

Can Creative Hubs Contribute Towards Creative City Development?

Case of Hin Bus Depot, Penang, Malaysia

Suet Leng Khoo⁺ & Nicole Shu Fun Chang⁺⁺ (Malaysia)

Abstract

As cities shift their economic base towards culture and creativity, the emergence of creative hubs to catalyze local creative industries is acknowledged as a viable urban development strategy. In Malaysia, the concept is not new. In George Town, Penang, a sterling example is Hin Bus Depot which is a once-abandoned bus depot that reinvented itself to become a successful creative community hub. The ways upon which Hin contributes towards creative city development warrants documentation. Through qualitative techniques and a longitudinal timeframe, this paper unpacks Hin's role by revisiting its evolving functionalities, forms, and meanings as it thrives, and responds to changes. Findings indicate that Hin is an organically self-gentrified creative hub that managed to stimulate socio-economic growth within the hub, and also its surrounding neighborhood. The findings further implicate creative hub concepts, policy and practice as George Town aspires to be a sustainable and inclusive creative city.

Keywords: *Creative hubs, Creative Cities, Sustainable Urban Development, Cultural Development, Hin Bus Depot, Penang*

Introduction

⁺ Suet Leng Khoo, Associate Professor & Professional Town Planner, Development Planning & Management Program, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia. email: slkhoo@usm.my.

⁺⁺ Nicole Shu Fun Chang, Lecturer, School of Built Environment, Equator College, Amoy Lane Campus, Penang, Malaysia. email: nicole@equator.edu.my.

The concept of creative hub concept has assumed much attention in academia and urban development agenda, particularly when the development pathways of nations and cities start to shift towards the creative industries and creative economy. This is aligned with the United Nation's acknowledgement of the creative industries as catalyst for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and later declared 2021 as the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. Globally, when cities de-industrialize and pivot their economic base shift towards culture, creativity and services-based; the role of creative hubs to propel urban creative industries is increasingly recognized, and creative hubs are even spotlighted as the 'lighthouse of the new economy' (Dovey et al., 2016).

Broadly, creative hubs are physical, virtual or hybrid spaces/places that appeal to creatives from the cultural, creative and technology sectors to congregate for networking purposes, collaborations, creative social entrepreneurship and community partnership (British Council, n.d.). However, the form, structure, operations, people and vision/mission that motivate a creative hub varies considerably from past industrial hubs. The philosophy and configuration of creative hubs are disrupted and subsequently refashioned in response to globalization, ICT advancements & digitalization revolution (Virani, 2015), and the on-going Covid-19 endemic. The fanfare of creative hub research is transcending borders when other contexts and geographies are recognizing the need to examine this nascent concept, such as urban hubs in Hanoi and Czech (Labbe, Zuberec & Turner, 2022; Chaloupková & Kunch, 2022). Although British Council (Malaysia) has attempted to introduce this concept in the cultural and creative sector, but there is a dearth of systematic research in the Malaysian academic sphere. Hence, this study is novel and attempts to fill this research gap by contributing to the body of literature relating to creative hubs, specifically its nexus with urban development.

On the Malaysian front, creative hubs are fast making a marked presence, especially in the UNESCO World Heritage site of George Town, Penang. In 2014, one pioneer creative hub that emerged incidentally and organically is the Hin Bus Depot, that was casually planned for an artist, Ernest Zachaveric, and organized by the local artist community to host Ernest's first solo exhibition in George Town. The original intent to search for an arts space has since evolved and morphed into bigger artistic aspirations where the hub has grown in size, functionality, values and visions, amid confronting the shocks and adversities of Covid-19 and demands of digitalization. After almost a decade since inception, Hin Depot today is unequivocally the de facto creative community hub that has etched a permanent mark on George Town's creative roadmap and cultural radar. Against this background, this paper aims to illustrate and reconceptualize Hin Depot as a creative hub based on a chronological timeline approach (i.e. then, now and future), by dissecting and revisiting the shifting functionalities, roles, and meanings of the hub as it develops, survives and responds to change. Though no one single creative hub can be similar, the lessons from Hin Depot can nonetheless serve as a comparative case study for other creative hubs within Malaysian cities or further afield.

This paper consists of five sections. The introduction explains the study's motivation while section two reviews key concepts on creative hubs and provides an overview of Hin Depot to set the background. Section three outlines the study's methodology which adopted a longitudinal approach. Findings are discussed in sections four and five. Section six concludes the paper with recommendations and implications for concept, policy and practice.

Conceptual Framework & Research Background

To fulfil the objective of establishing a case study for reference of other creative hubs in Malaysia, this section provides a chronological account of Hin Bus Depot's origins and development, after briefly defining the concept of a creative hub in the next section.

Creative Hub – Concepts & Definitions

The creative hub concept has gathered much attention alongside the fanfare surrounding the importance of the creative industries/creative economy and sharing economy (Pratt, Virani & Gill, 2019). As a phenomenon born out of yet another new (creative) economic order, the concept is gaining traction particularly in post-industrial economies and has gradually reached Global South nations like Malaysia. Understood as physical, virtual or hybrid spaces/places that attract creatives to congregate for collaboration and networking (British Council, n.d.), creative hubs are also known as 'third spaces' where workers share working spaces, information, technology, while they also socialize and establish social ties and professional acquaintanceship given the close spatial proximity in co-working spaces (Avdikos & Iliopoulou, 2019).

As elucidated by the London Development Agency, creative hubs are defined as "...places that provide a space for work, participation and consumption. Within its neighborhood, the hub may occupy one space, but its support activities will range across a variety of local institutions and networks. Creative hubs will form a network that will drive the growth of creative industries at the local and regional level, providing more jobs, more education and more opportunities..." (2003: 34-35). Arguably, though the aforementioned definition is generic, but creative hubs are diverse to the extent of being distinctive as there can never be two identical hubs since the motivations to establish each hub relies on the stakeholders' vision and purposes (Duchesneau & Déziel, 2019). The forms and structures of creative hubs are so diverse that they can portray as retail platforms, open access print studios, networks, maker spaces and fab labs (The Making Rooms hub; Fab lab Blackburn), incubators, co-working spaces (Duke Studios and Sheaf Street, Leeds, Hackney Bridge by Make Shift), arts venues, community hubs, artist studios/labs and such (O'Hara & Naik, 2021).

While creative hubs can be soloistic individual entities, the network aspect of hubs makes it important to fathom the ecosystem by which hubs operate. For instance, Duchesneau & Déziel (2019) explain the three (3) types of general creative hub ecosystems, namely, (i) commercial-purpose hubs; (ii) social-purpose hubs; and (iii) artistic and cultural-purpose hubs. In commercial-purpose hubs, the key focus is the production of tangible products and to propel innovative projects of high-potential start-ups to the market like the case of Espace CDPQ, tech accelerators such as Capital Innovation and FounderFuel and the Execution Lab. For social-purpose hubs, they are established to address societal concerns and their foci revolve around social innovation as evidenced by hubs like HEC Montréal's Mosaic, Techno Culture Club or the Quartier de l'innovation. As for artistic and cultural-purpose hubs, they are host to an ecosystem and network of cultural practitioners, media-tors, entrepreneurs, producers/co-producers, artists-in-residence, civil society and such. Examples of such hubs include the Artscape, La Piscine, Société des arts technologies, 104factory, the Bang Centre, Zù, and Gaîté Lyrique. Artistic and cultural-purpose creative hubs are also conduits and main avenues that provide mentoring, financial assistance, infrastructure, and fostering civic participation in the arts and culture via knowledge activities (Duchesneau & Déziel, 2019).

However, scholars argued that this nascent concept, albeit fundamental towards cultural and economic policy, is insufficiently deliberated (Pratt, Virani & Gill, 2019), and have further questioned its vaguely defined and precarious role in affecting work and productivity of employees in the creative economy (Morgan & Woodriff, 2019). Concerns regarding class, gender and race in creative hubs were also examined by British scholars where creative hubs are viewed also as spaces that can either celebrate ‘diversity’ or embed ‘privilege’ hence exacerbating inequalities (Virani & Gill, 2019). Interestingly, the creative hub concept is gradually making inroads in the East and Global South cities as well. For example, Sawangchot’s study (2016) of Osaka and Bandung highlighted that creative hubs in these urban settings tend to be bottom-up with commendable grassroots initiatives and close collaborations between creatives and artists. Urban spaces are also adaptively reused and reclaimed for cultural and creative expressions.

Against the above backdrop, this paper aims to examine a homegrown and community-driven creative hub, Hin Bus Depot, that is situated in the heart of George Town, Penang. Drawing from global definitions and constructs denoted for a generic creative hub, especially in a Western setting, this paper fills a pivotal research gap by attempting to apply the conceptual framings and utility of a global concept to a local setting. Hence, this study will investigate, compare and contrast one of George Town’s most famed and successful creative hubs, Hin Bus Depot. This endeavour is timely given that the creative industries are growing in Penang and the state’s socio-economic and cultural contextual settings are different from advanced economies. The novelty of this study lies in the longitudinal data and observation of how a local creative hub like Hin Depot has developed, evolved and sustained over time – a process that is important and invaluable. The subsequent section will recount the origins of Hin Bus Depot and then depict how the hub was instrumental towards the positive gentrification of a blighted neighborhood.

Birth of Hin Bus Depot

According to Hin Bus Depot’s official website (<https://hinbusdepot.com/about.html>), its social media platforms and published references (Chang, 2017, 2021; Khoo & Chang, 2021), the following sections will illustrate Hin Depot’s origin and its growing content offerings along with transformations to Hin, both interiorly and exteriorly.

Hin Depot initially opened its door as a bus depot owned by the Hin Company Limited, a licensed bus operator that served the Penang community until 1999. The ramshackle site was abandoned for many years before it was taken over by its current owner (a local company owned by three families) in 2010, who initially used the site for storage purposes following some minor repairs. Until the end of 2013, upon artist Ernest Zacharevic’s request, the unattended and dilapidated depot was then adaptively reused as an unusual exhibition space for Ernest’s solo exhibition, entitled “Art Is Rubbish Is Art” after some basic touch-up and repairs. Launched in January 2014, the exhibition showcased artworks made from recycled materials. The exhibition was well accepted, and had drawn interest and attention among the local creatives as well as the local and international art audiences and media. This eventually inspired a few local artists to commit to run the site as an independent artist-run space. Not long later, with intention to make arts and culture publicly accessible, Hin Depot has evolved into a community placemaking project initiated by a small passionate team of creative collectives that endeavours to sustain the depot as an accessible and affordable space for community engagement through arts, culture and creative activities/events (Chang, 2017).

Since its inception as a small gallery space within the property, and following the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Hin Depot had to confront and endure situations that repeatedly challenged its sustainability, yet it survived and has now transformed into a vibrant creative cluster that sprawls over 60,000 square feet situated adjoining the buffer zone of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hin includes eleven units of old shophouses along Jalan Gurdwara and Jalan Kampung Jawa Lama. Over the years of transformation, with its growing creative contents, the hub currently houses a gallery space, artist studios, creative startups, food and beverage outlets, retail stalls/shops, a weekend creative pop-up market that supports small creative business entrepreneurs, and a newly added community hub (i.e. COEX@Kilang Besi).

Within a decade of transformation, Hin's management has continuously explored new possibilities and pragmatic ways to sustain the relevancy and popularity of Hin by upgrading, adjusting, expanding or renewing its curated contents, making it an accessible and sought-after hub for creative incubation, creation, innovation, showcasing, promotion, consumption, collaboration, sharing and exchanges to both locals and visitors in Penang. Following Duchesneau & Déziel's (2019) classification, Hin covers all three types of creative hub ecosystems. For instance, in 2014, Hin was incepted for artistic and cultural-purposes (i.e. contemporary art exhibitions, street art/murals creations, art engagement activities, performances & cultural events), and extended to cover the commercial-purpose since 2015 - 2017 (i.e. food & beverage outlets, pop-up creative market, creative entrepreneurs' startups), and recently extended to address societal issues through community experimental initiatives, civic awareness sharing and social discourses (2022-2023). The cross-sectoral extended contents have significantly enhanced its relevancy and utility to different cohorts of audiences who are engaged with Hin for varied reasons, thus affirming Hin's role as an inclusive space within the urban setting.

Besides that, the aspect of "camaraderie" among Hin's management, its space/outlet tenants/operators, and its permanent/non-permanent content co-creators (e.g. events curators, organisers & etc) is discovered in this hub and can be perceived as a sustaining factor, according to Chang's case study (2017). Although the management insists on preserving the premise by place-making it into a functional and relevant hub in meeting the contemporary needs of the community through creative initiatives and activities, Hin's tenants/operators and acquaintances, who have synced vision, are actively co-creating and co-managing various engaging contents that inspired different groups of audiences/visitors. The sustaining factor of camaraderie is significantly observed from the repeated or long-term collaborations between and within the same or extended groups of tenants/operators/acquaintances through recurring events/festivals/initiatives held at Hin, such as Sunday Pop-Up Markets (operating since 2015) and REKA (Creative Market) (annual event since 2017). Figure 1 shows the location and site plan of Hin Depot and the new wing (COEX) in George Town, while the table in figure 2 chronicles the chronological development of creative contents within Hin's premises from 2013 till 2023.



Figure 1. Location and site plan of Hin Bus Depot & COEX at George Town, Penang (Source: COEX, 2022).

YEAR	2013 - 2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 - 2023
Start-up Creative Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art Exhibitions• F&B outlets• Clothing• Handmade accessories• Sunday Pop-up creative market• Arts & cultural workshops• Public forum/talks• Outdoor installation art & Murals• Picnic/gathering• Performances• Music• Film screening					
Add-on Contents		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bookshop• Crafts• More F&B outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photography studio• Artist studio• More Crafts & Artisan Workshops• More F&B outlets• More Performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More F&B outlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops & Events Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• *COEX@ Kilang Besi Community Center (consist of Architect Firm; F&B outlets; Bookshop; Event & Exhibition Space; Library)

Figure 2. Table of the growing creative contents of Hin Bus Depot since 2013 – 2023. Source: Created by authors, 2023.

Hin's physical expansion is further enhanced with the inception of COEX@Kilang Besi in 2022. Functioning as a new creative community space at the refurbished metal factory within Hin, COEX@Kilang Besi frequently creates co-platforms for cross-collaborations among creatives in diverse sectors. It started with an architecture firm that relocated from suburb Gelugor, Penang, and COEX instantly took off with new tenants and curated contents. The founder of COEX refers the extended hub as a community experiment. The founding team strives to promote community engagement through active cross-collaborative experimental initiatives. Since its launch in September 2022, COEX continuously experiments the formula of engaging communities by curating diverse events, ranging from art exhibitions, music festivals, talks, book launches, live performances and a series of wellness & lifestyle programs. The addition of COEX complements Hin's existing operations by bringing in working staff from the architecture firm, who will patronize the F&B outlets during working hours on weekdays when Hin usually remains quiet. Such economic spill-over effect is much welcomed. Likewise, Hin's weekend visitors bring footfall to COEX's curated events (Teoh, 2023). The presence of COEX has diversified Hin's creative and cultural offerings, covering a wider range of fields, forms, mediums, and languages. This has effectively expanded its impact, reaching different groups of talents and audiences from diverse backgrounds and age cohorts. Besides providing the community with exposure to a rich diversity of content, COEX and Hin have collectively extended platforms and opportunities, fostering job creation, business development, networking, collaborations, and economic spin-offs both on and off-site. COEX's role will be further discussed in the following sections.

Hin Bus Depot and Gentrification

Originally, the term "gentrification" was understood as changes in the social structure and increase in the housing market (Glass, 1964). It was later interpreted as an urban development strategy with reinvestment of capital into declining or post-industrialized neighborhoods to improve the residential infrastructure, which consequently attracts the immigration of new higher-income residents, which in turn causes displacement of existing lower-income working-class urbanites (Smith, 2002; Atkinson & Wulff, 2009). It also leads to urban transformations following the shift from the industrial economy to the post-industrial knowledge, services-based or the creative and cultural economy (Ley, 1996; Smith, 2002; Kim, 2016). Intensified inter-urban competition has prompted local governments to regenerate cities through festivals, exhibitions, cultural events (Kim, 2016; Chen, Piterou, Khoo & Chan, 2018a). Kim (2016) further highlighted the increasing incidence of urban homogenization in many Asian cities as a result of state-led gentrification. In response to the adverse effects of gentrification, Chan et al. (2016) raised the concept of 'self-gentrification' as a bottom-up process instead of a state-led gentrification process, where long-term residents (i.e. returning migrants and local entrepreneurs) have proactively empowered themselves as the 'gentry' or 'self-gentrifier,' where they benefit from the process, instead of being displaced from the regenerating city.

Undoubtedly, Hin's development aligns with the concept of 'self-gentrification' as elucidated above. The different groups of grassroots creative and cultural practitioners, who cluster to interact and organically support the revitalization of the premise as well as sustain Hin's identity and its content delivery bears testimony to self-gentrification. Hin's expanding creative contents depend heavily on bottom-up commitments and the proactive participation

and partnerships amongst the active community within an inclusive stakeholder network, comprising individuals and collectives who are directly or indirectly involved.

At Hin Depot, tenants, market operators, curators, event organizers, consumers, visitors, content creators, suppliers, and local community collectively generate long-term economic, social and environmental values through civic boosterism and post-industrial urban entrepreneurialism (Khoo & Chang, 2021). The presence of Hin Depot in the heart of George Town as a creative community hub has enabled local communities to jointly reclaim their space and conserve their heritage while concurrently establishing their own culture to improve their economic and social standings. These happened under mindful management, socially conscious proprietorship (who deliberately delayed the market rent adjustment in order to minimize the displacement impact within Hin's premise) and committed collaborations across multidisciplinary creative practitioners (Chen et al., 2018a).

Hin Depot's close proximity to the George Town city centre, especially its strategic location near to the buffer zone of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has effectively increased its city's visitors and cultural footprint. This facilitates Hin Depot's self-gentrification process. As a vibrant hub that attracts both local and international visitors, Hin Depot is increasingly assuming a pivotal role in supporting Penang's tourism industry. The effects of economic spin-off, as part of the value chain of the creative economy, have inevitably gentrified and regenerated Hin Depot's neighborhoods, which used to be a blighted area that was deemed unsafe and minimally visited by locals or tourists alike. Since UNESCO inscription in 2008 and later with Hin Depot's resuscitation and reintegration into the local socio-economic scene, new developments and property investments are seen in its vicinity. Hotels, hip and arty cafes, trendy restaurants, creative concept stores and such are visible in the adjoining areas.

Methodology

In examining and chronicling a creative hub's changes, the research enquiry calls for a longitudinal data collection and analysis approach that captures data and analyses findings from different timeframes, so that the socio-economic and cultural transformations in an urban setting can be systematically documented and analyzed. To achieve this, different datasets were used and they cut across several research projects to illustrate the developments and changes at Hin Depot so that our research aim could be achieved. The most recent dataset was from qualitative techniques (i.e. interviews, site observations) at Hin Bus Depot from February – March 2022, and again in November 2022. Additionally, the methodological novelty of this study resides in the use of heuristic lens to examine the transformations of Hin Depot over the years. Heuristic lenses enable a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences obtainable through interviews, focus group discussions and observations, as aptly illustrated in this study.

The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with the hub manager/hub owner, which took place twice. Both interviews were conducted face-to-face with the hub manager at Hin Depot. The first interview was longer and took about one (1) hour while the second interview was about 30 minutes. In keeping with qualitative tradition, the hub manager was purposely sampled given that she would have all the pertinent knowledge required

for this study. The first interview was useful to flesh out key aspects and variables that either converged/diverged from existing literature, and the follow-up second interview further verified data gaps and discrepancies. The interview protocol consists of nine (9) sub-sections as shown here: (A) Origin & History; (B) Programmes; (C) Processes; (D) People; (E) Place; (F) Values; (G) Impact; and (H) The Way Forward. Additionally, 30 retailers from Hin Depot's Sunday pop-up market were also briefly interviewed in March 2022 based on similar themes. The names of these 30 retailers were provided by the hub manager where they represented a good mix of retailers and micro-entrepreneurs who operated during the pop-up market. Their names were selected based on random sampling method. For site observations, both researchers frequented Hin Depot regularly, especially during their Sunday pop-up market, and the changes in Hin's activities, programs, exhibition contents and retailer presence were duly documented.

NVivo was used to thematically analyze the qualitative interviews for both semantic and latent meanings. Constructs/nodes based on the nine (9) sub-sections of the interview protocol were coded while new emerging themes were categorized accordingly. Simultaneously, past data gathered in previous projects in 2016, 2018, 2019 and previous publications by both authors (Khoo & Chang, 2021; Chan, Chen, Piterou, Khoo, Lean, Hashim & Lane, 2021; Chen, Piterou, Khoo & Chan, 2018a, 2018b) were referred as they were key secondary resources to illustrate the backdrop of Hin Depot in order to comprehend the origins of the hub as well as previous functioning, and the way Hin Depot has evolved, flourished and sustained till today. Other secondary data from journals, periodicals, blogs and website resources were also referred and collectively analyzed alongside the primary data collected for this project. The datasets (primary and secondary) were triangulated to address the research enquiry, especially to unravel the dimensions of 'now' and a 'reconceptualized future' of how a Malaysian creative hub should and would be amid changes. Triangulation entailed cross-checking data across multiple sources, diverse stakeholders and the extant literature. The interviews were validated when saturation point was reached for selected themes. In addition, secondary data from reports/website reporting/periodicals and such, were referred extensively to verify and validate primary interview accounts. Although the hub manager was interviewed several times during the course of this study, risk of response bias was mitigated when other stakeholders (i.e. retailers, new co-owner) were interviewed as well where fact checking was crossed-validated across different stakeholders of the hub.

Findings

Cultural and Creative Places/Spaces on George Town's Radar

Since the city's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, George Town has become a mecca of creative and cultural attractions. Art, cultural and creative spaces/venues/hubs have emerged and flourished around George Town World Heritage Site (GTWHS) since then. Established as the venue that hosted the famous street artist Ernest Zacharevic's solo exhibition, Hin Depot instantly became a favorite hub for international urban art exchange between local and international street artists. In 2014, in collaboration with the Berlin-based urban art centre (i.e. Urban Nation), Hin Depot hosted the first international street art festival in Malaysia, namely Urban Xchange. The festival brought together famous international and local street artists who collaborated to produce 16 public murals at various locations within George Town downtown area. The subsequent year, Hin Depot's

management organized the second Urban Xchange. Penang's art community generally acknowledged "street art" as part of Hin Depot's DNA. Furthermore, from the start till now, Hin Depot's exhibition space has always been the hot spot for contemporary art exhibitions showcasing local and international artists. Unlike other 'white cube' fine art galleries that mostly showcase mainstream art forms and established artists' works, Hin Depot offers an alternative space for both emerging and established artists. It features all art forms and genres, including paintings, photography, interdisciplinary art, new media art, art installations or experimental art, in order to engage the audience with a different artistic experience. Apart from showcasing its in-house curated exhibitions, it also hosts other curators' art shows. To improve the accessibility and outreach of art to a broader public, especially young collectors, Hin Depot actively promotes affordable art exhibitions.

Besides its exhibition space, Hin Depot's mural garden and lawn are both ideal spaces for outdoor performance art, musical events, public art engagement activities, and such. Additionally, the deck frequently hosts artist sharing sessions, art talks, workshops, film screenings and others. During the yearly George Town Festival, Hin Depot is definitely one of the event venues selected to host featured art programs, hence, making it the hotspot art, cultural and creative place and space on George Town's radar.

Model and Good Practice of Creative Hub

Unmistakably, throughout the years, Hin Depot has etched a name for itself for being a de facto model and successful creative and cultural community hub in George Town. Unanimously, all stakeholders interviewed, whether from the private or public sectors, would regard Hin as the model and good practice creative hub that others can refer to. The private sector owners are applauded, and Hin Depot is highly regarded as a success story of rags to riches, where a derelict and abandoned bus depot was transformed into a hype and vibrant urban cultural and public space for all and sundry (see Figures 3 – 4).



Figure 3. Hin Bus Depot @ George Town, Penang. Source: Site visit, 23 Feb. 2022.



Figure 4. Exhibition Space is constantly used by artists and creatives to showcase their works. Source: Site visit, 23 Feb. 2022.

Nonetheless, in unravelling the gist of creativity regardless of genre (i.e. artistic, cultural, technological, etc.), the element of newness and novelty must feature strongly in terms of the processes involved, the software, hardware and the stock of human capital to spark new ideations. In this regard, a 'creative hub' is perceived as a 'house' or a space, place, or platform to allow creatives to cluster, network and facilitate the inceptions of new ideas. However, the physical shape and forms as well as the subjective emotions and sense of place in Hin Depot cannot be imitated and replicated across the city in a lock, stock and barrel manner. This is because a creative hub, by default, is variegated and unique like that of our DNA thumbprint (Dovey et al., 2016). Hence, there can never and should not be a scenario of having closely identical versions of a creative hub albeit Hin Depot's famed accolade of being a model creative hub. Especially so when the creative and cultural industries and economy consist of diverse sub-sectors (i.e. film, design, gaming, advertisement, etc.), thus, there should be different permutations, forms and genres of creative hubs to portray and celebrate this diversity.

Although emerging creative hubs in George Town can draw lessons by referring to Hin Depot's structure and processes to garner insights, but ultimately, a creative hub should be bold enough to live by its values of experimentation, exploration and unearthing new grounds to differentiate themselves from others. This would then ensure that each and every creative hub is unique and makes a marked presence in the urban setting, just the way Hin Depot has unfolded, but with a cautionary note of not having a physical or digital twin of itself.

Creative Hubs & the Nucleus Concept

The clustering prowess of creative hubs is also intertwined with the nucleus concept. Although the original tenets in Harris and Ullman's Multiple Nuclei Model contend that the central/core (or Central Business District) will lose its importance to the adjoining or pe-

ripheral parts, in the context of a creative hub (as core) as featured in Hin Depot's case, it is still perceived as a focal point and its monumental presence serves as an anchor for other creative sub-sectors and micro-businesses to leverage, cluster and converge. See Figures 5 – 6. In urban development parlance, the urban expansion and sprawling of cities oftentimes invite mixed reactions. But, in creative hubs as illustrated by Hin Depot, a sprawling hub actually connotes positively, suggesting a hub's magnetic pull factor and ancillary role for other nuclei (i.e. creative businesses, arts activities) to be attached and form physical mass as well as construct a nuanced form and local identity, that in turn, affirms the favorable social-economic and cultural development of a creative hub within an urban environment.



Figure 5. Hin's Weekly Pop-up Market provides space for creative and micro-entrepreneurs. Source: Site visit, 6 March. 2022.



Figure 6. Hin's Weekly Pop-up Market at the lawn. Source: Site visit, 6 March. 2022.

The myriad and variety of micro-enterprises (i.e. Sew Cuddly, How Shy, etc.), retail shops (i.e. Kazimi, Rumah Kacha aka The Glass House, Suka-Suka, Osmanthus Alley, etc.), exhibition spaces, studios, even a fine-dining restaurant ‘au Jardin’ and the weekly Hin pop-up market on Saturdays and Sundays have indeed catalyzed local economic activities and provide employment opportunities for creatives, especially young and budding ones. More distinctively is the extension and emergence of the COEX@Kilang Besi wing that houses ALM Architecture, another sub-sector in the creative and cultural industry. The new wing also houses a range of other creative and cultural curio shops, startups and storefronts. According to the founder, the COEX acronym can be permuted to have seven (7) different meanings: (i) COMMunity EXperiment; (ii) COLlaboration EXperience; (iii) COMmitted EXecution; (iv) CONTinuous EXcel; (v) COLlaborators EXploration; (vi) COLlaborators EXpec-tation; (vii) COexist EXplain, all with the aspiration to experiment, create and innovate in the space. See Figures 7 – 8. He highlighted that his space is created to:

“...be organic and to find its own DNA and growth trajectory like a bonsai plant. It is OK to fail as you need not portray to be the best every time because this is a place to experiment.” (COEX Creative Hub Founder, interview, 15 Nov. 2022).



Figure 7. COEX – the new wing at Hin Bus Depot. Source: Site visit, 15 Nov. 2022.

Obviously, the Hin Depot case bears testimony that a well-curated and organized creative hub can function as an anchor hub, and be appealing to attract other sub-sectors of the creative and cultural industry to co-locate, spur local economic development and cross-fertilise ideas among and across creatives.



Figure 8. COEX – Exterior of the new wing. Source: Site visit, 15 Nov. 2022.

Creative Hub as Catalyst for Creative Pulse, Synergy & Energy

Characterized as peoples with curiosity, openness, innovativeness, flexibility, who dare to explore new ideas, and capable to see relevance and making interesting connections across diverse disciplines towards new creations of inspiring solutions, creative individuals always act as the catalyst to attract future and more talents to agglomerate, connect, exchange or collaborate to foster synergies towards realizing each other's aspirations (Landry, 2012). Resonating with Landry's idea, Ernest Zacharevic (a Penang-based Lithuanian artist) who held his solo show at Hin Depot acted as the creative catalyst. While Ernest Zacharevic's street murals around George Town had accorded him widespread fame in the global street art scene at that period, his exhibition at Hin immediately became a magnetic attraction to both local and international art communities alike.

Through Ernest Zacharevic and the personal past experiences of the initial management team (led by Gabija Grusaite, a British author cum curator and Eeyan Chuah, a local curator), Hin formed extensive connections and networking with both local and international creatives in art, including individual artists, curators, art collectors, art project organizers, managers, art funding organizations, art agencies, art academies, institutions and also practitioners in music, film, photography, performance, designs, architecture and such. The management's adoption of informal but flexible connections, collaborations and comradeship among like-minded stakeholders instead of official engagements with formal or governmental organization has stimulated the fluidity of creative resources and innovations

within the active and inspiring hub for creative class as espoused by scholars in creative class/districts literature (Kim, 2016; Florida, 2002; Chen et al., 2018b). The Sunday Pop Up Market, initiated after informal discussions among Hin's founder and friends, exemplifies a significant scenario reflecting the ideas of the aforementioned scholars. Starting without structured strategies, the market began with a few stalls, allowing operators to participate flexibly based on individual availability. Operating with a trial-and-error mindset, artisans convened weekly, sharing a co-curated start-up marketing platform. Under this friendly and collaborative initiative, artisans and creatives supported, inspired and learned from each other's experiences and also 'errors' in creative production, marketing and branding. The interviews conducted with Hin's stakeholders in 2016 consistently highlighted the sense of informal interactions and camaraderie among Hin's start-up tenant and managing team.

"It is good to bring in lots of things here. Our business moved really slow when we were the only cafe here in 2014. The first time I see people lining up here for my coffee was in November 2015. Now, with the pop-up market on Sunday, additional F&B outlets and artist studios, it further supports our business. We do not see each other (Hin's tenants/vendors) as competitors but family members who are working together to make this place a better place for all." (Operator of the First Café in Hin, interview, Aug 19, 2016)

"The whole process is about expanding the family. The key challenges are keeping the momentum of making our members (stakeholders) and visitors engaged. We are frequently questioning our inadequacies.... Today's Hin is accessible to everyone, not merely the art circles." (Hin's Gallery Manager, interview, Aug 19, 2016)

In sustaining its identity as a dynamic creative hub, the management never ceases to upgrade Hin Depot's contents with additional inputs from creative talents, such as the idea to offer inclusive platforms of opportunities and possibilities to more creatives in diverse expertise, covering creative retailers/marketers/entrepreneurs in crafts, F&B, technology applications, organic farming, healthy & wellness products, as well as creative collectives and community groups who are experimenting initiatives for positive public engagements. All these evolving creative elements collectively synergize Hin Depot's ambience and dynamic energies that consequently inspire and support the development of the creative ecosystem within the city of George Town.

Sustainable Development Goals No. 11 – Resilient, Sustainable, Inclusive & Safe Urban Settings

Globally, creative cities tend to incorporate creative hubs as part of their urban landscape, the more pertinent question would be the ability of these hubs, singularly or collectively, to be resilient, inclusive and sustainable in the long term. In this regard, Hin Depot has stood the test of time. Since its establishment in 2014, Hin was tested on various fronts, particularly related to financial sustainability to run and sustain a creative hub. Without a predecessor to refer to, Hin braved uncharted waters and pioneered the first organic creative community hub in George Town. A commendable point to note is the grit determination of the hub's private owners to commit themselves in developing Hin Depot - an endeavour never before undertaken by the private sector on this magnitude, especially when the art and culture agenda and funding matters are oftentimes relegated to the backseat in public policy affairs.

When Covid-19 hit, Hin and its hub members were again creative and proactive to pivot and adopt digitalization as much as possible. Hin Store, a digital marketplace featuring art, merchandise, and gifts from local and international artists within Hin network, was launched during the pandemic. Timely and apt, it supports and nurtures a sustainable creative market in the new normal era. However, many of the stakeholders interviewed in 2022 still preferred the in-person mode and viewed the depot's rustic setting as a major appeal for locals and tourists alike. In due course, the droves of visitors who returned to the hub when lockdowns were lifted attest to the allure of brick & mortar hubs, especially a historic building like Hin that exudes an urban retro feel. In sustainability rhetoric, to adaptively reuse dilapidated buildings/structures like Hin Depot is a move towards the right direction where historic buildings are salvaged, reused and repurposed, and subsequently, the neighborhood revitalized and local economy regenerated. The Hin Depot model, arguably, can be key exemplar of a resilient, inclusive and sustainable creative hub, with the element of malleability being integral, given that hubs cannot be static, but reinvent themselves and morph as circumstances warrant. In this context, Hin Depot contributes significantly towards achieving SDG No. 11 and the Hin Depot success story could potentially be emulated by other Malaysian cities/hubs or further afield.

The Way Forward

To date, Hin Bus Depot prides itself as being among the 'coolest' and most successful creative hubs in George Town, Penang, or even in Malaysia. Besides being the hub known only to creatives whether for professional or social purposes, Hin Depot has also earned itself an enviable accolade as a 'must see' location featured in state and national tourism brochures when visiting George Town. This study confirmed Hin Depot's key exemplar role as a creative hub evidenced through Hin Depot's on-going and active expansionary initiatives that are shaping and charting the hub's future direction. Three (3) key phenomena were observed as discussed below.

Hub Expansion

First, the hub has grown in size, and its entrepreneur headcounts, as well as the creative and cultural contents, have also increased in leaps since its inception in 2014. This positive growth has created a vibrant cultural pulse, where Hin Depot exudes a creative and cultural vibe of sorts when being physically present there. The table in figure 2 provides an overview of Hin Depot's evolving contents and growth trajectory from 2013 to 2023. From Ernest Zacharevic's solo exhibition in 2014 where the space was initially used for visual arts, performing arts, fashion, music, some F & B, the depot further became a space and hub to house artisanal studios, workshops as well as performances in 2016. The period from 2017 to end of 2019 witnessed Hin Depot hosting many workshops and it appeared to be the 'go to place' for F & B. However, when Covid-19 hit in 2020, Hin Depot was not spared by taking a hiatus from physical activities (i.e. 2020 to end of 2021). The activities and programs that were conducted in-person at Hin Depot had to migrate and pivot to the virtual realm during then when the Malaysian government imposed several rounds of lockdowns. The hub, nonetheless, gradually 'opened up' again to physical activities when lockdowns were lifted after 2021. The pandemic tested Hin Depot's resilience but it was quick to spring to its feet again. By bouncing back better and stronger, Hin Depot started to organise more weekly pop-up markets where the pop-up market is now also organized on Saturdays instead of just Sundays. This illustrates that Hin Depot is successful as a creative hub, and operated well as an intermediary to bring together producers and consumers of arts, cultural and heritage in George Town, Penang

Hin-COEX Collaboration: Symbiotic Co-Existence of Two Creative Hubs

Second, apart from vibrant economic activities within Hin Depot itself, the contagion effect of the hub is tapped by COEX@Kilang Besi when they (COEX) saw the promise and potential of leveraging the depot's creative and cultural vibrancy. COEX currently rents their space from Hin Depot, and in turn, sub-lets to smaller tenants within its (COEX's) compound. To outsiders, COEX is viewed as an extension or even an extended wing to Hin Depot, but in actual fact they are two different entities co-existing symbiotically in the same locality. It is certainly heartening to see that COEX is anchored by another creative sub-sector, (i.e. architecture). The mastermind behind COEX is a well-known practising architect-cum-avid artist who paints during his free time. Besides housing his architectural practice at COEX, the space is astutely designed and utilized to cater for exhibitions, creative/cultural events, and such. Presently, some of COEX's sub-tenants include a pop-up bookshop, a burger joint, a souvenir shop, among others. Drawing from the Hin Depot-COEX symbiosis scenario, there is likelihood that a creative hub can grow physically and expand in size incorporating other creative sub-sectors, which in turn contributes towards the socio-economic and cultural sustainability of the hub in the long term. Such micro and meso expansions would in turn positively impact the wider macro urban development and renewal of the once-upon-a-time blighted neighborhood where Hin Depot is still located. Both Hin Depot and COEX hub owners acknowledged that their close proximity and symbiotic relationship have singularly or collectively complemented each other's visions and activities. For example, those who visited the weekend pop-up market at Hin Depot would also drop by COEX and vice-versa. As such, there is constant footfall in both hubs thus facilitating complementary, supplementary and shared success between them.

Hub Mobility

Third, a novel discovery is unravelled in this study. The socio-economic and cultural prowess and allure of a creative hub are not merely restricted to its own physical boundaries but transcends such parameters. With its current fame, Hin Depot no longer leaves its footprints in George Town only but has transcended state borders to reach Johor and other Malaysian states (see Figure 9). It is welcoming and refreshing to see how Hin Depot has expanded and extended its creative and cultural presence outside of George Town, Penang, with Facebook advertisement taglines like 'Hin on the Move' announcing Hin's presence in Parit Bunga, Ledang, Johor, on 26 & 27 August 2023. This discovery is testimony that a well-organized creative hub can grow laterally beyond their existing footprint. Such a favourable outcome can motivate other budding creative hubs to strive towards positively impacting their local creative scene and the wider cultural economy. In turn, Hin Depot also attracts creatives from other parts of Malaysia to come to the hub and showcase their works. For example, creatives and cultural practitioners from Selangor (Macy's Handcraft, Eureka), Kuala Lumpur (Amorphous, My Beerkaki, Omo Omo Sticker X Chuangyidian), Muar (Elephant Floral), Johor (San 3 Handcraft, Teduh, Te.Ti.Tu), among others, are making their presence known in Penang through Hin Depot.

The above illustrations of Hin Depot's growth status and progress are commendable and give much relevancy, utility and currency to the concept and role of a creative hub in catalyzing socio-economic and cultural development in cities. From a formerly derelict and abandoned bus depot, Hin has bounced back to life and, at the same instance, functioned as an organic stimulus to catalyze the surrounding working class and blighted neighbor-

hood around the KOMTAR-Gurdwara area. No doubt, Hin Depot can serve as a sterling example for other cities on how an organic creative hub has been successful in revitalizing its vicinity en route towards sustainable urban development. Hin's success resides in a strategic management approach emphasizing camaraderie, co-creation, and collaboration. Fostering a diverse community- and talent-centered environment, coupled with its solid international networking, has enabled adaptability in the ever-evolving creative landscape. Tolerance, inclusivity and proactive adaptation empower Hin to leverage setbacks for continuous learning and improvement.



Figure 9. 'Hin on the Move' signifying Hin's presence in other Malaysia states like Johor. Source: Hin Depot's Facebook page, September 30, 2023.

Conclusion and Implications

The growing importance of the creative city concept has inevitably spotlighted the need to nurture and develop a city's creative industries, creative economy and also the pockets of creative hubs that exist, both formally and informally, within the city milieu. Though a nascent concept that is still understudied in many geographical contexts, arguably, the absence of a formalized label 'creative hub' in development plans or strategic blueprints does not mean that a city is void of their own version of a creative hub. In reality, many cases of variegated forms that are latent, invisible, covert and disorganized, would have actually existed and possibly thrived organically in many societies like the case of Hin Depot as showcased here. The fluid and elusive manner upon which creative hubs originate, develop, thrive and survive differs considerably across geographical, temporal and socio-cultural contexts, and are shaped by the vision, mission and values that underscore a hub. The progenitor of the hub, whether private-driven, public-dictated, community-led or a strategic partnership of all three (i.e. public-private-civil society alliance), will in one way or another shape and influence the operations, future directions and sustainability of a creative hub.

In this study, there is an attempt to map the developmental trajectory of a community-driven creative hub in George Town, Penang – Hin Bus Depot. The key findings illustrated that Hin Depot is a successful creative hub fulfilling its commercial, social and cultural purposes, verifying Duchesneau & Déziel (2019) theory of what creative hubs normally endeavour to be. In agreement too with the London Development Agency's (2003) concept,

Hin Depot also serves as an intermediary and a place for creatives and micro-entrepreneurs to work, produce, consume and also network with others to form new synergistic and creative alliances, be it within the hub itself or further afield in other creative hubs in other Malaysian states. However, a stark difference from existing theories lies in the 'humanistic human resource management approach' of Hin Depot as dissected above where the owners are empathetic towards young and budding creatives, and the unwavering belief that a creative hub that is well-supported, especially by the community of creatives themselves would stand a chance of better survival and sustainability. Hin Depot is also a sterling exemplar of a 'rags to riches' creative hub in Penang showcasing how a once dilapidated and defunct depot could be astutely and adaptively reused and transformed into an inclusive space, place and hub for communal arts and cultural endeavours. The ups and downs depicted in operating and sustaining Hin Depot provide key insights for other aspiring hubs, whether in George Town or other Malaysian urban settings.

In summary, this study is instrumental towards creative hub development in Penang specifically and for Malaysia in general. For conceptual implication, the case of Hin Depot affirms that agglomeration of creative talents/occupations are just as important as conventional geographical theories of clustering of firms. The novel discovery at Hin Depot is the way a creative hub can organically develop itself through integrative and collaborative planning together with the community (of creatives), and spearheaded by private sector commitment. It reveals that survivalism and resilience of creative hubs do not only depend on public coffers for initiation and ideation, but can succeed with sufficient vision and commitment from the private and civil domains, respectively. It is thus pivotal to unravel the "DNA" of each hub, that differentiates and makes it distinctive to enhance its competitive and comparative edge. Sawangchot's case studies (2016) on cultural spaces in Osaka and Bandung reveal that some creative/cultural hubs arise from grassroots initiatives, adaptive reuse of spaces and collaborative networks of artists and creatives. Similar to Hin Bus Depot, their resilience relies more on community participation, self-organization, and cross-sector collaboration than on top-down public interventions. This broader regional perspective affirms that Hin Bus Depot's development is not an isolated case; instead, it somewhat reflects a common pattern of organic creative hub growth across Asian cities, each shaped by its local context and distinct cultural characteristics/DNA.

Policy-wise, the success story of Hin Depot should inform urban managers on ways to acknowledge, integrate, plan, and develop other creative hubs (within a creative & cultural district), which in turn can catalyze the creative industries/economy of a city, but with due considerations for urban cultural inclusion and cultural democratization for all urban citizenries. As Sasaki (2011) posits, policies targeting social inclusion must guarantee that all community members have the opportunity to participate economically, socially, and culturally. The practical implications deriving from this study will require stakeholders to take cognizance of creative hubs as urban catalysts, their spin-off activities and economic ripple effects to other upstream/downstream economic activities and the hubs adjacent vicinity. Emphasis should be given to the types and diverse needs of creative people, processes, value chains and ecosystems that deserve support in terms of capacity building, funding, infra- and infostructure provision and continuous efforts to nurture inter and intra relations with other creative hubs en route towards sustainable creative city development. Nevertheless, potential challenges that might emerge include long-term sustained support

(i.e. capacity building, research and development), bureaucratic red tape and funding availability for further growth of the creatives individually and the wider creative ecosystem. Hence, according formal recognition to creative hubs should quickly garner policy attention so that hubs and the people and processes within them can be nurtured for the overall good of the cultural and creative economy.

Given the nascency of creative hub research in Malaysia, this study is a pivotal springboard to conduct more similar and related studies in other Malaysian creative hubs in the city milieu or even in suburb or rural settings. Given that Hin Depot is largely an art and cultural hub situated right smack in the hustle and bustle of downtown George Town, future research could attempt to examine tech-laden creative hubs or eco-creative hubs, whether in urban or rural settings. As a new urban denomination, the creative hub is worthy of further research exploration as there can never be a one-size-fits-all template albeit the success story illustrated by the Hin Bus Depot. Although Hin Depot deserves to be a good case study for reference, the way upon which the creative hub concept can be implemented for Malaysian cities or further afield will differ and has to be location-specific to tailor to the local contexts and specificities of the city. This opens up platforms for future research in creative hubs as a driver towards sustainable and inclusive development of creative cities in Malaysia.

Acknowledgements

The main author would like to acknowledge and thank Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS/1/2021/SSI02/USM/02/3) from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, for funding this project during fieldwork in 2022 and 2023

References

- Atkinson, Rowland & Maryann, Wulff. "Gentrification and Displacement: A Review of Approaches and Findings in the Literature (positioning paper)." AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute) Positioning Paper No. 115. AHURI Southern and Monash Research Centres (2009).
- Avdikos, Vasilis & Eirini, Iliopoulou. "Community-led Coworking Spaces: From Co-location to Collaboration and Collectivisation." In *Creative Hubs in Question. Place, Space and Work in the Creative Economy*. Edited by Rosalind, Gill, Andy C., Pratt, Tarek E., Virani, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.
- British Council. Creative HubKit. Made By Hubs for Emerging Hubs. A Study commissioned by the British Council. www.britishcouncil.my/sites/default/files/creative-hubkit.pdf. (accessed July 30, 2023).
- Chaloupková, Marketa & Josef, Kunc. "Locality Selection Matters. Investigating Creative Hubs in the Czech Urban Environment." *City, Culture and Society* 28 (2022): 100440.
- Chan, Jin Hooi., Shih-Yu, Chen., Athena, Piterou., Suet Leng, Khoo., Hooi Hooi, Lean., Intan Hashimah Mohd, Hashim. & Bernard, Lane. "An Innovative Social Enterprise: Roles of and Challenges faced by an Arts Hub in a World Heritage Site in Malaysia." *City, Culture and Society* 25 (2021): 100396.
- Chan, Jin Hooi, Katia, Iankova, Ying, Zhang, Tom, McDonald & Xiaoguang, Qi. "The Role of Self-gentrification in Sustainable Tourism: Indigenous Entrepreneurship at Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage Site, China." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 24 (8-9) (2016): 1262-1279.

- Chang, Nicole. "Hin Bus Depot – Derelict No More." *Penang Monthly*, May (2017). Penang: Penang Institute.
- Chang, Nicole. "Penang's Creative Sector Struggles to Stay Afloat." *Penang Monthly*, May (2021). Penang: Penang Institute.
- Chen, Shih-Yu., Athena, Piterou., Suet Leng, Khoo. & Jin Hooi, Chan. "The Art Hub in the World Heritage Site, Georgetown: A Case Study of Creative Sector Entrepreneurship in the Context of Gentrification." In *Research Papers on Knowledge, Innovation and Enterprise*. London: KIE Publications, 2018, 7-22. www.kiecon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/KIE-Journal-Conference-Vol-VI-2018_v2.pdf. (accessed on June 30, 2023).
- Chen, Shih-Yi., Athena, Piterou, Suet Leng, Khoo. & Jin Hooi, Chan. "Hin Bus Depot: A Case Study of Creative Sector Entrepreneurship in the Context of Gentrification." Paper presented at the *International Conference on Knowledge, Innovation and Enterprise*, Prague, Czech Republic, July 18 - 20, 2018.
- Dovey, Jon., Andy C., Pratt., Simon, Moreton., Tarek, Virani., Janet, Merkel., & Jo, Lansdowne. *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy*, City, University of London (in association with the University of West England, REACT, Creativeworks London, and The Watershed), 2016.
- Duchesneau, Marie-Odile & Guillaume, Déziel., "The Creative Hub, An Emerging Organizational Entity with Great Potential for Arts and Culture." Canada Media Fund. 2019. www.cmf-fmc.ca/now-next/articles/creative-hub-report-telefilm-canada-guillaume-deziel/. (accessed May 15, 2023).
- Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Glass, Ruth. *London: Aspects of Change*. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964.
- Khoo, Suet Leng. & Nicole Shu Fun, Chang., *Creative City as an Urban Development Strategy: The Case of Selected Malaysian Cities*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Kim, Ji Youn. "Cultural Entrepreneurs and Urban Regeneration in Itaewon, Seoul." *Cities* 56 (2016): 132-140.
- Labbe, Danielle., Celia, Zuberec., and Sarah, Turner. "Creative Hubs in Hanoi, Vietnam: Transgressive Spaces in a Socialist State?" *Urban Studies* 59 (15) (2022).
- Landry, Charles. *The Origins & Futures of the Creative City*. United Kingdom: Comedia, 2012.
- Ley, David. *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- London Development Agency (LDA). "Creative London: Vision and Plan." London: London Development Agency, 2003. www.creativeindustrieslondon.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/creative-london.pdf (accessed May 15, 2023).
- Morgan, George & James, Woodriff. "Herding Cats: Co-work, Creativity and Precarity in Inner Sydney." In *Creative Hubs in Question. Place, Space and Work in the Creative Economy*. Edited by Rosalind, Gill, Andy C., Pratt, Tarek E., Virani, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.
- Morgan, Nigel & Annette, Pritchard. "Meeting the Destination Branding Challenge." In *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Edited by Nigel, Morgan., Annette, Pritchard., and Roger, Pride. United Kingdom: Elsevier Ltd., 2004.

- O'Hara, Ellen & Deepa, Naik. "Mapping Creative Hubs in England." British Council. 2021. https://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/resources/Mapping_Creative_Hubs_In_England_.pdf (accessed on June 30, 2023).
- Pratt, Andy C., Tarek E., Virani & Rosalind, Gill. "Introduction." In *Creative Hubs in Question. Place, Space and Work in the Creative Economy*. Edited by Rosalind, Gill, Andy C., Pratt, Tarek E., Virani, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.
- Sasaki, Masayuki. "Urban Regeneration through Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* (2) (2011): 30-49.
- Sawangchot, Viriya. "Creative City and the Sustainable Life: A Study on the Making of Cultural Spaces in Osaka and Bandung." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* (12) (2016): 54-69.
- Smith, Neil. "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." *Antipode* 34 (3) (2002): 427-450.
- Teoh, Sheryl. "The Future Depends on the Creative Economy." *Penang Monthly*, April (2023). Penang: Penang Institute.
- Virani, Tarek E. "Re-articulating the Creative Hub Concept as a Model for Business Support in the Local Creative Economy: The Case of Mare Street in Hackney." *Creativeworks London Working Paper* No. 12 (2015). Arts & Humanities Research Council and Queen Mary University of London.
- Virani, Tarek E. & Gill, Rosalind. "Hip Hub? Class, Race and Gender in Creative Hubs." In *Creative Hubs in Question. Place, Space and Work in the Creative Economy*. Edited by Rosalind, Gill, Andy C., Pratt, Tarek E., Virani, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.