


## Article

# Research on Sustainable Development Model of Chinese Artist Village

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**Abstract:** As a development form of the creative industry, the Artist Village is a high concern of the Chinese government, and it has achieved rapid developments in China in recent years. However, many Artist Villages come to an untimely end a short period after their birth and fail to realize sustainable development. In this study, an empirical analysis on 80 Artist Villages in China was carried out. A field investigation and research on eight Artist Villages was implemented. Attention was paid to thoroughly analyze three typical Artist Villages of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village and Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village. It has been found from studies that the development of Artist Villages in China has experienced initiation, development and maturity stages. The development of Artist Villages in China generally has many problems, such as an insufficient endogenous impetus, the excessive intervention of government, market capital “squeezing out” the original artists, and so on. This paper proposed a sustainable development model for Artist Villages during urbanization in China based on the findings and conclusions of this study. This study not only enriches research contents in this field, but can also provide meaningful references for the sustainable development of Artist Villages in China.

**Keywords:** Artist Village; sustainable development; development model; urbanization; 3T principle



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## 1. Introduction

Artist Villages are a space form in which original artists gather together in creation and living, accompanied by the development of relevant industrial chains. It is also a special space agglomeration for cultural creative industries after social production level develops to a certain stage [1]. Compared with ordinary commercial arts districts, Artist Villages provide original artists a place for long-term creation and living. They are equipped with a strong artistic creation ability in addition to marketing or the copying of existing artistic works [2].

The Painter Village in the Old Summer Palace in the suburbs of Beijing during the end of 1980s and early 1990s is the earliest Artist Village in China. Artist Villages entered into the rapid development stage in the 21st century. According to statistics, there were about 140 Artist Villages in China by 2011, at least 30 of which were at a certain scale [3] (generally speaking, an Artist Village has a certain scale when the number of artists reaches 30 or more). There were more than 400 Artist Villages in China by 2018, including more than 50 of a certain scale. The most influential ones included the Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village, the Beijing 798 Artist Village, the Shanghai Fengjing peasant Artist Village, the Chengdu Artist Village, etc. [4]. These Artist Villages in China, which sprang up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, have distinctly different features from those in other countries. Except for existing waste plants and old residential areas with a small

residential population, Artist Villages began to develop in cities, in suburbs, and in rural areas. Industrial development and the attraction of tourists not only led to the reconstruction of building styles and appearances in the region, but also brought local residents opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship and promoted urbanization of whole districts. The most important effect of Artist Villages in China is to facilitate urban economic developments. In China, creative industries, including the arts industry, have been applied as a top-down planning tool to promote urbanization and economic growth [5]. Ren discovered that under the guidance of government policies, Artist Villages can promote urbanization quickly [6]. Qian et al. pointed out that the settlement of artists could facilitate the updating and development of rural areas [7]. Crawshaw and Menelaos have become aware of the important effects of arts on economic development in rural communities [8]. The development of the Artist Village is often accompanied with a rising of local cultural status, which brings surrounding residents more cultural enjoyment, and promotes the thickening of local cultural artistic atmospheres [9]. The economic and social impacts of Artist Villages after they have developed to a certain stage would attract the attentions of local government, thus improving infrastructure conditions in Artist Villages, including traffic, drinking water and electricity facilities [10]. More importantly, Artist Villages can bring local areas abundant employment opportunities to promote a shift in local residents' employment from agricultural departments to non-agricultural departments and facilitate urbanization progress. Take Songzhuang in Beijing, for example. In this Artist Village, more than 6000 artists offer over 24,000 employment posts for local residents related to the catering, logistics, marketing, and painting industries, including 30% of local villagers. This realizes the transfer from the primary industry to secondary and tertiary industries successfully [11,12]. From the perspective of ecology, artists create works with the brain, which neither consumes abundant ecological environmental resources nor causes great damage to the ecological environment. Art is a "green" industry with high creation values and zero pollution [13]. Therefore, Artist Villages which facilitate urbanization progress is a form of characteristic town that is accepted in many places [14]. During urbanization in China, Artist Villages in urban areas accelerates urban updating, while Artist Villages in the suburbs and in rural areas become an important impetus for urbanization and the development from agriculture to non-agricultural industries. In a word, the sustainable construction of Artist Villages in China is related to local sustainable developments of the economy and society.

Art is an important component of the wealth of society's spiritual culture. Artists are the most important producer of such wealth and assume the important task of "encouraging people with excellent works". However, artists occupy a weak position within the whole artistic industry. It has been proven by artistic district development around the whole world that, as the producer of artistic works, artists are in a weak position relative to capital and the phenomenon of "starting from art and end with business" is common, leaving no space for the survival of art [15]. This has been observed in Artist Villages around the world, including the Greenwich Artist Village in New York, the Artist Community in the east zone of London, Beijing 798 in Beijing, the Great Orient in Shanghai and so on. Artist Villages are sure to undergo a rapid development in China since the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China suggested "perfecting modern cultural industrial system and market system, creating an innovative production and operation mechanism, improving cultural economic policies and developing new cultural forms". However, there are still many Artist Villages which have died in non-urban areas in China [16]. According to the search results of "Artist Villages" on Baidu, a lot of Artist Villages have become "shell villages". In Liuhe Artist Village in Nanjing, most artists' studios have been closed and only a few are still struggling for survival [17]. In Chongqing Gujianshan Artistic Village, although more than 20 artists have built studios, most of them are just galleries of artists. These Artist Villages are constructed with tremendous "manpower", "financial resources" and "material resources". Meanwhile, many local governments view Artistic Villages as important projects of government, but most of the

projects were killed [18]. For example, the government has invested hundreds of millions of RMB into the Gujianshan Village in Chongqing, but it ended up as a “shell village”. Only 3–4 artists kept the promise of “working here for at least 3 months”. The failure of the development of the Artist Village has brought many negative impacts to the local economy and society. This not only affects the artistic atmosphere that has been built over many years, but also makes artists lack a psychological sense of security and belonging, which to some extent harms the development of China’s cultural and creative industries [19]. From the perspective of sustainable development, the practical difficulties faced by the development of the Artist Village will seriously affect the sustainable development of the cultural and creative industries, which may have a negative impact on the local economy, society, environment and other aspects. Hence, it is very important to study the sustainable development of Artist Village in the special urbanization background of China.

The research objective of this paper is to build a sustainable development model of the Chinese Artist Village. Firstly, 80 Artist Villages with relatively complete basic information were selected as research objects through literature research and network searches. Secondly, eight representative Artist Villages were selected for field survey based on the sample of 80 Artist Villages, which including the eastern, central and western regions. Thirdly, eight Artist Villages were divided into three categories according to the types of Artist Villages, and one Artist Village was selected from each type as a representative for detailed research in order to further study the development path and problems of different types of Artist Villages. Fourthly, a sustainable development model of the Artist Village in the process of China’s urbanization is proposed based on the 3T theory [20].

## 2. Literature Review

Recently, research on Artist Villages has attracted more and more international attention. According to a web science search, relevant studies increased from more than 230 in 1998 to more than 500 in 2022. These studies mainly focus on how to plan and how to design public spaces and create space for artists in Artist Villages. In 2000, Scott and Hall et al. successively proposed a trend of spatial agglomeration of creative industries. These industries are not uniformly distributed in space. In cities with certain conditions like London, agglomeration of cultural creative industries is promoted by developing creative cities, which raises the curtain on research on the spatial layout of cultural creative industries [21,22]. Culture-led urban transformation that usually leads to gentrification conflicts may be driven by the symbolic representation of space and the right to the neighborhood (Gainza, 2017) [23]. Sklair contributes significantly to our understanding of how architecture is entangled with the contemporary operation of international capital. Particularly sociological in orientation, *The Icon Project* adds much to our understanding of the architectural celebration of the transnational consumption and production practices that underpin deeply uneven cities the world over (Sklair, 2017) [24]. Jeff Cody and Francesco Siravo (2019) have captured the crisis confronting historic cities and issued a call to action in *Historic Cities: Issues of Urban Conservation*. This study points out that historic cities should be rescued for the value they represent to us now and in the future [25]. Federico Camerin (2022) states that the distortion of the existing built environment under speculative urbanization patterns has resulted in the search for creative districts (among other effects) [26]. Lopez-Pineiro’s research shows how urban and territorial voids have been replaced with “creativity” [27]. Gao proposed that the design of the Artist Village has to conform better with the creation of artists and reflect the artistic style of individuals [28]. Bischoff suggested a reasonable connection between public space and private space, so that the public can share the public space better with artists [29].

Some scholars have discussed the causes of the Artist Village. Nishimura and Shambroom (2017) pointed out that the international cultural flow of artists can promote the formation of Artist Villages [30]. Joaquim (2014) found that the convenience of living in urban areas and short distances to markets were important reasons why artists were willing to stay in urban areas [31]. Villar-Argáiz (2016) believed that artists have to make

frequent interactions with local residents in order to form a real community [32]. Jenkins and Romanos (2014) believed that the development of the tourism industry may bring certain benefits to artists, and thereby attract more artists to gather in a place [33]. With respect to Chinese studies on the causes of Artist Villages, Zhang Xiaojin studied the Artist Village in Tanhualin in Wuhan City and found that the inborn cultural heritage and talent concentration brought by Hubei Institute of Fine Arts and the block stability brought by the protection of old streets are keys to the success of Tanhualin [34]. Zeng Jinmei (2014) pointed out that, based on semi-spontaneous industrial agglomeration, introducing professional brokers is one of most important factors of the Artist Village [35].

Some studies reported that government plays the decisive role in the development of the Artist Village. Liu and Han (2013) pointed out that government is vital to the development of the Artist Village in view of macroscopic policy. One administrative order determines the existence and duration of suburbs in Beijing [36]. Han and Saeek (2014) pointed out that the strong intervention of government on the Artist Village has negative impacts [37]. Se Hoon Park (2012) carried out a comparative study on Artist Village projects in three cities including Fushan and Guangzhou, finding that the Fushan Government achieved the best effect of “offering capital assistance and no direct participation”. However, relevant reasons have not been analyzed deeply [38].

According to this literature review, previous studies mainly focus on a certain stage in the development of Artist Villages, but few have discussed the whole development process of Artist Villages as well as how to realize sustainable development in the development process. Therefore, it is very necessary to study the sustainable development of Artist Villages in China.

### 3. Collection of Research Sample Data and Data Acquisition

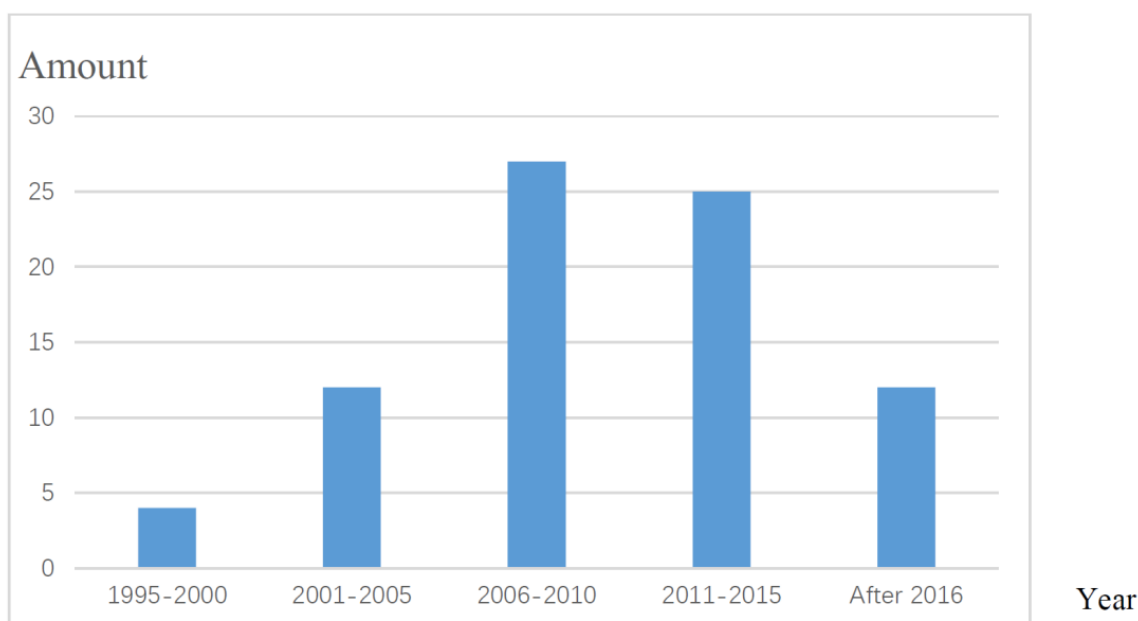
#### 3.1. Basic Conditions of Research Samples

To understand the development of Artist Villages in China, 80 Artist Village samples were chosen through the literature review and network searching. The spatial distribution of Artist Villages is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Spatial distribution of Artist Village samples.

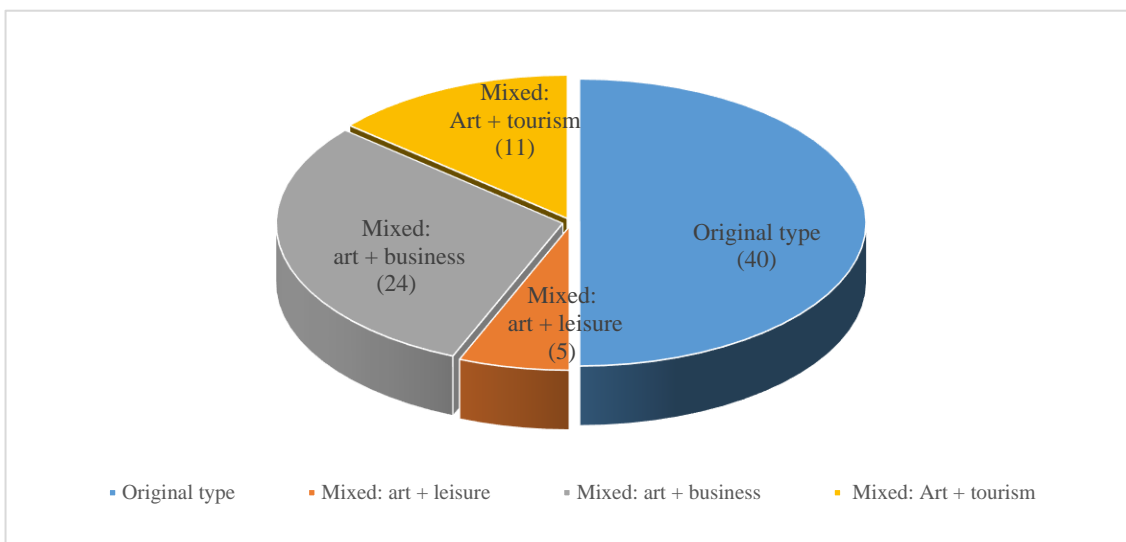
Places	Number	Percentage
Anhui	4	5.0%
Beijing	20	25.0%
Guangdong	6	7.5%
Guangxi	7	8.8%
Guizhou	3	3.8%
Hunan	1	1.3%
Jiangsu	2	2.5%
Jiangsu	6	7.5%
Shaanxi	1	1.3%
Shanghai	1	1.3%
Sichuan	9	11.3%
Yunnan	10	12.5%
Chongqing	10	12.5%

The year of foundation distribution of Artist Village samples is shown in Figure 1. It can be seen from Figure 1 that most samples were developed during 2006–2015.



**Figure 1.** The year of foundation distribution of Artist Village samples.

Artist Villages can generally be divided into original type and mixed type according to properties. The mixed type is mainly manifested as “art + leisure”, “art + tourism”, and “art + business”. Distributions of sample types are shown in Figure 2. It can be seen from Figure 2 that the original type and the mixed type of Artist Village account for a basically equal proportion and the mixed type is dominated by “art + business”.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of Artist Village types.

### 3.2. General Condition of Field Investigation Samples

To further explore the development process and problems in development of Artist Villages in China, eight Artist Villages were chosen from 80 samples and studied.

Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village, Chongqing Ciqikou Artist Village, Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village, 798 Art District, Chengdu Land-ing Artist Village, Hefei Cuigang Artist Village and Shenzhen Fenghua Ancient Village were investigated from December 2016 to November 2017. Deep semi-structured interviews with town and village cadres and artists were carried out. More than 20 town and village cadres and more than 10 artists were interviewed, with more than 40 interviewees

in total. The interview time with everyone was less than 45 min. A deep understanding of eight Artist Villages was gained through field investigation and interview. The general conditions of eight Artist Villages are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** General conditions of 8 Artist Villages in field investigation.

No.	Name of Artist Village	Date of Initiation	Property	Region	Location	General Conditions
Case 1	Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village	1992	Mixed type, art + business	Coastal developed regions	Ancient village in near suburbs	Decreasing from the original 200–300 artists to more than 100 at present
Case 2	Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village	1994	Original	Coastal developed regions	Ancient village in near suburbs	The number of artists is 4000–6000.
Case 3	Chongqing Ciqikou Artist Village	1999	Mixed, art + business	Middle and west China	Ancient town in urban area	Decreasing the dozens of artists to 2 at present.
Case 4	798 Art District	2002	Original	Coastal developed regions	Waste factories in cities	Decreasing 30–40 artists to less than 10 at present.
Case 5	Chengdu Landing Artist Village	2003	Original	Middle and west China	Rural areas in near suburbs	More than 500 artists
Case 6	Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village	2010	Original, art + tourism	Middle and west China	Rural areas in far suburbs	More than 20 artists
Case 7	Hefei Cuigang Artist Village	2013	Mixed, art + business	Middle and west China	Rural areas in near suburbs	More than 30 artists
Case 8	Shenzhen Fenghua Ancient Village	2014	Mixed, art + tourism	Coastal developed regions	Ancient village in near suburbs	Chinese National Academy of Arts settled down.

Based on the above eight Artist Villages, key attentions were paid to analyze their development model. The development model of Artist Villages generally can be divided into three types, namely, market-dominated development, government-dominated development and market and government-dominated development [39,40]. The market-dominated development model includes Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, 798 Art District and Chongqing Ciqikou Artist Village. Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village and Shenzhen Fenghua Ancient Village belong to the government-dominated development model. Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village, Chengdu Landing Artist Village and Hefei Cuigang Artist Village are market and government-dominated development models. Different development models of Artist Villages as well as development status and development factors are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Development status and development factors of different modes of Artist Villages.

Development Model	Typical Representatives	Development Status	Development Factors
Market-dominated development	Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, 798 Art District and Chongqing Ciqikou Artist Village	These Artist Villages developed quickly, but artists are easy to be squeezed out by capitals.	There are stable artistic talent sources, market activity and good market connection.



Table 3. *Cont.*

Development Model	Typical Representatives	Development Status	Development Factors
Government-dominated development	Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village and Shenzhen Fenghua Ancient Village	Slow development	With government supports, these Artist Villages are easy to get financial and infrastructure supports.
Market + government-dominated development	Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village, Chengdu Landing Artist Village and Hefei Cuigang Artist Village	Quick development with supports from the government	In early stage, artists develop independently. After getting government supports, activity of market elements is stimulated and Artist Village enters into prosperity.

#### 4. Development Path of Artist Village in China and Problems

This paper selects one Artist Village from each type as a representative for detailed research, in order to further study the development path and problems of different types of Artist Villages. This research should mainly consider their geographical representation and avoid different types of the same area when choosing these three representative Artist Villages. Based on the field investigation and interviews, the three typical Artist Villages of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village and Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village were chosen for analysis according to regions, properties and development models, aiming to explore the development path of Artist Villages in China and the problems against their development. The system life cycle is an important quantitative tool for assessing sustainable development. The state of each stage directly affects the sustainable development of the system [41]. The ecological life cycle can be divided into four development stages: initiation, development, maturity and decline [42]. Sustainable development refers to the continuous development and no decline in the mature stage. This paper studies the sustainable development of three types of Artist Villages to establish a sustainable development model for Chinese Artist Villages. Therefore, this study focuses on the initiation, development and maturity stages of three Artist Villages.

##### 4.1. Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village

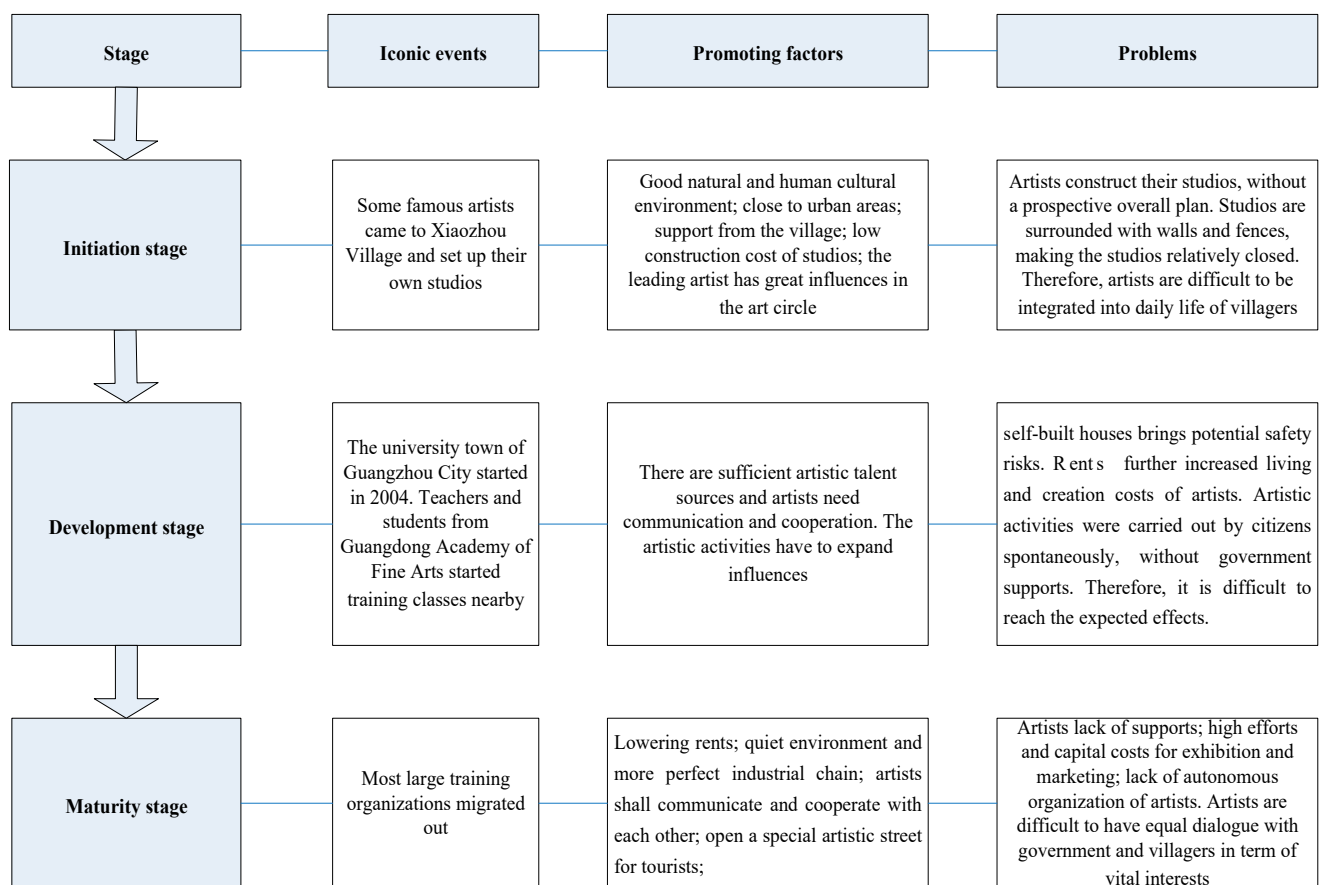
Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village was the first Artist Village in China. It is in the university town of the southwest region of Guangzhou. It was a pure agricultural village focused on crops and fruit planting in the beginning. In 1992, some famous artists like Liu Lun and Guang Shanyue from Guangdong Academy of Fine Arts came to Xiaozhou Village belonging to Haizhu District to collect inspirations. They constructed houses here and a prototype of an Artist Village with more than 10 artists was formed. After the university town of Guangzhou City migrated to the surrounding areas of Xiaozhou Village in 2006, more artists came to the village and an Artist Village with 200–300 artists was formed. In 2009, Guangzhou Yiyuan Industrial Co., Ltd. started to invest. In 2010, Xiaozhou Art District has been built into a comprehensive art district with original studios as the main body, large exhibition halls, art salons, art markets and places for leisure and communication, with a floor area of about 30,000 square meters (including public roads, squares, parking lots, etc.). In view of the development model, the development of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village is attributed to market power [43].

The basic situation of the initiation, development and maturity stages of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Art Village is analyzed based on a field investigation and data collection. In the initiation stage, artists select markets and creation environments positively. In the development stage, the university town in Guangzhou City migrates to Xiaozhou Village, which brings sufficient artistic talent resources and promotes the rapid development of Xiaozhou Village. This further attracts the settlement of profitability training organizations for art candidates and thereby contributes to the rapid development of the Xiaozhou Village.

In the maturity stage, art training organizations migrate out and some artists return to their original creation places, which bring a certain degree of regression in original art.

Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village also faces various problems in the development process. Firstly, Xiaozhou Village is an ancient village. Since the government lacks corresponding development goals and planning, there are common houses self-built by villagers, resulting in the poor appearance of the new village and great potential safety risks. Secondly, the settlement of “junior colleges” brings a rise in local housing price and living expenses and squeezes some “grassroots artists” with a poor pressure-bearing capacity. Thirdly, the government did not give enough support to essential exhibition and propagation. Consciousness artists have limited influences for their limited capital or efforts in getting sponsorship, thus making it difficult to realize sustainable development.

Based on the above analysis, the development path of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village can be expressed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Development path of Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village.

#### 4.2. Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village

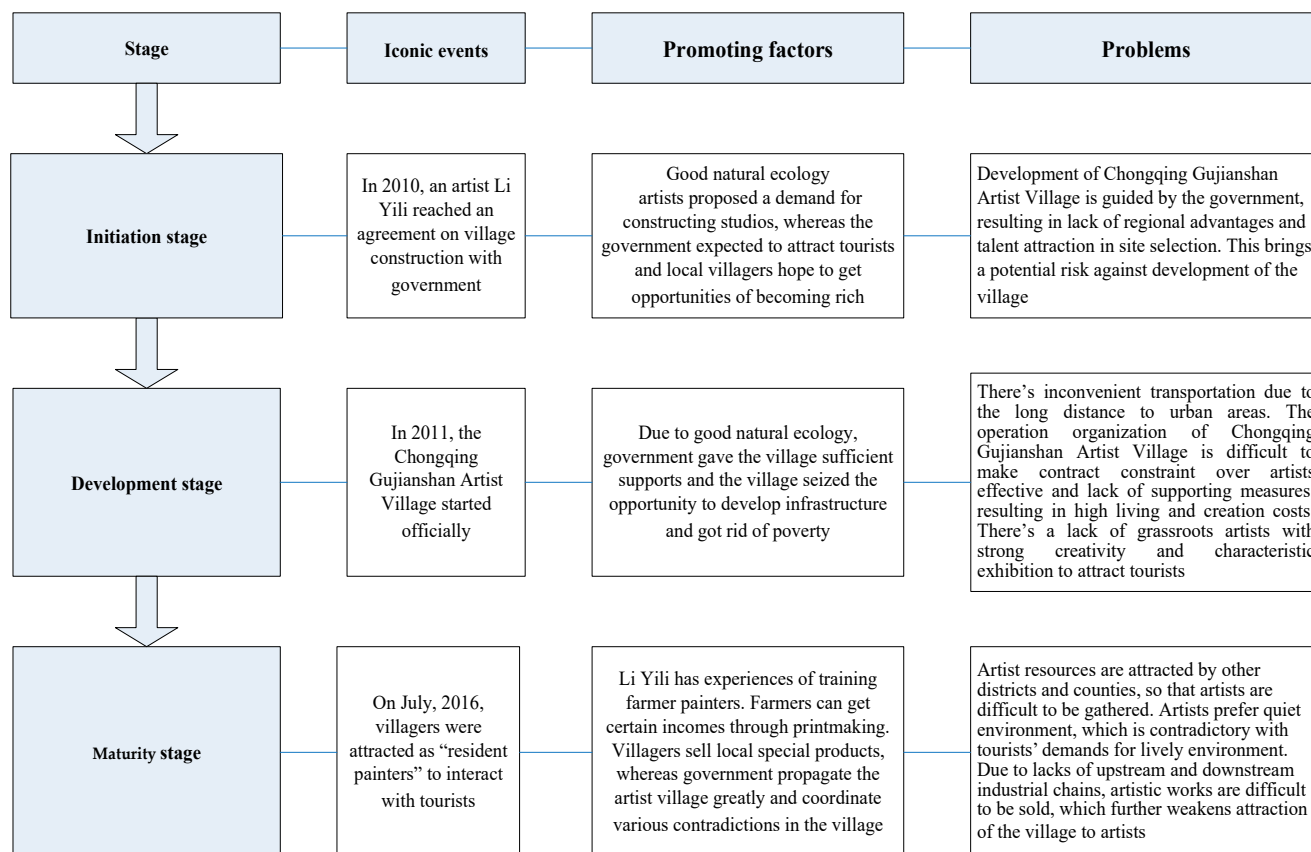
Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village is in Shangchang Village which is a poor, municipal village in western China. To cooperate with tourism development in Gujianshan, local government departments and artists reached an agreement to construct a Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village to enrich the cultural connotations of Gujianshan Tourism. In 2010, the project was started officially and the village was opened officially on July, 2016. It has attracted more than 20 Chinese artists. Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village is characterized by print art as the main body, and is compatible with other arts. In total, 26 artist studios and 12 national (regional) art galleries have been built, with a floor area of 20,000 square meters. In view of the development model, government is the primary promotion impetus for the development of this Artist Village.



The basic situation of the initiation, development and maturity stages of Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village is analyzed through field investigation and interviews with the relevant people of Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village (such as artists, entrepreneurs, capitalists, government officials, etc.). Since the initiation of Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village, the government plays an important role in each stage. In the initiation stage, artists submitted their suggestions to the government and were accepted by relevant sectors. In the development stage, the development plan, site selection, development mode and accession standards of the artists of the Artist Village were all decided by the government. In the maturity stage, the propagation, festival celebration activities, capital and the planning of the Artist Village were all dominated by the government [44].

Nominally, Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village is run by relevant companies, but its market operation ability is weak. It depends strongly on the support of the government. Such support provides excellent external conditions for the development of the village. However, the company may deviate from the market development law of the artist industry for the considerations of government's working and performance. It is difficult to form an endogenous power, which further increases difficulties for sustainable development.

Based on above analysis, the development path of Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Development path of Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Village.

#### 4.3. Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village

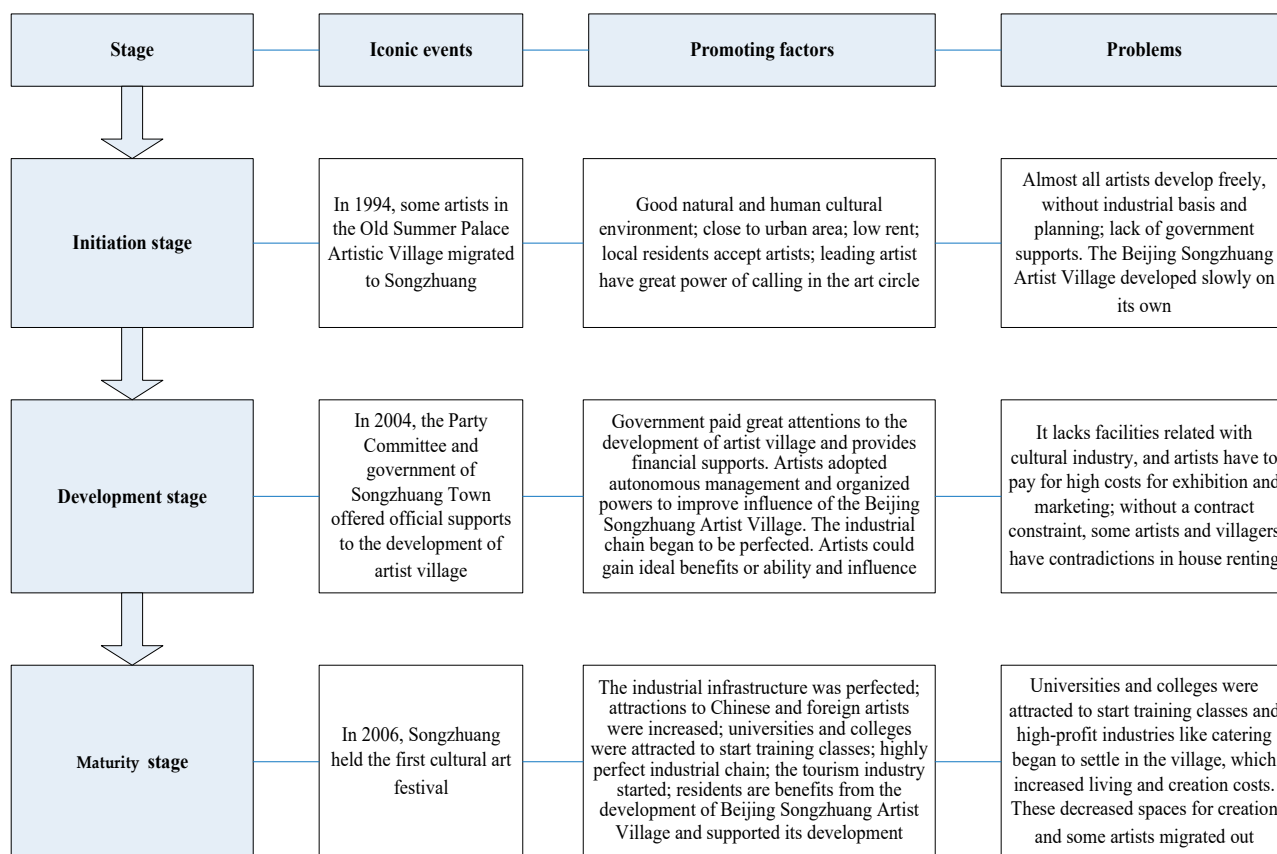
Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village is the largest base of original arts in China and the gathering place of avant-garde painters. Songzhuang was formed by the settlement of original artists in the Old Summer Palace. Through government support, there were more than 6000 artists gathering in Songzhuang in 2012. These artists undertake painting, sculpture, literature and composition. Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village has become the world's largest gathering area of contemporary original art, with a floor area of 60,000 square meters. In view of the development model, Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village

was promoted by market power in its early period, and it achieved a rapid development after the intervention of the government in the middle development stage.

The basic situation of the initiation, development and maturity stages of Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village is analyzed through a field investigation and relevant data acquisition. Benefiting from market and government support, the Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village became the most influential original art base in China and a famous scene in the suburbs of Beijing. In the initiation stage, the Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village was formed by artists spontaneously. It was artists that decided on the site selection and development model. In the development stage, the Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village attracted the attentions of local government after it had developed to a certain scale. The government formulated relevant goals and planning, as well as perfected infrastructure and an industrial chain from the perspective of industrial development. Moreover, the government increased propaganda and festival celebrity planning, bringing the village to a rapid development stage. In the maturity stage, Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village became a complex of original art and a tourism scene, which further attracted more talent [45–47].

Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village is one of the most successful Artist Villages in China. However, its development also faces some problems. It was formed for the comprehensive consideration of a local artistic creation environment and location as well as through spontaneous market selection. However, it developed relatively slowly. Against the macroscopic background of national cultural industrial development, the government gave indirect supports of finance and infrastructure. However, it is important to note that Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village also attracted abundant capital after reaching the maturity stage. Some original artists have been “squeezed out”, and its sustainable development is facing great challenges.

Based on the above analysis, the development path of Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Development path of Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village.

#### 4.4. Discussion

Based on the above analysis, development paths of three types of Artist Village can be divided into three stages: initiation, development and maturity stages. In the initiation stage, the three types of Artist Villages are similar, often relying on artists to initiate or appeal.

However, in the development stage, the driving factors for the development of the three types of Artist Villages are different. Especially in the maturity stage, the factors that affect the sustainable development of the three types of Artist Villages and the trend of sustainable development are more different. “Market-dominated” Artist Villages represented by Guangzhou Xiaozhou Artist Village, 798 Art District and Chongqing Ciqikou Artist Village have strong endogenous power, but their prosperous developments are often challenged by capital shock. The environment became unfavorable to artists and artists had to retreat from these regions. Consequently, Artist Villages just become a form and it is difficult to realize sustainable development. “Government-dominated” Artist Villages represented by Chongqing Gujianshan Artist Villages and Shenzhen Fenghuang Ancient Village have support from the government successively and they can realize fast expansion of volume. However, these villages developed slowly and are easy to become “shells” due to insufficient endogenous power. They also are difficult to maintain sustainable development. The “market + government-dominated” Artist Villages represented by Beijing Songzhuang Artist Village, Chengdu Landing Artist Village and Hefei Cuigang Artist Village have good development momentum, but attentions are still needed to balance between market power and government power and prevent non-sustainability caused by the strength of one party.

### 5. Construction of a Sustainable Development Model of Artist Villages in China

Based on the analysis on the development paths and problems of Artist Villages in China, this study constructed a sustainable development model for Artist Villages in China based on the 3T principle.

#### 5.1. 3T Principle

In theories related to creative industries, the 3T principle proposed in 2002 by Florida, an American scholar, discloses three elements for the regional development of the creative industry, which are Talent, Technology and Tolerance [20]. Specifically, the “Talent” is the main source for wealth creation and economic growth. “Technology” that combines creativity can promote local employment and economic development. “Tolerance” that covers openness, tolerance and diversity plays the key role in attracting creativity talents and supporting the high-tech industrial development and urban economic growth [48,49].

In the present study, “Talent” refers to artists and artists on the art industrial chain. “Technology” can be viewed as original artistic techniques of expression and manifestation techniques as well as the relevant industrial chain technology extended from the art. This is also the most distinct difference from artistic works for sale only or the commercial district of artistic duplicates. “Tolerance” refers to supports from the market, the government and consumers. These three elements are key elements to construct a sustainable development model of Artist Villages in China.

#### 5.2. Sustainable Development Modes of Artist Villages in China

The sustainable development of Artist Villages in China can be divided into the initiation stage, the development stage and the maturity stage. Each stage has explicit goals and measures.

### 5.2.1. Initiation Stage

The initiation stage of Artist Villages mainly emphasizes the training of endogenous power. Site selection and creating an appropriate talent ecosphere are the main measures in this stage.

In the initiation stage, the site selection of Artist Villages is very crucial, because they contain important factors related to development. Compared with other secondary and tertiary industrial parks, the products of Artist Villages are based on the creativity of painting, sculpture, drama, novels and so on, which need a certain number of artists as support. The production of artists often requires the accumulation of time and experiences, which are rare resources in the market. Therefore, attention shall be paid to regions close to the supply end of artistic talents during site selection, such as art universities and folk handicrafts by traditional artists. The selected site shall be able to meet the demands of artistic talents for the creative environment, but also can attract talents for long-term development and thereby promote sustainable development.

Site selection must be close to the consumption market. This determines that the selected site is better closer to big cities, at least provincial cities. These cities have a developed economy and have high concerns and consumption levels of artistic works. They can provide reliable market guarantees for the sustainability of Artist Villages.

Attentions also shall be paid to appropriate environment in site selection. The selected sites shall not only provide artists a beautiful and quiet natural and human cultural environment, but also claim low creation costs. Hence, most regions with low rent and low artistic creation cost in China are easy to attract grassroots artists rich with creativity. This also lays the foundations for the development and maturity stages of Artist Villages.

In the initiation stage, it is necessary to control the “ecosystem” that forms the development of artistic talents. In this ecosystem, there are three levels of artists, including famous and influential mature artists, artists who have formed their own styles and have no worries about foods and clothing, as well as grassroots artists who have just stepped into the art circle or are searching for their own styles. Among them, famous artists will help to form a “Sheep-Flock Effect” and attract more artists. The less famous artists and grassroots artists have vigorous creativity and can lay foundations for the continuous innovation and gaining concerns, aiming to assure the sustainable development of Artist Villages.

### 5.2.2. Development Stage

In the development stage of Artist Villages, the artistic industry can achieve rapid development based on endogenous power and appropriate government supports. Artist Villages can achieve considerable development in a short period. In this stage, the government can provide planning for the development of Artist Villages, improve infrastructure conditions, and create conditions for internal and external communication. Artists also can relieve contradictions between internal and external environments through autonomous organizations.

The appropriate intervention of government can provide thrust for rapid development, which can be manifested by the following three aspects: ① in the present stage, Artist Villages in China can only develop slowly with market power, while the abundant capital investment might make them deviate from the original development direction centered as an artistic industry. Therefore, under the premise of following market laws, governments shall formulate overall plans by viewing it as an artistic industry. Such plans shall be made according to current development conditions and the practical development of local industries. On the one hand, the overall development goal and steps in different stages can be proposed, and the government can intervene according to development situations. On the other hand, existing regions are zoned, which lays foundations for the maturity stage. ② Government enhances geological advantages and communication with the external world by improving the infrastructure conditions. Government can connect the Artist Villages with arterial roads in surrounding big cities through investment, perfect road networks between the villages and surrounding areas, and provide high-efficient low-cost

public transportations to enhance daily communication between the internal and external worlds. Moreover, government investment into infrastructures, such as exhibition halls and marketing centers, can improve the communication and interaction between products and external worlds, and create a platform for more artists to exhibit themselves and provide a path for ordinary members of the public to accept artistic edification. These also can improve the quality of cities significantly. ③ It is suggested to strengthen capital and propaganda supports to festival celebrity activities. Festival celebrity activities can increase the exposure rate of media in the short term and improve popularity. In these festival celebrity activities, professional artists shall be held responsible for the planning and implementation of Artist Villages, while the government shall be responsible for planning behind the scenes and providing supports, and create environments to attract artists and consumers. This lays a foundation for the subsequent maturity stage.

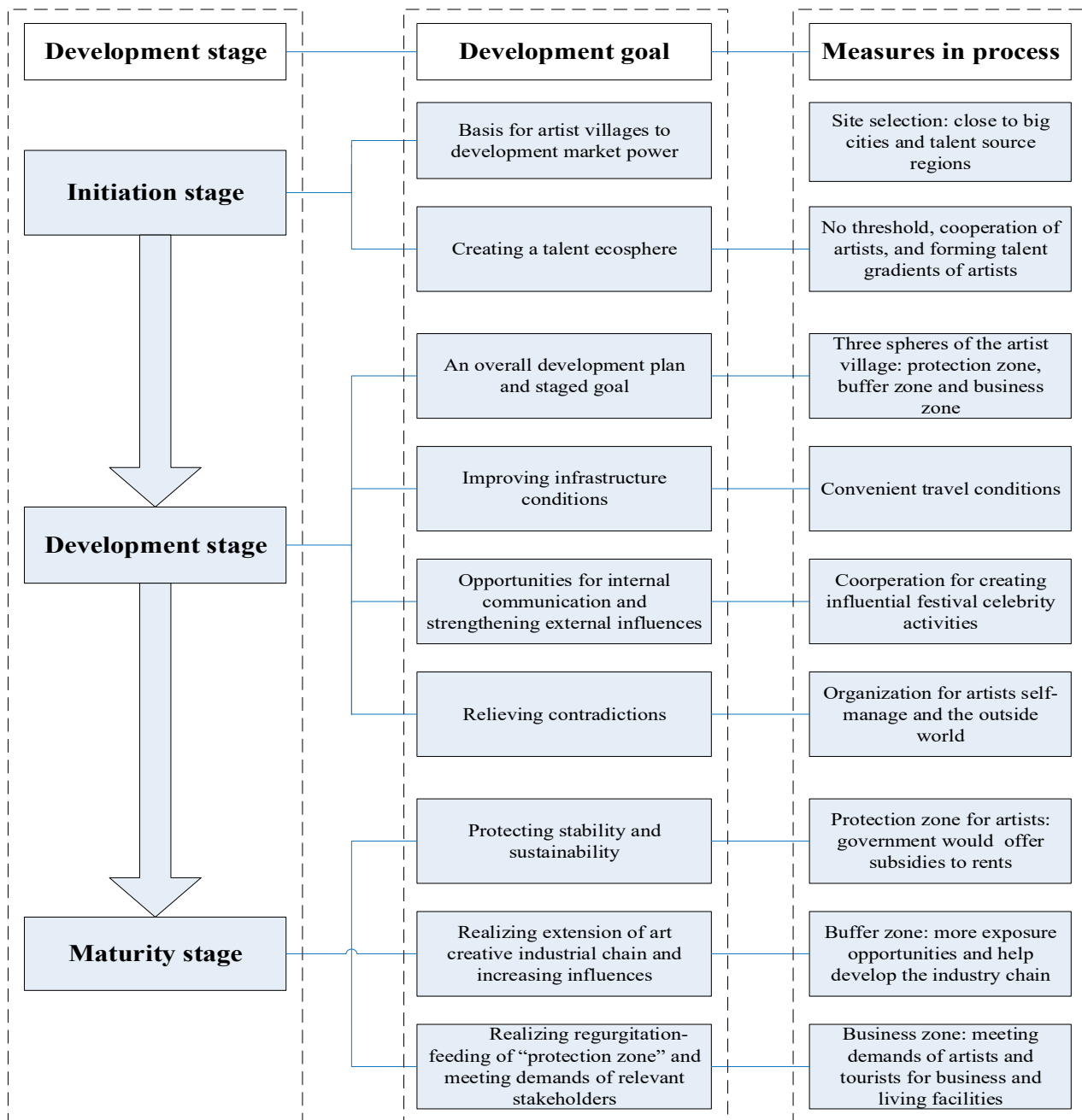
The development of Artist Villages requires the cooperation of artists. Artists shall communicate mutually. In addition, contradictions among artists and between artists and the external environment have to be handled mainly through negotiation by internal organizations. This can not only lower the cost of artists in facing with contradictions, but also can improve the overall ability of artists to bargain with the external world.

### 5.2.3. Maturity Stage

In the maturity stage of Artist Villages, they have to integrate market power and the administrative power of government, reduce development dissimulation caused by capitals, and prevent the development deviation from the artistic industry. Therefore, Artist Villages shall achieve further development according to government plans and policy implementation.

Based on the overall goal and staged goal of the government of Artist Village development in the previous stage, three spheres were divided including “protection zone”, “buffer zone” and “business zone”. ① A “protection zone” shall be constructed centered at the original studios. Artists’ demand for a quiet environment and low rents. However, it can be seen from the development in downtown areas of different cities in the world that many regions realized urban updating due to the driving of the arts. At the same time, a lot of capitals enter into business with high profits, which leads to an increase in price of local commodities and forces artists to migrate out. Finally, the Artist Village ends up as a shell. For this reason, local government shall formulate a certain “protection zone”, in which the type of industries shall be limited. Moreover, subsidies to rents shall be given with the cultural industrial funds of government to assure that artists make creations in the village. ② A “buffer zone” related to art shall be set out of the “protection zone”. The works of artists need a marketing channel and certain creation materials. Hence, a “buffer zone” can be constructed out of the “protection zone”, which is used for exhibition, marketing and auction. The “buffer zone” shall be equipped with a cultural exhibition hall, an exhibition hall of intangible cultural heritages, as well as a communication region between artists and tourists. Moreover, it shall permit art-related business forms, such as galleries and creative derivatives, aiming to provide a thick artistic atmosphere for artist development and the edification of citizens or tourists. ③ A relevant creative “business zone” shall be constructed out of the “buffer zone”. Major business forms in these commercial streets can be creative businesses (e.g., bars, restaurants and bookstores), artistic experiences and artistic product marketing. This zone can provide life services to artists and tourists. In addition, benefits in this business zone must be allocated as subsidies to artists and provide financial support for future development. This can offer a benign cyclic power for the sustainable development of Artist Villages.

Based on the above analysis, the sustainable development model of Artist Villages in China is shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Development model of Artist Villages in China.

## 6. Conclusions and Future

The development of Artist Villages in China has a unique law. This study discovered that Artist Villages in China generally can be divided into “market-dominated type”, “government-dominated type” and “market + government-dominated type”. During development, the “market-dominated type” is faced with capital challenges and the artistic industry is squeezed out gradually. The “Government-dominated type” has insufficient endogenous impetus for development. The “market + government-dominated type” is faced with problems of balance between market and administrative powers. Therefore, it is easy for many Artist Villages of all types to die young. These problems all demonstrate that three key elements, namely, Talent, Technology and Tolerance, must be considered in promoting the development of Artist Villages. It is necessary to integrate these three elements to promote a rapid development of Artist Villages. In the present study, a comparative analysis on typical Artist Villages in China was carried out, through which



universal experiences and problems in different development stages were summarized. This study enriches research content and depth on Artist Villages in China. By constructing a sustainable development mode, it provides experiences and decision-making references of relevant government sectors to promote art and creativity industrial development. It is of important practical significance.

This study tries to select typical and representative samples in different regions. However, conclusions still have some limitations such as the constraints of a small sample size. Future studies shall further increase samples to verify the validity of the proposed model based on plane statistical data. At present, the analysis of the three Artist Villages is more qualitative, and SWOT analysis (or another quali–quantitative method) can also be used in future research.

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