

Article

Interpretation of 798: Changes in Power of Representation and Sustainability of Industrial Landscape

Juncheng Dai, Xue Huang and Huasheng Zhu *

School of Geography, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China;

E-Mails: na0228@sina.com (J.D.); huangxue@mail.bnu.edu.cn (X.H.)

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed; E-Mail: zhuhs@bnu.edu.cn;
Tel.: +86-10-5880-7455 (ext. 1652).

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Abstract: Against the background of economic transformation and urban renewal, the protection and sustainable development of urban industrial landscapes has become an important practical issue, and how to maintain the unique local culture of these landscapes is key to solving the problem. By integrating the concept of “layer” and regarding the landscape as text, this paper will investigate the representation of industrial landscapes and the process of changes in power represented by different actors through different texts from the perspective of representation. The paper selected Beijing 798 as the research area to explore the shaping of changes in the industrial landscape of 798 from a weapon manufacturing area to an arts district, creative industry park and the “pan 798” by the factory owners, government, management committee, artists, media and tourists through different presentation forms, revealing the game process of representation of powers among the coalition between artists, management committee and the government. The paper points out that in fact, the representation of industrial landscape by different actors through different texts is a process that continues to explore and define the value of landscape. However, we need to look at this when the value of the industrial landscape is no longer given by localized life practices, but rather depends on different actors to produce and reproduce the value of landscape by representation, and thereby affecting the sustainable development of industrial landscape.

Keywords: industrial landscape; representation; text; power; locality; 798

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of economic globalization and the spread of information industries, the traditional manufacturing sectors in many cities have been relocated, bringing about the phenomenon of de-industrialization [1]. China's economic and industrial structures are facing a momentous transition, and urban land uses types are being adjusted accordingly, which has brought challenges to industrial landscape conservation and reuse [2]. Against the background of a post-industrial society, various industrial landscapes can now be seen in many places throughout the country. Some industrial landscapes contain much cultural beauty, however, in the context of urban renewal, the existing industrial landscape resources are abandoned and destroyed and many typical ones are gradually disappearing. How to study industrial landscape from a new perspective, inherit and protect urban post-industrial landscape resources to achieve sustainable development are the issues to be discussed in this paper.

Currently, demolition and abandonment are still the most common approaches in treating the old industrial landscapes that no longer have actual production functions [3]. However, due to the emergence of specific laws related to the re-development of these landscapes as well as social pressures, the importance of their reuse to urban development has once again been stressed [4]. How to reuse these abandoned industrial landscapes has become an important topic of discussion in sustainable urban development [5]. Therefore, the adaptive reuse of industrial landscapes is considered the best choice of protection. On the one hand, it does not destroy the historical and cultural significance of the industrial buildings, and on the other hand, it will help adapt to the new socio-economic requirements [6–8]. Currently one of the most important methods of adaptive reuse is transforming existing industrial landscapes into creative spaces, since the old warehouses and factories in urban areas are particularly attractive to the creative industries which open up new channels for the conservation and reuse of industrial heritage [9]. In recent years, the cultural creative industry areas that have transformed urban industrial landscapes have accounted for a very high proportion of the total number, such as 798 in Beijing, M50 in Shanghai and other such typical cases are continuing to emerge.

Sustainable development of industrial landscapes is a complex and difficult process, and many aspects need to be considered. The priority is the form, design, and elements of the industrial landscape [10], followed by planning, real estate transactions, land use, as well as social, economic and ecological development, and the coordination between the industrial landscape as an open public space and the surrounding communities [11]. Public pressure combined with the need to protect the environment, has increased the necessity of converting post-industrial sites into new multi-functional landscapes. Urban industrial sites present a resource to society when reintegrated into an urban context. Therefore how public and private discourse affects industrial landscape redevelopment is actually demanding, both in concept and practice.

This paper aims to contribute to how different discursive practices affect the place identity and sustainability of industrial landscapes. Existing research on the reuse of industrial landscape is focused more on the motivations, patterns and mechanisms, and less on the formation and representation significance of industrial landscapes. Areas such as how different actors recreate the unique significance of industrial landscape through text representation in particular requires further exploration. This paper looks at the different actors have created the locality of industrial landscapes through text representation, thus promoting the sustainable development of the industrial landscape. It aims to address two key issues:

firstly, how different actors represent industrial landscape through different texts in different periods, and secondly, how does the representation power of industrial landscapes change in different periods. Centered on these two issues, the main content of the paper can be divided into three parts. The first part will review the literature on the reuse of industrial landscapes and representation theory; the second will interpret the methodology and the study area; and the third part will analyze how different actors play the power game to create the industry landscape through text representation at different stages.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Industrial Landscape Reuse and “Layer” Theory

Driven by “industrial archeology”, industrial landscape conservation activities first appeared in England and spread throughout the world. The different methods of reuse and redevelopment of different industrial and post-industrial landscape typologies have been analyzed over the last few decades, and include typical cases of the reclamation of derelict industrial areas [12], “systemic design” to describe the reintegration of disvalued landscapes [13], turning brownfields into green space [14], and “landscape urbanism” that examines the relationship between landscape, ecology, and contemporary urbanism [15].

The core of sustainable development of industrial landscapes lies in ensuring an area’s own unique local cultural values, generally manifest themselves in the following four ways: first, by highlighting the value of local uniqueness. Most industrial landscapes used to be located in the development center of cities, near waterways, or in other areas that have significant geographical advantages. The process of succession of industrial spaces witnessed the profound impact of human activities on history and presence. The protection of industrial heritage left over during the process of succession of industrial spaces is based on the uniqueness of each site [16]. Second, it carries the value of local memory. People’s collective memories are present not only in the industrial space, contents, mechanical equipment and environmental background, but also in the industrial landscape and literature. These landscapes often have rich historical and cultural connotations [17]. Third, it strengthens place identity. The social and cultural value of succession of industrial spaces lies in the fact that the everyday life of different groups of people has been recorded there, which gives a significance of identity recognition. Since everyday life is attached to a certain space, it produces a place identity, and maintains the cohesion of the place [18], which is the focus to be discussed in this paper. Fourth, it shows an aesthetic value of the place. There is scientific and technological value in the history of manufacturing, engineering and construction, but these areas can also be of tremendous aesthetic value through the quality of architecture and planning. The architectural styles of some industrial landscapes can be unique and considered as landmarks of a city [19].

The current adaptive reuse of industrial landscape, however, often hovers between the creation of economic interests and cultural value, and the pursuit of economic interests prevails and there emerges a continuous quest for economic value in industrial spaces, as through the industrial land price redistribution process mentioned by Harvey. The economic benefits obtained after reuse of industrial landscape is considered as a “becoming-rent of profit” [20]. Then we must ask how it is possible to highlight cultural value in the reuse of industrial landscapes.

This paper attempts to integrate the concept of “layer” with the local layer accumulation theory proposed by Massey. The theory of layer first appeared in the article *In What Sense a Regional Problem*

published in 1978. The concept of “layer” refers to the spatial combination of local production relations over a period of time. She stated that “this combination of successive layers will produce effects which themselves vary over space, thus giving rise to a new form and spatial distribution of inequality in the conditions of production, as a basis of the next ‘round’ of investment” [21] (p. 235). On this basis, Massey proposed a “global sense of place”, where “history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world” [22] (p. 156). This paper does not focus on the coupling problems between the global and local scales, but tries to introduce the concept of “layer accumulation” into the reuse of industrial landscapes. It believes that it is not only a game process of major themes within the layer, but also an interactive process between layers, because of “debates over how to think the relationship between past, present and future can help us to reinvigorate the way in which we conceptualize geographical places” [23] (p. 186), and the place could be identified as “the product of the historical accumulation and combination of numerous layers of such articulations over time” [19] (p. 188). In this paper, a “layer” is not only the combination of production relations, but also an exploration of the representations of “layers”, *i.e.*, how does the representation of previous industrial landscapes affect future ones during the continuous process of development? In the case of 798, the owners of the industrial property, artists, government and tourists constitute the interactive actors within a layer. They characterize a “layer” during the process of power game and the representation of the later layer is influenced by previous historical representations. This cumulative process between layers is comparable with the case of the Wye Valley raised by Massey, where is both the birthplace of the industrial revolution, and the place where William Wordsworth’s pastoral school of poetry originates. Whether the area becomes an industrial museum or an exotic tourist destination related to Wordsworth in the future, the evidence of both can be found in the past “layer” [19]. However, there is a constructive relation that can be drawn between the approach of the “palimpsest” and the concept of “layer”, and so in this paper a “layer” could be seen as one page of the “palimpsest”. We try to clarify different relations in each layer rather than combining these layers.

2.2. Text, Representation and Place Making

From the view of new cultural geography, landscape is not merely that which we see on the ground or a piece of land defined by traditional cultural geography, but rather the ways in which humans view the world. For the purposes of this paper, the study on the industrial landscape will not just focus on the physical form, as a lot of research has been carried out in this area, but rather attempts to “regard landscape as text” starting from Duncan’s concept of the couple [24]. The metaphor of landscape as a “text” takes into consideration the two processes: “writing” and “reading”, which makes us deeply aware of the uncertainty of the significance of landscape, and this uncertainty will bring us to the practice of landscape representation. “Writing” can be seen as the display of representation power, whilst “reading” refers to the interpretation of the representation text.

The issue of representation power of the landscape is related to the rights of speech in representation, and the authenticity of place making [25]. Some of the aims of new cultural geography in studying landscapes are to observe the social and political processes of a place through the landscape [26], emphasize the representation and reproduction of landscape through text analysis, and also be aware of the power of narration in the reproduction process [27]. Just as some researchers believe when discussing

the representation of the countryside landscape in Greece that the local “bottom-up” representation resists the cultural representations from outside the region, which aim to attract international tourists. During this process, the social and cultural identity of a place is changed. The landscape of the Aegean Sea is no longer recognized as a native landscape of Greece, instead becoming the Aegean Sea of the world [28]. The relationships among several groups have the power in a region to affect landscape representation. These power groups may be economic or political as well as originating from outside or within the region. In the business districts or tourist areas, we often see the representation power lies in the hands of the merchants [29]; in some public spaces with national identity, state or local governments have the decisive power of landscape representation [30]. In terms of local landscape representation, the state and local governments do not necessarily have to come into conflict with the public or businesses, and some aspects are of a “non-social... process and approach that is detached from the history, society and politics, which is the field for consultation, struggle and maintenance of interpretation” [31]. Therefore, when discussing changes in the industrial landscape, this paper focuses more on investigating what caused this change.

The interpretation of representation text is not a free or repeated activity; on the contrary, “the landscape should be analyzed as the text written into social relations... thus, the ideology of landscape can be uncovered” [23]. Thus the metaphor of landscape as “text” requires that the focus should be placed on the particular and dominant reading paths, *i.e.*, the choice of representation text. Because of the various representation texts, the texts studied have developed from the traditional poetry, novels, stories, legends, *etc.* in the past to the serial product concept including literature, movies, television programs, advertising, the Internet and other media resources. The objects are no longer confined to the rural areas of traditional studies, but gradually shift to the urban cultural landscape and incorporate into the accelerating globalization process [27]. It is worth mentioning that the text itself has uneven power. In the past; laws, policies, planning and even television, newspapers and other media were considered the texts characterized and produced by the powerful social elites, but the rapid expansion of new media has led to the pattern of traditional texts being deconstructed subversively and a new social context and media ecology established. As a more participatory media, new media has become an important means by which to challenge the authority of existing texts by elites [32], which is also an important perspective of this study.

Landscape characterized by text was chosen as the focus for this paper in order to better understand the landscape through the text, and then maintain its sustainability through shaping the unique sense of place, which is reflected in the reproduction of the significance of landscape by text. Each text is the observation of a place from the author’s perspective, which can influence the perception of readers on a particular landscape [33]. Text is no longer seen as a simple description of a place, but can often help in making a place, providing different ways of understanding the world, showing a variety of geographical landscapes including landscapes for interest, experience and knowledge, *etc.*, so that readers can recognize the unique style or specialty of a place; since views of different texts constitute an interconnected network, through which you can learn about the world [34]. Currently, studies on making place by texts include: a description of the life scenes that can help readers understand the local characteristics of a region, and to reproduce the local landscape and local spiritual atmosphere in the text [35].

On the other hand, text is the expression of subjective ideas by actors during the process of place making, but when the majority of readers are impressed by the description of a place; readers accept the

scenes, atmosphere, and character of the place, and they believe these are the “locality” of that place. This locality is unique and thereby created due to the uniqueness of the text of the works. Spreading through different media texts can guide people to produce and consume the landscape, improve the popularity of places depicted in works to attract tourists; and strengthen the local significance of a place allowing it to realize sustainable development through promoting the landscape in text [36]. Meanwhile, works can help create a landscape by strengthening the place’s identity. Especially in industrial communities with deep-rooted social capital accumulation, through mining the intersection between different groups and thus carrying out activities based on text, vitality and cohesion of communities can be enhanced [37]. During the process of reconstructing urban communities, through protection of landscape recorded in the text, special cultural value attached can be protected; a typical case of which is the reconstruction work to commemorate Biddy Mason [38]. On the basis of reproducing the locality by text, the shaping of landscape is the core of the present research, and is also the focus of this article. But the place making process of industrial landscapes’ reuse by texts is not carried out through a single actor, but instead is woven amongst the interaction between different actors. Therefore we have tried to explore the reuse process from a discourse viewpoint and not just by physical form investigation.

3. Methodology and Study Area

3.1. Methodology

The analysis framework of this paper is based on the stakeholders of redevelopment of the industrial landscape, including the government, factory owners, users and so on. Many previous studies have shed light on how stakeholders decide the future of industrial landscapes through place politics. However, they often ignore how this game process is affected by the representation of different actors. The stakeholders of industrial landscapes are all of the subjects of representation, while also being objects affected by others’ representation of the landscape. Changes in the representation of power are a constant game process. Therefore, we must discover how the change of representation power affects the image and place identity of industrial landscape redevelopment, which finally is closely related to the sustainability of these industrial landscapes. In order to describe the process more precisely, we have borrowed the idea of “layer” by Doreen Massey, with every layer representing a typical image of industrial landscape made by different representation actors.

In this paper, the empirical analysis of 798 mainly relies on in-detail text analysis. With this approach, the paper assesses the discursive production of place-based subjectivity of different actors. In view of the characteristics of different actors, corresponding text sources were chosen to be studied. The main texts studied come from newspapers and journals, with data being selected from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure website (www.cnki.net). After searching and screening with “798” as the keyword, there was a total of 513 relevant journal papers and newspaper reports excluding “798” in other fields. The time range covered the period of 1997 to 2015. In the first round of analysis, we exported the references into NoteExpress reference management software, which is similar to Endnote, and read the abstract of all 513 references, finally selecting the 59 references most relevant to our topic. In the second round, we studied the full text of these 59 references to find the changing role of 798 represented mostly by scholars and journalists according to the time they were published.

In terms of the representation of industrial landscapes by the government and “798 Art District Management Committee” (hereinafter referred to as “MC”), we studied a total of 23 relevant policies, documents and proposals publicly issued by the State, Beijing city, Chaoyang District and 798 Art District Management Committee. The earliest two documents were from 1964 and the others came from the 1990s and after. We searched 798 in these documents to find how the government positioned and reimagined the 798 area and to find how the MC promoted development there.

In terms of the public (predominantly tourists), data from www.dianping.com was used. As a well-known source of information in China for local services and a trading platform, Dianping provides users with all kinds of life and business information, with comments and reviews. These comments are important texts in studying users’ perceptions of local consumption, and have the “authenticity” to deconstruct the authoritative media. We used “798 Art Factory” as the search term, and analyzed the reviews of 2768 users during the period covering 25 April 2007 to 16 January 2015. We refined the information by employing different keywords used to represent 798, such as “art district”, “tourist interests”, “creative industries cluster”, *etc.*, so as to explore the special place identity of 798 in the minds of the public.

There is certainly a need to critically reflect on the methodology in this paper. But due to China’s unique political context; relevant policies, documents and proposals can be seen as the most authoritative way to understand government. On the contrary, the Internet seems to be the only active public space where popular opinions are expressed with relative freedom by both artists and tourists alike [39]. Besides this, there is certainly a concern that a considerable proportion of Internet users in China consist of younger and more educated social groups, which coincides with the target market of 798. In this sense the online discursive materials constitute a relatively reliable sample for examining the place-based cultural identity of the 798 landscape.

In terms of artists, relevant published monographs and some media interviews were also analyzed. Texts related to art festivals, exhibitions and other festive activities are important in characterizing landscapes over a period of time, so we analyzed posters, announcements and news reports from the 798 Art Festivals and related exhibitions annually from 2003 to 2014.

3.2. Study Area

The selection the case studies was an essential component in our research. This paper takes the 798 district as the case, not only as it is one of the most representative cases of industrial landscape reuse in China, but also because it has faced the typical setbacks among administrators, redevelopers, and users, which are common in most Chinese industrial landscape cases. Beijing 798 district is located in the Jiuxianqiao area of Chaoyang District, Beijing; adjacent to the major roads of the airport expressway, and Jingshun Road, *etc.*, is not far from the embassy and business districts, as well as Capital International Airport (see Figure 1). The area is of low-lying ground covering more than one million square meters, and was chosen in the 1950s for the establishment of an electronics industry base, known as the “Beijing North China Radio Equipment Factory”. It was a national strategic project, with the code 718, under which there were plants 718, 798, 706, 707, 797, and 751. Many key components in China’s first atomic bomb and man-made satellite were produced here, so the plant has a long and significant history. At that time, 798 seemed to be just one part of 718 complex factories. With the advent of the

post-industrial era, production at 718 began to decline, industrial land gradually became idle and the buildings were even in danger of being demolished. It won the favor of a lot of artists because of its unique architectural style, spacious workshops and low rent. The artists who moved in first made reasonable transformations and used the plant with a unique vision, not only retaining the industrial traces, but also integrating modern culture with creative elements. Currently 798 has become an important industrial landscape in Beijing, and is often used as a typical case in exploring the transformation of China's industrial landscape, the rise of the post-industrial economy and urban transition [40–42].

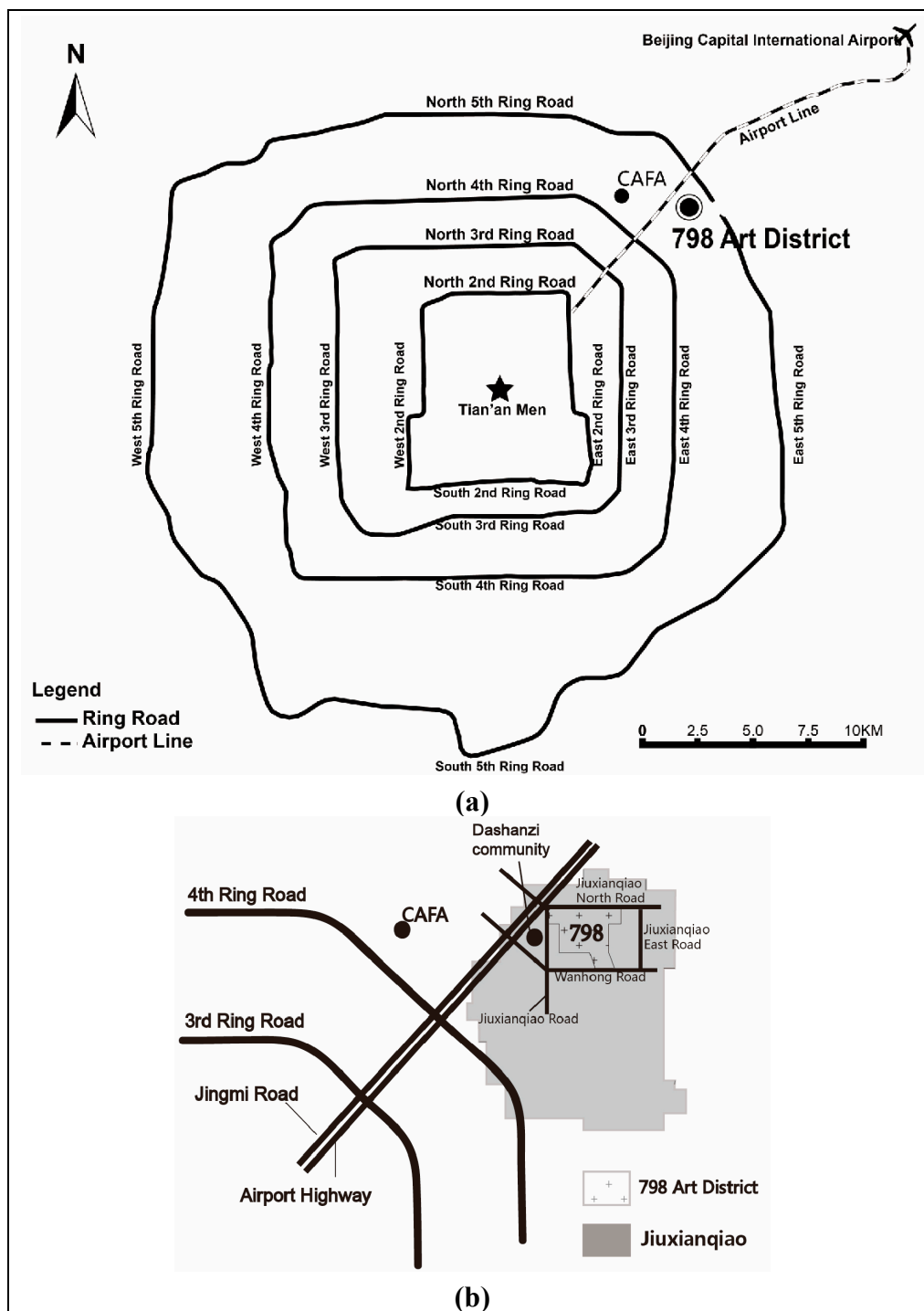


Figure 1. Location map of 798. (a) The location of 798 in Beijing; (b) The location of 798 in Jiuxianqiao District.

In order to investigate the changes in representation power game of 798, analysis is made separately according to four “layers”: before 2002, 2002–2005, 2006–2007 and post 2008, taking the formation of a typical 798 representation as a “layer”. At the same time, confirmation is made according to the existing data of the industry. It can be seen from Figure 2 that 2006 is an important year as the number of galleries showed a sharp increase. 798 can be seen as going through a transition from an art creation zone to an art industrial zone; with 2008 also being a watershed year in which year the number of artists’ studios dropped, and many artists had to move out due to the high rent. 798 is no longer just an art district.

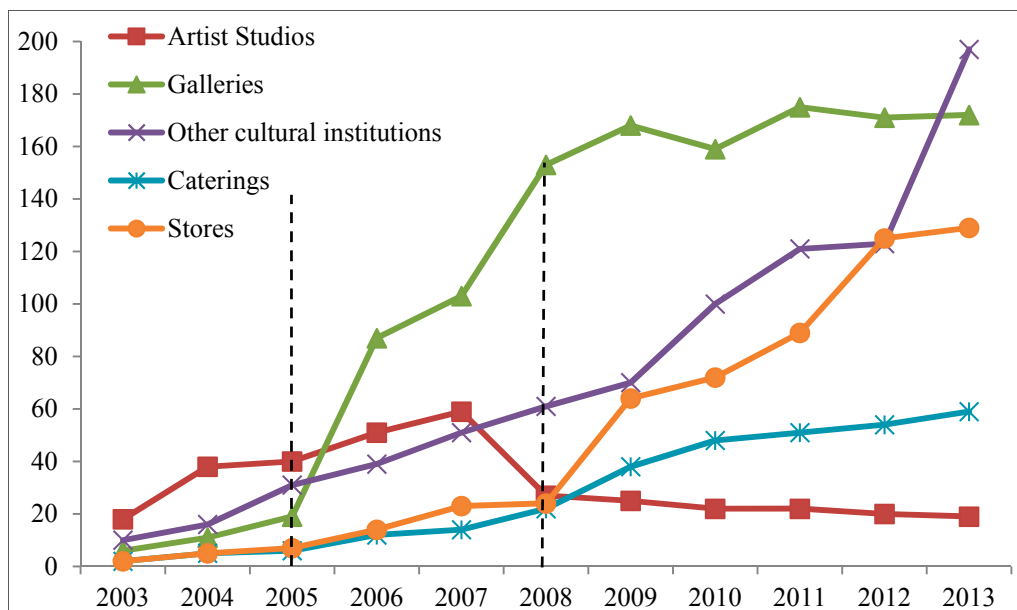


Figure 2. Change in institutions of 798 from 2003 to 2013 [43].

4. Changes in 798 Landscape Representation and Power Game

4.1. Prior to 2002: From “Weapons Factories” to “Electronic City”

As in the case of initial redevelopment plans for many industrial landscapes, the redevelopment of sites previously designed for storage, parking, industry, transport infrastructure were simply classified as “waste”. According to the wording at that time, a development pattern involving software development in Zhongguancun in the west of Beijing, and hardware development in Jiuxianqiao in the east was to be formed. Wang Hongfu, the person in charge of Jiuxianqiao Electronic Limited said in an interview: “Jiuxianqiao Electronics Industrial Zone is an old industrial base with a history of more than 40 years. It is the birthplace of China’s first computer, first automatic telephone exchange and first electronic tube, and has made great contributions to the ‘atomic and hydrogen bombs and man-made satellite’, the ‘Hongqi’ surface-to-air missile, ‘Dongfeng’ intercontinental missile, ‘Jaguar’ air-to-air missile, nuclear submarines and 44 national major advanced projects” [44]. Therefore, the development direction of the electronic city was regarded as the best choice for transformation and use of the industrial zone, since the electronic city could extend people’s memory of Beijing’s industrial history. In April 1992, directors of 12 enterprises in Jiuxianqiao area jointly submitted a document entitled “Suggestions on the establishment of the bonded and economic development zone in Jiuxianqiao” to the Beijing municipal party committee and government to propose reform and revitalization of the old industrial base.

At that time, all levels of government were major forces behind the direction of transformation. In January 1993, the Beijing Electronic Office submitted a “Request for the Establishment of the Beijing Electronic City” to the government, and proposed forming an electronic high-tech industrial base within 10 square kilometers around Jiuxianqiao by using the existing buildings and facilities, with the transformation and reform of old enterprise as the main means, and invigoration of the state-owned large and medium enterprises as the purpose; and the area where 798 is located was included. In June 1993, the Beijing Municipal Government approved the “Program of Beijing Electronic City”, and Jiuxianqiao electronics industrial zone over an area of 10.5 square kilometers, which was officially named “Beijing Electronic City”, and determined as a key independent planning and development unit with clear boundaries, which established the direction of regional economic development. In 1996, the State Ministry of Electronics (now the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology) and Beijing Municipal Government jointly issued the minutes of the “Co-build the Electronic City by the Ministry and the City” meeting, in which Jiuxianqiao was regarded as a “special electronic industrial zone”. In 1997, the Beijing municipal government proposed the building of the electronic information industry as the first pillar industry for the first time, and approved the “Development Plan of Beijing Electronic City (*i.e.*, Jiuxianqiao Electronic City)”, and put forward a “focus on fostering Jiuxianqiao Electronic City to form new industries from a higher starting point”.

At that time, the role of 798 as a regional symbol of Jiuxianqiao area was not highlighted. In fact, many people who knew Jiuxianqiao, might not have known about 798. The 798 plant was initially the No. 3 Branch of the 718 Factory complex, also known as the State-owned Beijing No.3 Radio Equipment Factory, and 798 was simply a code for a military factory. In April 1964, according to the two documents “Four Character No.1035” and “Four Word No.1354” issued by the No.4 Ministry of Machinery Industry of People’s Republic of China, the 718 Factory complex title was revoked and plants 706, 707, 718, 797, 798 and 751 were established under the Ministry. 798 did not seem to have any unique features when compared with the other five plants at the time.

If there were no artistic elements there, the 798 area would have been built into another Zhongguancun along the directions of an electronic city. But at that time, 798 was vaguely connected to the art world especially in 1995 when the Central Academy of Fine Arts moved nearby from its previous location of Xiaowei Hutong in Wangfujing. As the new campus in Huajiadi had not been completed, it leased the Beijing No. 2 Semiconductor Device Factory located at No. 2 Wanhong West Street in Jiuxianqiao, just to the west of 798 along the south road of Jiuxianqiao. That year, the Department of Sculptures received a task to create the statues to commemorate the Marco Polo Bridge Incident from the Anti-Japanese War, but the space of the No. 2 Plant could not accommodate such a large statue, so they rented an empty factory building in 798 across the road, and used the industrial production space of 798 for cultural creation. After the Central Academy of Fine Arts moved, Sui Jianguo set up his studio in a kiln workshop of a 798 factory; then the well-known publisher Hong Huang moved her periodical office and home into one of the 798 factories. The artistic buds for transformation of 798 began to sprout.

4.2. 2002–2005: The Art District after the “Rebuilding of 798”

The evocation of imagination of industrial landscapes is coupled with the discursive reproduction of the pioneer representation actor. In this “layer” of 798, artists began to play a key role in the re-imagining

of the site. 798 truly entered into the minds of people in 2002, when the 798 industrial landscapes began to become an art district in the true sense, and more artists showed that 798 was not just an industrial area, but an art district through publications, media, festivals and other different forms of representation. The milestone event of 798 art district was that in February 2002, Robert Bernell a Chinese contemporary art expert from America moved into the area and rented a cafeteria of only 120 square meters to open a “modern art bookstore”, which was considered the first art institution that entered 798. Later Robert Bernell registered his publishing house in Hong Kong and published Chinese contemporary art books under the “Timezone8” brand. In March 2002, the artist Huang Rui returned to Beijing from Japan and became the first artist to be allowed to rent a large Bauhaus style workshop. In October of the same year, Tokyo Gallery entered 798 and held the first exhibition “Beijing Ukiyo-e”. The importance of this exhibition to the 798 art district was recorded by Shu Yang in the article “Past and Present of 798 Art District”: “After the launching of Beijing Ukiyo-e, more domestic and foreign art organizations and artists entered 798 District, and the scale of 798 Art District was preliminarily formed.”

But the image of 798 Art District was in direct conflict with the transformation plans of the electronic city owner, the “Seven Stars Group”, and the government did not attempt to change the original plan. They were not fully aware of the aesthetic, historical and cultural values of the industrial landscape of 798, therefore mining the value of 798 industrial landscapes was the main goal of settlers in the area. The campaign of “rebuilding 798”, begun on April 13, 2003, and greatly promoted the functional transfer of 798, and accelerated its growth rate after moving away from the original plan. It was initiated by the artists themselves and attempted to declare the transformation of 798 from an old plant to an art district in the form of a bottom-up campaign of right to speech. In the poster of Figure 3, the 798 impression in the form of a barcode covered the 798 plant that was being dismantled, and the text of poster “rebuilding 798” was regarded as “the coexistence of pioneer spirit with traditional flavor, an emphasis on both experiment in color and social responsibility, a win-win of the spiritual pursuit and economic planning, and interaction between the elite and the masses.”

In 2004 Huang Rui and Xu Yong organized the first Beijing “Dashanzi Art Festival” (later renamed the 798 Art Festival). With “radiance and resonance/signals of time” as the theme (see Figure 4), over 30 series of events were held during the festival, and artists’ studios opened to the public. According to statistics, nearly 10,000 people visited during the festival, and 798 officially entered public consciousness, no longer being just an artistic vanguard area for a small minority [45].

If we say that the above two activities are representations of bottom-up discourse in industrial landscapes led by artists, the elites represented by scholars helped the retention of the 798 industrial landscape through submitting proposals. In February 2004, Li Xiangqun, a representative of the Beijing Municipal People’s Congress and Professor at the Tsinghua Academy of Fine Arts proposed to “retain the architectural heritage of an old industry and a growing art district!” during the Beijing People’s Congress. He suggested that relevant government departments should immediately stop the undergoing and planned large-scale demolition of the 718 Factory areas on the grounds that: “Most of the buildings here have kept their original appearance since the early 1950s. The early equipment and production technology gained technical support from large electronic factories of the former GDR, the design of the buildings come from 55 East German experts, and the world’s most advanced construction techniques and Bauhaus design philosophies were adopted, so the solid and grand architecture are a rare treasure of modern industrial buildings. Many designers regard the buildings as examples that adhere to

architectural aesthetics. In terms of their size and completeness of preservation, the 718 factory complex is one of only several remaining of its type worldwide” [46]. In addition to this, the No.1323 proposal of the CPPCC submitted by Dr. Chen Dongsheng from Taikang Life “a proposal on city orientation and giving full play to the unique advantages of cultural industry in Beijing” became an important force in protecting 798.



Figure 3. Poster of “Rebuilding 798” on April 13 2003 [47].

At the same time the government began to plan related policy support and re-adjust regional planning. In July 2004, the Beijing municipal party committee and government made clear that it would take cautious but positive attitudes toward the future development of the 798 district on the basis of in-depth investigation. In 2005 it made clear it would seriously consider ways to retain buildings in Dashanzi, produce a focused study on the 1950s Bauhaus style architecture of the No.4 Building of the art district, and issued a notice in the same year explicitly including 798 in the scope of protection; and the Beijing Municipal Government regarded the Bauhaus building as being outstanding modern architecture in accordance with the recommendations from the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design [48].



Figure 4. The flyer for the first Dashanzi Art Festival in 2004 [49].

The then president of Seven Stars Group, who served as a CPPCC member, also submitted a proposal for the protection and development of 798, which came as a surprise to the public. It can be seen that in the course of the development of events, different representation powers went through a process of growth and decline, for which there are many possible factors. The Seven Stars Group had begun to realize the tremendous value of the industrial landscape of the 798 factories and Bauhaus architecture. Due to the involvement of government forces, in particular the Chaoyang District Government and the Beijing Municipal Government conducting research on 798 and organizing expert assessment, the force of favor finally came in on the artists' side, and the government eventually retained 798 as an art district.

At the time, public awareness of 798 was vague; media used association and comparison, calling it the “Chinese Soho” allowing 798 become gradually accepted by the public. Visiting 798 at this time was still a niche activity. A tourist, and one time student of the Central Academy of Fine Arts called Yue Xiaoyue, said, “I often came here when I was at school (around 2004)... few people knew the area at that time... (2014-06-14)”. Although 798 was in its infancy then, and some factories were still being used for industrial product manufacturing, it was now a space created by artists. People could truly feel the rich artistic atmosphere with traces from the industrial era. One of the visitors mentioned his impression on 798 in 2003: “When I came here five years ago, facilities were inadequate and conditions were very difficult in the Bauhaus-style factory. Many talented but lackluster young artists took here as their studio

and stronghold, gradually taking root and forming a mass. So we can say they brought out the best of each other (ID: sleepseal, 2008-06-15)’’.

4.3. 2006–2007: “798 Cultural and Creative Industry Park”

In this “layer”, we investigate how the artists resisted the hegemony of the administrators. The imagination of place identity in 798 is varied not only for an art district. In January 2006, the Development Scheme of the 11th Five-Year Plan in Beijing included the cultural and creative industries as key developing industries. On 17 July 2006, Chaoyang District issued the 11th Five-Year Plan on cultural and creative industries, and identified 11 district-level cultural and creative industries parks including the 798 art district. In the same year, 798 was identified as one of the first batch of Beijing Cultural and Creative Industries Park. Relying on the platform of cultural and creative industries park, 798 art district enjoyed benefits from almost all of the relevant policies on the development of cultural and creative industries in Beijing municipality and Chaoyang District.

At the same time the government and Seven Stars Group were officially involved in the development and operation of 798. In March 2006, the Chaoyang district government set up a Construction Management Office in the 798 art district, and later formed the MC jointly with Seven Stars Group. Based on the publicly available information from the Chaoyang District Government, the main duties of the MC included: “being responsible for the daily work of the coordinating and leading group of 798 art district and implementing relevant policies of superiors; responsible for the study and development of plans and policies of the 798 art district to promote the industrial optimization and upgrading; responsible for conservation and tourism resource development and utilization of the art district; responsible for coordinating and promoting municipal infrastructure and public service facilities of the art district; responsible for coordinating relevant departments to carry out cultural safety supervision, production safety supervision, security management and urban management and supervision of the art district; responsible for outreach promotion, brand marketing, investment invitation and other routine service work in the art district” [50]. The duties of the MC in this announcement covered basically all of the daily operations of 798, and declared that the MC was to be the plenipotentiary power in representing the 798 Park.

In contrast, artists’ representation rights diminished. This came mainly because of the background of the high price of office space in Beijing, with rents in 798 rising continuously from around 0.6 RMB per square meter per day in 2001 to 6 RMB in 2007. Artists had to leave 798 to find cheaper areas to work, farther from the center of Beijing, and by 2008 the number of artists’ studios within the 798 had dropped by half (see Figure 5).

Compared with the issue of rising rent prices, what made artists even angrier is that they failed to obtain the naming rights of the 798 Art Festival, which was their most important platform in the 798 industrial landscape representation discourse system. The Festival was originally initiated by artists, such as Huang Rui. Due to the government’s support and recognition of the identity of the arts district, the MC of the Art District made it clear that: “The 798 Art Festival in 2007 will not ‘confront’ artists, we will just provide services and assistance, and not interfere with the academic nature of the festival, and are willing to offer great support to curators” [51]. It is strange that just before the festival began in 2007, Huang Rui had disputes with the property management office and left 798. The following year,

the MC took over organizational work of the festival “justifiably”. That is, beginning in 2007, the 798 Art Festival changed from a civil nature into a quasi-official nature. The Beijing Cultural Development Foundation, Jiuxianqiao Subdistrict Office of People’s Government of Chaoyang District, Beijing 798 Art District Construction and Management Office and other organizations behind the 798 Art Festival served as the mouthpiece of the festival (see Figure 6).

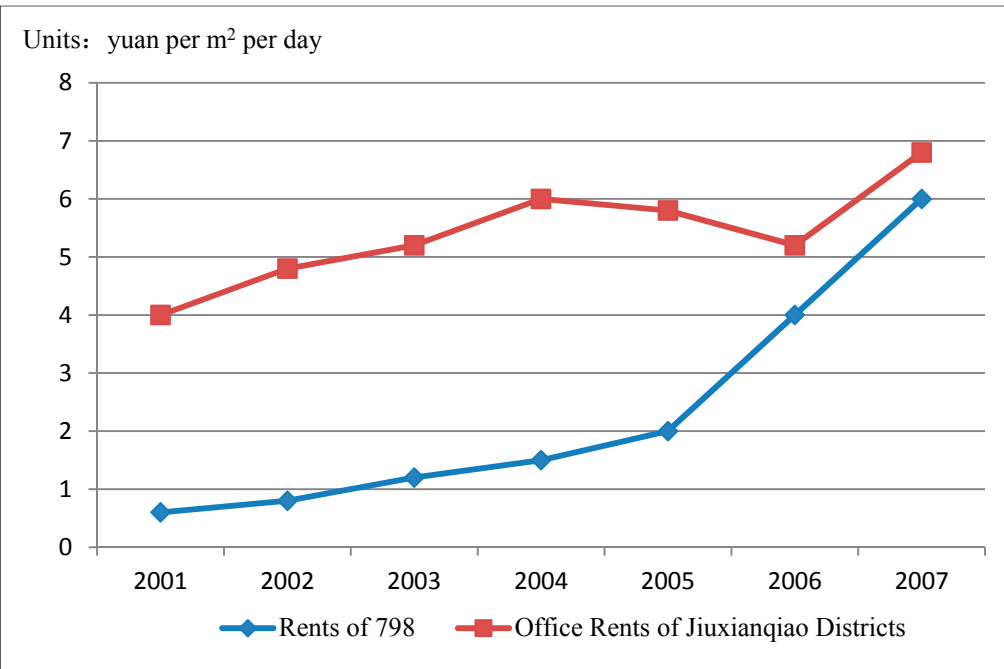


Figure 5. Comparison between rents of 798 Art District and that of offices in Beijing [52].



Figure 6. The flyer for the “798 Art Festival” in 2007 [53].

After 798 received official identification, various cultural and creative agencies began to enter, and public perception changed from it being just an art district, to more of a cultural and creative industry park, or a living area full of fashion ideas; as one tourist mentioned:

“The so-called 798 refers to not only 798, but also a cultural concept that has evolved from this art district and the stylish living and work style of LOFT... It includes publishing, architectural design, fashion design, interior home design, musical performances, video performances, artists’ studios, *etc.* In addition to galleries, there are bars, restaurants, clothing stores, bookstores, and a yoga center... everything that one expects to find. There are lots of choices here. For restaurants there are French, Italian, as well as Sichuan style. It’s like a small community...” (ID: tricky, 14 June 2008).

4.4. 2008–Present: “Pan 798”

“Pan” means everything or everyone, which implies hybridity and an unclear place identity in industrial landscapes. Tourist and public groups have become the most active representation power in this “layer” and the impact of 798 has become even larger. Nowadays there is a saying that “there is Soho in New York, Chelsea in London and 798 in Beijing” (ID: Butterfly in Full Regalia, 16 July 2008). Especially during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 798 was called a feast of culture in Beijing that can be eponymous with “Great Wall” and “Peking Duck”, and has become a famous “calling card” for the city [54]. 798 not only achieved its own development, but drove development in the surrounding areas such as 751, the tube plant and other industrial zones. For example, according to the new plan issued by the Beijing Municipal Government, the 751 Beijing Fashion Design Plaza near 798 had also been identified as a municipal cultural and creative industries park. “Changsha 798” [55], “Guangzhou 798” [56], “the Ruhr, Germany’s 798” [57], and other “pan 798” representation forms are widely seen in a variety of texts. 798 has almost become the spokesperson for reuse of China’s industrial landscapes.

The MC began to make comprehensive transformations to 798. In terms of the industrial landscape, the pipes wrapped in black asphalt that matched the original industrial environment were transformed into shiny white metal ones; the corridor of large workshops originally made of concrete, steel, glass and with dim lights and full of nostalgia were changed with bright stainless steel windows, with glass and brick floors, dazzling spotlights in malls and commercial logos added everywhere.

The positioning of 798 in government planning continues to extend with the expansion of its influence. In the latest “Construction and Development Plan of Cultural and Creative Industries Functional Area of Beijing (2014–2020)” issued in 2014, 798 has changed from a gathering place into 20 cultural and creative industry functional areas. It has been redefined in the plan as the “798 fashion creative functional area”, and is required to “expand space for development to the north and the east based on the parks of 798 and 751, spillover cultural and artistic features and elements, form convergence and be an exchange center for domestic and foreign modern arts and be a center of modern art creation. Develop cultural and artistic creation and cultural art trade, and promote industrial development to creative design, culture and arts intermediary services, constantly innovative art studio, art incubator, creative workshops, exhibitions, trainings and other new formats” [58]. While expanding its impact, 798 has been characterized by many other features.

The artists who made 798 famous, however, were running around attempting to safeguard their rights. The incident involving Hao Guang in 2008 was an example. He published a personal blog post entitled,

“How dare the property management office of 798 be so black hearted...?!” [59], which caused an uproar. The surface reason for the dispute was that the Seven Stars Property closed Hao Guang’s studio and smashed the glass in the doors and windows so that he delayed payment for rents and had overdue bills. As one of the parties to the incident, Hao Guang believed he did nothing wrong. He did not delay in payment for rents and nor did he have overdue bills, instead he was enthusiastic about the construction in 798. The underlying reason is that artists have no right of speech in 798. The individuals who created 798 were now no longer there. He pointed out in the blog post that: “I once thought 798 belonged to us artists, but now I come to understand that it belongs to somebody else (referring to the 798 MC)... If there are no artists or artistic atmosphere, will 798 be still 798?” [59].

Meanwhile, the public perception of 798 was also blurred into several categories:

Art District: “The best art park in China, there is no second” (ID: How can foodies not put on weight, 19 June 2004).

Commercial District: “Very disappointed. I regret not having come earlier. The art district has changed into a business district, even a commodity distribution center, like a miniature Yiwu, but the prices are very expensive. There are very few original designs and it’s quite expensive...” (ID: Michael’s Mom, 9 October 2013).

Creative Industry District: “Beijing’s most famous creative industry park. I used to come here when I studied in university. Many shops were very unique, literary and full of creativity. Though I’ve visited some creative industry parks in other cities, I feel 798 is the best.” (ID: lionhk3095, 12 August 2013).

Tourist Attraction: “Although it is a famous scenic spot in Beijing, it’s too abstract for us who are not artistic.” (ID: Maitang, 17 November 2012).

The blurred definitions reflect the increasingly diverse functions of 798, but the following message from tourists is worrying:

“The goods sold are similar to those in Nanluo Guxiang, some are even inferior, and most are odds and ends and rough. The stores sell everything. Most of the things I saw here are sold everywhere else.” (ID: Meiqiu, 19 April 2004).

“Can they call this art? There are some creative commodities for sale, but the cost performance is quite low. Now they are imitated, like Nanluo Guxiang, Lijiang and Yangshuo... they can be found everywhere where there are many petty bourgeois.” (ID: just4life, 21 November 2011).

“Then later I have no special feeling. There are similar places all around the country.” (ID: Write Your Hell, 18 January 2015).

When people start looking for the “real 798”, 798 becomes the twin of the 751 factory next to it and similar to Shanghai’s M50, and the audience’s perception of it is similar to many other parts of the country, *i.e.*, when 798 is no longer special, then can the industrial landscape being protected really be sustainable?

5. Discussions and Conclusions

In this paper, we explored the relational thinking of place politics and analyzed the ways in which industrial landscape is negotiated by different representation actors. 798 could be seen as a microcosm of the redevelopment process of the industrial landscape in China. During its change from a weapons factory to an electronic city, arts district, creative industries park, and the “pan 798”, its landscape

meaning has been created by different actors. The actors of representation include the factory owners, government, MC, artists, media and tourists. At the beginning, the Seven Stars Group—as the property owner—thought the 798 industrial landscape could become another electronic city alongside Zhongguancun in Beijing, but the artists updated the Seven Stars Group and others' understanding of the 798 through “rebuilding 798” and the 798 Art Festival, making it stand out from the series of 718 factory complex. Thus the 798 industrial landscape has been retained, by discovering the art and cultural value of industrial landscapes. When the MC and government became the dominant actors of representation power in 798, however, they expanded the influence and the function of 798 through policy, planning, control of the festival and other authoritative discourse platforms, and produced the “pan 798” effect through the “word of mouth” of tourists in media, but it also blurred people's awareness of the industrial landscape. In this process, from Beijing to other parts of the country, more and more industrial landscapes are being reused by imitating this model, so the sustainable development of industrial landscapes developed by modeling has been challenged.

Now we discuss the two issues of this paper from the case of 798; the process of representing images of industrial landscapes through representation by different actors is in fact a process in which the cultural values of the industrial landscape are constantly explored and defined under the “gaze” of different actors. Different actors characterize the landscape through different forms of texts, trying to make texts conform to their own needs. During this process, different actors realize the changing of their role and transit from the original “Other” to “I” of landscape, from “passive recipient” to “active creator” in understanding, and then produce the recognition of the significance of landscape.

Viewed from changes in power of representation at different periods, the nature of power is not characterized by its oppressiveness, but the productivity, *i.e.*, to give artistic and cultural value, commercial and business value, and consumption cultural value to industrial landscapes through representation by different actors. In terms of changes in the representation power, if there is no full involvement by extraneous actors, the representation power of industrial landscapes are considered to belong to the owner of the industrial property, but the property owner may not be able to fully exploit the cultural significance of the landscape. The full excavation and awareness of landscape significance often benefits from artists, experts and even cultural fieldworkers. They can be regarded as “pioneers of representation”, who attract the attention of the masses to the landscape through various forms of representation, thereby causing re-examination by the property owner and the government, who characterize the industrial landscape top-down later through “authoritative” policies, planning and other texts. Nevertheless, with the help of the increasing popularity of new medias, the original accidental and isolated “tourists' representation” influence each other through the power of the network, and start to challenge the authority of the text bottom-up and affect the expression of the established landscape significance. As for the concerns that we have about 798, when the significance and value of the industrial landscape are no longer given by local practices, but depend on different actors, especially when independent tourists or travelers' comments compete for the production and reproduction of the meaning and value of industrial landscape through representation, we should consider whether 798 will achieve “placenessless”, thereby affecting the sustainable development of the industrial landscape. Especially when more industrial landscapes around the country attempt to become the next 798, how should the story of 798 be told in the future?

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Author Contributions

Juncheng Dai and Huasheng Zhu contributed to the conceptual framework of the methodology and wrote some parts of the article. Xue Huang contributed to text analysis works and drawings figures.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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