016, 63-5)

It is noteworthy that neither the imperial court of the Qing Dynasty (1644~1911) nor the early period (1912~1949) of the government of Republic of China (ROC) could steadily have overall direct administrative power in the governance of the islands. Not until 1926 did the bureaucracy system was settled in Matsu (Lienchiang County Government 2016). Nevertheless, in the first half of the twentieth century, the development and power relations on the islands were still very organic, autonomous and fluid, which was called “stateless” by Lin (2018). The armed forces and local governments were neither under the direct control of national political powers. Throughout World War II, local representatives even had the possibility to have various types of contact and *quid pro quo* with the Japanese Armed Forces, ROC’s Armed Forces and regional pirates. (Wang H-D, Wang J-H and He G-Y 2016, 69-71) That is, during this period,

although the modern bureaucratic system had been gradually established, the state did not have direct control on the territory and people of the islands.

The situation changed dramatically because of the split into two Chinas. In 1949, the government of ROC, claiming that Communist China was the “fake” China, retreated to Taiwan. However, besides Taiwan, it only *de facto* controlled Kinmen (Quemoy), Matsu and Dachen Islands (大陳島; only until 1955) in the coastal region of southeastern China. Afterward, Kinmen and Matsu started to be mobilized as the front line of “retaking mainland” (反攻大陸) in the words of ROC’s propaganda in the context of the global Cold War. Besides the massive construction of military facilities on the islands, the total militarized mobilization of the community substantially transformed the social network and everyday life on the islands. A society which originally did not have much experience with governmentality was forced to accept the strictest monitoring and assignment in the endless military tension lasting for more than thirty years.

During the period of military rule (officially 1956-1992), the Commission of Military Rule (戰地政務委員會) was the highest authority on the islands, while the Country Government was just for consultancy. The United States Armed Forces was also implicitly involved in the defense of islands (Lienchiang County Government 2016). The highest number of soldiers on the islands was 50 thousand (Fu C-C 2011, 29), while the maximum population of residents is just around 17 thousand (Lienchiang County Government 2016). For more than three decades, every aspect of daily life, including migration, education, electricity, and sailing, had been limited by the Armed Forces.

The impact of military rule is substantial. For example, land registration had been rarely conducted in Matsu before 1949, but the Armed Forces expropriated residents’ land for military

purposes without legal procedures, which still cause disputes between the residents and the state up to now (Zhu R-Z 2014). The census system was finally established in 1954, as residents were not allowed to migrate freely anymore (Lienchiang County Government 2016). They could not go back to their hometown, mainland China, as it had become their enemy. Even if they wanted to migrate to Taiwan, they needed assurance from Taiwanese people to receive permission (Safeguarding Matsu Battlefield Culture Heritage 2018). All the policies on the islands were developed through the principle of “administration; education; economics; defense” (管教養衛) to assure the goal of military mobilization (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.).

Although military rule was enormously disturbing, the activity of the Armed Forces shaped the landscape and industry of the islands. Catering for soldiers’ daily consumption and needs became the main economic activity on the islands, replacing the original fishing industry due to overfishing and sailing limitations (Fu C-C 2011, 32). While some residents chose to stay and make profits from the soldiers’ need, others chose to emigrate to Taiwan to make up the deficiency of labor force for the mass-production industry. The population of residents was gradually decreasing until 1991 (Fig. 7), when demilitarization and democratization finally came to the Matsu Islands (Lienchiang County Government 2016).

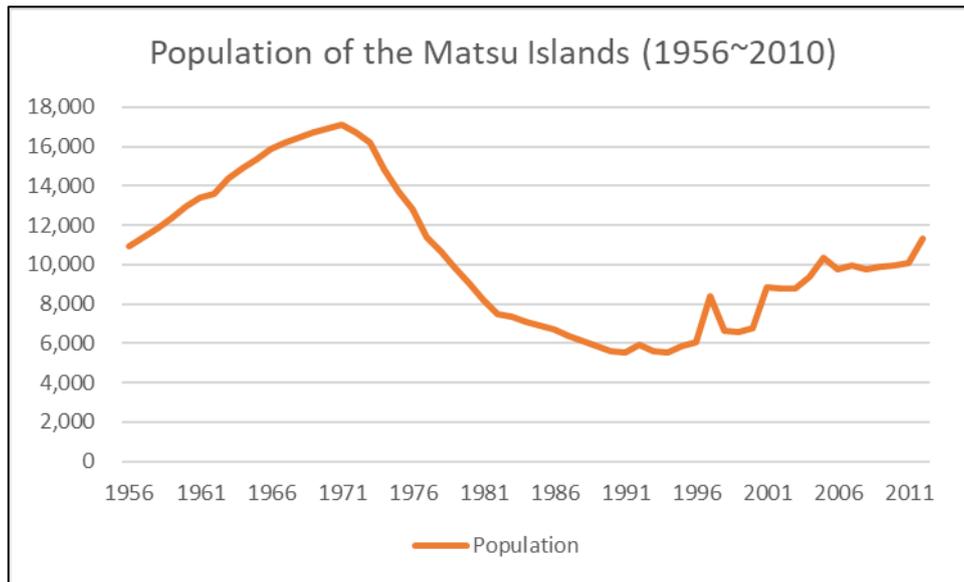


Figure 7: Population of the Matsu Islands (1956~2010) (Lienchiang County Government 2016)

Since the Matsu Islands returned to normal life, they have faced various difficulties in local development. The younger generations continuously move away from the islands to Taiwan in order to have a better life. A large part of the industry has been deteriorating. The disarmament causes a declining need for catering for soldiers. The fishery is also faced with rivalry from mainland China. As the military significance is no longer dominating the development of the islands, Matsu now focuses more on tourism and the brewing industry (Cao Y-G 2012). In 2000, the *Offshore Islands Development Act* was announced by the central government for the purpose of improving the infrastructure and industry on the islands using specific budgets. The act allows direct shipping between mainland China and the islands. Therefore, in the context of the thawing of cross-strait relations, residents on the Matsu Islands are keen on gaining interaction with the mainland in non-political events. The islanders would like to see themselves as the bridge between Taiwan and China (Lin 2014, 148).

## 1.2 Identification of Cultural Heritage

First, we need to clarify the understanding of cultural heritage for islanders. In Taiwan, most people recognize properties as cultural heritage only if they are registered on the official list of

the central or local government, according to *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* (CHPA). That is, registration is a must-do procedure in the recognition of cultural heritage. In contrast, the experience in the Matsu Islands is very different as they do have a more holistic view of cultural heritage. In Matsu, the concept of cultural heritage is more popular and was perceived more widely than in Taiwan. As a result, the work of registration is not a priority for the local cultural authority, which seems to show a lack of attention in Taiwan's approach. "The difficulties we meet here is very different from that in Taiwan (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.)." In fact, cultural heritage is always an essential part of the discourse of cultural governance and local development on the islands to enhance their significance and create new possibilities.

Table 1. List of cultural heritage in Matsu (Lienchiang County)

Name of the Property [English]	[Chinese]	Year of Registration [Declared as national]	Historic Period (Dynasty)
<b>Monuments [古蹟]</b>			
Dapu Stone Memorial	大埔石刻	1983	Around 1617 (Ming)
Dongyong Lighthouse	東湧燈塔	1985 [2016]	1904 (Qing)
Dongquan Lighthouse	東犬燈塔	1988 [2008]	1875 (Qing)
Qinbi Mazu Temple	芹壁天后宮 <sup>i</sup>	2016	1873 (Qing)
<b>Historic Buildings<sup>ii</sup> [歷史建築]</b>			
Jinbanjing Mazu Temple	金板境天后宮	2009	No later than 1869 (Qing)
Qiaozi Five Street Houses, Beigan	北竿鄉橋仔村五間排	2015	Around 1920s
Tienwo Wulinggong Temple, Xiju	西莒田沃村五靈公廟	2015	Around 1920s
Liu Yi-Hsiang's Residence, Dongyin	東引劉依祥宅	2015	Around 1940s
<b>Groups of Buildings<sup>ii</sup> [聚落建築群]</b>			
Jinsha Settlement	津沙聚落	2008	Since the 19th Century (Qing)
Qinbi Settlement	芹壁聚落	2010	
Dapu Settlement	大埔聚落	2010	
<b>Archaeological Sites [考古遺址]</b>			
Chipinglong Site	熾坪隴遺址	2008	Around 4000 BC
Liangdao Daowei Site	亮島島尾遺址	2013	Around 6000 BC
<b>Antiquities [古物]</b>			
Yuan Zhongtong Stone Memorial	元中統石碑	2008	The 13th Century (Yuan)
Clay Sculptures of Fuzheng Mazu Temple, Dongju	東莒福正天后宮泥塑神像	2013	Not specified
<b>Traditional Performing Arts [傳統表演藝術]</b>			
Guban	鼓板	2009	Not applicable
<b>Folklore [民俗]</b>			
Matsu Baiming	馬祖擺暝	2009 [2019]	Not applicable
Buku	補庫	2011	Not applicable
<b>Natural Landscapes<sup>iii</sup> [自然地景]</b>			
Matsu Geopark	馬祖地質公園	2018	Not applicable

i. Reference: Lienchiang County Government's announcement (2019). This registration can only be found in an official document.

ii. In the CHPA, the standards of historic buildings emphasize more in the relatedness to historic events, while groups of buildings emphasize more in the integrity of landscape of the settlement. Besides, there is also the connotation that historic buildings are the sites less significant than monuments.

iii. The preservation of natural landscapes is also regulated in the CHPA, while its competent authority is the Council of Agriculture of the Executive Yuan (行政院農業委員會). It was registered by the Economic Development Department (產業發展處) of the County Government.

iv. The competent authority of rest of this list is the Ministry of Culture (文化部) in the central level and the Cultural Affairs Department (文化處) of the county Government in the local level.

Reference: Bureau of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture (n.d.); Lienchiang County Government (2020)

As shown in Table 1, before the amendment of the CHPA in 2005, there were only three heritage properties registered on the list of cultural heritage including two lighthouses and one stone memorial for defeating a group of Japanese pirates (Lin H-C 2010; Wang H-D, Wang J-H, and He G-Y 2016). In 2006, the Review Committee for Cultural Heritage, composed with the local cultural authority, scholars, and local historians, was established in Matsu to fulfill the revised regulation. Afterwards, the work of registration has been ongoing based on a new heritage properties classification system.

The listing of cultural heritage on the Matsu Islands can be divided into three stages. In the late twentieth century, the three registered properties showed the importance of specific historical events in the context of Chinese history. The Dapu Stone Memorial was the most visible evidence of imperial presence on the islands. The two lighthouses were the testimony of the interaction of China and the West during the late Qing Dynasty. The second stage is between 2008 and 2013 when the review committee overviewed the cultural heritage and worked out the new classification system in the territory of the islands. The registration of groups of buildings was conducted more smoothly and completely based on the existing policy of preservation and related regulations in urban planning since 1999 (Xue Q 2010, 148). For several years, the preservation of traditional settlement had dominated the discourse of cultural heritage on the islands (Cao Y-X, pers. comm.). Simultaneously, the value and legal status of archaeological sites and intangible cultural heritage were also started to be scrutinized.

In the third stage after 2015, the listing procedures were mainly for fulfilling the budget need for restoration projects according to the CHPA. The Cultural Affairs Department (文化處) of the County Government first identified the potential properties to be restored, discussed with their owners or keepers, and then reached a consensus with stakeholders. The registration would follow up to allow the government to appropriate the budget (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.).

Detailed researches about these properties were conducted to plan the restoration projects. At this stage, the central competent authority of cultural heritage, the Ministry of Culture (文化部), also defined two properties as of national significance, showing their high attention to both cultural heritage and the Matsu Islands. As for the registration of the Matsu Geopark, it was mainly promoted by the Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (馬祖國家風景區管理處) as a tool for advertising ecotourism. At present, although the list covers more categories than before, it is still far from the full scenario of cultural heritage on the islands.

Generally speaking, most stakeholders on the Matsu Islands agree that there are three areas of cultural heritage (Wang H-D, pers. comm.), namely, the Eastern Min traditional culture, battlefield culture, and marine culture. Observing the list provided, most registrations are about the Eastern Min traditional culture. The other two realms are missing from the list. However, the systematic survey of the battlefield cultural landscape was actually completed in 2008 after three years' efforts (Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Lienchiang County Government 2006). Afterward, there is a consensus that the interpretation of the cultural landscape of the islands should be focused on the battlefield heritage (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). Because most sites of military facilities and fortifications remain visible and traceable, and the Armed Forces has the obligation to collaborate based on the CHPA ("If it has been more than 50 years since the construction of a public building or its affiliated facilities, [...] the owning or managing [government] agency/institution shall evaluate its cultural heritage value, before disposing of them," Article 15), the survey is easier and more thorough than other projects. In addition, due to the disarmament, many abandoned fortifications were given over to the public. The two government agencies (the County Government or the Scenic Area Administration) would take over the sites, clear them up and seek for revitalization projects. As regards the marine culture,

based on the researcher's observation, there are not many tangible heritage properties to preserve, while the intangible aspects are drastically fading away.

The two pillars of cultural heritage policies on the Matsu Islands which are performed consistently to date are the preservation of the traditional settlement and the promotion of the battlefield cultural landscape as World Heritage. The former is more connected to the discovery of local history and memory since residents' migration to the islands, while the latter is gained increasing significance in the history of Taiwan and even in contemporary world history. This is also the reason why the finding of the Liangdao man is so inspiring for islanders. In addition, islanders' cultural memory during the period of military rule has also caught people's eyes as part of battlefield culture to broaden military heritage (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.).

When preserving these two very different perspectives, the attitude of residents may be contrasting. For them, the short period of development does not actually create a rooted link between them and the islands. The identified tradition is not so traditional because everything about their past and future is always unknown and ephemeral (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). In contrast, although the memory about war mobilization should still be impressive and profound for them, it is very far from their everyday life. It is common that the islanders have never visited any of the battlefield heritage sites (Anonymous L, pers. comm.). The interest in war heritage is mainly from the viewpoint of external experts and tourists, while residents' genuine interest in preserving traditional culture cannot be separated from their real inquiries about their present life and future possibilities (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.).

There are other programs not regulated by the CHPA but can be recognized as cultural heritage enactments. The Matsu Folklore Culture Museum (馬祖民俗文物館), established in 2002, collects and exhibits a wide variety of objects including artifacts, archaeological findings,

models of architecture, etc. There is a further project to connect museums all over the islands as an integrated network in the following decade, and this museum will work as the central institution of the network. To enhance the content of the museums, the program of the cultural repository has also been active by collecting oral history and old pictures throughout different generations and topics since 2018 (Collaborative O. 2018). Proceeding the tradition of chronicle writing (方志) in Chinese historiography, the latest edition of *Chronicle of Lienchiang County* was published in 2014 and was made accessible online in 2016. All of the effort has demonstrated islanders' and the County Government's vitality and faith in preserving cultural heritage on the Matsu Islands in recent years.

The visualization of different cultural heritage projects on the islands is shown in the Figure 8. The arrow consisting of two separate parts shows the sequence of the two interrelating core concepts. The circles inside the arrow are the infrastructure to collect and exhibit local memory and heritage. Projects related to the concepts are also displayed in the figure.

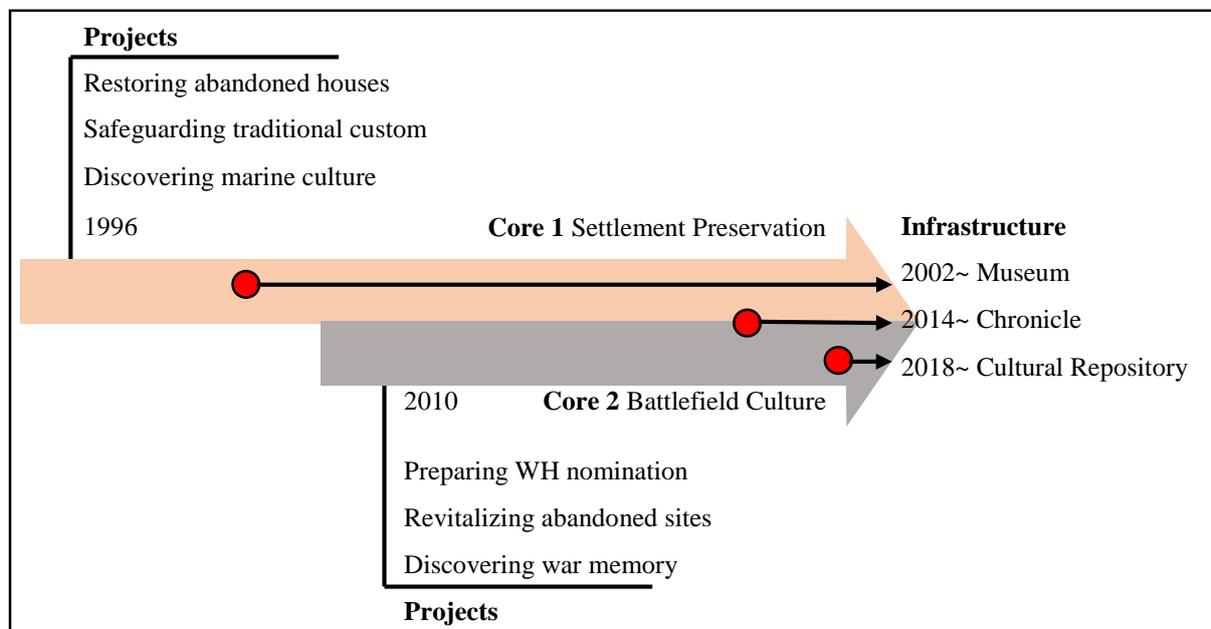


Figure 8: Projects of cultural heritage preservation on the Matsu Islands (created by the author)

### 1.3 Establishment of Heritage Preservation

Not until the demilitarization of the Matsu Islands in the 1990s did the concept of cultural heritage start to be perceived by islanders (Cao Y-X, pers. comm.). At that time, people remaining on the islands need to deal with the problem of hollowing-out of the industry, population decline and the threat of vanishing of traditional culture due to modernization. It was literally the first time for islanders to consider what they wanted and determine how the islands should progress in the future. “Originally I thought I lived in a less-developed rural area without anything valuable. After I learned the concept of settlement preservation, I finally realized how valuable Matsu is,” said by Cao Yi-Xiong (pers. comm.), a critical person in cultural heritage preservation of Matsu. He, together with other local intellectuals, formed a group to introduce the concept and policy framework of village empowerment and settlement preservation from Taiwan, Italy and Japan, which was later recognized as a local policy framework and written in the *Comprehensive Development Plan (2000~2011)* of the County Government. “Establishing an international holiday island with the battlefield culture and Eastern Min culture (Lienchiang County Government 2000)” became one of the four visions in local development for the following decade.

The first settlement to promote cultural heritage preservation was Niujiao (牛角) village in 1999, and the County Government also established a corresponding office, Urban-Rural Planning Workshop (城鄉工作室), in the same village. There were four villages listed as settlement preservation area (聚落保存區) under the framework of land-use zoning, including Qinbi (芹壁), Jinsha (津沙), Dapu (大浦) and Fuzheng (福正) villages, based on the fact that these villages were mostly abandoned with very few residents still living there (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). In the cases of Niujiao and other villages outside of the preservation area, because there were more active residents, the restoration and revitalization projects have been

conducted case by case with the aid of government subsidy. As for the four listed villages, the two related government agencies lead the overall restoration plan and coordinated with landowners (Xue Q 2010, 148).

In the case of the Matsu Islands, cultural heritage preservation and village empowerment are the two sides of a coin, which also reflects the national policy on village empowerment in Taiwan since 1994. To discover the potential and to recover the dynamism of the community are the main goals of the project. At least two abandoned houses have been transformed into public spaces for community affairs and small businesses in the more populated villages (Cao Y-X, pers. comm.; Chen G-Z, pers. comm.). The policy of village empowerment also encourages activities to safeguard traditional customs and legends, which makes the local history and memory of the islands more fruitful and approachable. As for the listed villages, most restored houses have been used as hostels or restaurants, creating a total atmosphere of tourism which might be deviating the expected goals of village empowerment. (See Chapter 2.2.4 for a more detailed analysis.)

In 2010, another brand-new concept was initiated in the Matsu Islands. To follow up the international standard and display the cultural diversity of Taiwan, the national cultural authority, Council for Cultural Affairs (文化建設委員會), proclaimed “Matsu Battlefield Cultural [Landscape]” (馬祖戰地文化) as an item on the list of “Potential World Heritage Sites” (世界遺產潛力點). The first stage of promotion was to disseminate the concept throughout the islands through educational programs and community workshops (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.; Anonymous L, pers. comm.). The general survey of battlefield cultural heritage in the past few years has served the identification and interpretation of the nomination. After several years of endeavoring, in 2015, the Matsu Battlefield Cultural Heritage Society (馬祖戰地文化資產學會) was established as a non-governmental organization to empower

residents and outsiders to be involved in the preservation and promotion of war heritage. The global passion for war heritage also intensifies the rationality of promoting battlefield heritage as World Heritage on the islands. The first museum dedicated to war heritage, Shengli Fort, was opened in 2017. It had been operated by the aforementioned society for few years and will play a major role in the museum network under development for the future. (See Chapter 2.2.5 for a more detailed analysis.)

Furthermore, although the central and local governments are also aware of the necessity to safeguard the local vernacular, Fuzhounese, and traditional practices as intangible cultural heritage, the related projects are mostly excluded from the policy framework of cultural heritage preservation. Vernacular education has been enacted in every elementary school on the islands, while for the middle-aged generations, who grew up in the period of abolishing vernacular, it takes more effort to recover it (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, the islanders' attitude towards traditional religious practices is still very positive across the generations (Zhou Z-X, pers. comm.; Chiu Y 2018). The social network of each village is embedded in the local religious belief and activities. To hold a religious event or to construct a new temple can always arouse villagers' attention and cohere the community. When local intellectuals are realizing village empowerment, they find that religion is what all the community members have an interest and willingly participate in (Lin 2017, 142). Therefore, the government does not need to put much effort into safeguarding religious heritage. As most folklore is an essential element in religious events, islanders inherit it and do not particularly consider it intangible cultural heritage. Instead, the government's apparent preservation measures might lead to objections by the culture bearers themselves (Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.).

Reviewing the policy of the central government, Matsu has adopted the main direction of various policies about local development and cultural governance to work out the concept of cultural heritage and identify a way to realize it in a way that is more suitable for the islands. It takes advantage of discourses of developing the periphery, discovering the locality, and positioning the significance for creating Taiwanese subjectivity after democratization and modernization. However, residents' concrete needs for their everyday life and local economy should be as important as heritage discourses. The fact of two parallel situations has led to various conflicts between stakeholders on the islands as the place-making processes are always full of negotiation and compromise. Returning to the questioning of the future of the islands, there is never a simple answer.

## Chapter 2 – Stakeholders

In the first chapter, I presented an overall picture of the Matsu Islands regarding their history and heritage. As the heritage scenario seems to be thorough, diversified and colorful, we should not overlook the stakeholders who adopt and operate the concept of heritage on the islands. In order to contextualize the network of heritage affairs on the islands in this chapter, I will start with an overview of stakeholder groups: government agencies, islanders, the heritage community, professional experts, etc. These classes of stakeholder have been chosen to represent both the common and diverging interests of different groups of islanders. Afterward, I will discuss the role of each class of stakeholder in a variety of heritage projects to help readers understand the achievements and problems of cultural heritage on the islands more clearly. Finally, the range of controversies between stakeholders will be analyzed. These materials will be used for further analysis of the fragmentation of heritage concept developed in the following chapter.

### 2.1 Overview of Stakeholders

The Matsu Islands cover a relatively small area and many individuals belong to different stakeholder groups at the same time. Thus, the commonly found division of government between residents previously discussed in the literature review does not really apply to the islands. This situation is also the same in heritage affairs in Matsu. Most investments in heritage projects are financed through central government funds. Most stakeholders in community heritage networks rely financially on the government. However, the government does not arbitrarily force programs to comply with their wishes without consideration of the residents' ideas and needs; instead, the interaction between the government and residents is very tight and intense. This scenario is only possible under the particular conditions of historic context and social structure on the islands, which makes it an exceptional case all over Taiwan.

## 2.1.1 Different government agencies

Inside the County Government, the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) deals with cultural heritage based on the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* (CHPA) in Taiwan. The duty of the CAD follows the regulations of the CHPA: “The competent authority shall [maintain] full files of the investigation, research, preservation, conservation, restoration and reuse of [cultural heritage.]” (Article 16; this quotation is modified from the English version provided in the official database because of some ambiguity in the translation.) That is, other aspects of cultural heritage affairs such as promotion, tourism, and urban planning, will be assigned to other departments which are the corresponding competent authorities, as shown in Appendix 3.

Cultural heritage preservation measures initiated by CAD includes inventorying cultural heritage properties, conducting surveys for cultural heritage properties, establishing and managing cultural heritage institutions, and planning restoration and revitalization projects. Comparatively speaking, other departments conduct their activities based on their assigned duties without much concern for cultural heritage although these activities may be closely related. Thus, when dealing with cultural heritage affairs, CAD should reference the opinions and regulations of other assigned departments, and it sometimes becomes urgent to defend the value of cultural heritage (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.). For example, based on their respective functions, both the Economic Development Department and the Traffic and Tourism Bureau of the County Government take part in the village empowerment project which is considered to be related to cultural heritage. Despite this common interest, however, interdepartmental communication is quite rare.

In addition, the Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (MNSAA) was established in accordance with the *Act for the Development of Tourism* (發展觀光條例; announced in 1969, last amended in 2019). This government body worked on many projects connected to tourism

issues which legally parallel to the county government. “They basically do the same thing, repetitively,” said a heritage activist (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.). The institutional characteristics of MNSAA are very different from the County Government. It is directly supervised by the central government. The selection and training of its personnel is based on the profession of engineering and economics (Cao Y-X, pers. comm.) and civil service examination. Typically, islanders consider it an external organization practicing its mission in Matsu as designated by the central government but without reference to the local context. “The logic of its governance is based on development and construction (Cao Y-X, pers. comm.)” In response to islanders’ criticisms, “We understand that local people have their way of thinking about the islands, but we, as a government agency, need to comply with our regulations and mission as an independent institution,” said a MNSAA manager (Anonymous X, pers. comm.). As a researcher, when I first heard this response, I felt a bit shocked by his arrogance, but after I delved into the whole issue of fragmented heritage management on the islands, I realized a few islanders in the tourism industry also back their position.

## 2.1.2 Outside stakeholders and their attitudes

There are some stakeholders who play important roles in heritage affairs in Matsu although they operate somewhat outside the field of contested heritage discourse on the islands. The Armed Forces is one such group whose opinion is quite critical in preserving the war heritage. After years of promotion, they are now a positive force in the way they collaborate with the community heritage network. Preserving war heritage is also meaningful in the ongoing political propaganda war between Taiwan and mainland China (Wang H-D, pers. comm.).

As shown in the previous chapter, the tourism industry has become the major economic activity in Matsu. Most resources and policies are controlled or connected to travel agencies and the hotels in partnership with them. They do not invest much in the development of the islands and

show marked disinterest in cultural heritage preservation. “Islanders who are not part of the tourism industry basically do not like them much,” said Zhou Zhi-Xiao (pers. comm.), a young part-time local tour guide interested in cultural heritage. They always request the government to provide them with resources but do not share their profits through investment in cultural heritage construction or by inviting other stakeholders to participate in their businesses to the profit of the local community. Fortunately, there are still some newcomers, either islanders or Taiwanese, coming to the market who are more welcoming with regards to cultural heritage preservation (Zhou Z-X, pers. comm.).

The presence of Mainland China in cultural heritage can also be easily observed. As a tool for creating an imagined community and symbolic linkage on two sides of the strait, Matsu and Fuzhou City on Mainland China have hosted the “Liang Ma Lantern Festival” (兩馬同春鬧元宵) to initiate contact between two local governments for nearly two decades. Besides this parapolitical festival, cultural linkage can still be observed in many other ways. When local government and heritage activists started to trace back their traditional culture, they needed to visit their homeland in Mainland China and conducted field surveys there. However, because of constant social turmoil and the cultural revolution in Mainland China in the late twentieth century, practice of many intangible cultural heritage features is better preserved and still popular in Matsu compared to the islanders’ places of origin on the mainland, at least as far as the restoration of heritage objects such as houses and figurines.

### 2.1.3 Landowners and traditional local representatives

There are two major groups of islanders who pay more attention to cultural heritage in Matsu. One group comprises landowners who typically become some kind of representative such as local politicians, representatives of temple committees, or heads of village associations, in present-day local society. In these positions, they influence the distribution of resources

(Anonymous A, pers. comm.). Based on the nature of their social position, they have begun to adopt the concept of cultural heritage with specific interests in mind. Although there are a variety of different interests, the most common concern of this group regarding cultural heritage is to increase the prosperity of the islands. More and more landowners of traditional houses start the business of hotels and homestays in Matsu, some of whom utilize the subsidy of the government to restore their houses beforehand (Anonymous C, pers. comm.). Strangely, most of them do have considerable real estate or industry in Matsu, Taiwan or Fujian, so this concern is not really an economic one, but a symbolic one (Zhou Z-X, pers. comm.).

#### 2.1.4 Heritage activists and the community network

Another group of “islanders” I refer to in this thesis are the local intellectuals and heritage activists who introduce and practice the concept of cultural heritage on the islands. Different from the previous group, they positively implement the concept of cultural heritage and try to enact it in different ways. They build collaborative partnerships with governmental bodies, especially the Cultural Affairs Department of the County Government. In Matsu, these local intellectuals emerged from generation to generation, which facilitates the continuation of the community heritage network. However, the presence of only a very few older women and Taiwanese immigrants is still very rare, showing the relatively closed and imbalanced character of such heritage groups on the islands. In the traditional social network, women had little involvement in the public realm so that their voices remain largely hidden in recent heritage interpretation. On the other hand, the local identity of Matsu islanders is generally very strong, meaning that Taiwanese immigrants have difficulties integrating into the local heritage network.

#### 2.1.5 External academic and professional groups

The heritage network in Matsu also involves external academic and professional groups in addition to the local community. The participation of academic groups began as long ago as

the beginning of the twenty-first century with the introduction of movements to preserve traditional settlements. Afterward, few private professional groups entered the field of cultural heritage in Matsu. They typically accept commissions from local government to conduct research, survey and village empowerment projects. These groups mostly originate in Taiwan and are unable to maintain a sustainable presence on the islands.

## **2.2 Ongoing Heritage Projects**

After roughly introducing each stakeholder comprising the heritage community in Matsu, in this section, I will provide some examples to contextualize the range of ongoing heritage projects and indicate stakeholders' roles in it. In this manner I will lay the foundations for further analysis of fragmented heritage management in the following chapter, namely, the various ways cultural heritage is comprehended, treated and utilized by different groups of islanders. The context of central government directives will be compared to practices connected to local government reactions to them. I will focus more on the current status and future development of heritage preservation and only provide short descriptions of past efforts. Again, top-down or bottom-up models are not so appropriate to describe the situation because it is very difficult to differentiate the boundary between “top” and “bottom” in Matsu society.

### **2.2.1 Government-owned cultural heritage properties**

According to which organization manages a particular property, museums and cultural heritage properties in Matsu can be classified into four categories (Appendix 4). The first category comprises the museums operated by the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD). Accordingly, the maintenance status of these museums is better and their operation and curating work follow the principles of standard cultural heritage preservation practice more closely. The most representative one is the Matsu Folklore Culture Museum, which is the first and the largest

institution managed by CAD. The second category, operated by the Economic Development Department, are the properties transformed from industrial facilities no longer in use because of the decline in traditional fishery. Although they have not yet been properly preserved, an ongoing renewal project already exists to combine one exhibition hall with the restoration of a nearby traditional residence (Guo M-J, pers. comm.).

The third category comprises the properties managed by MNSAA, many of which include battlefield sites formerly operated by the Taiwanese Armed Forces. During the gradual withdraw of the Armed Forces from Matsu, many battlefield sites have become abandoned or “closed but still prepared for war” (平封戰啟). To increase tourist interest, since these battlefields always occupy places with the best views on the islands, both the County Government and MNSAA petition the Armed Forces to release the sites. The Armed Forces typically comply with these requests because it cuts down their workload on the maintenance of the sites (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). The two agencies have the right by default of allocating who has control over which sites based on their location so that each agency can develop their project within an intact area. CAD obtained the Shengli Fort and restored it as the Battlefield Culture Museum. Other renowned military sites were mostly obtained and managed by MNSAA. Not all the released sites are used for exhibition, which I will explain later in the section on revitalization projects.

The fourth category is represented by properties that retain their original functions such as breweries, temples and fortifications that are still in use. Therefore, their managing organizations do not focus on the heritage aspect of the properties. Certain rules apply. For example, the rule that only Taiwanese citizens can visit military sites still operates on those fortifications still garrisoned by the Armed Forces. Although the CAD has an ambition to

improve all the sites together and incorporate them into a museum network, the bureaucratic obstacles raised between different agencies still causes many difficulties in its realization.

As these properties are managed by a variety of institutions, some exhibitions are repeated across museums and their maintenance status also differs a lot. That is why better integration of the museum network is required in the near future. Since 2018, the County Government has commissioned an external expert group, Classic Design and Planning, to conduct projects to develop the cultural repository in which to collect local memories and related materials to reconstruct the history of Matsu and improve the curation in the museums on the islands as part of an integrated network. This act follows the directive of the central government and utilizes a subsidy provided by the central government to strengthen local museums' role in cultural heritage preservation and tourism (Guo M-J, pers. comm.).

## 2.2.2 Private properties and government subsidies

The initial projects of settlement preservation in Matsu have two sources: village empowerment and restoration of traditional residences. The first government subsidies for the restoration of private properties within the preserved village took place in 2000 in Qinbi Village in order to improve the tourism infrastructure. The County Government contracted landowners to give the government entitlement to its use for eight years and in turn the government would complete the restoration of the house and return it after the end of the term of the contract. During the contractual period the County Government either designated a public function for the site or commissioned business owners to run cafes and guesthouses in the restored village with the profits shared back to government (Beigan Township Office, Lienchiang County 2005; Chen G-Z, pers. comm.). This model of "Operate-Transfer" (Tam 1999) has been being adopted for the restoration of many traditional houses. This system is considered successful by Matsu islanders. Afterward, the landowner either continues the business by themselves or

commissions the same operator to maintain their service. Similar projects have also been conducted by MNSAA later (Anonymous X, pers. comm.).

There is another kind of subsidy to offer incentives to landowners to restore their houses based on particular regulations concerned with maintaining the landscape integrity (風貌) of the villages. The beginning of the project was initiated by the County Government, while MNSAA also started a similar project in 2006 based on the central government's directive few years later. Generally speaking, the amount of subsidy depends on the materials the restoration project uses, the location of the house, and the size of respective houses. MNSAA's regulation is more technically detailed to assure the fairness and effectiveness of the subsidy. (For detailed information on the earlier stage of such subsidies, see Chang Y-C [2005]; for MNSAA's regulation, see *Regulations on Subsidy for Stylistic Architecture Landscape Integrity Improvement in Matsu* [馬祖地區特色建築風貌改善補助作業要點].) As a result, the subsidy covers around 40 to 60 percent of restoration costs in each case (Anonymous D, pers. comm.). Chang Y-C (2005, 104-5) indicated that there was a consensus that preserving the landscape integrity was important after several years of promotion and operation. Thus, the exterior of each house in the preserved village started to be considered public goods which all islanders should safeguard together.

According to one of the MNSAA managers (Anonymous X, pers. comm.), general surveys about the preserved villages were conducted by MNSAA between 2006 and 2008. After twenty-year-long efforts, they contacted landowners who could be traced and who were willing to restore their houses using the subsidy. The project of restoring houses will come to an end in the near future. Simultaneously, the CAD of the County Government has actively been searching out more properties which have the potential to be restored, mostly temples and

family residential halls. This kind of subsidy is more specific to individual cases and subsidized properties first need to be listed as official cultural heritage.

### 2.2.3 Revitalization projects and the Operate-Transfer model

The aforementioned Operate-Transfer model has also been applied to the revitalization projects of battlefield heritage sites in the latest decade. As opposed to traditional settlements, the battlefield sites are mostly owned by the Armed Forces so that the ownership issue is not as complicated as with the houses and villages. Due to the fact that tourists simply cannot endure unending visits to analogous fortifications, it is necessary to search for new functions for these sites. To date, there are two former fortifications (Stronghold 12 and Stronghold 55) transformed into guesthouses. Local associations were commissioned to revitalize some of the other fortifications. Furthermore, the restoration project of the former Meishi barracks (梅石營區) is undergoing restoration aimed at transforming into a cultural center for the islands. The County Government has inventoried the potential sites which were released by the Armed Forces and planned to use them for the project of the “International Art Island” (國際藝術島). New art concepts will be introduced to the islands to reinterpret these battlefield sites as environmental art (Cultural Diversity Studio 2018). Compared to the abundance of potential sites, a lack of developers makes the vision of revitalization very difficult to widely realize.

### 2.2.4 Village-based community empowerment

The introduction of community empowerment in Matsu is considered successful in individual villages by most islanders after years of operation, although how the villages has been empowered is another question. As the social network of the islands is largely based on neighborhoods and villages, the community basically equals the village in the context of Matsu. (Therefore, when I refer to village empowerment in the thesis, it is understood as community

empowerment by islanders.) The scenario of village empowerment can be categorized into two types: event-dominant populated villages and revitalized tourist villages.

The concept of village empowerment was first introduced in Niujiao village in 1998. Villagers cleaned up seven traditional houses and revitalized them as a café, a village salon, and so on (Chang Y-C 2005, 60). Nevertheless, as Niujiao is a relatively populated village and very close to the core of the county, some villagers do not value these developments which they considered useless. Thus, the revitalization project and settlement preservation processes have not always been continuously smooth in the way they have been conducted. Hence, part of ongoing village empowerment projects connected to settlement preservation was transferred to the abandoned villages of Qinbi, Jinsha, Dapu, and Fuzheng. Subsequently, the focus on settlement preservation turned into the preservation of landscape integrity and tourism development because there were almost no residents or active social networks left in these villages. Landowners of these villages were either residents of more developed villages on the same island or had emigrated to Taiwan and expected their abandoned properties to bring some profit. So far, these villages have been hotspots of tourism and many guesthouses have been opened these years.

Dapu village is home to a unique project among these villages, “Exchange Your Life with ‘X’” (以「X」換生活). Here, people from Taiwan are invited to stay on the island for several weeks or months and utilize the public space of the restored houses to experience life on a remote outlying island with their special arts and crafts. Originally, this project was operated by an external professional group, Cultural Diversity Studio. Since 2019, the project has been run by the village association. According to the head of Cultural Diversity Studio, the rapport between these outsiders and islanders has been grown year by year. That is, it was time for

external groups to leave the running of this village project to locals in this village (Anonymous L, pers. comm.).

Besides these tourist villages, the village empowerment project has flourished all over the islands. As villagers are intimately bound with each other before the project was initiated, the project aimed more to instruct villagers on how to organize events and apply for government subsidies (Anonymous T, pers. comm.). However, sometimes, the social network becomes even more competitive in each village with increasing resources and villagers can get their share (Anonymous A, pers. comm.). The newly-introduced organization and villagers' varying attitudes toward the value of "development" has also caused disputes between villagers (Wang J-H 2006). The fluidity of each village is actually and intuitively even more marked and multi-generational in religious affairs. Even islanders who live in Taiwan are motivated to return and contribute to this aspect of traditional life. Typically, villagers who are active in community affairs are also the ones who get involved in religious associations (Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.).

## 2.2.5 Promotion of war heritage as World Heritage

Since "Matsu Battlefield Cultural Landscape" was listed as a "Potential World Heritage Site" in Taiwan in 2010, there has been a continuous project to promote war heritage as World Heritage in Matsu. An academic group received the commission to operationalize this project by the County Government for the first two years and afterward, to the present day, work was carried on by the Cultural Diversity Studio. In 2014, Matsu was chosen as one of the three best practices for potential world heritage sites which meant it would receive more resources from the central government (National Audit Office 2017). In my opinion, Matsu is truly one of few sites which conducts the promotion of World Heritage in Taiwan effectively. The initial stage of the project, taking around two years, confirmed and inventoried extent of cultural heritage

in the designated area. In the next phase of work, the people involved in the project started to disseminate varied aspects of the concept of World Heritage among different segments of local society, including government agencies, students, the tourism industry, local residents, etc. Consequently, most islanders understand that the government has a goal of achieving World Heritage status for the site, even though they might not agree much with the idea. Some negative attitudes include not being persuaded of the heritage value of the sites and not feeling confidence in the future of the islands.

After the completion of the inventorization and introduction phase, the latest actions of the project are intended to explore the memories and identities of islanders as inheritors of the war heritage of the islands. This changed narrative is important because during the period of war mobilization, the islanders had little opportunity to approach military areas, let alone the defense system. They are actually quite unfamiliar with the battlefield which was an extremely restricted area. Therefore, to connect the heritage value of the battlefield with their living experience becomes a necessity to make the cultural meaning of the site be more comprehensive and down-to-earth (Anonymous L, pers. comm.). For political reasons the actual world heritage nomination of the site takes a long time but in the meantime the importance of war heritage becomes gradually rooted among local people in Matsu.

## 2.2.6 Local-inherited intangible cultural heritage

As shown in Table 1 in the previous chapter, there are only three registrations of intangible cultural heritage properties on the official list, making it appear that intangible aspects of heritage have been lost in Matsu. Nevertheless, in the Taiwanese context (including Matsu), people do not consider what they habitually practice in religious affairs as heritage. Chiang et al. (2017, 246) pointed out that “the division of tangible and intangible heritage was dangerous and could be a regressive step for the preservation movement in Taiwan.” Actually, in contrast,

although religious events were restricted during the period of war mobilization, religious activity substantially recovered after the democratization of the islands. Islanders' involvement in religious affairs is much stronger and more consolidated than the protection of tangible cultural heritage. Therefore, even if this thesis does not concentrate much on the intangible aspects of heritage, this does not mean the intangible cultural heritage has been overlooked on the islands. Simply, islanders have their ways of conducting their religious affairs and the consciousness of heritage is neither critical nor necessary.

Many academic work have shown the importance of religious affairs in mobilizing islanders. The greatest threat to religious traditions is still the shrinking of population in Matsu, especially the younger generation (Chiu Y 2018). The engagement of government agencies in these religious activities is only on the level of budget subsidies and tourism marketing. The complexity of the bureaucratic process and focus on tourist value sometimes has a negative effect on operations. It is noteworthy that for religious representatives, the value of what they inherit is far from the tangible heritage properties and listed festivals; what is more important to them is their undying belief in the deity hidden from professional discourse on artistic and historical heritage values (Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.).

In sum, ongoing heritage projects are quite plentiful in Matsu, but the actual executants mostly belong to the same group of people because the population on the islands is very limited. Individual islanders would be kept very busy indeed if they wanted to be involved in everything. Just as every individual's voice can be easily heard and their opinions shared across the islands, any disagreement between stakeholders within a project can also be easily observed as well, a difficulty which will be discussed in the next section.

## 2.3 Disagreements between Stakeholders

Disagreements between stakeholders began at the same time that the concept of cultural heritage was first introduced into the islands in the 1990s. Originally, the points of dispute naturally lay in a distrust of the role of heritage preservation in local development (Chang Y-C 2005, 60), while, later on, many deep structural contradictions gradually emerged between stakeholders. In this section, I will provide examples of the kind of disagreements that arose between pairs of stakeholders, including between government agencies, between residents and the government, between internal and external experts, between islanders as the result of unstable social structures, and the tension and instability inherent to the cross-strait relations between Mainland China and the Matsu islands. First, however, I will provide an overview of the community heritage network as a whole as well as describe interactions between the individual stakeholder groups within the network in order to make clearer heritage preservation processes and disruptions in Matsu.

### 2.3.1 Overview of the community network in heritage preservation

Although most heritage projects in Matsu seem to be top-down initiatives, the accountability of the local government operates directly in reaction to the intimate social network and elections (Chang Y-C 2005, 78). Each islander can have dual roles as different kinds of stakeholders. The county mayor was also one of the local intellectuals who initiated village empowerment projects; another local intellectual became the head of the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) of the County Government. As a result, it is difficult to see these projects as either top-down or bottom-up. At the same time, both internal heritage communities and external expert groups can have intensive contact with the government. Normally, islanders do not distinguish much between a contact person with ties to the government itself or someone

coming with a professional idea from external groups. All these factors make the heritage scene on the islands even more complicated and difficult to tackle.

While everyone is for improving Matsu, various stakeholders disagree in terms of ideology and fundamental measures that need to be taken. On the other hand, stakeholders can also exploit official measures to realize their wishes. This kind of adoption and translation of various official discourses is very common in heritage affairs in Matsu. Thus, the overview (Fig. 9) I provided here is based on the procedures by which resources are distributed and the common goals of various stakeholders, rather than the stakeholders' real concerns. However, individuals can play many different roles in any given scenario which has the effect of hiding underlying disagreements and thereby preventing from more serious conflicts.

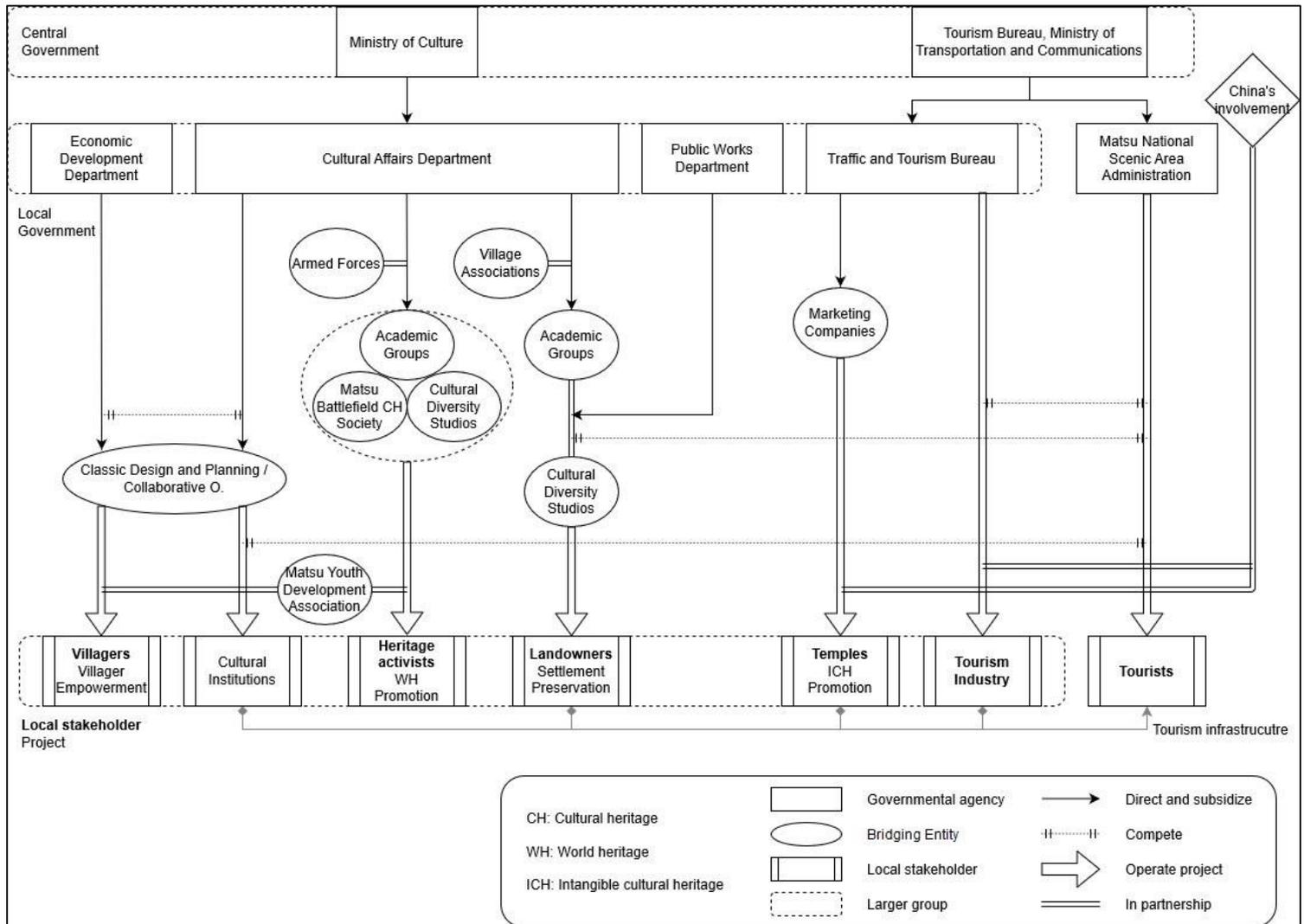


Figure 9: The overview of stakeholders in heritage affairs in Matsu (created by the author)

### 2.3.2 Disagreements across government agencies

From the overview, it can be observed that there are several government agencies involved in heritage affairs in Matsu. Although according to the legal framework, heritage is the responsibility of the cultural authority, ranging from the central to the local governmental level, the nonexplicit condition of this responsibility is the legitimation process of “identifying heritage.” In other words, only heritage with legal recognition is considered heritage for most outside stakeholders. Therefore, other government agencies will not give appropriate attention to heritage lacking legal status. This is the general situation when there is any disagreement across government agencies from the viewpoint of each agency or the islanders.

Among government agencies in Matsu, the Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (MNSAA) is the most controversial. It is not controlled by the County Government, which means islanders' opinions are only rarely exchanged between the agency and islanders through the County Council. Furthermore, the officials it employs are typically not islanders; therefore, islanders' social networks cannot intervene and influence it. The projects the MNSAA has been carrying out are mostly for incoming tourists. "Heritage preservation is not so connected to our business; what we are doing is providing tourism resources," said a manager of MNSAA (Anonymous X, pers. comm.). This attitude is also acknowledged by most interviewees, especially the head of CAD of the County Government (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.). They depicted the agency as superficial, destructive and uncooperative.

The origin of this problem lies in the way the agency was established. From the very beginning, it was directed by an authority which had little interest in cultural affairs. Although MNSAA manages many heritage properties, it always gives priority to tourism and reconstructs heritage properties to make them more appealing, convenient and useful tourist attractions. "Anyway, general tourists are superficial, so we need to provide something as superficial for them," he further argues (Anonymous X, pers. comm.). When both agencies do come together for discussions, they appear more interested in how to distribute these heritage properties rather than how to properly preserve heritage.

When CAD's head shared her experiences in office, she mentioned that "there is no point in being too stubborn in cultural affairs (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.)." As the County Government is a single entity and most of its officials are islanders, there are generally more mutual understandings between different departments. Since each department represents divergent kinds of needs on the islands, "what the cultural authority can do is to influence more people with culture."

Government agencies in Matsu also struggle to attract attention and resources from the central government (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.). Matsu is the smallest county in Taiwan with a very distinct history compared to the island of Taiwan. In the narrative of Taiwanese nationalism, Matsu only incidentally became part of modern Taiwan in the 1950s. For domestic tourists, Matsu is attractive because of its uniqueness, but for international tourists, Matsu is far from the Taiwan they hear about. Therefore, even when the central government is marketing international tourism, Matsu is typically not represented (Zhou Z-X, pers. comm.). This attitude reflects the general attitude of the local government towards the central government.

### 2.3.3 Disagreements between residents and the government

The islanders' attitude toward the County Government and MNSAA vary widely. People who care more about heritage on the islands typically have positive attitudes toward CAD, while criticizing MNSAA: "The Cultural Affairs Department preserves heritage, while the MNSAA destroys it. (Zhou Z-X, pers. comm.; Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.)" However, for those who do not directly work with CAD, some of their activities might be not understandable because they do not directly benefit from them (Jianduzhe 2015). Besides destroying cultural heritage properties for touristic purposes, the fact that the MNSAA tends to plan projects in advance and informs residents only after decisions makes islanders feel disrespected (Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.). As a result, islanders actually avoid collaborating with MNSAA, considering it an outside agency on the islands.

Nevertheless, during the settlement preservation project, MNSAA's outsider position made it more reliable from the viewpoint of the central government as this agency fairly distributes subsidies for the restoration of each traditional house. It developed a fixed regulation to determine what would be meant by reasonable restoration as well as the amount of each subsidy. Later, the County Government also adopted the same regulation to insure fairness when they

conducted similar projects (Anonymous X, pers. comm.). Although some islanders criticize the subsidy process as unfriendly, bureaucratic and tricky, others express their understanding of the compromises that sometimes have to be made to create parity between stakeholders (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). In addition, for some local heritage activists, providing large budgets for restoration is not an appropriate way to preserve cultural heritage because that simply means more “traditional” guesthouses (Anonymous J, pers. comm.). Nevertheless, this subsidy intended to support reconstruction expenses is basically what most islanders expect in the discourse of cultural heritage preservation.

There is also the phenomenon that islanders cannot distinguish which department of the County Government they are dealing with as separate competent authorities may conduct similar projects at the same time. When they consider the County Government as an entirety, any negative behavior from one department causes people to have negative impressions of the whole government although it is common that there are disputes between departments. Furthermore, when the CAD commissions professional groups to conduct a project, the islanders consider them part of the government as well. This kind of ambiguity in organization makes it difficult for islanders to identify who they can turn to when disagreements occur.

When private properties receive government subsidies, some disagreements occur because islanders most likely consciously regard these properties as public properties, while the government’s plans are more like one-time subsidies. Responsibility for follow-up maintenance, thus, becomes a problem. Both the government and those who receive the subsidy forget that traditional architecture is often more fragile and also costly to maintain (Feng Z-M, Chen X-Z, and Chen Q-Y, pers. comm.). One such case, the restoration of Tisban Mazu Temple, will be presented in Chapter four.

### 2.3.4 Disagreements between internal and external experts

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the County Government depends greatly on external professional groups. It commissions them to conduct projects based on the government's standards and expectations. It is common that professional groups often adopt the measures which are appropriate in Taiwan without taking into consideration the special social structure of the islands. For example, in Taiwan, most heritage properties face serious threats from development pressure resulting in an urgent need to maintain their original settings. However, in Matsu, most heritage properties are already abandoned and without interference, either positive or negative, no one would bother with them. As the head of CAD describes,

“If we keep letting hundreds of identical fortifications remain in their original settings, then they will be forgotten in Matsu. However, from the viewpoint of an academic group from Taiwan, more valuable heritage properties should be preserved in a more authentic way to preserve their memory. In contrast, for me, finding new meanings for these properties would be more useful. We are trying hard to communicate this concern with them.” (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.)

Another similar concern occurs in the field of village empowerment. “Village empowerment works well in Taiwan because people there are quite alienated from each other; however, in Matsu, villagers are naturally very intimate with each other,” said a manager working on the islands in the field (Anonymous T, pers. comm.). In the case of a temple restoration project in Niujiao, Lin (2017, 142) also observed that in the end the ideal villager empowerment project must coordinate with the actual social network more interested in religious affairs. The flexibility of religious affairs is much more powerful than any newly introduced villager empowerment project, best described by the following quotation from Yang Sui-Sheng, a heritage activist from Niujiao Village:

Originally we thought of the community as a big circle, and the temple committee as a smaller circle within. But then we had to change our way of thinking ... we had to hide ourselves [the association] within the temple committee, and use their power to strengthen our own. (as cited in Lin 2017, 142)

Similar disagreements began in the earlier phase of settlement preservation. Since 2000, many professional groups came to Matsu to carry out their theoretical ideas about how settlements should be preserved. They established good relationships with the local government officials, which was depicted as the “preservation ideology of the elites,” while woefully neglecting the voices of local landowners (Chang Y-C 2005, 66). They even tried to introduce the concept of grass-root participation to Matsu. Obviously, these were measures more suitable for urban contexts. Islanders were already very grass-root and participatory in their own way. In addition, most landowners had already left their properties in the preserved village and it is impossible to reconstitute a community in an abandoned village.

The disagreement between internal and external experts was present from the very beginning of heritage preservation in Matsu. Nevertheless, heritage activists on the islands still think positively about their efforts. “They are very important in conveying the heritage value of Matsu to the outside world,” said Wang Hua-Di (pers. comm.). Several scholars continue to pay attention to the development of Matsu even they have no ongoing projects on the islands.

### 2.3.5 The unstable social structure of the islands

Many trivial disagreements can be attributed to unstable social structures in the islands. Most of the islanders who solely have their sole residence in Matsu are the elderly. Although usually identifying themselves as islanders, many people emigrated to Taiwan between the 1960s to the 1990s. Their concern about the islands is based more on affection than material needs (Chen M-Z, pers. comm.). For example, when government agencies wish to hold public hearings about heritage projects, they typically have additional sessions in Taoyuan (桃園), a city on Taiwan Island where many islanders immigrated. Even those who still have occupations on the islands, usually public officials or people working in industry (for example, the tourism industry), often have two residences – one in Matsu and one in Taiwan. Some islanders invest

in real estate in Fuzhou City, Mainland China, which is even more profitable. In order to meet parental expectations, the younger generation mostly develop their careers in Taiwan unless they find a job in government agencies (Anonymous X, pers. comm.). To sum up, although many islanders identify themselves as islanders, not many of them make a living in Matsu during their lifetimes. Matsu is more like a transfer point throughout their lives and the lives of their family.

For that reason, when we talk about settlement preservation in Matsu, it is actually preservation by the government with some experts' help and landowners' permissions. There are very few current residents. What landowners expect is to make additional profit from it. Otherwise, they no longer depend on these houses and traditional industry anymore. If the government introduces some new ideas of heritage preservation, very few islanders would be mobilized because, generally speaking, "it is difficult to persuade people remaining on the islands to accept new ideas (Anonymous L, pers. comm.)," as they are the most conservative among the islanders. Restoring old houses and making profits from the restored buildings is obviously a safer and more predictable option. The heritage activist group is always made up of similar islanders who are encouraged to participate all the various projects, but sadly, they are growing older.

Fortunately, after years of effort, some islanders from the younger generation appear eager to remain on the islands and are interested in cultural heritage preservation, although there are very few employment opportunities that can ensure their livelihood for long. Several younger Taiwanese have also dedicated themselves to Matsu. However, how to keep these young people on the islands represents a serious issue for constructing a stable society on the islands.

### 2.3.6 Tensions between Mainland China and Taiwan

The attitude of islanders toward Mainland China is also very contradictory. Although the Cultural Affairs Department is interested in working together with mainland entities on archaeology, the collaboration is significantly constrained by tensions in cross-strait relations, which has become worse since 2016 when Tsai Ing-Wen entered office as Taiwanese president (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.), and much worse after 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, Hong Kong protests, etc. As for the collaboration in the “Liang Ma Lantern Festival,” the head of the Cultural Affairs Department clearly considers it a form of propaganda. “We just make a show with them,” said Wu Xiao-Yun (pers. comm.). It is ironic that a festival inscribed on the national list of intangible cultural heritage (国家级非物质文化遗产) on one side of a strait appears to mean nothing on the other, reflecting the nature of politics in each country.

Compared to Kinmen, another Taiwanese outlying archipelago having a similar political context to Matsu which profits a lot from contact with Mainland China, Matsu is still considered remote and unknown by Mainland China. While islanders keep expecting the arrival of tourists from Mainland China, the tourism industry on the islands actually rely on domestic tourists from Taiwan. From the vantage point of Fuzhou City across the strait on the mainland, Matsu represents both the periphery of the region of Eastern Fujian and the frontier of Taiwan, which even strengthens Matsu’s Taiwanese characteristics from their point of view. From the stand point of Matsu, the local government responds that Matsu is Matsu and not the periphery of any territory (Huang K-Y 2017, 100). That is, the very existence of Matsu helps the local government of Fuzhou City maintain its significance, while Matsu emphasizes its individual identity more to both central governments. As a result, cultural heritage becomes a discourse in geopolitics within the framework of national boundaries and enclave mentality (Huang K-Y 2017).

## Chapter 3 – Fragmented Management

In the previous chapter, I have already shown how disagreements occur between different stakeholder groups concerning the trajectory of heritage affairs on the Matsu Islands. After examining the complexity of heritage preservation projects and political contexts as well as the variety of stakeholder groups in Matsu, it is not surprising that the heritage affairs on the islands can be quite fragmented. In this chapter, I will review different aspects of heritage discourse on the islands to explain the interacting factors resulting in this complicated situation. First, I will show how Matsu’s heritage is presented to tourists and how they actually interpret their own heritage they think should be preserved. Second, I will explain why heritage is important from different points of view, forming “heritage values” on the islands. Third, I will analyze how government stabilizes and intensifies the heritage interpretation and value through implementation of various policies and measures to achieve its goal and other stakeholders’ responses to it. Actually, every government’s act reflects a kind of ideology and ambition toward the future of different stakeholder groups.

### 3.1 Heritage Interpretation

Imagine a tourist who is interested in Matsu is planning an excursion to the islands. The most detailed information you can access beforehand is from the official website constructed by the Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (MNSAA). The website includes practical information such as transportation and accommodation and also a full list of tourist attractions and festivals. However, this information is mainly arranged for the convenience of mass tourism. If they are already interested in a specific topic, it is very difficult to find thematic information on this website or other online resources – although a variety of information already exists if the visitor can figure out the correct information channel to access. The general message the government wants to convey is that “Matsu is historical, beautiful, interesting, and

diverse. You should come.” It is a good message and is also what I felt when I first visited these islands.

After they arrive in the islands, the person who they first meet is typically the owners of guesthouses, one of the stakeholder groups. They will give you a free map published by MNSAA and spend five minutes indicating what places are of greatest interest in their opinion. Most tourist attractions lack supervising personnel, so tourists need to discover them on their own. The MNSAA government agency provides information boards at every spot. Generally speaking, it is still difficult to find any interpretation of Matsu as a whole and explanations of its complicated contexts. If the tourist visits the Folklore Culture Museum, they can receive some answers concerning a “folklore” which today barely exists on the islands. As a result, the more times visitors come to the islands, the more confused they feel. Why are these temples all “traditional” but look dissimilar? Where are the inhabitants of this “preserved settlement?” There are very few working fishing boats, but restaurants are all selling “local seafood.”

If tourists manage to ask the islanders questions, things become more problematic. Now three versions of Matsu exist: what presented in official discourse, the heritage interpretations offered by the islanders themselves, and what tourists actually observe during visits. The most contrasting heritage discourses in Matsu concern the belief in the Goddess Mazu. Wang Y-H (2011) presented the top-down process to intensify the connection of the island and Mazu in official narratives by promotion and construction. The name “Matsu” itself originally referred to a single village where a temple to Mazu is located. In 1949, during the military retreat from Mainland China, the Armed Forces was the dominate political entity controlling more of life on the islands. They dictated this name be used to include the whole area of islands. Later on, they invented the legend that her corpse floated to the coast of Nangan Island and that the Mazu temple marked the site where she was first buried in order to strengthen the link of the islands

with mainland China (62-68). Decades later, after Matsu started to promote tourism, the local government aimed to develop the image of the islands directly representing the goddess Mazu. Yet when you really ask islanders about their main beliefs, they worship tens of other gods, and Mazu is not among them. Mazu is, of course, an important deity in the general region, namely, southeast China, but she is not as significant on Matsu in the way that is specifically promoted in Matsu.

MNSAA has done a lot concerning the goddess Mazu in order to promote tourism. It leads several agencies to hold the festival, “Mazu Ascension Day” (媽祖昇天祭) annually to celebrate her immortality. Every islander, however, considers this festival to be a complete fiction designed for tourists and conducted by public relations agencies (See Appendix 5). MNSAA further constructed a theme park with a gigantic statue of the goddess Mazu and entitled it the “Mazu Religious Cultural Area” (媽祖宗教文化園區) at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The county government played an assisting role in realizing these projects. Even the local community’s decisions intensified this artificial image. For example, Magang villagers decided to rebuild their Mazu temple in a Taiwanese palace-style, an architectural style originating in south Fujian province on the mainland, mainly because they thought that kind of temple more splendid to compete with what is found on Taiwan.

However, when you really ask islanders about their religion and beliefs, the goddess Mazu goes unmentioned except for her connection to Matsu as a place name; even the related legend is commonly held to be suspect. In Wang Y-H’s interviews, islanders often revealed the following attitude: “Mazu should not represent the Matsu Islands... although, every place needs to create some stories and legends to attract tourists; we accept it (80-81).” Considering that the goddess Mazu is more significant on the island of Taiwan, it is evident that this strategy of interpretation would turn out to be effective for attracting tourists. Nevertheless, Mazu deity worshiped on

the islands is obviously not part of their daily lives. (For example, in the recently rebuilt temple in Niujiao Village, there are seven gods worshiped inside without the goddess Mazu [Lin 2017, 144-5].) Even though some Mazu temples are more active, their guardians are more interested in broadening links with other Mazu temples in Taiwan and mainland China (Cheng Q-Y, Chen X-Z, and Feng Z-M, pers. comm.), thus linking Matsu to Taiwan and also becoming an important node within Greater China.

Therefore, interestingly but strangely, all these activities centered around the goddess Mazu are not considered authentic heritage in either government or community discourses. It is an appropriation of religious values for touristic purposes. This same situation, more or less, repeats itself in other categories of cultural heritage in Matsu. The MNSAA, together with other government agencies, is dedicated to producing beautiful interpretations with stories, legends and traditions by embellishing simpler facts. See the Table 2 for a quick view of this phenomenon across different categories of cultural heritage in Matsu.

Table 2. Different interpretations of cultural heritage across categories in the Matsu Islands

Category	What presented to tourists	What tourists observe	Islanders' responses
Mazu belief	Mazu is the islanders' main belief. She is the representation of the islands.	Very few worshippers can be observed in the temple. Other temples are even more splendid and traditional.	All such Mazu interpretations are produced to attract tourists, and we accept it.
Traditional settlement	Matsu has the best practice of settlement restoration anywhere in Taiwan. These villages are like the "Mediterranean of Matsu."	Most houses are guesthouses and cafes; others are abandoned. No residents really live there.	This is a way to make profits. No one really wants to live in that kind of old house. Anyway, the whole thing is good for islanders.
Fishery industry	It is the traditional means of livelihood in Matsu. It reflects how meticulous traditional techniques are.	There are very few working fishing boats along the coast. The ports are very quiet and deserted.	During the cold war period, fishing was seriously limited. Also, fish yields are increasingly poor. Only modern aquaculture is profitable now.
Battlefield construction	These fortifications have beautiful views. We should be grateful to the soldiers defending our country.	Yes. They are wonderful. But what were the roles and attitudes of islanders during the military period?	We feel very distant from those sites. During the cold war period, we were not allowed to approach any of these fortifications. War is not that simple.

Reference: author's observation and interviews

Generally speaking, the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) of the county government tries hard to prioritize islanders' voices. One of their roles is to subsidize and empower heritage activists to discover islanders' memories concerning these cultural heritage fields. The local community has begun to discuss what they really value as heritage. Another role of CAD is to explore the extended interpretation of cultural heritage properties on the islands. For example, new attempts have been made to develop a new style of house which adopts both traditional and modern techniques to adapt to the environment of the islands (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.). Furthermore, future heritage properties undergoing restoration projects would no longer be

leased as guesthouses or cafes. More of the CAD budget is used in the local community's workshops in heritage affairs rather than in subsidies for restoration. Nevertheless, for the older generation on the islands, these kinds of directives are still opaque and useless (Jianduzhe 2015).

Recently, the most dominant "shared" heritage property across the Matsu Islands has been the Baiming festival (Ba-mang in Fuzhounese; 擺暝) taking place during the Lantern Festival (15<sup>th</sup> January on the Lunar calendar). For Matsu islanders, this festival is even more important than the Lunar New Year itself. Originally, it marked a celebration of the new year held in each village. In 2013, the county government started to organize a series of events and promote them as a unique tourist experience. After years of mobilization with the reinforcement of mass media, this festival has gradually become a symbol of Matsu agreed upon by most islanders. The festival itself even reformulates the cultural identity of Matsu (Tong X-Y 2017). Although some commoditization problems connected to tourism still occur, the festival no longer overwhelms the locality and identity gradually developing out of the event. See Chiu Y's (2018) recent work for more detailed arguments.

Overall, however these local interpretations of various heritage phenomena still lack information materials to further disseminate to interested tourists. Tourist images of the islands are based on what has already been produced for nearly twenty years. Culture, thus, becomes an artificial commodity meant to serve outsiders. In the end, even for islanders, although they may have given up on explaining these realities to tourists, researchers are very welcomed if they happen to find anything strange. For tourists, it is an issue of tourism quality. Nevertheless, for islanders, if such cultural fragmentation continues to worsen, they will gradually become lost in a hopeless combat between tourism and cultural views upheld by different stakeholder groups. Is cultural heritage preservation for the islanders or is cultural heritage a fake for

tourists? In other words, do heritage properties reproduced for tourists really represent Matsu's cultural heritage? Ironically, as most internal stakeholders tacitly understand: they are not.

Actually, even the comprehension of heritage as a concept is not that simple and homogenous in Matsu. The academic understanding of heritage is only valid in the circle of cultural officials and heritage activists. For some islanders, when they are asked about cultural heritage, they directly divert to the topics which mainly concern them such as their family, religion, temple or settlement. It is not easy for them to consider the whole context of Matsu's cultural heritage. They receive the concept of heritage through the cultural authority's diffuse guidance. As for other government agencies, cultural heritage is limited to the properties given legal status. Therefore, it is understandable how difficult for the cultural authority in Matsu to discuss cultural heritage issues as a whole with other stakeholder groups on the islands.

## 3.2 Heritage Value

It is common that economic values and cultural values compete in heritage discourse everywhere in the world. In Matsu, the fragmentary nature of cultural heritage concerns add to the complexity of its history and place-identity. In 1997, the respected former county mayor Liu Li-Qun (劉立群) proposed a vision of the Matsu Islands with the slogan “the pearl of eastern Fujian; the hometown of hope (閩東之珠，希望之鄉),” which still appeals to and is remembered by islanders today. The development strategies he proposed mainly enhanced infrastructure and promoted the tourism industry (Lienchiang County Government 連江縣政府 2016). The construction of the Matsu Folklore Culture Museum and the initiation of settlement preservation were both realized by him. Since then, tourism has become the dominant discourse in the development of the Matsu Islands. As a result, the links between cultural heritage and tourist resources becomes increasingly solid. Most stakeholders on the

islands would agree that cultural heritage is significant for tourism, and tourism is significant for the future of the islands. There are still a few islanders, however, considering effective heritage preservation strategies that would make heritage properties profitable and suitable for tourists.

Actually, some islanders even welcome other kinds of opportunities which might be helpful for the islands. In 2012, islanders voted in favor of allowing the construction of casinos in Matsu (57% to 43%, turnout rate 41%; Meng X-J [2016]). The referendum evoked intense debates between islanders, probably representing the first instance of a public affair being placed on the table for open discussion in the history of Matsu. Many heritage activists started to defend the priority of cultural identity and sound alarms about the dangers of introducing a gambling industry. Cao Ya-Ping, the present head of the Matsu Youth Development Association, was the leader of the anti-casino ally at that time (Wu P-R 2019). “They expect the casino will bring more investment and infrastructure to Matsu,” she said (pers. comm.), “I totally understand their motivation to support the construction, because we really need more. Yet, I feel we have other solutions.” Later, although the referendum allowed the possibility of the construction, related nationwide regulations did not permit plans to be follow up. So far, the planning of the casino has ceased for a while and has gradually been forgotten by islanders.

The incident of the unrealized casino (Fig. 10) may appear to have nothing to do with cultural heritage, but by exploring why those heritage activists were determined to stay in Matsu and dedicate themselves to the future of the islands, it will be shown that the dispute marked a critical point in bringing islanders together, both in the sense of searching for the future of the islands and reinforcing the significance of Matsu culture and identity. Culture and mass tourism became two contrasting motivating discourses as place-frames (Martin 2003, 730) to unite

islanders. For some islanders, cultural heritage is just an addition to Matsu development, but for others, it represents the whole core of the future.



Figure 10: Blueprint of Matsu Casino designed by Weidner Resorts (Meng X-J 2016)

At first glance, it is difficult to see how something old and useless could become both meaningful and profitable. Just like the local key figure of settlement preservation, Cao Yi-Xiong, most islanders never thought those old houses were valuable until they had opportunities to observe other heritage sites elsewhere around the world. For those who care more about Matsu identity, cultural heritage would naturally become a solution for leading Matsu towards a better future. “We are not an outlying island of Taiwan; Taiwan is our outlying island,” said Cao Y-X (pers. comm.). Another Taiwanese heritage activist active in Matsu for more than a decade also notes that “Matsu islanders need more imagination and faith in their hometown. They did not have much agency in history. Before, they have always been forced to accept what they have.” (Anonymous L, pers. comm.) If the identity of Matsu exists in only a few islanders’ minds, how is it possible to make cultural heritage persuasive for them?

When it comes to external stakeholders, especially agencies of the central government, their discourses concerning heritage value in Matsu are very different. The central cultural authority is more dedicated to propagating the significance of Matsu in national and global history.

Therefore, Cold War heritage and the context of cross-strait relations have been placed more in the spotlight to tell the story of the last historic period of Taiwan as a newborn nation-state, composed of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu – the official title of Taiwan in the World Trade Organization. In addition, anything that can only be found on Matsu has become increasingly important to highlight the cultural diversity of Taiwan. As a result, the value of Matsu has been historically combined with that of Taiwan (as a nation-state), although it is culturally alienated from Taiwan (as a cultural entity).

The logic of the central tourism authority is more realistic and visible. The most dominant government agency of tourism in Matsu, MNSAA, has performed its duty perfectly with regard to what Urry (1990) calls the “tourist gaze.” The MNSAA assesses the value of cultural heritage based on tourists’ preferences. It is continuously on the lookout for any kind of new spectacle. It rebuilds existing heritage properties and creates brand-new heritage properties only if those properties can attract more tourists. Other external heritage activists also adopt this logic and propose a variety of new ideas of different kinds of spectacles, such as the contemporary land art festival, but in a manner more respectful of islander wishes. These external stakeholders understand tourists are interested in cultural heritage, but some of them do not treat heritage properties properly as concerns their respective heritage value, as if heritage value is only meaningful in official documents but useless in reality. A MNSAA manager’s description best reflects this situation: “We respect any policy and measurement which concerns the listed cultural heritage, otherwise what we do is to attract tourists and construct a better environment. (Anonymous X, pers. comm.)”

Actually, the “heritage value” I discuss here is very ambiguous. The vague definition and comprehension of heritage on the islands strengthens this problematic situation. The widely-accepted assessment of the cultural aspect of heritage value, namely, authenticity and integrity,

does not work well in Matsu. For example, are temples built by the Armed Forces with cement during the military period authentic? Actually, most older temples (although not that historical) in Matsu are rebuilt with the help of the Armed Forces, but this fact remains invisible in the discourses of heritage value because it might not look ‘authentic’. Even today, soldiers are still asked to help run religious events as they were a few decades ago. Is this integrity (Fig. 11)? In sum, the islands have not been all that “authentically traditional” for a long time, although some external stakeholders interpret the heritage on Matsu as if it was.



*Figure 11: Banli Mazu Temple (坂里天后宮) built by the Armed Force (left; author's collection) and soldiers participating in the Mazu pilgrimage festival (right; author's friend's contribution)*

Generally speaking, in historiography, the concept of cultural heritage comes much later than the concept of cultural identity. But in Matsu, strangely, two concepts were introduced and produced simultaneously and interchangeably. The process of cultural heritage preservation also implies the search for the islands' cultural identity. Therefore, it is very hard to figure out a unified and solid discourse for heritage value in Matsu; even a discourse of what kind of place Matsu is and should be in the future is difficult to develop. Considering that there are internal stakeholders (islanders) and external stakeholders (outsiders), the complexity of the value of cultural heritage in Matsu can be analyzed as follows:

Table 3. Heritage values from different points of views on Matsu

Point of View Heritage Value	Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders
Tourism	Making profits - How to increase profits? - How to allocate profits? - Where do funds come from?	Producing spectacles connected to the: - Natural landscape - Tangible cultural heritage - Intangible cultural heritage
Identity	Discovering locality by - Searching shared memories - Creating common experiences	Emphasizing Matsu's significance - In Taiwan as a nation-state - Globally for outstanding universal value

Reference: author's observation and interviews

Although this model looks applicable anywhere in the world, very few places can simultaneously demonstrate all these contrasting but equally influential discourses, not to mention that Matsu only has around ten thousand residents. Moreover, the stratified view of heritage, from world heritage, national heritage to local heritage, which can be widely observed in other places, greatly overlaps in Matsu. Stakeholders, especially government agencies, are eager to expand the interpretation of Matsu's heritage and place heritage values of different geographical scales to every heritage property on the islands. The complexity of government agencies' heritage policies and measures of heritage management are the main factors resulting in this **fragmented heritage management**.

### 3.3 Heritage Management and Policy

In the previous chapter, I have already shown the variety of disagreements occurring between stakeholder groups. However, the characteristics of policies and measures taken by each individual government agency is problematic concerning cultural heritage preservation as a whole. This situation can be observed everywhere in Taiwan; however, as Matsu is relatively smaller compared to other counties, the effects of the heavy burden of bureaucracy is more obvious and influential.

Generally speaking, cultural heritage policies are still developing and immature in Taiwan. Although more and more citizens begin to care about cultural heritage, the government is still finding its way in its response to people's requests. It either imitates foreign measures or adopts measures used in other fields such as public infrastructure. In Matsu, there are only two officers specifically dealing with cultural heritage affairs in the local cultural authority. Therefore, what they mainly do is distribute funds from the government budget, select appropriate partners, and audit bidders' outcomes. They rarely produce materials and discourses on their own. Instead, the cultural authority realizes its cultural heritage policies through the procedure of government financial procurement. This procedure typically functions in a competitive market where many similar service providers can compete with each other. However, this procedure becomes an obstacle for people who are willing to enter the field of cultural heritage because it makes their funding sources very unstable. On the other hand, when the authority builds a sustainable rapport with a specific partner, both stakeholders are suspected of collusion.

In Matsu, compared to visible restoration projects, community workshops and professional consultation of cultural heritage are not widely understood by most of the islanders. They trust academic groups more when it comes to these types of projects concerning community engagement and professional knowledge. However, for internal heritage activists, their experience with academic groups is not that satisfactory. The fact that these academic groups from Taiwan do not remain on the islands for long continues. Sadly, Matsu is the only county in Taiwan with no university. (Recently, a university branch from Taiwan dedicated to the marine sciences has been constructed on Matsu.) Therefore, there is a need to foster a stable organization, either national or local, to conduct heritage projects directed by the government. So far, among all the agencies accepting the government's commission, only a non-profit organization led by a local heritage activist is local. This organization, which represented the institutionalization of the local heritage community network, was first initiated in 2014

(Cultural Diversity Studio 2014, 86). There is another agency company registered in Matsu but run by a Taiwanese who has long been interested in Matsu. The other groups comprise either companies or universities from Taiwan Island. For the cultural authority of Matsu, it is very uncertain how long its collaboration with those external groups will last.

As for other sectors of the government, the main problems lie in the distribution of resources and profits and the openness of communication channels with the local community. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the MNSAA usually adopts the operate-transfer model to commercialize restored heritage properties it funds. Economically, the whole scenario reveals that the MNSAA utilizes public expenditures to support private business owners.

However, public expenditures should be spent on public needs. This measure creates dissonance between the understanding of publicity and heritage value. In addition, almost every interviewee expressed their negative impressions concerning the MNSAA government agency. Its representation on the islands is strongly questioned. It is obvious that there is little communication between the agency and the islanders. It acts more like a colonial institution serving Taiwanese tourists. Its missions and functions need to be discussed and modified if cultural heritage is to be considered important on the islands.

There are also structural factors obstructing government policies. First, although the local government has autonomy in cultural heritage affairs to a certain degree in Taiwan (Article 18; 19, *Local Government Act* [地方制度法], announced in 1999, last amended in 2016), most cultural heritage policies are proposed by the central government. So-called autonomy is limited to the inventorying of local cultural heritage properties and other administrative affairs. In addition, most of the government budget is allocated through project-based initiatives drafted by the central government. Very few financial resources can be autonomously used by

the local government. Considering most initiatives are developed based on the context and experience of Taiwan, some do not function well on Matsu. “What the central government is initiating is frequently changing, but anyway we find a solution to modify our continuing project to fit those initiatives,” the head of CAD said (Wu X-Y, pers. comm.).

For example, the practice of the initiative of community empowerment (or village empowerment), which has been promoted by the central government for more than two decades, also works very differently in Matsu compared to Taiwan. What islanders need is to have broader views in specific fields such as cultural heritage rather than holding random events to consolidate the village. A project manager shared her experience in this field:

“To be honest I do not know what to do to ‘assist’ islanders in this affair of community empowerment. Each village is already very consolidated. Sometimes it is me who asks them to do me the favor of submitting applications to related programs lest it looks like I am not doing anything.” (Anonymous T, pers. comm.)

Reviewing the system of local government structure (country – county – township – village) and corresponding cultural heritage policies and strategies in Taiwan, it can be expected that different directives would greatly overlap as Matsu is so small. Distinguishing between nationwide, county, and village initiatives is not that meaningful in such a small-scale place. From this point of view, something necessary in Taiwan might result in ambiguity, inefficiency, and waste in Matsu. Overall, it is common that a variety of inconsistent and rigid directives announced by the central government turn out not to be applicable on the local level because of particular historical contexts and geographical characteristics. Those directives are typically developed based on urban contexts, including community engagement, the operate-transfer model, profit-making heritage revitalization, etc. Very few strategies are formulated for rural areas and the diversity of cultural heritage categories such as cultural landscape and indigenous

settlement. The role of the central government should be to support local government in making the cultural heritage decisions best suited for the place.

Another phenomenon which can be clearly observed is the departmentalism of different government agencies in Matsu, an issue also common in other areas of Taiwan. However, as cultural heritage in Matsu is particularly important in many aspects of place-making, more agencies have become interested in it compared to other counties in Taiwan. The disagreements between the Cultural Affairs Department (part of the county government) and the Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (directed by the central government) have been demonstrated repeatedly throughout this thesis. Even other related agencies rarely consider cultural heritage issues as a whole in their policies and directives, as if cultural heritage is the exclusive business of the Cultural Affairs Department. However, in the latest white paper for sustainable development on Matsu (following the United Nations 2030 Agenda) issued by the county government in 2018, cultural heritage was finally placed at the center of visions for the future (Lienching County Government 2019, 6-8). Generally speaking, the core of local politics agrees that cultural heritage is very important in Matsu, but very few stakeholder groups really explore the implication of cultural heritage in Matsu for islanders.

As a result, the Cultural Affairs Department remains the only entity responsible for broadening the field of cultural heritage on the islands and finding solutions for cultural heritage preservation. Nevertheless, cultural heritage in Matsu should be more than the concern of other government agencies. The role of the cultural authority should be in proposing integrated strategies to get other stakeholders involved. In addition, different governmental stakeholders should be aware of what other stakeholder groups are doing to avoid misunderstandings, disagreements, and repetitions. Ideally, it would be even better if all stakeholders could find common goals in order to achieve and split tasks appropriately. Even if there are still

divergences in the way cultural heritage understood and how it can be preserved, stakeholders should at least have a forum where they can positively discuss these issues and where more stakeholders' participation in decision making is included. Therefore, I will propose some concrete solutions to improve communications over the future of cultural heritage on Matsu in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4 – Solutions

After scrutinizing the history and heritage of the Matsu Islands and observing **fragmented heritage management** and disagreements between stakeholders, in this chapter, I would like to provide some solutions to improve this situation. The core of solutions lies in the concept of “shared heritage” proposed by Labrador (2013). Although it sounds self-evident, when I was in the field, very few stakeholders expressed a sense of sharedness when it comes to cultural heritage in Matsu. While cultural heritage, or even the place itself, is somehow created, it does not come to be shared by the community as a whole. It takes strategies to make the community feel they share a heritage and thus, possess a common identity.

The following solutions I propose here are based on some experiences already adopted in other places. Actually, for more than a decade, many similar suggestions have already appeared in internal reports and professional proposals in Matsu. However, due to various factors which are difficult to overcome, what I can do at present is raise these concerns again. Luckily, some interviewees already proposed similar solutions when I asked them what was needed most urgently to preserve culture heritage in Matsu. The mission in this part of my research is to summarize different aspects of situations and possibilities so that stakeholders can develop a more comprehensive perspective on this issue.

First, I will introduce two of the better heritage practices, if not the best, already considered by stakeholders based on the community’s needs. I will focus on how consensus was achieved and what these cases of consensus mean. Second, I will introduce some clear and successful practices and techniques which can be used by stakeholders on the islands to establish a better sense of “shared heritage.” These techniques are not that difficult and already exist to a certain extent on Matsu. If more stakeholders can become seriously involved in heritage matters, the situation could be significantly improved and fragmentation of heritage management could be

greatly reduced. Third, I will propose the reorganization of public bodies to strengthen the local heritage network, despite the fact that government agencies, among the different stakeholder groups, are always the most rigidly structured. After all, promoting reengineering of the administrative system is always a long process which requires repeated advocacy. Last, I will return to the notion of the role of place-making processes in cultural heritage affairs in Matsu. Why is shared heritage important for Matsu with regard to development and cultural identity? What is the better way to interpret the cultural heritage of the Matsu Islands? These are the final but critical questions islanders need to face in the future.

## **4.1 Better Practices Based on Community Needs**

### **4.1.1 Restoration of Jinbanjing Mazu Temple**

The first case I would like to present which is considered by the community as an example of good practice is the restoration of Jinbanjing Mazu Temple (Fig. 12; 金板境天后宮). This is the first temple inscribed on the local cultural heritage list and the first temple that underwent professional restoration project on the Matsu Islands. Prior to this, there was a tendency for other villages to transform their temples into newer and bigger ones, adopting modern techniques and a Taiwanese style. Even much earlier, in the late twentieth century, the Armed Forces used concrete in many reconstruction projects. Therefore, very few temples in Matsu have remained in their traditional form (although what standard tradition is itself is a matter of question) both in style and technique.

The earliest material evidence of the temple dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, while it is inferred that the temple might have been established as early as the seventeenth century (Lienchiang County Government 2010, 23, 26). Four periods of restoration were confirmed in the twentieth century (32). Afterward, during the military period, the Armed Forces assisted

villagers in adding some additions utilizing cement and varnish although part of the original wooden structure remained. After the end of the period, in the 2000s, voices began to emerge in the village advocating construction of a new temple. Some villagers felt that the temple should be restored rather than be reconstructed so that the spirit of the place could be better passed down to future generations and the village remain unique among others on the island. The local government, mainly the Cultural Affairs Department, also expressed their interest in subsidizing the temple works if restoration was conducted. After the temple received its cultural heritage status as a “historical building” in 2009, the local government and villagers started to propose the restoration project with the help of an academic group.

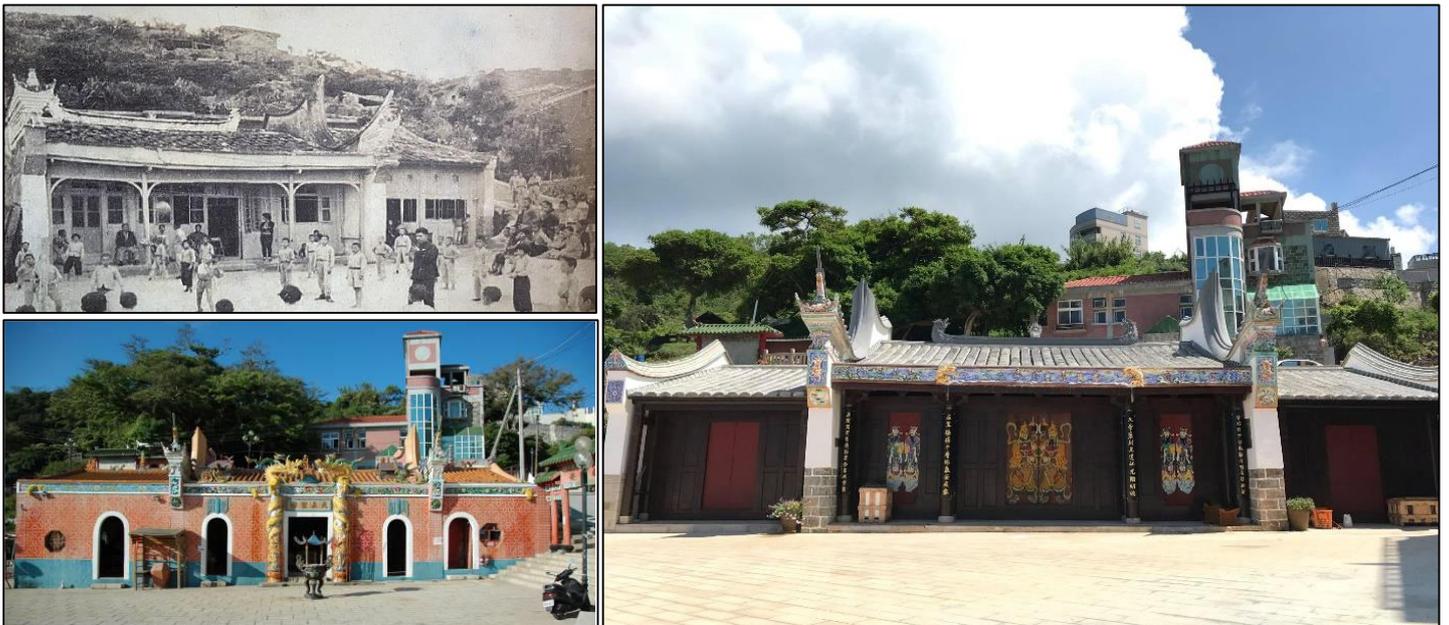


Figure 12: Pictures of Jinbanjing Mazu Temple in the 1960s (top-left, *Memory of Matsu* [2019]), before restoration (bottom-left, *Lienchiang County Government* [2010, 50]) and after restoration (right, *Memory of Matsu* [2019])

During the process of restoration planning, the invited academic group relied a lot on villagers’ oral history because there were very few available written and visual sources on the architecture itself. The only available material was a black-and-white picture taken in the 1960s. The blueprint was developed based on the single picture and the memories of elderly people. The detailed history of the temple was also recorded in the survey for the restoration. As a result of the restoration, completed in 2016, the temple now looks very different compared to its

previous version and other temples on the islands. Nevertheless, it is claimed (something I also agree with) to be the only medium-sized temple constructed in the traditional Eastern Fujian style on the Matsu Islands. The additions completed by the Armed Forces were also retained behind as villagers agreed this part of history is also important.

When I asked the temple commission's opinions on this restoration, they said, "generally speaking, villagers are satisfied with the restoration as it strengthens the village's image as the inheritor of Matsu Culture. Our figurines are also the most ancient on the islands which testify to our temple's heritage value (Cheng Q-Y, Chen X-Z, and Feng Z-M, pers. comm.)." They were even proud of competing for legitimacy using the goddess Mazu, with another bigger village connected to the legend of the floating corpse. Not surprisingly, the village of the temple reconstruction, Tisban, has consistently been more socially consolidated since the village empowerment program was initiated in Matsu. In this restoration project, the roles of the government, the academic group, and the local community were clear and well-allocated.

Nevertheless, when I was conducting the fieldwork, there was a dispute on how to utilize the indoor space between the government which wanted to install a larger exhibition for tourists, and the temple commission which would like to keep the space for the temple's lounge area (Cheng Q-Y, Chen X-Z, and Feng Z-M, pers. comm.). The bridging entity, a professional heritage group, thus, was placed in a difficult position between the two stakeholders (Guo M-J, pers. comm.). This dispute reflects the issue of ownership. Does the government have the power to control the space because it provided funds for the restoration and listed the temple as a heritage site? How important is the tourist value of the temple?

## 4.1.2 Restoration of Zhuluo Elementary School

The other case I would like to present is the restoration of Zhuluo Elementary School (Fig. 13) conducted by the Matsu Youth Development Association (馬祖青年發展協會). In the beginning, the association wanted to find a physical office space for its future operations, a space that could also be used as a venue for events. Later, they felt they could revitalize this abandoned space, a school, to express the particularity of Matsu. The school was built during the military period (around 1950s) as the islands were preparing for war. While the building was under construction, they discovered the layer of the military period with propaganda slogans painted on the wall. The material heritage value therefore became an issue for the planning of the building. They further identified this kind of abandoned school as “battlefield schools”, recalling villagers’ childhood memories during the military period. Consequently, the whole project became far more than just an office construction; it became a journey to recall Matsu’s past and catch the attention of even more stakeholders. The younger generation on the islands began to feel that they also had the ability and agency to affect cultural heritage preservation on the islands (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.; Wu P-R 2019). To date, the office is opened for a variety of workshops on local culture, events which are warmly welcomed by the local community.



Figure 13: Pictures of the abandoned Zhuluo Elementary School (left, picture taken by the author) and its present appearance after the restoration by Matsu Youth Development Association (right, Matsu Youth Development Association [2020])

The most obvious difference of this project compared to others on the islands is that the whole project was initiated by the local community from the very beginning without governmental participation. The association received a subsidy to cover part of the construction fees from the governmental village empowerment program, but that program did not interfere much with the project. Interestingly, the Cultural Affairs Department was not much involved in this project, and the school itself was not listed as cultural heritage. When I was on the islands, many islanders from the older generation expressed their high expectations of the association because of its gradually increasing presence in the heritage field. The association later took over the operation of the Battlefield Culture Museum in 2020 to expand its influence. What is hopeful for them are the voices and mobility of the younger generation. A scenario in which the government did not need to take any part is a very refreshing one on the islands. However, there is only one such group in Matsu, because the association already gathered together almost all the young people with other full-time jobs on the islands. Therefore, relying solely on this association is not practical and insufficient for effective cultural heritage preservation in Matsu.

## **4.2 Wider Participation and Mutual Understanding Between Stakeholders**

### **4.2.1 Information integration: archive and assembly**

From the two cases provided in the previous section it is obvious that participation is the key to cultural heritage preservation on Matsu, something repeatedly demonstrated in academic research on effective and sustainable culture heritage initiatives. However, pointing out the problem is easy while providing solutions is difficult. Interestingly, when I was asking my interviewees, “what is the most urgent need in cultural heritage preservation matters in Matsu?” No one answered “funds.” This answer is contrary to what outsiders might suppose. Their real answers can be summarized in two different directions: people and information integration.

The issue of population is so structural and complicated that I cannot simply provide solutions in this thesis, but the need for *information integration* can be carried out in some immediate and straightforward ways.

A local heritage activist proposed the establishment of a county archive in Matsu which collects existing resources to help researchers (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). Reviewing the process of my fieldwork, I have been frequently astonished by existing but hidden resources I came across in different places. When I was searching for research topics, I immediately felt the lack of information about related research in Matsu despite the fact that there has already been much work undertaken. The questions that I came up with had usually been solved or tackled, but later researchers do not have access to those projects and the results if they fail to find the correct person. These resources concerning former research, mostly funded by the government, should be opened to the public to inspire more potential researchers and the attention of island stakeholders. In early 2020, the county government already began to plan a physical archive in Matsu (Wang H-D, pers. comm.), but an online, digital archive would be also wonderful and even more useful for researchers within and outside the islands. The archive should contain academic research, islanders' collections related to heritage properties, government reports and general surveys, etc. These resources should be given equal value and utilized so that future researchers can have a good overview and insight into what work has been carried out on the islands in the past. In addition, newcomers would not need to waste time doing repetitive things or asking stupid questions which have already been asked several times.

The existence of an archive is, more or less, an academic affair falling far away from the interests of the general public. To engage islanders' effective and meaningful participation in cultural heritage affairs would be more important, as Matsu islanders are often passionate about these affairs in ways that are sometimes very different to what experts and scholars expect.

Besides present agenda-settings, the act of looking backward and pondering the future should take place regularly in Matsu in assemblies or workshops organized by a particular organization, either a governmental body or other suitable institutions. The aforementioned youth association would be suitable candidate although at the moment, it does not have capacity for such an undertaking. In any case, it is important that all stakeholders have a stake in building a more open-minded environment to appreciate different understandings of diverse heritage. Another local heritage activist proposed a general assembly across stakeholder groups to facilitate information exchange and mutual understanding (Cao Y-P, pers. comm.).

The assembly could focus on two heritage aspects. First, each stakeholder should report and present what they have recently been involved in concerning cultural heritage in Matsu, especially when the work involved public funds. Second, stakeholders should propose their plans and strategies publicly in a manner inviting the engagement of other stakeholders to at least clearly declare their mission and what is for heritage value to them lest misunderstandings occur. This transparency will be the foundation of further cooperation. The discussions and debates taking place in this assembly should be carefully considered during the stakeholders' decision-making processes. The local community should have chances to express their ideals, needs, and expectations in government and private agendas that impact their daily lives to improve the current situation in which regular islanders have no formal vehicle where they can express their opinions.

#### 4.2.2 Internet-based platform inside and outside community

Matsu islanders across generations have long been accustomed to online forums through the website portal “Matsu Information” (馬祖資訊網). Lin W-P (2016) argued that this website transformed Matsu into a place with its own unique values and consolidated society. Government officials also claimed that what they do first every day is to check whether

anything related to their affairs has been posted (34). In my experience, browsing this website would not be less important than participating in religious events to be better integrated into islanders' lives. Thus, developing an online forum involving and consolidating different stakeholder groups and project groups in mutual discussion of cultural heritage affairs on the Matsu islands would be practical and a form familiar to islanders. The technique of such an online forum (Fig. 14) was designed and realized by Labrador (2013) for discussion of cultural heritage affairs on the Eleuthera Islands in the Bahamas. As opposed to other topics, cultural heritage affairs would interest some Taiwanese and Matsu immigrants as well, making the Internet a friendlier environment for promoting discussion and conquering physical distances. Ideally, research resources and available materials should be provided – that is, combined with the online archive – so that people can discuss the issues based on accumulated evidence and existing contributions. Such day-to-day, continuing participation assures that stakeholders will be able to communicate with each other and feel influential and respected in themselves.

In addition, the relationship between the government and islanders and the relations between government agencies also needs to be improved. For example, there are many existing websites and social media accounts managed by different government agencies providing contents on cultural heritage. Even the simple act of providing links to other websites would be appreciated so that people can access materials which might interest them. The various government agencies involved in cultural heritage in different ways should inventory and take advantage of materials produced by others. An official thematic website designed for tourists (Fig. 15) managed by a government agency of higher level to put all these materials together would be fantastic. This is the path followed by the latest Japanese (tentative) World Heritage sites (Nagasaki Prefectural World Heritage Division 2018; Niigata Prefectural Government n.d.). Very few financial resources are needed for these simple but effective tasks.

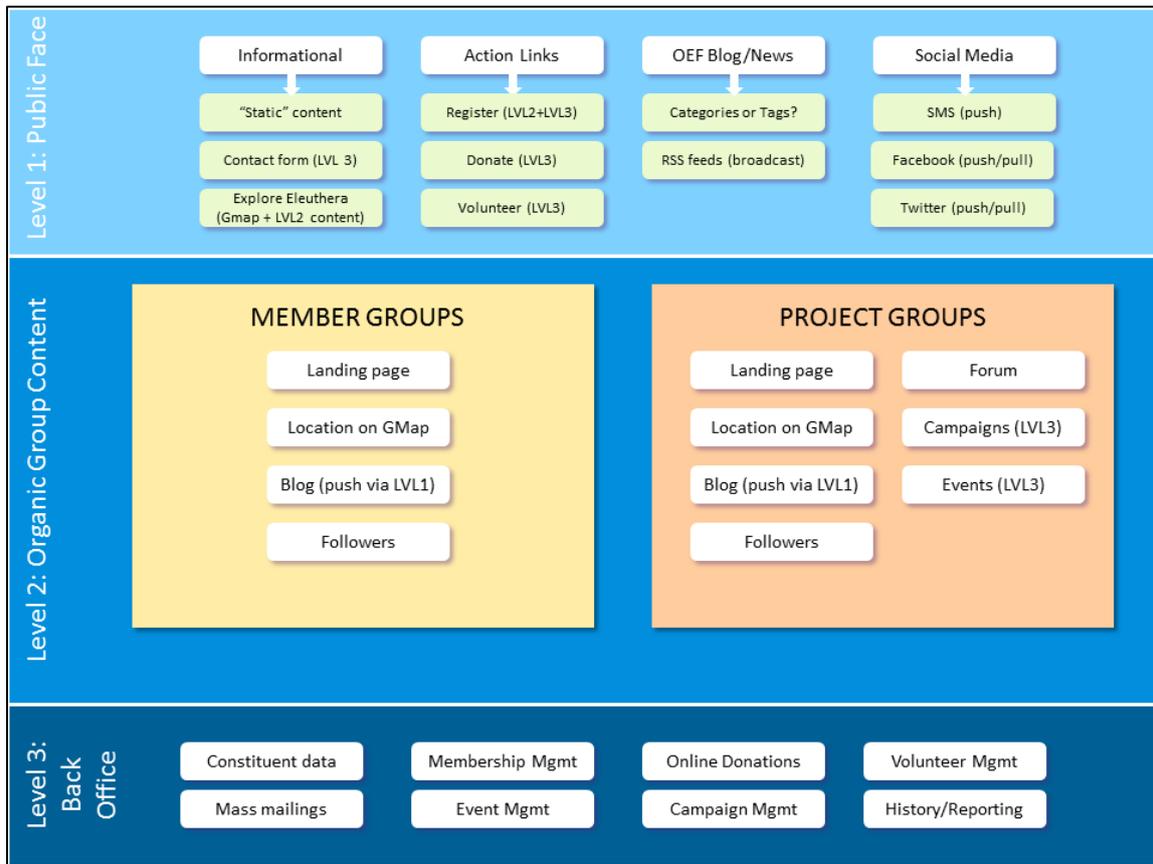


Figure 14: One Eleuthera Web Portal Site Architecture (Labrador 2013, 137)

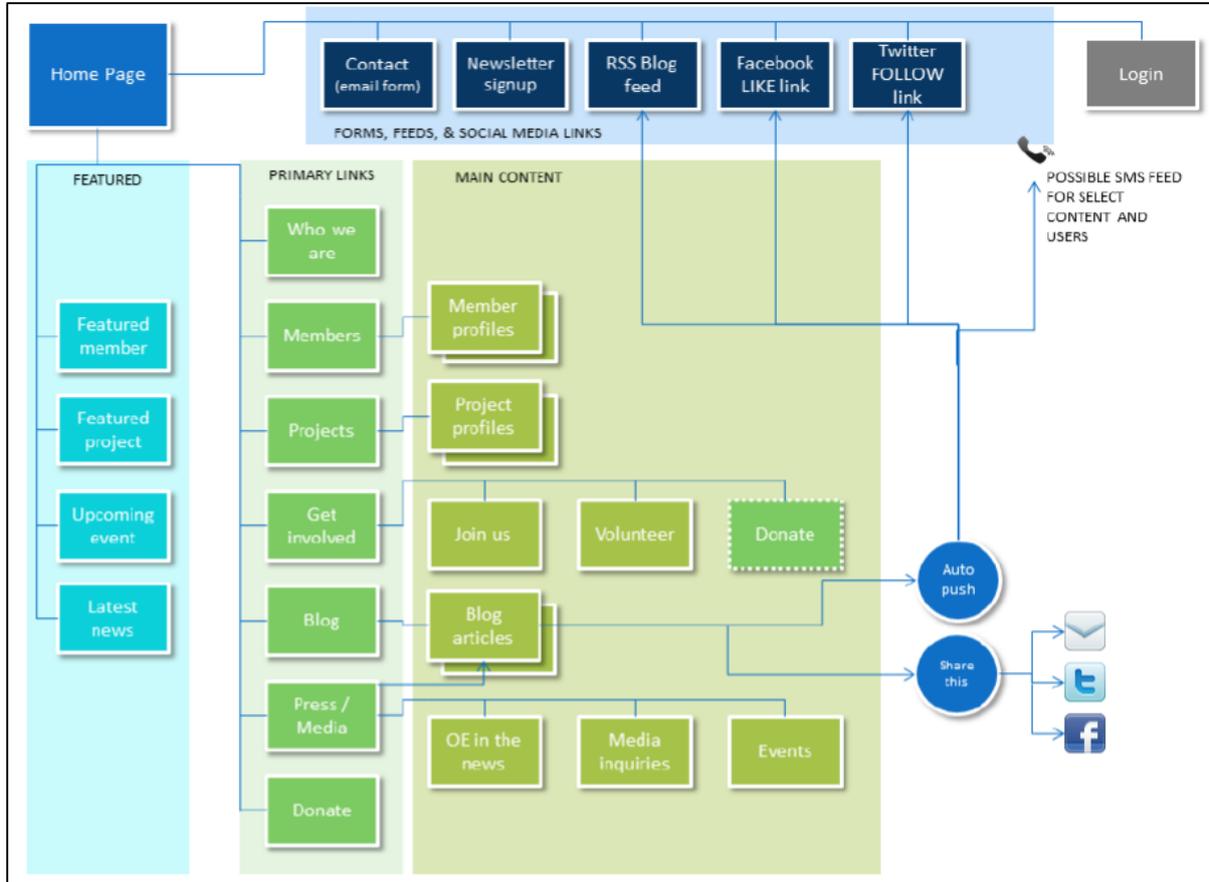


Figure 15: One Eleuthera Web Portal Site Map (Labrador 2013, 140)



World Cultural Heritage

## Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region

長崎と天草地方の潜伏キリシタン関連遺産

日本語 한국어 簡体中文 繁体中文 Français

Español [Visiting rules and access](#)

HOME

For beginners
History
Map
Value
Component
Information



Welcome to Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region.






For those who visit this website for the first time

Basic questions and answers

For beginners

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For visitors to the property

Rule and access information

For visitors

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Introduction to the Hidden Christian



History



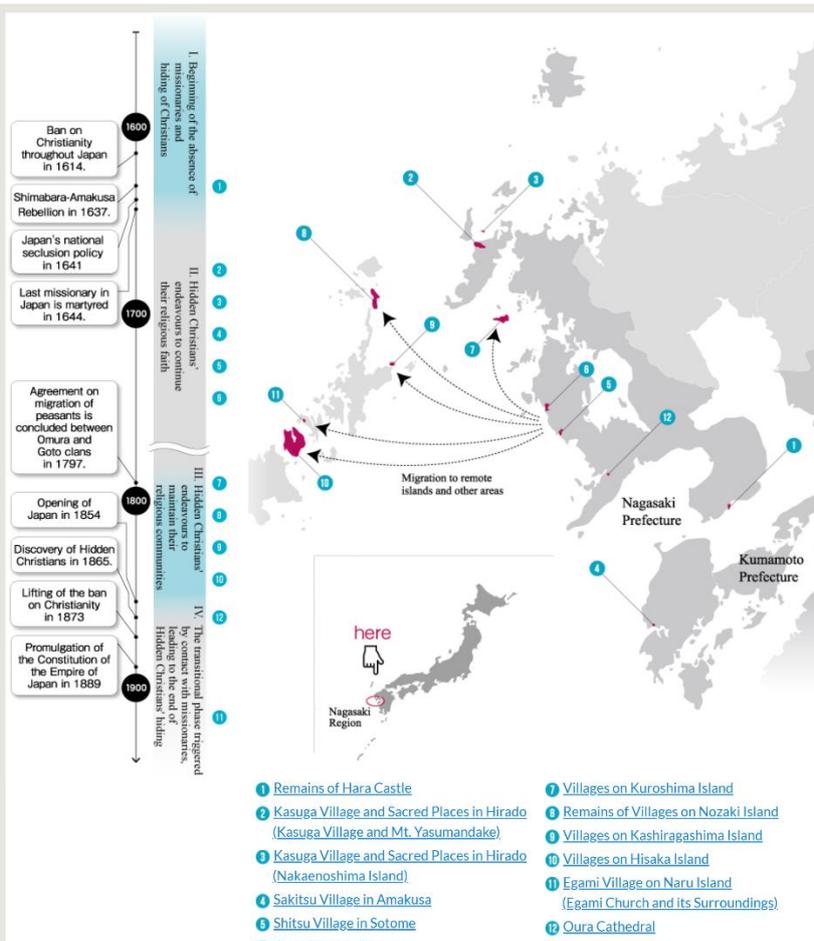
Map



Value



Component



**I. Beginning of the absence of missionaries and hiding of Christians**

- 1600 Ban on Christianity throughout Japan in 1614.
- Shimabara-Amakusa Rebellion in 1637.
- Japan's national seclusion policy in 1641
- 1700 Last missionary in Japan is martyred in 1644.

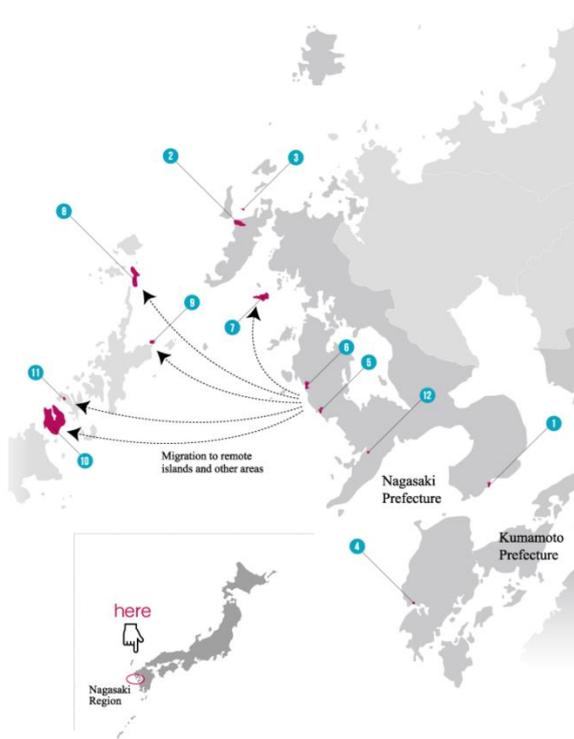
**II. Hidden Christians' endeavors to continue their religious faith**

- Agreement on migration of peasants is concluded between Omura and Goto clans in 1797.

**III. Hidden Christians' endeavors to maintain their religious communities**

- 1800 Opening of Japan in 1854
- Discovery of Hidden Christians in 1865.
- Lifting of the ban on Christianity in 1873
- 1900 Promulgation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1889

**IV. The transitional phase triggered by contact with missionaries, leading to the end of Hidden Christians hiding**



Migration to remote islands and other areas

- 1 Remains of Hara Castle
- 2 Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado (Kasuga Village and Mt. Yasumandake)
- 3 Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado (Nakaenoshima Island)
- 4 Sakitsu Village in Amakusa
- 5 Shitsu Village in Sotome
- 6 Ono Village in Sotome

- 7 Villages on Kuroshima Island
- 8 Remains of Villages on Nozaki Island
- 9 Villages on Kashiragashima Island
- 10 Villages on Hisaka Island
- 11 Egami Village on Naru Island (Egami Church and its Surroundings)
- 12 Oura Cathedral

Figure 16: Example of the thematic website of a World Heritage site: Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region (Nagasaki Prefectural World Heritage Division 2018)

The most obvious difficulty in resolving information exchange and integration obstacles in the cultural heritage affairs of Matsu is to decide who should do this. Observing the recent situation, no stakeholder would voluntarily conduct and manage such a big project. Even if the government is determined to initiate this action, it does not have much spare energy to carry it out. Therefore, allocating some funds from the government budget to allocate for this measure would be helpful, while the operating organization should be one widely accepted on the islands, probably one of existing bridging entities. The long-term goal of information integration between stakeholders is to institutionalize such organization to implement cultural heritage preservation projects coherently.

### **4.3 Reorganization of Government Agencies and Public Bodies**

As I have already shown in Chapter two, there are many meaningless procedures, repetitions, and rivals in the complicated network of government agencies, bridging entities, and other organizations in Matsu. Although cultural heritage is generally considered to have public value, the public value of cultural heritage in Matsu is still not well represented and consolidated. Theoretically, the role of government should be limited merely to fundraising and resources allocation. The government should not be seen as the sole representative of publicity. Observing previous projects and agenda-settings, the government tended to simply introduce what has been done in other places and then try and enforce similar projects on cultural heritage properties. Later, disagreements occur because of these trivial affairs. The process of formulating the main direction and strategy on cultural heritage affairs does not sufficiently engage the stakeholders.

Continuing the conclusion of the previous section, establishing a specialized independent organization, either a non-governmental one or a non-departmental public body which is

operated autonomously outside any local government department, might resolve this situation. The mission of this organization is to assist the government in cultural heritage preservation and, at the same time represent the local heritage community. The regulation and composition of this organization should consider and include different categories of stakeholders to improve the lack of communication between stakeholder groups. Existing government budgets for different purposes, currently commissioned to different organizations, together with public donations from islanders and tourists, could be aggregated together to allocate all available funds more effectively. The allocation of funds should reflect islanders' and donors' expectation of what needs to be done. Another part of the funds could be raised from profit-making activities such as the rents of homestays and restaurants run in subsidized restored historical buildings.

This ideal organization should integrate all the bridging entities' roles (See Chapter 2.3) which are now very fragmented and unstable, into a single entity to inventory heritage properties, conduct research, hold events, manage heritage properties, and revitalize abandoned sites. Compared to the bureaucratic system and rigid regulations of government agencies, such an organization might appear more feasible and accessible to islanders because it can be flexibly employed and financed appropriately. Lusiani and Zan (2010) exemplified three cases (Heritage Malta, British Museum, and Pompeii) of reorganization of cultural institutions to indicate how the degree of institutional autonomy, accountability, human resources management, etc., would result in the efficiency of such institution. Briefly, decreasing political and rigid bureaucratic influences and introducing professional personnel (either trained heritage activists on the islands or specialists from Taiwan if more people are needed) and integrated strategic management are the keys to empowering cultural institutions. Reviewing the current situation in Matsu, the redundant procurement system of the government in cultural heritage affairs should be replaced. The role of academic groups can be narrowed to provide

consultation and assistance. Another significance of this organization would be to provide a stable working environment for local heritage activists to develop their professional careers, as very few local people have a chance to procure a stable working position although they are interested and knowledgeable in cultural heritage affairs.

Related nationwide regulations on the non-departmental public bodies founded by local government have already been announced in Taiwan. The first such a non-departmental public body of cultural heritage affairs was set up to maintain three museums in Kaohsiung City, 2016 (Wang Y-R, Cheng Y-J, and Sun J-R 2016). Considering Matsu is a small area, a countywide organization would be more than enough to manage related affairs. There have actually been similar suggestions in this direction for more than five years (Cultural Diversity Studio 2014, 77). Before the establishment of such an organization is possible, more consolidated government across different agencies is necessary.

The recent cooperation of different government agencies has been very superficial. They rarely adopt or even adapt each other's opinions in formulating their own directives. Although in some circumstances such as committees for urban planning and reviewing cultural heritage, officials from different agencies are obligated to cooperate (Anonymous X, pers. comm.), this mutual involvement only goes as deep as fulfilling this requirement or letting other agencies know of their decisions. Generally speaking, cultural heritage has not become an integrated strategy of county development, although that is what is claimed on the countywide white paper (Lienchiang County Government 連江縣政府 2019). Sadly, even the central government fails to propose strategies on engaging the local community for a more integrated cultural heritage preservation. Considering the small size of Matsu, it would be a good place to explore the proper administrative system for local cultural heritage management on a county level for the central government.

When a local heritage activist shared his experience, he noted that the heritage aspect has gradually become a concern in the operations of the Armed Forces after years of cooperation with the Cultural Affairs Department (Wang H-D, pers. comm.). They have begun to independently report potential cultural heritage properties when they discover something new with respect to military heritage on the islands. Raising this kind of awareness across different stakeholders is very important. If cultural heritage should be an integrated strategy for a place, all government agencies should have their corresponding and complementary roles and not operate in independent knowledge silos. Specifically, the goal of the establishment of the National Scenic Area (國家特定風景區), aiming at building a better tourist environment and promoting tourism of the islands, should be reconsidered. Besides receiving more funds and attracting more tourists, although possibly not the best solution, I cannot observe the value of such an institution in cultural heritage preservation. The needs of tourists should not overwhelm the local community's expectations and views concerning the preservation of cultural heritage on the islands.

#### **4.4 Cultural Landscapes for the Future of the Islands**

The future of the Matsu Islands has long been very uncertain. Culture has been the most effective, or even the only way, to increase social consolidation on the islands since the military period. Originally, these islands were simply outlying islands within a coastal area in southeast mainland China. However, due to changing political contexts, the islands have a tremendously different outlook now. During my fieldwork, I discovered that although general islanders indeed care about cultural heritage issues, their chief concern has always been transportation. The construction of bridges, the improvement of airports, and the renewal of ships for the convenience of both islanders and tourists remain priorities to attain sustainable development as far as they are concerned.

After the numbers of stationed armed forces in Matsu decreased, tourism obviously developed into the most hopeful and feasible economic prospect for the islands. However, Matsu is not like economically less-developed areas which depend on tourist incomes. Compared to attracting more tourists, keeping residents from leaving the islands and attracting potential immigrants should be given priority in the discourses of development, echoing the strategy of “regional revitalization” (地方創生) directed by the central government (National Development Council 2018; Hsu C-J 2018). In addition to the economic aspects of the strategy, the cultural aspect should be given more attention in Matsu as place-making processes represent the continuous acts required to build a place shared by its residents.

The discourses of heritage value exhibited in Matsu are usually first categorized into battlefield culture, traditional culture, marine culture, etc. However, I would argue that the concept of “cultural landscape” representing the most valuable and resilient spirit in Matsu, is the most inclusive kind of discourse needed to demonstrate the integrity and continuity of Matsu society within its geographical settings and historic contexts. Very few places in the world “simultaneously” display this kind of radical change from a virtually deserted island complex to a modern society over the latest century. At the same time, Matsu is a good example of the second category of cultural landscape defined by the World Heritage Committee: “[Organically evolved landscape] results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment (UNESCO World Heritage Centre n.d.).” Both traditional culture and battlefield sites are closely associated with the natural environment, and the combination of these two elements ultimately creates a unique landscape across all the islands.

It is worth noting that this notion of cultural landscape I propose is more complex than the one which is recently used in the protection of battlefield sites in Matsu. One academic group has

recently suggested that the government designate a cluster of specific areas an integrated item of cultural landscape under the cultural heritage legal framework of Taiwan. Zoning in urban planning should extend the designation (Chiang B-W et al. 2017, 143). Interestingly, in the general survey of cultural landscape in Matsu conducted in 2006, the focus was put on “the landscape of agricultural and fishing villages and the practices of local customs (Cultural Affairs Bureau, Lienchiang County Government 2006, 43).” After years of war heritage promotion, cultural landscape gradually developed the connotation of battlefield sites in Matsu.

Observing this transition, it again shows the way information in this affair, especially contract research, rarely continues to be adopted or developed across stakeholder groups, partially due to government intervention (Hatano, pers. comm.). Both ideas are workable, but consensus and consolidation needs to be continuously reconsidered within all communities on the islands. In my opinion, exploring the symbolic meaning of different cultural elements and layers connected to Matsu identity and integrating the concept of cultural landscape into other themes and categories of cultural heritage is one path towards making cultural heritage of Matsu both outstanding and sustainable. This kind of cultural landscape is always evolving, so authenticity – however that is defined – is not represented only by materiality and the built environment but rather through the faith and wisdom that comes from living sustainably on the islands.

At the end of this chapter, I present a table (Table 4) summarizing the aforementioned solutions to help readers grasp these solutions as a whole. In addition, these solutions are not specifically designed only for the Matsu Islands. Other heritage sites where there are problems related to fragmented heritage management may consider them as well.

Table 4. Potential solutions to fragmented heritage management

	Between Government agencies	Between Government agencies and Local Community
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish a county archive which collects existing resources (under planning).</li> <li>■ Publicize research resources and survey results online as an online archive.</li> <li>■ Construct a thematic website designed for tourists and islanders to gather together available information from different agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organize regular assemblies or workshops to discuss cultural heritage affairs.</li> <li>■ Develop an online forum to get different groups involved and consolidated in their discussions of cultural heritage affairs.</li> </ul>
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish a specialized independent organization operated autonomously from any department of the local government.</li> <li>■ Aggregate government budgets for different purposes and public donations to allocate funds more effectively and accountably.</li> <li>■ Explore the proper administrative system for local cultural heritage management.</li> <li>■ Reconsider the function of the National Scenic Area Administration (or other equivalent agencies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Propose strategies on engaging the local community for more integrated cultural heritage preservation.</li> <li>■ Assure cultural heritage preservation in alignment with the strategy of “regional revitalization”.</li> <li>■ Define and consolidate the concept of evolving cultural landscape (or other appropriate categories) in discourses of cultural heritage on the islands (or other areas).</li> </ul>

Reference: created by the author

# Conclusions

Throughout this year of research, I have frequently been asked: “why did you choose Matsu as your field of study.” It is really difficult to answer this question in a simple sentence. I felt astonished by the different layers of cultural landscape characterizing the islands. I was deeply affected by the islanders passion for the cultural heritage on the islands. I admire the spirit in which islanders have struggled to sustain the character of their hometown for decades. Therefore, as an outsider, I started to think about what the role of a researcher can be in helping cultural heritage affairs on the islands in this thesis. During my fieldwork, I observed that the measures and strategies for cultural heritage preservation in Matsu is fragmented and decentralized so that communications between stakeholder groups is disrupted, a situation which sometimes causes those efforts to be in vain. This observation, thus, became the focus of this thesis.

My research can be divided into two: why fragmented heritage management happens on the islands and how to fix this issue. In chapter one, I demonstrate the historic contexts of Matsu, especially with regard to heritage preservation. The history of Matsu is in itself ephemeral and uncertain, even today. Due to this fact, cultural heritage preservation is actually a significant part of islanders’ ongoing place-making processes to build a place identity for Matsu. In chapter two, I present the network of stakeholder groups, mainly government agencies, regular islanders, and bridging entities with their respective projects and interests. Their contrasting positions on cultural heritage affairs across the islands result in various disagreements. Concrete examples are given to demonstrate my observation. In chapter three, I contextualize the disagreements into three parts: heritage interpretation, heritage value, and heritage management. The difference in these three issues reflects the complexity of cultural identity,

local development, and institutional bureaucracy in Matsu, although each aspect is related to the other.

After analyzing the situation of fragmented heritage management and why it occurs, chapter four aims at providing solutions to resolve the problems of inter-stakeholder communication. I first show that community participation lies at the heart of successful heritage projects on the islands with two case studies. Next, I introduce some practices based on heritage experiences outside the islands to facilitate information integration and community empowerment. In the end, I recall the concept of cultural landscape in sustaining discourses of cultural heritage in Matsu. The preservation and management plan of the World Heritage site “Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region” mentioned in the literature review provides a series of clear and doable strategies in the preservation of depopulated cultural landscape. It could provide a very helpful model in formulating integrated strategies for agencies in Matsu’s local government looking for best practice examples with similar geographical characteristics to the Matsu islands.

The following principles jointly proposed by the local government (Nagasaki Prefecture et al. 2017, 1-7) mean to “ensure the integrated protection of the components for future generations:”

- a) Legal protection, preservation, and management of the components of the nominated property
- b) Enhancement of the surrounding landscapes in harmony with the components and orderly presentation
- c) Promotion of sustainable development of regional society
- d) Preservation and management systems operated jointly by the owners and regional stakeholders
- e) Mechanism[s] for monitoring and improvement

Five tasks (11) are formulated accordingly:

- 1) Adequate preservation management and research for the components
- 2) Conservation and formation of surrounding environments suitable for World Heritage sites

- 3) Minimizing the negative effects of development, environmental changes, and natural disasters
- 4) Responsible visitation and appropriate presentation (i.e., harmony between tourism and local communities' daily life and religious faith)
- 5) Sustainable maintenance and development of local communities (i.e., balance between preservation and utilization of the nominated property)

From these principles and tasks, it is observed that cultural heritage preservation is far more than treating cultural heritage properties well. The development of regional society and the participation of stakeholders are no less important. Rather, legal protection and research on the various heritage sites represent just the first foundational step. On the other hand, cultural heritage preservation should never be seen as the opposition to local development, as local development should continuously take the community's concerns on cultural identity seriously. These two goals are interdependent regarding place and can be combined into an integrated strategy.

Throughout my research, I discovered that research, surveys, and management plans of cultural heritage properties in Taiwan – as well as in Matsu – have all been fruitful to some extent. (When a senior scholar researching Matsu sent me twelve Gigabytes of documents about the cultural heritage of Matsu which were never published I was totally astonished.) However, somehow still missing is research on domestic or international analogies between heritage sites with different geographical characteristics or historical contexts, administrative systems and cultural heritage regulations as well as theoretical aspects of cultural heritage combined with other traditional subjects such as anthropology, geography or political science. While I dealt with fragmented management issues throughout this research, it was very difficult to find practicable analogue solutions in Taiwanese literature. It is my hope this research will arouse more attention to communication issues which are abstract and general but important for developing integrated strategies given the particular circumstances of the Matsu Islands.

Besides publishing this thesis in English, I also plan to submit a shortened version in Chinese in an academic journal because many stakeholders in Matsu might not be able to read the English version. In addition, I will find an opportunity to present this work in local academic workshops in heritage affairs held regularly in Matsu. This should provide a wonderful opportunity to disseminate the results of this research and encourage local discussion on this topic. Ultimately, I would like to become part of the heritage network in Matsu so that this communication research will remain interactive and continuous which was the original motivation for my research.

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## Literature of Foreign Languages

The following transliteration of authors' names refers to general principles suggested by various universities based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Typically, Chinese names are not inverted, so the family name remains at the beginning of each entry without a comma.

The transliteration of names shown on publications or the database of materials is used if available. Otherwise, Hanyu Pinyin is used, although, in Taiwan (the main origin of the following literature), authors' official English names might be actually transliterated in the Wade–Giles system. In addition, legal entities such as government agencies are translated literally.

Although in most style guides, romanization of titles is suggested (although *Chicago Manual* does not have strict regulations on it), I only provide literal translations (sometimes presented on publications or the database of materials) so that the layout of the reference list looks more concise. Original Chinese/Japanese titles are provided in brackets.

Because many Chinese family names are the same, in the in-text citation I provide the family name and the given name together to clarify who the exact author of each reference is. For example, "Cao Yu-Gui" is written as "Cao Y-G" in the in-text citation.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Information on Interviews

### List of Interviews

Date	Interviewee	Role
December 17 2019	Cao Ya-Ping 曹雅評	Heritage activist Head of Matsu Youth Development Association 馬祖青年發展協會理事長
December 17 2019	Wu Xiao-Yun 吳曉雲	Governmental agency Director of the Cultural Affairs Department 連江縣政府文化處處長
December 18 2019	Anonymous X	Governmental agency Planning Section, Matsu National Scenic Area Administration 馬祖國家風景區管理處企劃課
December 18 2019	Wang Hua-Di 王花倂	Heritage activist Head of Matsu Battlefield Cultural Heritage Society 馬祖戰地文化遺產學會理事長
December 19 2019	Cao Yi-Xiong 曹以雄	Heritage activist Former county councilman Former director of the Cultural Affairs Department Owner of a revitalized heritage property 刺鳥咖啡書店 店主 曾任縣議員、文化處處長
December 22 2019	Zhou Zhi-Xiao 周治孝	Heritage activist Local tour guide
December 22 2019	Chen Gui-Zhong 陳貴忠	Landowner and local representative Former county councilman 曾任縣議員
December 22 2019	Chen Qi-Yun 陳其運 Chen Xue-Zhong 陳學忠 Feng Zhang-Ming 馮章明	Landowner and local representative Representatives of Tisban Mazu Temple Committee 金板境天后宮管理委員會
January 8 2020	Chen Mei-Zhong 陳美忠	Landowner and local representative Owner of a preserved heritage property 西莒田沃村五靈公廟 屋主
January 8 2020	Anonymous L	External expert Founder of Cultural Diversity Studio 好多樣文化工作室 創辦人
January 10 2020	Guo Mei-Jun 郭美君	External expert Manager of Classic Design and Planning 經典工程/原典創思 經理

All interviews were conducted in Chinese.

### List of contacts

Contact	Role
Anonymous A	Head of a village association
Anonymous C	Owner of a guesthouse in a traditional settlement
Anonymous D	Heritage activist who recently runs a café in Matsu
Anonymous H	Young scholar recently carrying out work in Matsu
Anonymous J	Founder of Matsu Information Portal (matsu.idv)
Anonymous T	Manager of a village empowerment program

These contacts are informants during my first fieldwork in Matsu. They were informed of the goals of my fieldwork and the theme of this research when I first met them. I keep their names anonymous because of the lack of their formal permission.

### Sample of proposed questions of interviews

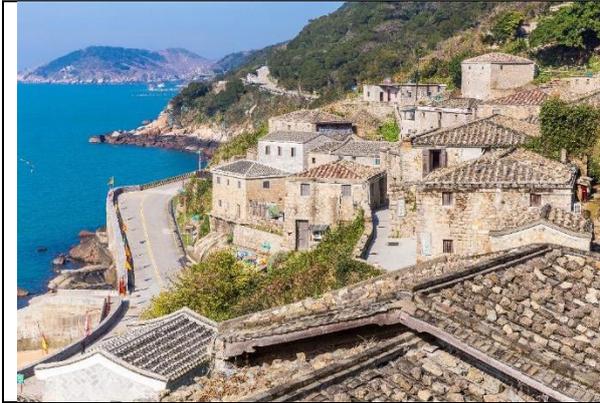
#### Interviewee: Wu Xiao-Yun (Director of the Cultural Affairs Department)

1. How does the Cultural Affairs Department interpret the cultural heritage in Matsu? Generally speaking, there are categories of East Min culture, battlefield culture and marine culture. How do you see their respective values?
2. Recently, what policies does the Cultural Affairs Department adopt to preserve, manage and promote cultural heritage? Are any new projects planned? Is there anything that should be done but is hindered because of a lack of opportunity, budget and energy?
3. Why is cultural heritage important in Matsu? How to connect it to the future?
4. What's the difficulty you face in executing policies?
5. Have you ever faced any conflict with different governmental bodies, including the central government, parallel departments and the Scenic Area Administration? If so, what possible solutions do you see for these conflicts? Can you give any examples?
6. What is urgently needed for preserving cultural heritage in Matsu? Is it lack of energy and resources or lack of cooperation? Is there any way to improve this situation?
7. Does the phenomenon of fragmentation play any part in cultural heritage preservation in Matsu? Is there any way to improve it?
8. The county government has direct contacts with the local government in mainland China. Is there any collaboration with them in cultural heritage affairs (both tangible and intangible)?

1. 文化處目前是怎麼去詮釋馬祖的文化資產？一般都是以閩東文化、戰地文化和海洋文化三者去闡述，分別強調什麼價值？
2. 目前文化處在各方面的文化資產，採取什麼政策去保護、管理、推廣？有什麼是計畫要做的？有什麼是想做但還缺乏機會、預算，或能量不夠的？
3. 文化資產在馬祖為什麼重要？和未來有什麼連結？
4. 在推動政策上，主要遭遇到什麼困難？
5. 和不同政府部門間（包括和中央政府、和平行部門、和風管處），有沒有遇到什麼衝突？有遇到的話通常怎麼改善？是否有具體的例子？
6. 馬祖的文化資產保護，目前最欠缺的是什麼？欠缺能量和資源比較嚴重，還是缺乏合作比較嚴重？有什麼改進的方法？
7. 馬祖和大陸的地方政府有對口，文化資產（包含物質或非物質）方面會進行什麼樣的合作嗎？

Most interviews did not strictly follow the proposed questions. Interviewees were free to develop their own views in certain topics.

Appendix 2 Tourist Resources on the Matsu Islands



Qinbi Village 芹壁聚落 (19<sup>th</sup>~20<sup>th</sup> Century)



“Blue Tears” 藍眼淚



Magang Mazu Temple 馬港天后宮(Rebuilt in 2001)



Statue of the Goddess Mazu 媽祖巨神像 (2009)



The Iron Fort 鐵堡 (late 20<sup>th</sup> Century)



Beihai Tunnel, Nangan 南竿北海坑道 (1970)



Dongyin Lighthouse 東引燈塔 (1904)



Tunnel 88 (now a brewery) 八八坑道 (1974)



Caipuao Geopark 菜埔澳地質公園



Tern Wildlife Refuge 燕鷗保護區



Liangdao Daowei archaeological site  
亮島島尾遺址<sup>i</sup> (8000 years ago)



Baiming festival 擺暝<sup>ii</sup>



Exhibition on Neolithic Liangdao Man  
in Matsu Folklore Culture Museum  
馬祖民俗文物館 亮島人展覽<sup>iii</sup> (2017)



Shengli Fort  
(Matsu Battlefield Culture Museum)  
勝利堡 (馬祖戰地文化博物館)<sup>iv</sup> (1961)

References: Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (all pictures without mark)  
(<https://www.matsu-nsa.gov.tw/user/Main.aspx?l=1>)

i. (Lin F-Y 2015)

ii. <https://www.matsu.idv.tw/print.php?f=1&t=120951&p=1>

iii. <https://museums.moc.gov.tw/>

iv. <https://voiceofmatsu.com/勝利堡-戰地空間與和平論述的據點/>

### Appendix 3 County governmental agencies related to cultural heritage affairs in Matsu

Department	Duty related to cultural heritage
Civil Affairs Department 民政處	Supervision of religious affairs
Cultural Affairs Department 文化處	Cultural heritage preservation
Economic Development Department 產業發展處	Community infrastructure, landscape planning, and management of geopark
Education Department 教育處	Cultural heritage education
Finance and Local Tax Bureau 財政稅務局	Management of national property (國有財產)
Public Works Department 工程處	Urban planning (reserved zones of settlement) and construction supervision (restoration projects)
Traffic and Tourism Bureau 交通旅遊局	Promoting and supervising tourist resources and events

i. The difference between “department” and “bureau” is due to organizational regulations on local government in Taiwan, while there is no much prominent significance on it.

Reference: created by the author based on interviews and official websites of the county government (<https://www.matsu.gov.tw/>), both in Chinese (2020) and English (2019).

#### Appendix 4 Museums and cultural heritage properties on the Matsu Islands

Museum	Operating organization	Location
Matsu Folklore Culture Museum 馬祖民俗文物館	Cultural Affairs Department	Nangan
Ching-kuo Memorial Hall 經國紀念館		
Matsu Battlefield Culture Museum* 馬祖戰地文化博物館	Cultural Affairs Department (commissioning Matsu Battlefield Cultural Heritage Society)	
Qiaozi Fishing Village Museum 橋仔漁村展示館	Economic Development Department	Beigan
Blue Tears Ecological Museum 藍眼淚生態館	Economic Development Department (commissioning Chenghong BioTech 承虹生物科技 <sup>ii</sup> )	Nangan
Iron Fort (Tiebao)* 鐵堡	Matsu National Scenic Area Administration (MNSAA)	Nangan
Dahan Stronghold* 大漢據點		
Beihai Tunnel* 北海坑道		
Statue of the Goddess Mazu 媽祖巨神像		
War and Peace Memorial Park Exhibition Center* 戰爭和平紀念公園主題館		Beigan
Banli Residence 坂里大宅		
Andong Tunnel* 安東坑道		Dongyin
<b>In use but open for tourists</b>		
Shengli (Victory) Tunnel 勝利山莊	Matsu Defense Command, Armed Force 陸軍馬祖防衛指揮部	Nangan
Yuntaishan Military History Museum 雲台山軍情館		
Dongyin Military History Museum 東引隊史館 <sup>iii</sup>	Dongyin Area Command, Armed Force 陸軍東引地區指揮部	Dongyin
Dongquan Lighthouse 東犬燈塔	Maritime and Port Bureau, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications 交通部航港局	Dongju
Dongyong Lighthouse 東湧燈塔		Dongyin
Tunnel 88 八八坑道	Matsu Liquor Factory Industry 馬祖酒廠	Nangan
Tisban Mazu Temple 鐵板天后宮	Self-governed by the temple committee advised by the Cultural Affairs Department	Nangan

i. This list tries to cover all the museums and cultural heritage properties which have kinds of exhibition functions. Properties with \* sign are the sites which are former battlefield released by the Armed Force.

ii. (Wu J-R 2017) iii. (Chen Q-M 2014)

Reference: created by the author

Appendix 5 The Poster for Festival “Mazu Ascension Day”

**Mazu in Matsu**  
 2019 媽祖秋慶  
 Matsu Fall Festival

**媽祖在馬祖**  
 Ascension Day  
**昇天祭**

**10/5 SAT.**  
 13:00-16:00 **Real Escape Game**  
 實境解謎暨導覽活動 / 媽祖宗教文化園區朝聖步道入口  
 20:00-20:30 **Projection Mapping**  
 普天同慶媽祖昇天 / 光雕表演  
 南竿鄉馬祖境天后宮廣場

**10/6 SUN.**  
 11:00-16:30 **Fun Fair**  
 園遊市集 / 清輝樓廣場  
 13:00-16:00 **Real Escape Game**  
 實境解謎暨導覽活動 / 媽祖宗教文化園區朝聖步道入口  
 19:20-19:30 **Projection Mapping**  
 普天同慶媽祖昇天 / 光雕表演  
 南竿鄉馬祖境天后宮廣場  
 19:40-21:10 **Folk Art Performance**  
 普天同慶媽祖昇天 / 演出九天馬船舞 (from Taiwan)  
 創意藝陣表演 / 南竿鄉馬祖境天后宮廣場

**10/7 MON.**  
 09:30-10:00 **Gathering**  
 集合 / 南竿鄉馬祖境天后宮廣場  
 10:00-10:30 **Walking Blessing**  
 祈福步道祈福 / 南竿鄉宗教文化園區  
 10:30-12:00 **Tunnel Blessing**  
 昇天祭祭祀大典 / 祈福坑道巡禮  
 南竿鄉宗教文化園區

馬祖境天后宮

指導單位 | 交通部觀光局、文化部、連江縣議會、立法委員陳雲生國會辦公室  
 協辦單位 | 馬祖境天后宮、馬祖村村辦公室、馬港社區發展協會、中正國中、馬祖酒廠實業股份有限公司  
 主辦單位 | 連江縣政府、承辦單位 | 連江縣政府文化處、執行單位 | 捷斯文廣告

**Adviser** | Tourism Bureau, Taiwan; Ministry of Culture, Taiwan; Lienchiang County Council; Office of Chen Hsueh-Sheng, member of the Parliament

**Co-organizer** | Magang Mazu Temple; Magang Village Office, etc.

**Organizer** | Lienchiang County Government

**Implementer** | Cultural Affairs Department, Lienchiang County Government

**Executive Unit** | Jiesiwen Public Relations Co., Ltd

Reference: <https://www.matsu.idv.tw/topicdetail.php?f=28&t=208469>