Chinese Notions of Public Space

Transculturation in Urban Design and Architecture after the 'Reform and Opening-up' in 1978

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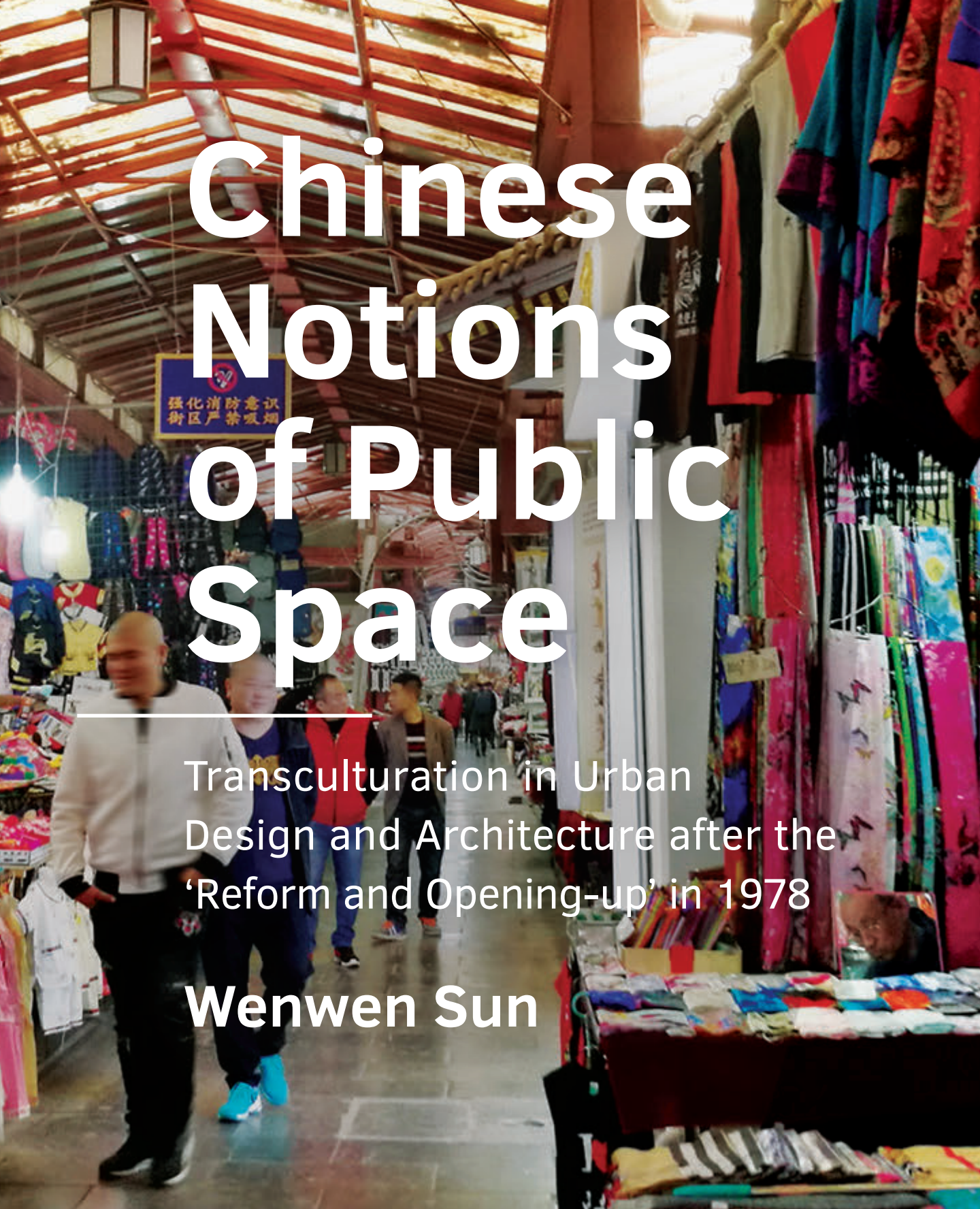

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Chinese Notions of Public Space

Transculturation in Urban Design and Architecture after the 'Reform and Opening-up' in 1978

Dissertation

for the purpose of obtaining the degree of doctor
at Delft University of Technology
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus, prof.dr.ir. T.H.J.J. van der Hagen
chair of the Board for Doctorates
to be defended publicly on
Monday 7 November 2022 at 12:30 o'clock

by

Wenwen SUN
Master of Science in Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences,
Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
born in Shenyang, China

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This dissertation has been approved by the promotors.

Composition of the doctoral committee:

Rector Magnificus,	chairperson
Dr.arch. R. Cavallo	Delft University of Technology, promotor
Dr.ir. M.G.A.D. Harteveld	Delft University of Technology, copromotor

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Prof.dr.sc. H.K. Tieben	The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Prof.dr.ir. M.J.van Dorst	Delft University of Technology, reserve member

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We seek common ground while reserving differences.

<The Book of Rites>[1]

1 This is a translation of the Chinese idiom '求同存异' that comes from the Confucian treatise *Li Ji (礼记) or The Book of Rites (475 BC – 221 BC)*, in Chapter 'Yue Ji (乐记)' or 'Record of Music'.

Dancing and watching, Dalian (author photo, 2019)

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Wenwen Sun
Rotterdam, August 2022

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Summary

The concept of 'public space' has played a significant role in the urban development of China in the past decades of intensive economic and cultural globalisation, particularly after the 'Internal Reform and Opening to the Outside World' (or the 'Reform and Opening-up') in 1978. While the Chinese interest in the concept emerged based on Western knowledge and international models, in its elaboration, features of public space in Chinese cities — how it is addressed, realised, and actually used — have been contested by the local and particular cultural, social, and spatial conditions *vis-à-vis* the related political, economic, and governmental conditions. Despite this, current urban and architectural research on public space in China remains largely based on Western theories, employing a rather simple framework of adopting the Western knowledge systems to the Chinese context, a context different from the West in terms of historical conditions and urban development paths. Although as a concept originated in the West, public space is inevitably a context-contingent notion and inextricably entangled with the cultural context that accommodates it, shapes it, and exercises it. This dimension of public space is yet to be systematically and fully explored in the fields of urban design and architecture in China.

This doctoral research takes a fundamental first step by investigating the understanding and implementation of public space, particularly from the perspectives of urban design and architecture in the reformed Chinese context, by referring to the complex process and result of transculturation (*transculturación*). As such, this research adopts 'transculturation', a notion coined in anthropology, initially to describe processes and results of cultural encounters in urban design and architecture of one multi-cultural rooted country. Consisting of three partial processes as acculturation, deculturation, and neoculturation, the notion implies that cultural assimilation is a multi-directional and dynamic process rather than a linear path of migration of knowledge and practice. Applying transculturation as a lens, this thesis delineates how public space as a Greco-Roman originated concept traversed the urban and architectural cultures of post-reform China, merging and negotiating with the local conditions, and evolved into a new phenomenon in Chinese urban design and architecture. First, the thesis frames the local construction, rules, and norms of the collective realms in the Chinese city, based upon a review of historical and contemporary narratives from Chinese philosophy and sociology. Within this framework, the thesis continues with an epistemological investigation

of the concept's trajectory within the field of urban design theory during the era of transcultural encounters with the West. It critically reviews materials written in China on the topic of public space. Following this new understanding, various cases are analysed in their design and spatial conditions. This set of cases ranges from 'shared spaces' in the areas characterised by urban dwelling and communities to 'open spaces' in the central city where strangers mingle and globalisation manifests. Using various tools of observation and representation, the presented research has engaged theory directly with spatial and social practices in the urban and architectural spaces of studied cases. As a result, this thesis develops an interpretative framework within which the meanings and transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture can be understood and elucidates potential for future urban design and architectural practices.

Samenvatting

Het concept van ‘publieke ruimte’ heeft een belangrijke rol gespeeld in de stedelijke ontwikkeling van China in de afgelopen decennia van intensieve economische en culturele globalisering, met name na de ‘Interne Hervorming en de Opening voor de Openstaan voor de Buitenwereld’ (of de ‘Hervorming en de Openstelling’) in 1978. Terwijl de Chineze belangstelling voor het onderwerp voornamelijk naar voren gekomen is op basis van Westerse kennis en internationale modellen, worden in de uitwerking de kenmerken van de publieke ruimte in Chinese steden - in aangepak, gerealisatie en toegeëigening - betwist door de lokale en bijzondere culturele, sociale en ruimtelijke condities, ten opzichte van de gerelateerde politieke, economische, en bestuurlijke condities. Desondanks blijft het huidige stedelijk en architectonische onderzoek naar de publieke ruimte in China grotendeels gebaseerd op Westerse theorieën, waarbij gebruik wordt gemaakt van een tamelijk eenvoudig kader waarin het Westerse kennissysteem wordt toegepast op de Chinese context, een context die verschilt van de Westerse in termen van historische omstandigheden en stedelijk ontwikkelingstrajecten. Alhoewel de publieke ruimte, als concept ontstaan in het Westen, het is onvermijdelijk een contextgebonden begrip en in praktijk onlosmakelijk is verbonden met de culturele context waarin zij wordt ingepast, vormgegeven en toegepast. Deze dimensie van de publieke ruimte moet nog systematisch en ten volle worden onderzocht op het gebied van architectuur en stedenbouw in China.

Dit doctoraal onderzoek neem teen eerste fundamentele stap door het begrip en de implementatie van de publieke ruimte te onderzoeken, met name bezien vanuit de stedenbouw en architectuur in de hervormde Chinese context, door te verwijzen naar het complexe proces en resultaat van ‘transculturatie’ (*transculturación*). Op deze wijze, adopteert het onderzoek ‘transculturatie’ als een begrip gemunt binnen de antropologie aanvankelijk om de processen en de resultaten van culturele ontmoetingen in het publieke domein van een multicultureel geworteld landte beschrijven. Het begrip bestaat uit drie deelprocessen: acculturatie, deculturatie en neoculturatie, en impliceert dat culturele assimilatie een dynamisch proces in meerdere richtingen is, eerder dan een lineair pad van migratie van kennis en praktijk. Door transculturatie als lens te gebruiken, wordt in deze dissertatie afgebakend hoe de publieke ruimte als een uit het Greco-Roman afkomstig concept de architectonische en stedelijke cultuur van het China van na de hervorming heeft doorkruist, en zich heeft vermengd en heeft onderhandeld met de lokale omstandigheden, en zich heeft ontwikkeld tot een nieuw fenomeen in de Chinese

stedenbouw en architectuur. Ten eerste, kadert deze dissertatie de lokale constructie, regels en normen van het collectieve domein in de Chinese stad in, aan de hand van historische en hedendaagse narratieven vanuit de Chinese filosofie en het gerelateerd stedelijk onderzoek. Binnen dit raamwerk, vervolgt de dissertatie met een epistemologische onderzoek naar het traject dat het concept heeft doorlopen binnen het veld van de stedelijk ontwerptheorie tijdens de periode van transculturele ontmoetingen met het Westen.Het onderzoekt kritisch materiaal geschreven in China over het onderwerp publieke ruimte. In navolging van dit nieuwe begrip, worden verschillende casussen geanalyseerd in hun ontwerp en ruimtelijke condities. Deze set casussen varieren van ‘gedeelde ruimten’ in gebieden die gekarakteriseerd kunnen worden door stedelijk wonen en stadsgemeenschappen, tot ‘open ruimten’ in de centrale stad waar vreemden elkaar ontmoeten en globalisering zich manifesteert. Met behulp van verschillende observatie en representatie instrumenten, verbindt het gepresenteerde onderzoek theoriedirect aan de ruimtelijke en sociale praktijken in de stedelijke en architectonische ruimten van de bestudeerde casussen. Als gevolg hiervan ontwikkelt deze dissertatie een interpretatief kader waarbinnen de betekenissen en transculturatie van de publieke ruimte in de Chinese stedenbouw en architectuur begrepen kunnen worden, alsook het toekomstige mogelijkheden voor de architectonische en stedenbouwkundige praktijken verhelderd.

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Entrance space of the China World Trade Centre, Beijing, as designed for the public but confined in use (author photo, 2019)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Relevance

Especially after the Second World War, public space has been recognised not only as a functional demand in cities, but more so, it has turned towards an academic understanding of places place as key to cultural and social formation. In large parts of the world, the notion of public space has been stretched beyond a utilitarian understanding of outdoor city networks, or the organising principle of being and human functioning, while arranging people's movement. Public space has been acknowledged as a nexus for people's coexisting, common responsibility, and collective perceptions. In this line, public space can be any space used, owned, and known by many people, which also includes interiors.[1] From a *Western* [2] view point, American sociologist Sharon Zukin has relevantly noted that "public spaces are the primary site of public culture; they are a window into the city's soul."[3] In China's ongoing engagement with globalisation, especially in the past forty years, the public spaces in the Chinese city — their appearance and social affordance — have been characterised by a rapid and continuous transformation. They have become a locus of societal and cultural changes and a terrain for the practices of architecture and urban design. Yet, an academic review on the Chinese understanding of public space, particularly in these fields that shape the built environment, remained absent until now.

1 See Maurice Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist* (Delft: Delft University of Technology, 2014), 10-11, 65-76, and 96-100.

2 **'Western'** generally refers to the geographical and cultural contexts of Western European and North American countries, which have or relate to the Greco-Roman cultural root and the Indo-European civilisation. In this thesis, the word 'West' is not used as a binary counterpart of the 'East' but as a reference to the European and/or American architectural and urban contexts.

3 Sharon Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," *Malden, Mass and Oxford. UK: Blackwell Publishers* (1995): 259.

FIG. 1.1 The over-scaled square in front of Dayanta (大雁塔, Dayan Tower) historic park, Xi'an (source: author photo, 2018)

This thesis underlines the urgency to approach the topic of public space in China from a local perspective by observing ongoing transformations in urban and architectural spaces in Chinese cities. In China, the pursuit of reform, development, and opening up to the outside world has been led by a continuous national movement since the late twentieth century, and this has accelerated in the twenty-first century. Chinese cities have undergone a dramatic retrofit to meet European-American praxes of modernisation through urban development.[4] The rise of new Chinese cities with 'Western-style' buildings, infrastructures, and open spaces seems to have brought, firstly, new forms of urban design, and secondly, standardised approaches to urban and architectural spaces in shaping the public realm. Constantly seen in Chinese cities, broad streets of an inhuman scale are decorated with greenery to display the achievement of modernisation urban development; similarly, well-designed public spaces are often managed as decoration for significant buildings in this development (Figure 1.1). While the city square is gaining popularity in Chinese urban development, public activities emerge more in interiorised places such as shopping malls, restaurants, and karaoke bars.[5]

4 See Piper Gaubatz, "New Public Space in Urban China: Fewer Walls, More Malls in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining," *China Perspectives*, no. 4 (2008). Chinese urban scholar Shiqiao Li also writes in Understanding the Chinese city (2014): "for more than 100 years, the Chinese city has been re-imagined and reconstructed to accommodate many features of the Western city resulting from a 'modernisation' process." Shiqiao Li, *Understanding the Chinese City* (Sage, 2014).

5 *Understanding the Chinese City*.

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Such expressions of the city's public realm in the Chinese context have gradually turned into trendy design assignments nationwide under the high demands for modernising urban development and the political-economic aspirations of governmental leaders.

Indeed, from this perspective, the notion of public space has played a significant role in the urban development of China since the start of the 'Internal Reform and Opening to the Outside World' in 1978.[6] This period coalesced intensive economic and cultural globalisation world-wide: public space is increasingly debated as a concept and applied to many places in Chinese cities. While the Chinese interest in the concept began to grow mainly based on internationally-known Western understandings and models, in its elaboration, features of public space in Chinese cities — how public space is addressed, realised, and actually used — are contested by the local and particular cultural, social, and spatial conditions. In contrast with the repetitive urban landscapes that are found in almost any newly built Chinese city or urban area, the patterns of urban public life are highly diverse and complex. In everyday urban spaces such as the street, the courtyard, and the city square, many spontaneous activities are taking place, some of which conflict with the designated functions of the spaces. In these places, what was meant to be public can be claimed by individual use, and what is not internally public can become shared territories.

The tension between development-centred city planning and the complex patterns of everyday public life in contemporary Chinese cities has inspired this research to re-examine the Chinese understanding of the notion of public space along with its practice. Given the rising awareness regarding the diversity of local cultures, sociality, and spaces within the global interconnectedness and the pressing need for rapid urban development in China, public space should not exist only in the city plan as a development showcase associated with beautification, but represent a significant site of cultural and social practice. Thus, public space is subject of continuous debate in the fields of urban design and architecture. Therefore, scholarship must reassess the actual meaning of public space within the specific geographical and temporal context of modern China. Doing so will clarify how to address this topic in urban and architectural design practice from a Chinese perspective.

6 'Internal Reform and Opening to the Outside World', or 'Reform and Opening-up (**改革开放**)', is formed by Deng Xiaoping in his speech 'Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, Unite and Look Forward', delivered at the closing meeting of the Central Work Conference, followed by his opening speech of 'The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee', both in Beijing. See**邓小平** (1978, December 13) **《解放思想，实事求是，团结一致向前看》在中央工作会议闭幕会议上的讲话**. And **邓小平** (1978, December 18) **十一届三中全会开幕词。**

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1.2 Existing Studies: Current Developments of the Topic

Public space is a notion produced within the Greco-Roman rooted Western contexts and historical circumstances, and it has been systematically applied in practice while debated over time. When discussing it in urban design and architecture-related fields, one explicitly refers to the concept that evolved from the philosophical and sociological reasoning on the public realm and/or the public sphere after the Second World War, as in the theories of Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and Richard Sennett, among others.[7] On the basis of these pronounced paradigms, architectural and urban research on public space has profoundly evolved in the West in the post war period.[8]

7 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). Jürgen Habermas, "Strukturwandel Der Öffentlichkeit," (1962). Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977). The well-known German philosopher Arendt associated the public realm with the marketplace of the ancient Greek polis, for it is the place of appearance and the stage for political actions. Habermas, writing after her in 1960s, defined the bourgeois public sphere as a brace for Western democracy. In the 1970s, the American sociologist Sennett considered polymorphous sociability as the essence of the public realm, which had been threaten in the Modern city due to an invasion of the private sphere.

8 On the basis of the three paradigms, architectural and urban research on public space has profoundly evolved in the West since the Second World War. Thinkers and designers, such as Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Roger Trancik, Manuel de Solà-Morales, Edward Soja, and Rem Koolhaas, are credited for coining notions such as 'semi-public space', 'collective space', 'third space', and 'generic space.' The 1990s' scholars, such as Michael Sorkin, Bruce Robbins, Nancy Fraser, and Margaret Crawford, positioned themselves in the Late-Modern condition and posed their critiques, such as the 'theme park' claim, the phantom public sphere, multiplicity of publics et cetera. More recently, Dutch urban designer and architect Maurice Harteveld has continued broadening the understanding of public space specific to the people who use, own, and know it, and as the space of socio-spatial transformation. See: Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (MIT press, 1977). Roger Trancik, *Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986). Manuel de Sola-Morales, "Public and Collective Space: The Urbanisation of the Private Domain as a New Challenge," *La\/anguardia, Barcelona* (1992). Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996). Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *Generic City* (Sikkens Foundation, 1995). Michael Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992). Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social text*, no. 25/26 (1990); Bruce Robbins, *The Phantom Public Sphere* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993). Margaret Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49, no. 1 (1995). Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist.*

In a so-called 'Late-Modern society'[9], urban design and architecture aspire to accommodate 'the public', as do contemporary urban designers and architects whose work relates to the concepts of the public realm and/or the public sphere.[10] Since then, the notion of public space, despite cultural dependence and social meanings, has become a global topic in the research and practice of urban design and architecture, including in China.

In China, research on public space in urban design and architecture sprang from a large-scale encounter with European and American urban design knowledge following the reform of 1978. The first crucial development of urban-architectural theory was seeded in the import of 'urban design' discipline in the 1980s primarily from the US. Chinese scholars and designers steered this new discipline towards aesthetic and functional perspectives on urban form, comparing the idea of public space to open space that mostly referred to urban green or entertainment space in land-use planning.[11] Since the late 1990s, a strong voice of people-centred design principle in Chinese architecture academia has altered the focus of urban design, thereby promoting the importance of the human-scale in spatial design and serving the needs of users in terms of social activities.[12] During the last ten years, due to the growing influence of globalisation, an in-depth encounter with Western theories and practices in the Chinese urban and architectural professions has substantially extended the academic view of public space towards its philosophical and sociological grounding.

9 Late-Modern society or Late-Modernity is a widely-used term in the fields related to urban design and architecture to refer to the continuation of modernity to the contemporary era's highly developed global society. See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990).Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990 Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford University Press, 1994). Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

10 Tom Avermaete, Klaske Havik, and Hans Teerds, *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere* (Amsterdam: SUN Publishers, 2009).

11 Jianguo Wang, **現代城市設計理論和方法** [Modern Urban Design Theory and Method] (**南京** Nanjing: **東南大學出版社** Southeast University Press, 1991). Zuhua Xia and Weikang Huang, **城市空间设计** [Urban Spatial Design] (**南京**: **东南大学出版社**, 1991).

12 For representative works from this school of thoughts, see Kongjian Yu, "**城市公共空间设计：呼唤人性场所**," [Urban Public Space Design: Recalling Human Space.] **城市环境艺术** 1 (2002).; Kongjian Yu, Jun Wan, and Ying Shi, "**寻回广场的公民性**: **成都都江堰广场案例**," [Back to the Meanings as People's Place: the Case of Dujiangyan Square.] **新建筑**, no. 4 (2004).; Yongjie Cai, **城市广场** [City square] (**南京** (Nanjing): **东南大学出版社**, 2006).; Deci Zou, "**人性化的城市公共空间**," [The Humanised Urban Public Space.] **城市规划学刊** *(Urban Planning Forum)* 5 (2006).

Currently, Late-Modern studies of the public sphere in particular have gained increasing influence among Chinese urban and architectural scholars and practitioners, although surprisingly, only a few books have been published on this topic. In 2005, Chinese architect Lei Yu thoroughly reviewed the translated theories of the public sphere in his book entitled *Research on the Publicity of Space*. This study examines some urban and architectural design practices in China via the Western conceptual framework of the public sphere, which is mainly built on secondary sources such as the translated literature.[13] A similar approach characterises the 2009 article *What is Authentic Urban Public Space* by Hong Kong-based Chinese scholars Zhu Chen and Min Ye, who argue that 'publicness' should be a parameter to evaluate the quality of urban public spaces in China.[14] One of the most recent Chinese urban-architectural books focusing on the notion of public space is Chinese architect Hao Li's 2015 book *The Meaning of Public Space: Analysing and Constructing the Value of Urban Public Space in Modern China*.[15] As the title implies, this work reviews the Western theories from secondary sources and constructs a value paradigm for studying and designing urban public spaces in contemporary China.

Although these studies have meticulously investigated the Western theories of public space, they still employ a relatively simple framework generated by applying the Western knowledge systems in another cultural context with its own historical conditions and urban development path. In recent years, cultural, sociological, and spatial studies tend to reconnect the situated social practices of publicness in urban China to the historical and geographical particularities of the Chinese city.[16]

13 See Yu, 城市公共性研究 [Research on the Publicity of Space] (南京(Nanjing): 东南大学出版社(Southeast University Press), 2005).

14 Zhu Chen and Min Ye, "什么是真正的公共空间?—西方城市公共空间理论与空间公共性的判定," [What is Authentic Urban Public Space? A Review of Western Public Space Theories and an Evaluation of the "Publicness" of Public Space.] 国际城市规划 24, no. 3 (2009). The 'publicness' this paper refers to as comprising 'access', 'agency', and 'interest' is based on S. I. Benn and Gaus Gerald F., *Public and Private in Social Life* (London; New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983).

15 Hao Li, 公共空间的意义 [The Meaning of Public Space: Analysing and Constructing the Value of Urban Public Space in Modern China] (北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2015).

16 See Junxi Qian's articles such as: Junxi Qian, "Public Space in Non-Western Contexts: Practices of Publicness and the Socio-Spatial Entanglement," *Geography Compass* 8, no. 11 (2014). "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China," ed. Mark Jayne, *Chinese urbanism: critical perspectives* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018). (E-book)
Junxi Qian (钱俊希) is a social and cultural geographer at the Department of Geography, the University of Hong Kong. (https://www.geog.hku.hk/jx-qian)

Chinese scholars in this field, such as Junxi Qian, tend to go beyond the theoretical notions and norms conceived in the West and search for a localised understanding of Chinese public space as "extensively used and appropriated, as well as profoundly politicised and contested."[17] On the broader topic of understanding Chinese cities, one of the most recent publications entitled *Typological Drift: Emerging Cities in China*, written by Shiqiao Li and Esther Lorenz, also tends to bridge this gap. Li and Lorenz argue that the Chinese urban developments in the post-reform era are "neither derivatives of Western cities nor isolated from them." Their work asserts Chinese culture as "structurally divergent from the common Indo-European civilisational roots of Western cultures" and has therefore led to urban change favouring certain features while terminating others in China.[18]

Nonetheless, public space as a context-contingent concept and practice is yet to be systematically and fully explored in the fields of urban design and architecture in China. Although it is a concept that has originated in the West, public space has become inextricably entangled with the Chinese cultural, social, and spatial contexts that accommodate it, shape it, and exercise it. Its emergence and transformation in modern China engages with both the global urban and architectural knowledge and the local cultural tradition.[19]

This doctoral thesis argues that the understanding and practice of public space in urban design and architecture in the post-reform Chinese context are characterised by a dynamic evolution, combining the Western influence (in terms of knowledge due to globalisation) with the traditional cultural sensibilities and social values of space-making in China. As a fundamental first step, this doctoral thesis investigates and delineates this evolving process and subsequently puts forward this combination in concept and practice through the lens of transculturation.

17 "Public Space in Non-Western Contexts: Practices of Publicness and the Socio-Spatial Entanglement," p.834.

18 Shiqiao Li and Esther Lorenz, *Typological Drift: Emerging Cities in China*, Next Cities (San Francisco: Applied Research & Design, 2021).

19 As American urban geographer Piper Gaubatz concludes, the Chinese public sphere is formed and re-formed by China's continuing engagement with the world and with itself. Gaubatz, "New Public Space in Urban China: Fewer Walls, More Malls in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining," 83.

1.3 Research Framework, Goals, and Research Questions

In operationalising research, this thesis employs the anthropological concept of 'transculturation' to confront the complex and dynamic phenomenon of public space in the reformed Chinese context. Introduced by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940 in postcolonial research, this concept is a critical addition to anthropological vocabulary, which can replace an incorrectly-applied 'acculturation'.[20] Acculturation, according to Ortiz, implies a sense of supremacy felt by a dominant culture, whereas transculturation refers to 'an (dynamic) exchange between two cultures, both of them active, both contributing their share and cooperating to bring about a new reality.'[21] As such, transculturation actually encompasses both acculturation (the process of acquiring another culture) and deculturation (the loss or uprooting of the existing culture). Moreover, another issue that underpins transculturation is neoculturation, or the emergence of a new cultural phenomenon. Adopted foremost in post-colonial urban and architectural studies, transculturation reveals the development of architectural phenomena as a multi-directional, dynamic, and never-ending interactive process rather than a linear path of immigration of knowledge and practice that is static or unidirectional.[22] Such a phenomenon has also been targeted in other relevant disciplines such as planning history and policy transfer beyond the so-called Western world.[23] Thus, transculturation offers a powerful theoretical lens to scrutinise how public space as a global phenomenon has been situated in the post-reform Chinese context, provoking mutual changes in both cultures that encounter each other and generating new meanings and practices in Chinese urban design and architecture.

20 Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo Cubano Del Tabaco Y El Azucar: Advertencia De Sus Contrastas Agrarios, Economicos, Historicos Y Sociales, Su Etnografia Ysu Transculturación* (Havana: Jesus Montero, 1940).

21 Fernando Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar (Duke University Press, 1995), lix. The nature of transculturation also emphasises an interactive reality of cultural relations, which is unlike the notion of acculturation that implies a one-way process of the less dominant culture assimilated into a dominant one.

22 Ibid., xli. See also: Felipe Hernández, "The Transcultural Phenomenon, and the Transculturation of Architecture," (Liverpool University Press, 2002). Tom Avermaete, "Coda: The Reflexivity of Cold War Architectural Modernism. ," *The Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2012).

23 Mercedes Volait and Joe Nasr, *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (Wiley-Academy, 2003). Giulia C Romano, *Changing Urban Renewal Policies in China* (Springer, 2020).

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Therefore, two fundamental questions that inform this research arise: *i) Under the intensive global cultural exchange, what are the notions of public space put forward in the contemporary theory and practice of Chinese urban design and architecture? ii) How and to what extent is public space transculturated in the post-reform era?* To answer these questions, this thesis unfolds the discussion in three dimensions within which the understanding and practice of public space evolved or transculturated in Chinese urban design and architecture: meaning, concept, and design practice, resulting in five main chapters (Chapter Two to Six).

Chapter Two examines the understandings and practices of the collective realms that have originated and emerged in the Chinese city before the 'Reform and Opening-up' of the country; this is considered crucial for the redevelopment of Chinese cities in the globalised era.[24] The chapter questions: *what are the intellectual foundations that have determined the cultural, social, and spatial constructions of public space in the Chinese city before and during the arrival of Western urban design and architecture in China?* Historically determined factors, such as the design of spaces for the collective in the traditional Chinese city, are key to answer this question. Moreover, novel ideas of public space have evolved with the changing social and spatial conditions of the Chinese city, and so have the collective realms, leading to new typological variations in the rapid urban transformation. This chapter explores the meaning and concept of the 'public' in Chinese history and connects it to urban and architectural typologies of the collective realms in both past and present urban developments, producing an alternative conceptual framework of what is considered the public realm, as a foundation for understanding public space in the Chinese city.

24 The 2007 book *Chinese Conception of Space* by the Chinese scholar and architect Xiaodong Li substantiates the Chinese philosophical constructs of architectural spaces based on Chinese history and traditional culture. He argues that the Western influence has obscured the conception of space in contemporary Chinese architecture so that the Chinese conception of space should be profoundly discussed. In line with his thoughts, the 2014 book *Understanding the Chinese City* by the US-based Chinese scholar Shiqiao Li situates in the twentieth century China city, analysing the modern spatial expressions of Chinese philosophies and urban traditions in this globalised era. See Xiaodong Li and Kang Shua Yeo, 中国空间 [Chinese Conception of Space] (Beijing: Zhongguo jian zhu gong ye chu ban she, 2007). And Li, Understanding the Chinese City.

Next, Chapter Three traces the evolution of the concept of public space in Chinese urban design theory that sprang from the cross-cultural exchange of ideas and practices with the West in the post-reform era. The chapter examines: *how did the notion of public space evolve in Chinese urban design culture due to the global exchange of knowledge in the post-reform era?* In the fields of urban design and architecture, public space as a Greco-Roman originated notion affected the body of Chinese knowledge and significantly expanded the conceptual universe of these disciplines in China. A thorough review of local publications unfolds a transculturated notion of public space appearing in urban design studies in China, instead of following the above-mentioned perspectives focusing on Western theories. The transcultural development of public space not only articulates the complexities and dynamics of cultural exchange but also shapes the urban and architectural discourses on and practices of public space design in contemporary China.

Stemming from the critical position determined by Chapter Two and Three, the next section of this thesis (comprising Chapter Four, Five, and Six) investigates the evolution of public space in urban and architectural design practices. Thus, the central search in this part is formulated by: *what kinds of spaces or spatial conditions are created in practice for the public realm by urban designers and architects and by people in Chinese cities in the post-reform era?* And more specifically: *what new ways of understanding, designing, and practising public space do these projects and spatial practices articulate?*

This thesis addresses these questions by considering three types of public spaces in three significant collective realms: the common space (Chapter Four), the civic, symbolic, and commercial space (Chapter Five), and the fluid and dynamic space (Chapter Six). The distinct case studies featured here — representing the three collective urban realms — are effective in order to understand the design of public space in China; they not only involve urban and architectural projects of various scales and types, but are also located in two northern Chinese cities with significant historical backgrounds and ancient features in the built environment, Beijing and Xi'an, which can typify the different periods in understanding public space. On one hand, these projects are rooted in the Chinese urban and architectural tradition; on the other hand, they engage with the new knowledge evolved from the global cultural exchange. These three chapters investigate each type of space through urban and architectural design projects as well as through spatial practices; they explore specific ways in which the evolving understanding of public space is applied in practice, and therefore they address public spaces that reflect transculturation in Chinese urban design and architecture (Figure 1.2).

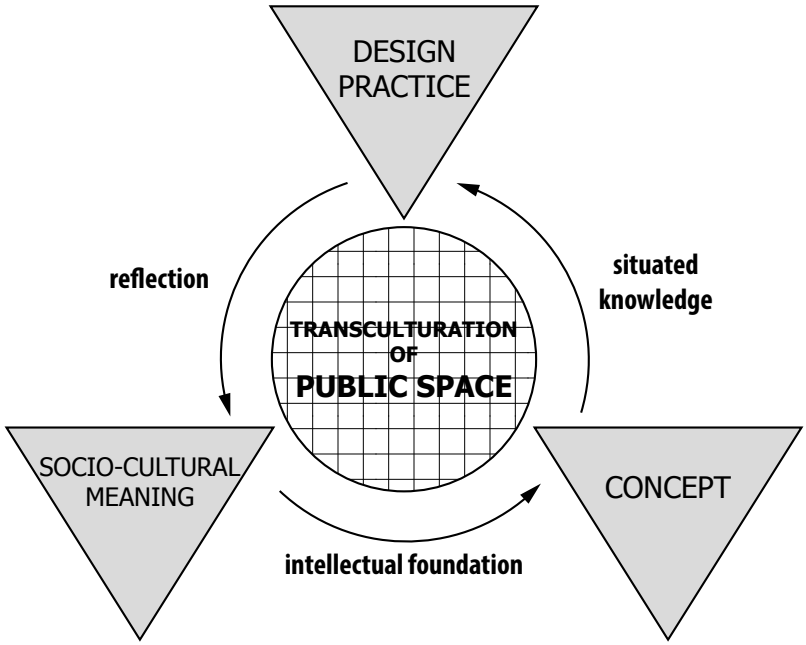

FIG. 1.2 Research framework (source: author drawing)

By analysing public space as a cultural phenomenon, carrying specific meaning, through specific concepts and designs, this thesis illuminates public space in the post-reform Chinese context from the perspectives of urban design and architecture. Theoretically, it moves beyond the conventional research on public space that is primarily based on Western thoughts, an Indo-European notion, and a Greco-Roman tradition.[25] Practically, this research paves the way for future development of the design of public space, highlighting the cultural, social, and spatial dynamics in Chinese cities *vis-à-vis* the related political, economic, and governmental conditions within the context of ongoing globalisation.

25 See: Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist*, 60.

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1.4 Methodology

This research dynamically combines an extensive literature review with case studies. Generally, there are three types of literature review: systematic review, semi-systematic review, and integrative review, all of which entail different ways of examining literature and suit different types of research (see table below).[26]

Three Types of Literature Review (Snyder 2019)

Type of Literature Review	How to Do It	Type of Research It Suits
Systematic review (Liberati et al. 2009)	Identify all empirical evidence that fits a criterion	All the studies included share the same effect size to allow comparisons (e.g. medical science)
Semi-systematic review (narrative review) (Wong et al. 2013 etc.)	Identify and understand the potentially relevant research traditions that have implications for the studied topic	For cross-discipline topics that have been conceptualised in diverse disciplines
		To map a field and synthesise the state of knowledge
Integrative review (critical review) (Torraco 2005 etc.)	Critically analyse and examine the literature and the main ideas and relationships of an issue Combine perspectives and insights from different fields or research traditions	To assess, critique, and synthesise the literature on a topic in a way that enables new theoretical frameworks and perspectives to emerge
		To critically review and potentially re-conceptualise, to expand on the theoretical foundation of the specific topic as it develops

Based on the nature of the topic and discipline, the literature review conducted here combines the semi-systematic review (otherwise known as a narrative review) and integrative review (otherwise known as a critical review). First, rather than identifying all literature that covers the topic of public space (systematic), this research focuses on the relevant literature and research traditions across different disciplines that inform the studied topic, as the semi-systematic review suggests. Main topics covered include: understandings and practices of spaces in the collective realms throughout the history of the Chinese city, the critical role of historical narratives, the influence of local ideas on current constructions of public spaces in Chinese cities, and the debates surrounding the notion of public space among Chinese scholars of urban and architectural design disciplines in the post-reform period.

26 Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of business research* 104 (2019). Alessandro Liberati et al., "The Prisma Statement for Reporting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Studies That Evaluate Health Care Interventions: Explanation and Elaboration," *Journal of clinical epidemiology* 62, no. 10 (2009). Geoff Wong et al., "Rameses Publication Standards: Meta-Narrative Reviews," *BMC Medicine* 11, no. 1 (2013). Richard J. Torraco, "Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples," *Human Resource Development Review* 4, no. 3 (2005).

Second, this research employs the integrative review method throughout the entire course of investigation, as each chapter selects and analyses relevant critical discourses. In particular, the tactic is to critically review works that represent the first appearance of crucial ideas and insights that inform or motivate paradigmatic shifts in the theory and practice of public space in the post-reform era. Combining the two review methods, the literature review not only maps the state of knowledge (for instance, the evolution of public space in Chinese urban design theory in Chapter Three), but also seeks for potentials to synthesise the literature in a way that enables new conceptual frameworks to emerge, such as the transculturation of public space.

The case studies featured in Chapter Four, Five, and Six pointedly encompass two tactics: review of published materials pertaining to design projects and onsite research into urban conditions. The former tactic begins to take shape using the cultural, social, and spatial challenges in designing for the public realm in Chinese cities — and on this basis, it reviews a representative selection of diverse design projects — both in type and period of realisation. The review of design projects involves various research practices such as textual analysis, image analysis, and historical research, respectively looking into written texts, drawing representations, and historical narratives.[27]

The latter tactic, onsite research, is an observation-based fieldwork.[28] Through multiple means of interaction and exchange between the researcher and the research participants, it situates the researcher in direct interaction with the research subject: public space and public life in the city. The fieldwork here employs methods that transform observed interactions into tangible forms available for documentation and analysis,[29] including photographs, interviews, and analytical drawings, which are commonly used in public space and public life studies.[30] To compile robust data regarding public space and public life studies, fieldworkers should include photography, interviews, and analytical drawing in their research tool belts.

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27 Virginia Nightingale, "Why Observing Matters," in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2008).

28 Observation in this context: the researcher's primary engagement with research participants through communication that includes interactions and exchanges. It regards communication as a material process in the sense that it can be observed, recorded, documented, analysed, and written about. See: ibid., 106.

29 Ibid., 121.

30 William Hollingsworth Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1980). Peter Bosselmann, *Experiencing Downtown Streets in San Francisco* (Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley, 1987). Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre, "How to Study Public Life," (2013). Kathleen Madden, *How to Turn a Place Around: A Placemaking Handbook* (Project for Public Spaces, Incorporated, 2018).

Photography is a primary means of documenting observation-based fieldwork to capture situations in the city observed by the human eye. It registers and illustrates transient encounters and allows for later analysis of complex spatial and social phenomena in detail.[31] Throughout this fieldwork, the focus of the camera is particularly on the interaction between urban form and life, thus capturing specific features and moments of public interactions in the studied areas.

Interview is also a tool of data collection through a series of dialogues between the researcher and the participants with designed questions to elicit comparable information on a set of topics, such as people's everyday experience of space and how spaces are understood and represented by them.[32] In this research, interview is also used to inform the process by which a phenomenon occurs, such as the motives behind certain practices and spatial phenomena in the researched cases.[33] Mainly utilised in Chapter Six, the onsite interviews include appointed interviews with pre-designed questions asked to specific participants, as well as unplanned interviews catching random participants on the street.

Analytical drawing is another way to transform the fleeting character of spatial and social interactions and relations into analysable forms. Adopted throughout the case studies and highlighted in Chapter Six, this method focuses on drawing the interrelated physical space and spatial practices from the human eye level.[34] Used in combination with photographs, drawing extracts critical elements relevant to public space in specific situations, and further, can uncover rhythms, trends, and phenomena through repetitive observations.

31 Gehl and Svarre, "How to Study Public Life," 31.

32 See the 'spatial triad' conceptualised by Henri Lefebvre as 'spatial practice', 'representations of space', and 'representational space' in Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1991), 38.

33 Matthew DeCarlo, Scientific Inquiry in Social Work, (Roanoke, VA: Open Social Work Education, 2018), https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/591. 363.

34 See 'form of being' and 'form of doing' in Atelier Bow-Wow, *Atelier Bow-Wow: Echo of Space, Space of Echo* (INAX, 2009). According to Atelier Bow-Wow, the physical space and the spatial practice are two complementary aspects of architectural and urban experience that are often simultaneously present and interrelated.

1.5 Clarifications: Scope and Limitation

It is important to clarify the scope of this work in the fields of urban design and architecture. Firstly, the selection of literature on Chinese urban design theory in Chapter Three is limited to works by Chinese scholars writing in Chinese (simplified).[35] Secondly, although the case studies and examples in this thesis focus on a specific geographic and cultural region, northern China, the regional variation in urban development throughout the whole country is acknowledged. The discussion of these case studies and examples aim to illustrate the emergence of trends in the understanding and design of public space and the development of public culture in cities throughout China. Thirdly, the author of this thesis has been educated professionally in both China and Europe like many others of her generation, and her outlook has been strongly influenced by a collective cross-cultural experience. Engaging with the Dutch urban and architectural design culture at the Delft University of Technology and the urban conditions in European cities, she has constantly been re-learning what public space is; resembling the Chinese notion of public space, its meaning, concept, and design remains contested. It can vary considerably, depending on the framework within which it is discussed and defined. Meanwhile, the researcher's affiliation with Chinese culture and language has undoubtedly coloured her view and created awareness of the difference in approaching research topics. Therefore, considering herself as a globally situated Chinese researcher, the work in itself is already transcultural. Finally, this thesis is not a comprehensive study of public space in the Chinese context. Rather, it contributes to the scholarly understanding of the concept and features of public space in the contemporary Chinese context from the disciplinary perspectives of urban design and architecture. It also hopes to inspire future research on the design practice of public space — in China and elsewhere.

35 Simplified Chinese (**简体字**) is a writing system of the Chinese language used in mainland China and Malaysia. The other system, known as 'traditional Chinese' (**繁体字**) is used in other regions and countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

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A gated community in Xi'an, shot through bus window (author photo, 2018)

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2 The Collective Realms in the Chinese City

Towards an Alternative Framework for Public Space

The proliferation of small urban spaces, such as parks, bars, cafes, and squares: they will never gain a high social status in Chinese culture and may not change the traditional ideology of family and relations…but by nurturing pleasure in the urban experiences, it continues to change the public culture of Chinese cities.'[36]
Shiqiao Li, 2014

The modernisation process throughout the twentieth century gave rise to new Chinese cities with new functions and urban experiences to match the Western conception of city and public space.[37] In Chinese cities not only did a variety of places for social gatherings emerged — such as cafés and bars, cultural programmes like museums and cinemas — but new leisure activities facilitated by open spaces — such as parks and city squares — also became prevalent.

36 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, xxiv. The author expounds partial disagreement with the statement that these new urban spaces will never gain a high social status in Chinese culture. As globalisation evolves, the contemporary Chinese city is going through a transformation. Some new urban spaces emerged in the recent years have become increasingly important. These spaces including bars and cafes, shopping complexes, and cinemas have provided a space for more and more important social activities among younger generations, cultivating vigorous public life in urban China. Their importance keeps evolving, as lifestyles in Chinese cities are changing.

37 See ibid.: Introduction.

Meanwhile, Chinese cities have responded to emerging programmes with different cultural, social, and spatial dynamics compared to Western cities[38]: thereby drawing attention to the conception of the city and urban spaces that are indigenous to China. Chinese urban scholar Shiqiao Li notes that the Western categories of knowledge have undoubtedly contributed to a rapid urban development in China in this globalised era; however, the Chinese city has also implicitly maintained an order of the past that long predates the Western influence.[39]

The belief that the cultural disposition of Chinese people gives shape to and maintains its existence through the evolution of the urban physical environment has intrigued this chapter to explore an alternative perspective on public space in the Chinese city. This position comes from a clear awareness of cultural differences in understanding and operating collective or common territories in China and the West. In the West, the public realm, or the public sphere, has been framed with clear categories of discourse: parameters such as usage, ownership, experience, connectivity, and accessibility are often applied to define the public space.[40] What then could be the parameters for defining the public space in the modern Chinese context[41]? Moreover, what are the intellectual foundations that have determined the cultural, social, and spatial constructions of public space in the Chinese city before and during the arrival of Western urban design and architecture in China?

This chapter starts from the conceptual origin of the 'public' in Chinese philosophy and sociology. It then deliberately elaborates on three culturally grounded ideas concerning the collective realms of the Chinese city, which are the urban spaces shared or collectively used to certain degrees: the relational circle, the realm of strangers, and the marketplace. Two of these grounded ideas relate to collective patterns of space creation embedded in the social realities of China, and the final idea considers the physical and conceptual components of the Chinese city, which has existed as a collectively used and openly accessed urban space throughout the history of the Chinese city.

38 Western cities generally refer to the cities of Western European and North American countries, which have or relate to the Greco-Roman cultural root. The dichotomy of West and East comes from the terms 'Occident' and 'Orient' used by German sociologist and philosopher Max Weber in the early twentieth century. See: Max Weber, "Gesammelte Aufsätze Zur Sozial-Und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," (1924).

39 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*.

40 Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist*.

41 By 'the modern Chinese context', I refer to what Junxi Qian suggests as the period starting from the late nineteenth century onward, when Chinese cities evolved due to the large-scale influence of Western Modernism and urban modernity. See Junxi Qian, "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China," in *Chinese Urbanism: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Mark Jayne (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), 17-18.

In addition to its philosophical grounding, the emergence of collective space and its social practices in particular in Chinese cities are described in this chapter, so as to contribute an alternative conceptual framing of public space within the Chinese context.

The first key idea is the relational circle, or the *guanxi* (关系) in Chinese, which came from an ideological commitment to the family in the Confucianist tradition and has been a social convention in China. The social space formed around the relational circle is initially reflected in the realm of dwelling. By examining two distinct dwelling case studies from different eras, this chapter explains how this social space maintains its features through a spatial and social construct of the inside and the outside, thus drawing a physical and social boundary between the domestic and the public realms. In contemporary Chinese cities, this boundary also separates most of the social spheres from the non-related outsiders. The second key idea is the realm of strangers, referring to the spaces outside the relational circle where people encounter strangers in the city. In contrast with the relational circle conceived as the social space, the realm of strangers roughly represents the public domain in contemporary Chinese cities. As such, regarding the public domain as the realm of strangers has led to spatial consequences, such as the ubiquity of barriers and space appropriation, manifesting a simultaneously enhanced and dissolved boundary between the public and the private spaces.

Unlike the first two complementary social norms that can exist independent of space, the third key idea is derived from the physical properties of the traditional Chinese city where the marketplace is a compositional element. As heterogeneous commercial and social spaces throughout the history of Chinese cities, the marketplace and its derivative, the market street, have indisputably impacted the formation of the contemporary Chinese city and its public space. The materials included in this chapter are assembled from the extensively articulated efforts of Chinese and Western scholars to understand the Chinese city and its public space in various fields: before translating to architecture and urban design, this investigation focuses on philosophy and sociology first.

2.1 The 'Absence' of Public Spirit

'The Absence of Public Spirit' is a chapter title of the 1894 book *Chinese Characteristics* by the American missionary Arthur Henderson Smith, one of the earliest Western texts presenting Chinese culture to foreigners. Composed more than a hundred years ago, this Anglo-Saxon written work contains an introduction which posits the Christian civilisation as "a faith which reaches to heaven furnishes better guarantees for public and private morality."[42] It seems that Smith, a Westerner who had lived in China for more than two decades, assigned both the public and private issues a central role in studying cultural differences between China and the West, thereby making this book an early reference to what can be considered 'public' in Chinese culture. In this book, Smith briskly assumes that people in the Chinese city lacked a sense of responsibility and respect towards public properties and public rules. Smith criticises the common practice of space appropriation in Beijing as displaying 'a lack of public spirit': "The wide streets of Peking[43] are lined with stalls and booths which have no right of existence," as Smith complains, adding that "the space opposite to the shop of each belongs not to an imaginary public but the owner of the shop."[44] Smith's critique shares that it was disturbing to a 'Western' eye to perceive public property not being respected by people, but appropriated for private use, thus losing its public quality. This situation truly perplexed Smith as he doubted if a public spirit existed at all in nineteenth century China.[45]

Is the public spirit as manifested in support of public space and civic rules in Western cities[46] really absent in Chinese culture? It would be false to affirm so without identifying the cultural premises that determine the meaning of this notion in the Chinese context. The assessment of what is behind 'the absence of public spirit', if there is any, must be done on the basis of a philosophical grounding regarding what is 'public' in China. In the Western context, public spirit may refer to civic virtue, which is within the foundation of classical republicanism in both ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy and pronounced by the German philosopher Hannah Arendt in

42 Arthur Henderson Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 5th ed. (Fleming H. Revell, 1894), 14.

43 Peking is a different translation of Beijing, the capital city of China.

44 Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 110.

45 "It is not difficult to perceive that patriotism and public spirit, if such things exist at all in China, do not mean what these words imply to Anglo-Saxons." From ibid., 114.

46 See also Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 98. Li argues that in the Greco-Roman tradition, the care for citizens of the polis above the loyalty to families is inseparable from the care of public space in Western cities.

the twentieth century.[47] However, in traditional Chinese society, a so-called public spirit has an utterly different genesis. According to historian philologist Ruoshui Chen[48], the original meaning of the Chinese word 'public', *gong* (公), is the state or government, which is also the most commonly used meaning and concept in ancient Chinese literature. In the same line, *gongmin* (公民) means 'public people' thus citizens, associated to their rights and obligations. The best relational antonyms of *gong* may be '*si* (私)', which connotes the 'field of the self', hence personal, private, individual, or civilian,[49] yet not so much the citizen. As *gong* (公) is a compound of 'the opposite (八)' of 'the self (厶)', it may also be the contrast to 'si' in its narrow meaning. The *gong* and *si* constitute a first binary relation resembling public and private in the ancient Chinese political system.

Another significant meaning of the *gong* in Chinese history, as Chen analyses, derives from the writing of Confucius in 200B.C. as recorded in *The Book of Rites* (礼记): "When the grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky."[50] This sentence has been constantly referred to by scholars who explore the origin of the Chinese notion of the public, including Chen.[51] Confucius considers the spirit of the *gong* a supreme rite and virtue that both a state governor and their people should possess. Put as a universal consciousness of morality, the *gong* represents Confucius's vision of a just society under the governance of a wise emperor surrounded by courteous civilians. As Chen summarises, the Chinese concept of the public primarily connotes the state, and secondly, a moral construct of the state governor. We can thus understand that the concept of the *gong*, to which we refer as the public in the present, is the government itself. This connotation of the public, relating to the state and the government, plays a vital role in constructing the public order and the physical public domain of the Chinese city throughout history.

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47 Ruoshui Chen, 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)* [Public awareness and Chinese culture] (Beijing: Xin xing chu ban she, 2006), 24; Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*, vol. 64 (Harvard University Press, 1971).

48 Ruoshui Chen (Jo-shui Chen 陈若水) is a historian-philologist who has thoroughly examined the Chinese conception of the *gong* (the public) in history through the lens of ethics and culture. He summarises that the blurred boundary of public and private is the characteristic of the Chinese society and the dividing line between Chinese and Western cultures.

49 Chen, 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)*, 74-76.

50 James Legge, "The Lî Kî (the Book of Rites), Part 1," (Sacred Books of the East, 1885). The sentence quoted here is from the English version of *Li Ji* (礼记), Book VII Li Yun (礼运), translated by James Legge, which is also known by its English title *The Book of Rites*. Not surprisingly, the *gong* has been matched with the English word *public* in this broadly recognised translation of the work of Confucius. The original Chinese texts: 大道之行也，天下为公.

51 Chen has referred to the original texts in Chinese when addressing this sentence.

Besides semantic genesis, as Chen mentions, the Western concept of the public often has a spatial implication.[52] For instance, Hannah Arendt associated the public domain with the marketplace (*agora*) of the ancient Greek polis, for it is the place of appearance and the stage for political actions; whereas the public space following Jürgen Habermas's notion also includes a staging function for the public and the emergence of Western democratic politics.[53] As previously mentioned, the Chinese conception of the 'public' involves only the aspects of morality and rite, yet not a sense of domain; this, according to Chen's study, explains why the public and the private properties in the physical world have remained ambiguous in Chinese society. This "clear in concept but blurred in practice"[54] character of the public has premised the further discussion on Chinese people's seemingly illegible perception of the public realm from a Western perspective.

The divergence in understanding the public in Chinese and Indo-European cultures had not been widely recognised in China until the late nineteenth century when the evolving globalisation and cultural exchange started to destabilise the feudal regime and the dominant Confucian tradition.[55] Qichao Liang (1873-1929), the renowned apostle of the Hundred Days' Reform[56], is one of the first progressive intellectuals who introduced the 'Western' idea of the public in China.[57] Having perceived the fall of the feudal regime after The Opium War (1840), he initiated a reformation of Chinese culture, especially Confucianism-based traditional culture. To promote Western technology and the idea of democracy, he composed the influential political commentary *Xin Min Shuo* (新民说), or *New Democracy Theory*, comprising a series of publications from 1902 to 1906. In one of the commentaries entitled *Lun Gong De* (论公德, On Public Morality), Liang criticises the traditional social ethics of Confucianism, particularly the ethics of the 'five relations' (五伦, *wulun*) – liege (君臣, *junchen*), filiation (父子, *fuzi*), connubiality (夫妇, *fufu*), brotherhood (兄弟, *xiongdi*), and friendship (朋友, *pengyou*) – that has dominated the discourse of social value in China.

52 Chen, 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)*, 29.

53 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press, 1991).

54 Ruoshui Chen, "中國歷史上 "公" 的觀念及其現代變形-一個類型的與整體的考察," [The Concept of 'Gong' in Chinese History and its Modern Transformation.] 政治與社會哲學評論, no. 7 (2003).

55 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)*.

56 The Hundred Days' Reform, also known as Wuxu Reform (戊戌变法), is a political, cultural, and educational reform movement in the late Qing Dynasty China in 1898. See: Rebecca E. Karl and Peter Gue Zarrow, *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002). Shiping Hua, "The Meiji Restoration (1868) and the Late Qing Reform (1898) Revisited: Strategies and Philosophies," *East Asia* 21, no. 3 (2004).

57 Chen, 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)*.

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Liang holds that these valued relationships are either family-related relationships or relationships between rulers and subordinates, while the relation with strangers, which is considered the essence of the public realm in the West, has been left out. Friendship is the only relation of the ethics of Confucianism that vaguely addresses a public relationship, however it is incomplete.[58] This has explained the lack of 'public morality' among Chinese people, meaning the obligation to the society and the state. Liang writes:

[…] The ethics of friendship cannot cover the whole picture of social ethics. Why is this? The obligation one has to society is not limited within friend circles. Even the ones who never make friends have obligatory responsibilities for society. Moreover, the country is never possessed only by the emperor and his ministers. […] It seems that the Chinese ethics of five relations are complete merely in terms of family ethics but not society nor state ethics. This is a defect resulting from valuing private morality and devaluing public morality, which must be remediated.[59]

To substantiate his arguments, Liang borrowed the notion of society from the West, which was later translated as *shehui* (社会) in Chinese from the identically written Japanese word *shakai* (社会).[60] Thus, the concept of society, where people engage with strangers, is not indigenous to Chinese culture. That is to say, at the heart of Confucian ideology there is a strong commitment to the feudal ruler and the family, rather than any explicit awareness of a public-private distinction that has been historically distinct in the West, as derived from Greco-Roman originated Western cultures. Hence, other modern interpretations of the public in a Greco-Roman frame, such as Arendt's concept of the public domain and Richard Sennett's 'heterogeneous sociability' that have been generated by encounters between strangers,[61] will not be primary references to understand the public sphere in the Chinese tradition.

58 Ibid.

59 Original texts: "然朋友一伦，决不足以尽社会伦理。君臣一伦，尤不足以尽国家伦理。何也？凡人对于社会之义务，决不徒在相知之朋友而已。即绝迹不与人交者，仍于社会上有不可不尽之责任。至国家者，尤非君臣所能专有。……若中国之五伦，则惟于家族伦理稍为完整，至社会国家伦理不备滋多，此缺憾之必当补者也。皆由重私德轻公德所生之结果也。" Author translation from Chinese Text Project, "Xin Min Shuo," (2006).

60 Chen, 公共意识与中国文化 *(Public Awareness and Chinese Culture)*, 121.

61 In his 1977 book *The Fall of the Public Man*, Sennett considers polymorphous sociability as the essential condition of the public realm, which has been threatened by modernisation pronounced by the Modern Movement. This aspect of the psychological and social order in Western cities is articulated before in: Lyn H. Lofland, *A World of Strangers; Order and Action in Urban Public Space* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

2.2 The Relational Circle

If the heterogeneity among strangers forms social spaces in Western cities, and relations are the social value basis behind 'gong', what then bears the sociability of space with respect to strangers in Chinese cities? As many scholars have confirmed, although simplistic in nature, the relational circle, or *guanxi* (关系)[62] in Chinese, explains this. As a defining social value in Chinese society, the relational circle is fundamentally built on commonalities among individuals or individual entities. The commonalities include kinship, same geographical origin, working in the same company, and graduating from the same school, among others.[63] In Chinese cities, a space shared by a closely related group, such as a family, a community, or an institution, is often intensively protected and taken care of collectively: being a collective realm.[64] On the contrary, strangers outside a relational circle, such as passersby on streets or in places like railway stations and shopping malls, belong to an unknown and unimportant category. Consequently, people's autonomous care and protection of these spaces in Chinese cities cannot be directly perceived: rather their ubiquitous appropriation for individual use. Two types of collective realms form different spaces in the Chinese cities: the space of the relational circle and the space of strangers. This twofold approach informs a unique conceptual framework for the 'public' space in China.

The intensive valuing of the relational circle and the absence of care for strangers in Chinese culture have resulted in a rigid separation of some spaces from others in the city, both physically and socially.[65] For example, this separation is articulated by the form of Chinese dwelling, particularly the traditional Chinese courtyard house (四合院, *siheyuan*).[66] As the Swedish art historian Osvald Sirén precisely depicts in his 1924 book, *The Walls and Gates of Peking*:

62 This translation of *guanxi* comes from *Understanding the Chinese City* by Li Shiqiao, on page 108. For other translations of *guanxi* such as social connections or social relationships, see Thomas B Gold, Doug Guthrie, and David Wank, *Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*, vol. 21 (Cambridge University Press, 2002). Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Cornell University Press, 1994).

63 Karen Christensen and David Levinson, *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World* (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2003).

64 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 108–10. Chapter 5: Degree of Care.

65 See also ibid.

66 The *siheyuan* is a type of compound dwelling in China whose basic form is a courtyard surrounded by buildings on its four sides.

The home of the Chinaman is an extremely well-guarded place. Every family forms a little community by itself — often quite a numerous one, as the married sons share the parental house — and the walls that enclose it are often just as effective for confining the inmates as for protecting them against intruders.[67]

The wall of the courtyard house functions not only as a protection element, but more importantly, as a spatial element to define territories. The wall is a remarkable feature of traditional Chinese dwelling and acts to seperate the home and the outside realm as two opposing social spheres, creating a binary pair based upon the inside (内, *nei*) and the outside (外, *wai*). On a social level, the meaning of the *nei* has been extended to the inside of a network built on social circles.[68] Being in the *nei* is synonymous to being part of a close social circle, just like inside the walled home. Those in the *wai* are naturally regarded as outsiders, that means they do not belong to this intimate social circle, and the wall will fence them out. Therefore, the relational circle is symbolically materialised by the archetype of Chinese dwelling with a clear separation between the inside and the outside, where the outside can be surmised to the public space in the city.

Traditional Chinese architecture and the built environment have been actively engaged with the binary of inside and outside. Both Shiqiao Li and Liangyong Wu[69], two important figures of Chinese urban design and architecture, have informed this binary relation in their research and practice. This binary relation helps better understand why Sirén considers Beijing the most enduring materialisation of the walled enclosure; as he notes, the walls and gates in a Chinese city like Beijing "form an unbroken chain with the past and renew at many places with new links."[70] If we relate this observation to the intensively valued relational circle in Chinese culture, the walled enclosure, which is one of "the most basic features of the traditional Chinese landscape"[71], is predicted to shape architectural and urban forms in the modern urban transformation.

67 Osvald Sirén, *The Walls and Gates of Peking* (London: The Bodley Head, 1924), 6.

68 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*.

69 Liangyong Wu (吴良镛) is a Chinese architect, urbanist, and architectural scholar. In his famous urban regeneration project 'Juer Hutong' in the 1980s' Beijing, he has mentioned and elaborated his understanding of, as he names, 'the relativity of inside and outside' in traditional Chinese dwelling. The project is discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

70 Sirén, *The Walls and Gates of Peking*, viii.

71 Andrew Boyd, *Chinese Architecture and Town Planning, 1500 B.C.–A.D. 1911* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 49.

The second dwelling example, in which this relation is seen, is more contemporary one: the Chinese-style gated community, also known as micro-district, or *xiaoqu* (小区). The micro-district, a contemporary Chinese term for residential area, is a hybrid concept partly built on the ideas of the *mikrorayon* (микрорайо́н) from the Soviet Union and the neighbourhood unit schema formulated in the United states of America (USA) in the 1920s.[72] According to the Chinese scholar Duanfang Lu[73], the practice of the 'neighbourhood unit' — a Modernist planning concept — was first implemented in some Japanese colonies in the 1930s during the Republican era (1911-1949); urban designers and planners in China sequentially experimented with these basic principles of the neighbourhood unit schema and the superblock model from the Soviet Union, throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The 2006 article by Lu, entitled *Travelling Urban Form: The Neighbourhood Unit in China,* reads:

> The superblock schema consisted of a grouping of four-to-six-story blocks of flats arranged around a quadrangle with public facilities in the centre. The schema stressed symmetrical axes and aesthetically co-ordinated street façades, which was more directly influenced by the Beaux-Arts concern for formal grandeur than by Marxist theory.[74]

This micro-district concept was derived from the Russian word *mikrorayon* in 1956 and soon became a paradigm for residential planning in China. Nevertheless, due to a lack of financial power in the socialist era (1949-1978), most of the Chinese micro-district projects remained on paper until the reform of the housing market in the 1980s. The housing reform generated new opportunities for developing the micro-district model. At the beginning of the 2000s, a national scheme for a community building campaign finally propelled a large-scale implementation of the micro-district in the country; this was promoted as "the new basic unit of urban governance".[75]

The micro-district has gradually dominated the housing development since a market-oriented housing reform in the early 1980s, inaugurating a large-scale 'privatisation' within Chinese cities as well. This led to a different kind of urban space. In this movement, some state-owned properties in Chinese cities were transferred to the

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72 Duanfang Lu, "Travelling Urban Form: The Neighbourhood Unit in China," *Planning Perspectives* 21, no. 4 (2006). *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949-2005* (Routledge, 2006).

73 Duanfang Lu is a professor of architecture and urbanism in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney. https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/09/03/meet-our-researchers--professor-duanfang-lu.html

74 Lu, "Travelling Urban Form: The Neighbourhood Unit in China," 378.

75 Ibid., 370.

hands of private corporations for management. Moreover, soaring demand for commodity housing has forced the Department of Housing Bureau to distribute the management services of the commodity housing to estate management companies since the mid-1980s, in order to release the pressure from the local government; this measure was then standardised as a law in 1994.[76] The transfer of responsibility from public sectors to private entities led to a demarcation of residential areas, rather than the traditional demarcation of the courtyard house. For management companies, partitioning these residential areas with secure borders became a matter of convenience. For the residents of such micro-districts, it was seen as a guarantee for safety as well as a prevention to share services with strangers in the city. The residents paid a service fee to the management company for this arrangement.[77]

In this gated situation, the creation of shared spaces within the neighbourhood is subjected to the interests of a particular collective. Most micro-districts have a well-designed and maintained public space, which is often promoted as a symbol of high-quality urban living in contemporary marketing campaigns to attract customers.[78] The use of its outdoor central public space is exclusive for the residents, although it is not part of their purchased properties. As such, the development of gated communities in China is the result of an urbanisation process initiated by governmental reform and driven by common economic interests: the public sectors gain profit by selling urban lands to real estate developers, and the residents pay for the management of the shared spaces to be exclusive, well maintained, and secure.

The reason behind the emergence and profusion of the micro-district is complicated. Scholars argue that the Chinese gated community is simply a product of rapid urbanisation and the associated housing demand in cities, and has little to do with the walled courtyard house.[79] Others in turn ascribe it to "a derivative of the protected home," considering the long history of gated settlements in China.[80]

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76 Xiangming Chen and Xiaoyuan Gao, "Urban Economic Reform and Public-Housing Investment in China," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1993). Fulong Wu, "Changes in the Structure of Public Housing Provision in Urban China," *Urban studies* 33, no. 9 (1996). "China's Changing Urban Governance in the Transition Towards a More Market-Oriented Economy," *Urban Studies* 39, no. 7 (2002).
Measures for the Management of Newly Built Urban Residential Areas, 城市新建住宅小区管理办法，建设部. Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China (MOHURD), 1994

77 Xu Miao and Yang Zhen, "Design History of China's Gated Cities and Neighbourhoods: Prototype and Evolution," *Urban Design International* 14, no. 2 (2009): 111.

78 See also ibid. The central public space is also called 'central green space', which is translated from the Chinese word 中心绿地.

79 Ibid., 116.

80 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 107.

As far as this chapter concerns, this assessment aligns with the prevalence of 'gated communities' in China and people's preference of a protected living environment established by the wall. Micro-districts, in this sense, are in line with the research to regard them as a modified spatial form derived from the socio-cultural longevity of walled settlements, which are modelled, not on the family ties, but on a different kind of relational circle binding common goals and interests.

As underpinned by the past scholarship and illustrated by these two examples of Chinese living environments — the walled courtyard house and micro-districts — the relational circle is a deeply-rooted cultural idea derived from the Confucian ethics of family. It shapes the physical appearance of shared spaces in Chinese cities and keeps them functioning in their own way. In the dramatic changes that took place in Chinese cities throughout the twentieth century, common goals of connected groups have allowed the moulding of social spaces to function and prosper; in the contemporary era, the connection is not restricted to kinship and common background but has been extended to other relations such as common interests. The public space of the Chinese city can be regarded as a division of many collective realms organised in all kinds of socio-spatial entities; it is formed mostly by the left-over spaces from this division, in contrast to the traditional (Greco-Roman and Indo-European) sense of civic society.

2.3 The Realm of Strangers

Against the relational circle, the realm of strangers is defined as spaces in the city where no familial relationship or common interest is to be maintained. Dominant post-war theories have assigned a central role to strangers in the construction of the public sphere thus the public space. Following the Greco-Roman tradition, public space is initially "the pre-eminent ideal basis for the organisation of Western cities";[81] in the late-modern Western context, public space is regarded as the social space in which strangers meet in the city. Richard Sennett writes: "a city is the milieu in which strangers are likely to meet."[82] From this point of departure, the emergence of modern public life is inevitably linked to the assemblage of strangers, being maintained by new social conventions as what Sennett calls '*civicness.*' In other words, public space has become an important measurement of care given to and given by strangers in Western cities, and as such helps understand Chinese cities in modern transition too.[83] Such considerations culturally affect the spatial construct and social practice of the public sphere. Whereas in the culturally rooted system of the relational circle in China, social spaces are initially grounded in personalised connections, avoiding the presence of strangers.[84] Therefore, encounters of strangers may entail different spatial and social conditions in modern Chinese cities.

What spatial and social conditions can the encounters of strangers entail in Chinese cities, and what are the reasons? It is crucial to notice the difference in perceiving strangers in Chinese culture first. German sociologist Max Weber has described the difference he experienced between China and the West in dealing with strangers, or the unknown, in the intellectual sphere and trading. Based on an analysis of the dominant religions in Chinese culture, including Confucianism, Weber describes that "there is an extraordinary and unusual horror of all unknown and not immediately apparent things, which finds expression in ineradicable distrust," in his 1951 book *The Religion of China.*[85]

81 Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist*, 94.

82 Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 48.

83 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 99.

84 In *Understanding the Chinese City*, Li writes about this nature of the Chinese social system: "…there is essentially no place for strangers in Chinese cities; strangers must quickly identify relational circles and break into them so that they, like those who are in these circles, can have some access to resources."

85 Max Weber, *The Religion of China : Confucianism and Taoism* (New York: Free Press, 1951), 231, 32.

Opposite to the relational circle is the world of the known: the generally unknown situation of strangers is unable to sustain trust in social contacts. This phenomenon might still seem more obvious in Chinese culture than Greco-Roman originated Western culture in the present. As a result, when stepping out of the relational circle, self-interest tends to grow and maximise, whereas the care for the not-related-other tends to minimise. It is demonstrated by prevailing space appropriation practices observed in spaces like streets and railway stations; here, people's casual and careless behaviours and their indifferent attitude towards other people can serve as evidence.[86] The solid ideological boundary between the relational circle and the realm of strangers has, in practice, led to a pertinacious resistance against the purposely established spaces that intend to unite strangers.

The perception of the realm of strangers makes the public sphere illegible and more complex to operate in the Chinese city. For example, it is perhaps surprising to Westerners that not stepping on public lawns has been promoted as a civilised behaviour in China. Almost everywhere in Chinese cities, public planted areas such as the green spaces in parks and city squares are always fenced with a warning sign, while in a European city like Amsterdam or Paris, it is mostly jammed with people doing all kinds of activities, especially in good weather. The contrast is striking: in European cities, green spaces are intended for everyday public leisure activities and used in this way, yet in China, green spaces will be treated as a potential resource for individual use that is mandated to be avoided using physical barriers and strict rules.

The spatial development of the realm of strangers in Chinese cities is geared to the evolution of globalisation throughout the twentieth century. Traditionally, there has been no space for strangers in Chinese cities until the emergence of the public park, or *gongyuan* (公园)[87], at the end of the nineteenth century. Having become an indispensable part of urban public life today, the park concept first emerged in China as a Western notion and urban space in the nineteenth century.

86 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City.*

87 The English word park is translated as '公園' in both Japanese and traditional Chinese language, but with different pronunciations as *kōen* (Japanese) and *gongyuan* (Chinese). Since Japanese uses a lot of Chinese characters in their writing system, it is rather smooth to transmit words between Japanese and Chinese.

Inspired by the public park movement in the mid-nineteenth century Europe and North America, the emergence and rise of the public park in Beijing considerably reshaped the imperial city by transforming imperial gardens that belonged to the ruling class to public parks open to the common people. For the sake of public health and civic virtue as seen in Western cities, the design of parks was promoted by the Chinese urban reformers who were considered progressive and socially advanced in the late nineteenth century. These reformers were also mostly ambitious urban elites who offered financial support to this movement. This movement, according to Chinese scholar Mingzheng Shi's 1998 paper, not only destabilised the imperial hierarchy in the city but more crucially, led to "the emergence of a modern urban culture" especially among middle and high social class citizens.[88]

This modern urban culture appeared as a reformation of lifestyle and, in particular, as a new manner of social interaction with strangers in the city, hence introducing a public sphere adjacent to collective spheres. In the early Republican era, parks in Beijing were designed as publicly accessible places, although with some rules on dressing code and behaviour.[89] In the park, people no longer met friends, as they had in teahouses and restaurants, but instead come across strangers. Shi asserts that the concept of the park is purely modern and Western, as is the concept of public space. The park movement in early Republican China was ideologically connected to the cultivation of modern citizenship by the government, which referred to a healthy and civilised lifestyle and an idea of 'public' interests and order.[90] Catalysed by the elite class in Republican China, socialising with strangers in the city — as a Western idea and practice — was eventually normalised and subsequently reformed the public culture of Chinese cities.[91]

88 Mingzheng Shi, "From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing," *Modern China* 24, no. 3 (1998). David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Univ of California Press, 1989).

89 Yun-qian Chen, "On the Change of Tourism and Entertainment Space During the Period of Late Qing and Republican China," *Historical Review* 5 (2004).

90 Shi, "From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing." See also Qian, "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China," 21.

91 Further exploration of the park as a case study is shown in Chapter Five of this thesis.

To summarise, while the West was dealing with the colonisation of the public sphere by elements of the private sphere during late-modern society[92], the Chinese city was also experiencing a change of urban culture. Contextualised by globalisation, the public space in the Chinese city has gone through a transformation from being dominated by collective realms, based on the relational circle as showcased in the courtyard house and the micro-district, to embracing heterogeneous urbanity, reaching out to strangers, as the introduction of the public park demonstrates. This change has increasingly generated ambiguity in the understanding and practice of the public sphere, resulting in the design of public space. Consequently, these intensively protected social spaces are neither absolutely private nor public. The urban realm that should be accessibly and inclusive is likewise not always empowered by everyday care and enjoyment.[93] To explicate this ambiguous status of public space in Chinese culture, some specific concepts are required for contemplation, such as the relational circle and the realm of strangers. The discussion — prompted by a semi-systematic and integrative review[94] —shows that the understanding and practice of the collective realms in contemporary Chinese cities mediate between the relational circle and the realm of strangers, resulting in a simultaneously blurred and enhanced boundary between, under traditional Western discourse, the private and the public.

92 Avermaete, Havik, and Teerds, *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere.*

93 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City.*

94 See Chapter 1: Methodology.

2.4 The Culture of the Marketplace

From a Western vantage, the *agora* of the Greek city-state (the polis), a central gathering place in time also serving as a marketplace, is often put forward as archetypical exemplar for what still is or should be public space today. Hannah Arendt, for example, emphasises the staging function of the agora for free discussions among citizens concerning political issues. Such public space becomes a functioning place where people can and must be seen and heard.[95] In the Chinese feudal regime, the central place was reserved for the empirical palace, or the government, whereas marketplaces were spatially distributed. These had little to do with politics, but in terms of openness and plurality of people, marketplaces were gathering places where information was naturally circulated. Its derivative, from The Song Dynasty, the market street played a similar role: jammed with shops and stalls and used by merchants, performers, and a wide variety of ordinary citizens.[96] Taking Although political debate is largely absent here, it might be the only urban space in the Chinese city that partially resembles a Greco-Roman public space in its social practice. In sum, the marketplace must be regarded as another archetype of the Chinese public space.

2.4.1 The Origin of Marketplace in the Chinese City

The Chinese word *chengshi* (城市), meaning 'city', comprises two characters, *cheng* and *shi*, respectively meaning 'the ward' and 'the market'. It shows that the marketplace (市, '*shi*', or市场, '*shichang*') is essential to the concept of the Chinese city together with the wall. More so, past research on the Chinese city (e.g. that of the American scholar on Chinese architectural history, Nancy Steinhardt and Shiqiao Li) has shown that the imperial Chinese city is the materialisation of a strict hierarchical order of the feudal regime.[97]

95 Arendt, *The Human Condition*. See also Avermaete, Havik, and Teerds, *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere*, 28.

96 Chye Kiang Heng, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1999), 189.

97 Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "Chinese Imperial City Planning," (1990).

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In this construct, the Chinese marketplace seems to operate beyond the imposed political framework on the imperial city. Li substantiates this argument through the material abundance of the marketplace, which suppresses the dominant numerical schemes imposed by the Confucian rites fundamental to the design of the Chinese city.[98]

Throughout history, the increasing demands for food and goods generated possibilities for urban life to develop through the prosperity of the marketplace in the Chinese city. During the Han Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty (202 BC - 907 AD), two marketplaces were located within the imperial city, respectively an East and a West Market (resp. 东市and 西市). All the commercial activities of these markets were constrained within walled quarters (坊, fang), on which basis the imperial city was organised. During the Tang Dynasty (618 AD - 907 AD), the scale of the marketplace reached its peak as the country gained immense economic power. The West Market in Chang'an (长安), the capital of the Tang Dynasty, known as the Chinese city Xi'an in the present, was the starting point for the Silk Road, distributing silk, porcelain, tea and goods to Europe and the Middle East. Additionally, there was the East Market in which "Chinese brush sellers, musicians, performing artists, iron mongers, cloth dealers, butchers, wine shops, printers, etc." congregated.[99]

Besides functioning as a place for trading and consumption, the marketplace possessed a symbolic meaning: it denoted the common people, as it materialised the social order of the Chinese imperial system. The marketplace was originally designed for commerce outside the imperial city and was therefore mainly occupied by merchants. In the Chinese imperial system, merchants were explicitly labelled as the lowest social class. *Writings of Master Guan*, or *Guanzi* (管子), a crucial Legalism Treatise by Chinese scholar Liu Xiang around 26 AD, distinguished four categories of civilians as the "main pillars of a country": scholars (士), peasants (农), artisans (工), and merchants (商). A chapter within the *Writings of Master Guan,* entitled *Da Kuang* (大匡), clearly links this hierarchical order to the spatial structure of the ancient Chinese city: "government officials live near the palace; non-officials and peasants live near the city gate; artisans and merchants live near the marketplace."[100] The marketplace was also inhabited by people that were not included in the four groups, such as musicians, entertainers, and thieves. They were not even counted as citizens in the feudal society. In this sense, the marketplace indeed assembled all strata of the society.

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98 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 14.

99 Heng, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes*, 19. See also Bai Su, "Sui-Tang Chang'an and Luoyang," *Kaogu (Anthropology)* 6 (1978): 416-20.

100 Original texts in Chinese: 凡仕者近宫，不仕与耕者近门，工贾近市. Chinese Text Project, "Guanzi: Da Kuang," (2006). https://ctext.org/guanzi/da-kuang/ens

If the imperial city materialises the social order of the Chinese feudal regime, the marketplace then epitomises the mundane through the periodical assemblages and distributions of people and goods. *The Book of Changes: The Great Treatise II,* known as *I Ching: Xi Ci II* (易经: 系辞下), a Confucianism essay collection composed during the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC to 771 BC), has described the daily routine of the marketplace regarding this feature:

He caused markets to be held at midday, thus bringing together all the people and assembling in one place all their wares. They made their exchanges and retired, everyone having got what he wanted. The idea of this was taken, probably, from Shi He (the twenty-first hexagram).[101]

Moreover, the marketplace particularly materialised and represented 'city life' due to the vigorous and various activities and exchanges it accommodated, which contrasted the pattern of 'rural life.' The ancient historical discourse, entitled *Book of the Later Han,* or *Hou Han Shu* (后汉书), writes: "the countrymen keep their rusticity, and some would never enter the marketplace for their entire life."[102] The marketplace here semantically denotes the city itself. Even today, modern Chinese language still uses the word *shi min* (市民), literally meaning 'market people', to also refer to citizens. While this term may include a larger range of people than in the ancient days, it nonetheless complements the meaning of *gong min* (公民), 'public people', used as synonym today. Doubtlessly, the meaning, concept, and space of the marketplace is crucial to understand not only the formation of the Chinese city in both its physical and social structure but also the origin of citizenship as equivalent to the state of being public in Chinese culture.

101 Original texts in Chinese:日中为市，致天下之民，聚天下之货，交易而退，各得其所，盖取诸噬嗑.(translated by James Legge). "Xi Ci Ii (the Greatest Treatise Ii)," (2006). https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/xi-ci-xia/ens
Clarification: The use of 'he' is not intended by the author but according to the original English translation. This thesis has no objection against gender equality in academic research and has attended to using gender-mutual languages in writing.

102 Original texts in Chinese: "山民愿朴，乃有白首不入市井者." (translated by the author) "后汉书: 循吏列传," (2006).https://ctext.org/hou-han-shu/xun-li-lie-zhuan/ens#n76904

2.4.2 The Market Street

Lastly, as one of, if not the only, the archetypes of public space in the Chinese city, the marketplace has profoundly influenced the form, practice, and perception of the 'street' (街, *jie*). The marketplace started to transform into an open commercial street at the end of the Tang Dynasty and flourished to prosperity throughout the Song Dynasty (960 AD - 1279 AD). In the pluralistic, mercantile, and pragmatic society of the Song Dynasty, the market quarters were overwhelmed by the expanding commerce prompted by a prosperous social class in the city: the professional bureaucrat. Commercial activities were pushed beyond the walls, leading to the disappearance of the walled marketplace and the emergence of an open street system.[103] The urban scholar Kiang Heng Chye considers the emergence of this new urban paradigm "one of the most dramatic and important changes in Chinese urban history."[104] Although based on the necessity of commerce, this 'market street' has irreversibly altered the urban landscape of the Chinese city and has a far-reaching and pervasive impact to mould public space.

In the current urban system, due to the demand for a more concentrated economy and consuming social interaction mode in modern urban life, commercial activities in Chinese cities have been gradually taken over by shopping malls and pedestrian shopping streets. The marketplace has started to transform into a place for daily necessities, or more recently, for cultural and gratifyingexperiences. The existing traditional market streets such as the Huiminjie (回民街) of Xi'an and the Wangfujing (王府井) of Beijing have become tourists attractions instead of necessary stops for everyday life (Figure 2.1). Even so, the marketplace, beyond its physical presence in the Chinese city, is a deeply rooted cultural element shown through the implicit focus and prevalence in many urban developments in Chinese cities.

103 Chye Kiang Heng, "Kaifeng and Yangzhou: The Birth of the Commercial Street," in *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, ed. Zeynep Çelik Alexander and Spiro Kostof (1994). *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes*, chapter 4, 5.

104 "Kaifeng and Yangzhou: The Birth of the Commercial Street," 46. Chye Kiang Heng is a professor at the University of Singapore who has published widely in Chinese architectural and urban history, urban design and planning. (http://www.arch.cuhk.edu.hk/person/heng-chye-kiang/)

FIG. 2.1 The Huiminjie (Hui people's street) of Xi'an, China (source: author photo, 2019)

Social plurality and its associated visual representation act as the reappearing features of the market street: informally speaking, the messiness or chaotic nature is often highlighted to depict this space. In the early Republican era, art historian Osvald Sirén addressed these features in his 1924 book, *The Walls and Gates of Peking,* as "a good deal of the business transacted in the street, by the shopkeepers as well as by itinerant vendors, particularly at the food shops which display their delicacies outside." [105] Commercial streets in Chinese cities always seem to be decorated with countless signs and things[106], regardless of major shopping centres like the Nanjing Road of Shanghai or the traditional *hutong* (**胡同**) alleys formed by lines of *siheyuan*, oftern present in Northern cities, especially in Beijing. The visual mess, created by displaying commodities for public viewing and purchase, as well as the interactions between shops and the crowd, between street vendors and passersby, have collectively generated a vigorous street life. The intersection of visual, functional, and social properties has become one of the most prominent features of commercial streets in China. Related to the marketplace, the market street forms a last archetype of the Chinese public space.

105 Sirén, *The Walls and Gates of Peking.*

106 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City.*

Moreover, the idea of the marketplace in Chinese urban culture is not restricted to the spatial form of an actual marketplace or street, but appears in building interiors as well, thereby grounding a kind of interior public space in China. A typical example of reimagining the marketplace in an interior space is perhaps the supermarket. Although the supermarket is a Western concept that arrived in China after the 1978 reform[107], the ways of organising commodities, socialising with people, and the mode of communication between sellers and buyers in the supermarkets in China are all quite different from the supermarkets in a European or American country, such as The Netherlands. Recounting the standard grocery experience in a Dutch supermarket, where everything is already pre-packaged, and people conduct their shopping activities independently, a user is still able to compare the experience to a typical Chinese market due to the sensory stimulation. In a Chinese supermarket experience, as most raw products — vegetables, fruits, and seafood — are openly displayed in bulk, talking to sellers for purchases is necessary. Every displaying area is usually equipped with one or multiple shop assistants to conduct the weighing, cutting, and wrapping jobs. Therefore, frequent verbal communications create a riot of sound in the room. The spatial organisation and mode of social interaction in a Chinese supermarket manifest the ubiquitous existence of the marketplace that can be experienced in everyday urban life, along with the development of Chinese cities.

107 北京日报, "开架售货怎样走进我们的生活," http://www.xinhuanet.com/fashion/2018-02/24/c_1122441405.htm.

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2.5 The Collective Realms in the Chinese City

In a review on the understanding of the collective realms in the Chinese context from a conceptual origin of the 'public' in Chinese philosophy and sociology, three ideas are found in the socio-spatial realities of China, both at the present and in the traditional Chinese city: the relational circle, the realm of strangers, and the marketplace. These ideas are articulated by Chinese urban and architectural archetypes. They form an alternative frame of knowledge to perceive and consider public space. This is based on the local understanding of the collective realms in the Chinese city and complementary to the Western conceptual frameworks rooted in the Greco-Roman culture.

The social space of the relational circle and the heterogeneous space of strangers, together, recast the way we view and describe the public space of the Chinese city. From a cultural-historical point of view, the networks of collective spaces in the Chinese city form an endless matrix of relational circles, manifested in layers of 'the inside' and 'the outside' in the built environment, and reoccurring in new spatial forms in modern urban areas. All-together they form a Chinese network of public spaces. The realm of strangers, in-between the enclosed and protected urban spaces colonised by the relational circle, is another type of public space. It is occupied and practised by strangers. Here, a heterogeneous urbanity arises while being challenged by the established culture of the relational circle. These are public spaces of the unfamiliar. The marketplace and its derivative, the market street, as a defining element of the Chinese concept of the city, is another key idea to argue the existence of more heterogeneous public space in the Chinese city. It is a place for all social classes, where urban public life can flourish. The spatial and symbolic meanings representing the marketplace in the urban history of China have enabled its most remarkable and enduring existence in the Chinese city and public culture.

By raising these three notions and the archetypical examples, this chapter supports a critical conceptual basis to research public space in Chinese urban design and architecture. In the forthcoming chapters, this conceptual basis will be consistently reflected upon using an in-depth analysis of design cases and spatial practices in post-reform Chinese cities.

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Sketch of the shopping street plan, Munich city centre, by Chinese architect Chunyuan Sha as a visiting scholar at the Technical University of Munich 1979-1981 (source: Sha, Chunyuan. “城市的‘起居室’: 西德慕尼黑步行商业街评述.” Urban planning Research, no. 3,1985: 3-12, 4)

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3 Public Space in Chinese Urban Design Theory after 1978

A Compressed Transculturation

The content of this chapter has been published in modified form in: Wenwen Sun, "Public Space in Chinese Urban Design Theory after 1978: A Compressed Transculturation," The Journal of Architecture 25, no. 01 (2020).

The previous chapter addressed a set of key ideas and their reflections in the urban conditions, which continued to exist when Chinese cities were redesigned to accommodate features of Western cities under influence of the twentieth-century globalisation. Especially since China's 'Reform and Opening-up' in 1978, a large-scale cultural exchange and a rapid urbanisation process have taken place in China. This resulted in a growing interest in European and North American literature on understanding public space in the fields of urban design and architecture. To establish a theoretical and empirical understanding of the notion of public space, Chinese scholars and design practitioners related to Western design theories and exemplary cases through direct and indirect contacts with European and North American context during the four decades after 1978. The Western notion of public space as such encountered Chinese urban design and architecture, and it was rapidly negotiated on the level of concept and through a theoretical development.

As introduced at the beginning of this thesis, the migration of the notion from one cultural territory to another exemplifies a process of transculturation. Coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, the notion of transculturation provides a theoretical lens through which to scrutinise the global circulation of

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architectural and urban knowledge as a dynamic and interactive process rather than a passive adoption of a culture in another context.[108] For the notion of public space, the process of transculturation begun with a loose transmission of urban design knowledge and techniques while uprooting the their cultural backgrounds; then it developed into a situated and structured framework of knowledge in the specific context of modern China. Containing acculturation, deculturation, and neoculturation, transculturation demonstrates an exchange between two cultures, co-operating to engender a new reality.[109]

This chapter employs transculturation as a theoretical lens and sketches the trajectory of the acceptance and redevelopment of public space — as a theoretical concept — in the Chinese urban design debate after 1978. The research is based on a large corpus of local publications by Chinese scholars, such as books, theses, and journal articles, as well as translated Western urban design theories. Knowing that the amount of information could be endless, the materials for discussion are selected deliberately: limited to the fields of urban design and architecture, they represent the first appearance of ideas and insights from different eras, as they inform the paradigmatic shifts of theoretical focuses of public space in China. The selection is also limited to Chinese-written material and omits similar studies conducted and presented in other languages. Instead of a worldwide review of theories and critiques regarding the topic of public space in China, this chapter examines particularly the understanding of public space within the urban design debate among Chinese scholars. It presents the results of discovering a trajectory of transculturating public space in Chinese urban design theory with three stages of development: an embryonic stage, an intermediate stage, and finally, a situated stage, resulting in three notions as ‘open space’, ‘human space’, and ‘societal space’. By addressing the three stages of development, this chapter concludes that due to a loose transmission of knowledge and concepts, the notion of public space in Chinese urban design theory is a compressed transculturation, as it went through an extremely rapid and compact development trajectory in the four decades after the 1978 reform.

108 Hernández, Felipe. “The Transcultural Phenomenon, and the Transculturation of Architecture.” Liverpool University Press, 2002, 2.

109 Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar, lix.

3.1 Embryonic Transculturation: Urban Design Theories and Open Space

The understanding and definition of public space in the post-reform era in China emerged in conjunction with the acculturation of various theoretical concepts of the urban design discipline in the West. In the early 1980s, Chinese municipal authorities desired developments in accordance to international standards and models,[110] prompting the fields of architecture and urban design in China to theoretically engage with Western knowledge frameworks and techniques. By establishing transnational academic exchanges with the USA and Western Europe, as well as translating urban design theories from these two contexts — often the most dominant ones — Chinese architectural scholars in the 1980s had the chance to embrace European and North American urban design knowledge, and this paved the way for the development of urban design in China too.

In the early 1980s, the Beijing-based Chinese architect and urban scholar Liangyong Wu made a plea for developing urban design as an important discipline mediating between architecture and urban planning, while bringing the two together. In addition, Wu briefly summarised what urban design was about in the West in his 1986 article *A Critical Approach to Improve the Quality of Urban Planning and Architectural Design.* He called urban design 'a neglected domain in China'.[111] Meanwhile, representing the southern school of architecture, Chinese architect Kang Qi is also amongst the first to make summaries of several European and North American urban design studies that dominated discourse in the West.

110 Gaubatz, Piper Rae. "Urban Transformation in Post-Mao China: Impacts of the Reform Era on China's Urban Form." *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China* (1995): 28-60.

111 "A neglected domain in China" is summarised from the texts: "在我们城市建设理论与实践中，还有一个被忽略或不为人知的重要领域 — 这就是城市设计," in Liangyong Wu, "提高城市规划和建筑设计质量的重要途径," [An Important Approach to Improve the Quality of Urban Planning and Architectural Design.] 华中建筑, no. 4 (1986): 23.

In an article published in 1988 entitled *The Interaction between Urban Design and Architectural Design*, Qi categorised the works of Camillo Sitte, Frederick Gibberd, Gordon Cullen, and Roy Worskett as visual image-based urban design studies, and Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs, and Christopher Alexander as being based on human experience of the urban environment.[112] This paper addresses public space by suggesting that urban spaces are designed as "places and stages which meet different physical and psychological needs of people."[113] In contrast to Qi's previous manifesto in his 1982 manuscript *The Urban Forms*, in which he writes that "planners can conscientiously grasp and follow the rules of changing urban form and propose a rational planning project",[114] this paper reveals a slightly different perspective of urban planning in the 1980s: that social interaction in urban space matters as well as top-down manipulation of urban form.

Meanwhile, being in European countries for academic exchange enabled Chinese architects and scholars to directly encounter Western urban conditions in the 1980s. Notably, the Chinese architect Chunyuan Sha researched the main pedestrian street in the historical centre of Munich during his visit to the Technical University of Munich as a guest researcher from 1979 to 1981.[115] His research made a critical contribution to the early formation of urban design discourse in China by recalling this exemplary project as a reference. In his report, Sha analysed this case not only from the large-scale perspective of an urban planner but simultaneously from a human perspective, analysing different types of public spaces with respect to how they represented the image of the city and how they brought the quality of a '*gute stube*' (German for 'good living room') to the city centre.[116] Sha's study established a critical point of reference that architects could rely on in their practices vis-à-vis the theoretical development of urban design.

112 Qi, Kang, and Dekun Zhong. "城市设计与建筑设计之互动." 建筑学报 *(Architectural Journal)*, no. 09 (1988). Original texts: "城市设计就是要根据人的行为心理特征, 为人们提供舒适的城市环境, 提供适应不同要求的场所和舞台。因而城市设计常常对人在城市公共空间中的行为方式, 心理特征进行调查分析, 从而使得空间的设计能够适应人的各种活动和心理要求。"

113 Ibid.,18.

114 Kang Qi, "城市的形态（研究提纲初稿）," [The urban Forms.] 南京工学院学报 *(Journal of Nanjing Institute of Technology)*, no. 3 (1982): 27.

115 江苏省地方志(Local Journal of Jiangsu Province), "一、专家 (List of Experts),"

116 Sha, Chunyuan. "城市的 '起居室': 西德慕尼黑步行商业街评述." 城市规划研究 (Urban planning Research), no. 3 (1985): 3-12, 12.

Translation, which improved the accessibility of European and North American literature to a large degree, was always a crucial tool to create a mediated encounter with Western urban design knowledge in those years. *Town Design*, written by British architect and planner Frederick Gibberd in the 1950s, was imported in China in 1983.[117] This significant work of 'city making' from the UK, integrating architecture, landscape, and road design, is one of the earliest informative brochures for Chinese architects to get to know Western urban planning and design theories. In 1987, twenty years after American urban planner and architect Edmund Bacon published *Design of Cities*, the Chinese edition of the book was released officially in China. It delivered the first account of Modern urban design from the USA. *The Art of Building Cities* by the nineteenth-century Austrian architect Camillo Sitte, hence composed much earlier than Bacon's, was translated into Chinese in 1990. Additionally, this first impulse of translation in Chinese academia covered the books of Rob Krier and Ian McHarg in 1991 and 1992, respectively.[118] From multiple continents and different schools of thoughts, this seemingly random selection of urban design books has served as a fruitful source of references for the establishment of the discipline of urban design in China, and furthermore, the transculturation of public space.

Following the above study of the existing literature produced after 1978, the starting point of the transculturation of the Greco-Roman notion of public space was marked by the emergence of the concept of 'open space'. In the Chinese urban design discourse, open space was defined as an important urban design element first in 1991 by Chinese architect and urban designer Jianguo Wang in his pivotal manuscript *Modern Urban Design Theory and Method.* This publication made a name for Wang as one of the first architectural scholars to introduce Western urban design theories to China after 1978. This work has traced some leading urban design theories between the 1960s and the 1990s from North America and Europe with a focus on their methods for analysing cities; it presents a general introduction of ideas such as the sense of place from Christian Norberg-Schulz, the cognitive image from Kevin Lynch, social liveability addressed by Jane Jacobs, and methods of bricolage from Colin Rowe and Kred Koetter, as well as Gordon Cullen's visual

117 吉伯德. 市镇设计 [Town Design], trans. by 程里尧. 北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 1983. Gibberd, Frederick. Town Design. 1953.

118 埃德蒙·N·培根. 城市设计 [Design of Cities]. 北京 (Beijing): 中国建筑工业出版社, 1987. 西特. 城市建设艺术—遵循艺术原则进行城市建设 [The art of building cities], trans. by 查尔斯·斯图尔特, 仲德昆 and 齐康. Nanjing: 东南大学出版社, 1990. I.L. 麦克哈格.设计结合自然 [Design with nature], trans. by芮经纬. 北京 Beijing: 中国建筑工业出版社, 1991.罗伯·克里尔. 城市空间 [Urban space = Stadtraum], trans. by 秦家濂, 钟山, 姚远. 上海: 同济大学出版社, 1991. KRIER, R. Urban space = Stadtraum.1979.

coherence and organisation, to mention a few.[119] In the fourth chapter of the book, which discusses 'urban design elements', Wang acknowledges the definition of open space as 'public outdoor space of a city', a phrase adopted and translated from *The Urban Design Process* written by British-Iranian architect Hamid Shirvani in 1985.[120] The section, entitled 'Open Space', refers to Shirvani's analysis of the characteristics of open space in the city as a multi-functional system. By analysing a few pedestrian streets in European cities and China, Wang also addresses the interdependence of space and activity, emphasising that urban space is designed to facilitate urban public life. Furthermore, he has extended the definition of open space by incorporating courtyard spaces of a public building which connect indoor and outdoor spaces and are collectively used and publicly known by citizens.[121]

The embryonic stage of this transculturation is a stage in which the knowledge of public space is acculturated from a seemingly random selection of Western urban design theories; in this mode of acculturation, the notion of public space partly lost its initial meaning and was understood as open space. Using open space to refer to public space reveals an explicit focus of 'space' rather than 'public', which has resulted in operative guidelines for the physical design of urban spaces. Open space was considered an urban or architectural form, a spatial component of the city much more than a social space from a human perspective. The concept of public space was quite constrained on technical and spatial levels: the social and political meanings of public space were marginalised in the early body of Chinese urban design theory, as they were considered less relevant to the task of urban development that was given the highest priority in post-reform China when rapid urbanisation was to be achieved as efficiently as possible.

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119 Wang, Jianguo (**王建国**). **现代城市设计理论和方法** [Modern Urban Design Theory and Method]. Edited by 3rd: **中国建筑工业出版社**, 2001, 87-127.
In Chapter Six of the book, Wang reviews several major urban design works from the US and Europe, such as Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Existence, Space & Architecture*. New York: Praeger, 1971; Norberg-Schulz, Christian; *Meaning in Western Architecture*. Praeger Publishers, 1974; Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960; Jacobs, Jane; *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 1961; Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter. *Collage City*; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978; Cullen, Gordon. *The Concise Townscape*; New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971, and so on.

120 **开放空间** (open space): **意指城市的公共外部空间(不包括那些隶属于建筑物的院落)包括自然风景, 硬质景观(如道路等)公园, 娱乐空间等** (Wang 2001, 73). This definition is adopted and translated from Shirvani's 1985 book *The Urban Design Process*: "Open space can be defined as all landscape, hardscape, parks, and recreational space in urban areas." (on page 27)

121 Ibid.,76.

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3.2 Intermediate Transculturation: Human Space

In the late 1980s, the concept of social accessibility was woven into the definition of open space, unfolding a new stage of transculturation: intermediate. Chinese architects and scholars, such as Wenyi Zhu and Jianguo Wang, conceived their visions and ideas of architecture and urban design for the new millennium. They mainly emphasise the importance of architecture for the social, cultural, psychological, and artistic aspects of the urban environment, inaugurating a theoretical shift in architecture and urban design towards the goal of building a humanistic living environment.[122] In 1999, Chinese urban designer Guangjun Jin followed Wang's step and composed another key work of Chinese urban design theory entitled *Illustrating Urban Design*, which informed a nuanced enrichment of the definition of open space. Jin used the term 'public space (**公共空间**, *gong gong kong jian*)' with an English translation of 'open space (**开放空间**, *kai fang kong jian*).' It seems to echo Wang's definition from eight years earlier, but the definition of open space is modified as "the space that is open to and used by all citizens."[123] In the same section, Jin exclusively discussed Jan Gehl's study of the dependence of social activities on the urban physical environment in *Life Between Buildings,* an idea that is not included in Wang's book.[124] Regardless of treating public space as open space, the open space here, in essence, tended to move away from a sheer material definition of public space and indicated a different sense of the word 'open': no longer the openness of actual space or architectural form but the right to access and to appropriate.

122 Zhu, Wenyi (**朱文一**). "**迈向21世纪的建筑与环境**." **中外建筑** 1 (2000): 17-18. Wang, Jianguo. "**21世纪初中国城市设计发展再探**." [A further exploration of Chinese urban design at the beginning of the 21st century] **城市规划学刊** *(Urban Planning Forum)* 1 (2012): 1-8.

123 Jin, Guangjun (**金广君**). **图解城市设计** [Illustrating Urban Design]. **哈尔滨** (Harbin): **黑龙江科学技术出版社**(Heilongjiang Science and Technology Press), 1999, 57.
"**城市公共空间也称开放空间或开敞空间。其是指城市中向全体市民开放使用的空间。**" (Author translation: "Urban public space is also known as open space. It is the space that is open to and used by all citizens.")

124 Ibix.,58: Gehl, J. **戶外空間的場所行為: 公共空間之使用** [Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space], trans. by **陳秋伶，陳朝興**. **台北**(Taipei): **田園城市**, 1996.

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The local promotion and practice of urban design theories opened the door for a broader acceptance of European and North American urban design ideas in China. The start of the twenty-first century welcomed another significant step in the introduction of urban design theories. In 2001, the Chinese edition of Lynch's two famous books *The Image of the City* and *A Theory of Good Urban Form* were finally launched in the local bookstores in 2001 and 2003, respectively. After Lynch, three books written by the Danish urban designer Jan Gehl were translated. Additionally, we should mention the translation of studies and critics on radical urbanisation, and with that, the loss of public space in Modern cities, such as *Collage City* in 2003 and the milestone work of Jane Jacobs *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 2005.[125] From the selection of books translated in this second stage of transculturation, we can clearly sense a change of interest towards a human perspective on the social practice of urban space. Moreover, since some of the main ideas of these works already appeared as critical points of reference in some early Chinese urban design theories in the 1980s, one could reckon that it was the application of those acculturated theories by Chinese scholars in their urban design studies that indirectly prompted the official introduction of these books.

The inclusion of human activities in urban design indicated an essential care of the social dimension of public space. It meant that the social and cultural substance of public space was not entirely eliminated in the acculturation of Western design theories, which previously only emphasised on its technical and methodological dimensions. Rather, new meaning was generated by rediscovering and reinterpreting this layer in the notion of public space. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, public space was more often interpreted as 'human space (人性空间, *renxing kongjian*)', as it was closely associated with the lives of citizens. We see this in the debates on social and political issues in spatial design among Chinese scholars and designers. Landscape architect and scholar Kongjian Yu is a progressive thinker and one of the mainstays of the idea of 'human space'.[126]

125 凯文·林奇 (Kavin Lynch). 城市意象 [The Image of the City], trans. by 方益萍 and 何晓军. Beijing: 华夏出版社, 2001. 凯文·林奇. 城市形态 [A theory of good city form], trans. by 林庆怡. 华夏出版社, 2001. A theory of good city form. 扬·盖尔. 交往与空间 [Life Between Buildings], trans. by 何人可. 北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2002. 扬·盖尔 (Jan Gehl), and 拉尔斯·吉姆松. 新城市空间 [New City Spaces], trans. by 何人可, 张卫 and 邱灿红. 北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2003. 扬·盖尔(Jan Gehl), and 吉姆松. 公共空间，公共生活. [Public Space, Public Life], trans. by 汤羽扬. 北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2003. 柯林罗(Colin Rowe). 拼贴城市 [Collage City]. 北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2003. 简·雅各布斯 (Jane Jacobs). 美国大城市的死与生 [The death and life of great American cities], trans. by 金衡山. 南京Nanjing: 译林出版社, 2005.

126 Prof. Kongjian Yu (俞孔坚) is the founder and dean of the School of Landscape Architecture at Peking University. He is also the leading translator of the book *People's Places* by American landscape architect Cooper and Francis. After being granted a doctoral degree by Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1995, Yu returned to China and founded the department of landscape architecture at Peking University in 1997, where he started his academic career as a professor as well as his practice as a landscape architect.

In one of his papers published in 2004, a manifesto entitled *Back to the Meaning as People's Place*, Yu addresses his understanding of the city square in the European city as 'a political landscape',[127] a place for human identity and public participation, which embodies humanity and a sense of citizenship. Meanwhile, Yu criticises certain squares for their inhuman scale. In his view, they have become political tools of autocracy and lost the quality of humanity. In Yu's opinion, these squares should function as places for public assembling and collective social activities, symbolising collectivity and equality.[128] By proposing a broadened social concept of public space, Yu has remarkably extended the understanding of public space towards its cultural grounding. The German-educated Chinese architect and researcher Yongjie Cai, who conducted comprehensive research on a large number of European city squares in the 1990s, is another recognised supporter of the concept of human space. In his 2006 book *City Square*, Cai analyses how city squares act as the centre of the social and political life of a European city and which spatial forms accommodate this feature. He also notes that in China the intentional design and creation of urban public space appeared since the arrival of *Western* design culture; however, design became a superficial copy of the physical forms without conforming to the social conditions of those *Western* cities.[129]

The idea of human space became a central topic not only in the theoretical debates of urban design but also in urban practice in China. In the urban developments from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, urban design was radically used for marketing purposes, because it helped create an international brochure that manipulated images of new urban development. The focus of urban design seemed to have devolved into pure functionality or aesthetics, and the quality of design was no longer a parameter in the process of urban development. In 2006, an article entitled *The Loss of Public Space* was published in the major Chinese planning journal *Urban Planning Forum*,[130] in which urban planner Baojun Yang harshly criticised the massive new constructions being carried out in Chinese cities at the expense of the urban environment and the quality of life:

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127 Yu, Kongjian, Jun Wan, and Ying Shi. "寻回广场的公民性: 成都都江堰广场案例." "寻回广场的公民性: 成都都江堰广场案例," [Back to the Meanings as People's Place: the Case of Dujiangyan Square.] 新建筑, no. 4 (2004): 25: "广场本质上是一种政治景观.'

128 Ibix., 26: '中间这个广场代表了公家, 是集体的体现, 在这个场所里人人是平等的.'

129 Cai, Yongjie. "从两种不同的空间形态看欧洲传统城市广场的社会学含义." 时代建筑 *(Time+Architecutre)*, no. 4 (2002): 38-41. Qu(屈湘玲), Xiangling. "蔡永洁· 人文关怀城市空间 (Yongjie Cai: Urban Space with Human Care)." 中外建筑 *(Chinese & Overseas Architecture)*, no. 12 (2008): 32. In this book, Cai uses the word '西方' (West) to refer to the general Western European and North American contexts.

130 Urban Planning Forum (城市规划学刊) is one of the influential major urban planning journals in China, founded by Tongji University, Shanghai.

The loss of public space in our city does not refer to a decreasing number of public spaces but to the loss of spatial quality, the disappearance of character, the fading of the human dimension, the deviation from proper aesthetic tastes. […] The orientation of design is getting lost. It is bidding farewell to the public life of citizens, departing far from public activities, opposing the needs of users. Some of the public spaces have endured ruthless damages or a hostile reception, and others retreated into being mere showrooms detached from their original meaning.[131]

The public debate in practice and academia also focused on how Modern urban development in the twenty-first century China largely erased the human dimension of urban public space by the sheer growth of vehicle traffic in major cities. As an example, another paper published in the same journal in 2006, entitled *The Humanised Urban Public Space* by Chinese scholar Deci Zhou, echoed Yang's critiques from a different angle but situated in the same context of the modern Chinese city:

In the modern city, […] the social attributes of public space such as the place for walking, interacting, resting and entertainment are ignored or discarded. […] It became indifferent to human needs and experience, and only the spectacularity of the modernist style remained. These public spaces become meaningless without the people who use them.[132]

The presence of these two articles with such strong emphasis on the importance of people notably enriched the agenda of this major planning journal at the time, whose main focus had been Modern urban planning theories and practices from a distant and top-down perspective. Since this issue of 2006, the journal has begun publishing urban design research and practice, announcing a shift of focus more towards the architectural qualities of urban spaces as places to be.

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131 Yang, Baojun. "城市公共空间的失落与新生." [The Loss and Revival of Urban Space.] 城市规划学刊 *Urban Planning Forum* 6 (2006): 10.
"言及我国城市公共空间的失落，并非指城市公共空间消失或者减少，而是指它的环境品质下降了，个性魅力褪色了，人文观海淡漠了，审美情趣偏离了，设计手法庸俗了，营造方向迷失了。" (Author translation)

132 Zou, Deci. "人性化的城市公共空间." [The Humanised Urban Public Space]. 城市规划学刊 (Urban Planning Forum) 5 (2006): 11. Original texts: "现代城市中，汽车和快速路的出现缩短了时空距离，同时也将城市空间分割零碎的片断，道路的通行能力被摆在第一位, 而公共空间应有的步行、购物、休闲、交谈、景观等社会特质被忽略甚至摒弃了。" (Author translation)

Shortly after the publication of the above-mentioned two articles, in 2007, US-based Chinese architectural scholar Pu Miao[133] questioned and challenged the development, design, and management of urban public space in the rapid expansion and renewal of Chinese cities. In his paper entitled *Whose City? A Pictorial Essay on the Three Problems of the New Public Space*, Miao addresses three problems in the urban public spaces of modern Chinese cities: i) the privatisation of public space; ii) window-dressing; and iii) social segregation, regardless of scale or history. Miao argues:

Some governmental officials attempt to copy the form of the Western city in urban development in China. For them, developing a modern society equals constructing Western-style buildings. Those people do not understand the inherent characteristics of many Asian cities developed throughout history as high density, large scale, paucity of public space, and high frequency of usage, as well as a lack of networks of public space that European cities have developed since the nineteenth century.[134]

This paper demonstrates a strong view of public space and urban development in the specific urban conditions of China. Being an Asian city expert, Miao mainly accuses developers and politicians of preferring a so-called 'hard import' of the Western modernisation. At the same time, he remains modest about the impact of design on the potential to change the general condition of the urban environment. "In the absence of any agreement on that citizens are the actual owners of public spaces", he notes reluctantly, "urban public space would continue towards its destiny of being a tribute to political authority and the money-making machine."[135]

Highlighted by the notion of human space, the intermediate phase can be seen as a transitional period towards the social essence of public space. A new discourse was formed around the notion of human space following the harsh negotiation between the large-scale urban developments and the emerging people-centred design. In this period, the prevailing notions representing the first stage of transculturation was faced with resistance from the local realities of urban China. Transculturation started the next stage.

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133 Pu Miao is Chinese professor in School of Architecture, University of Hawaii. http://arch.hawaii.edu/content/pu-miao

134 Miao, Pu. Miao and Zhen, "Design History of China's Gated Cities and Neighbourhoods: Prototype and Evolution," 111. Original texts: "政府主管的官员企图在我国城市建设中照搬西方城市的模式，把建设现代化社会等同于建造西方化建筑。这些官员不理解亚洲许多大城市在历史中形成的一下基本特点：人口密度高，城市规模大，公共空间总量少，公共空间使用率高，缺乏像欧洲城市从19世纪开始逐渐形成的公共空间系统。" (Author translation)

135 Ibid., 13: Original texts: "我国的不少城市空间有可能继续演变为官员的邀功请赏的贡品，资本家造钱的机器。" (Author translation)

3.3 Situated Transculturation: Societal Space

By the end of the 1990s, the trajectory of the transculturation of the notion of public space in China tended to deviate permanently from single physical focus towards a philosophical grounding and sociological connotation. The various post-war European and North American discourses around the public realm and the public sphere, such as those of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, were circulated in China. These works facilitated an in-depth understanding of public space not only as a spatial issue in urban design but also as a social and political one.[136] In this way, the study of public space in China seemed to regain the cultural layers of the notion and developed into a comprehensive network of knowledge in its own right.

Thereupon, public space was regarded as a social issue and was thus attached to the social conditions of Chinese cities in the architectural and urban discourses of the 2000s. In a thesis published in 2005, *Research on the Publicity of Space,* Chinese architect Lei Yu acknowledged that "the design of public space is no longer a mere technical subject. It engages with the society and the people." Referring to Arendt and Habermas in particular, Yu's study showed an intensified awareness of the political and social meanings of public space, addressing the fact that the introduction of the concept of modern publicity in China has pervasively challenged the traditional social relations and people's perceptions of the public, of the private, and of the communities. It also challenged the role of the architect, confronted with a nation's political and social environment and the task of facilitating public space through architectural means; as Yu mentioned in this book, "public space has become a device for architects to engage with the political and the social environment." [137]

136 尤尔根.哈贝马斯, 公共领域的结构转型 [The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society], trans. 曹卫东，王晓珏，刘北城，宋伟杰 (上海Shanghai: 学林出版社, 1999). 汉娜.阿伦特, 人的境况, trans. 王寅丽 (上海: 上海世纪出版社, 2009). 理查德.桑内特, 公共人的衰落 [The Fall of Public Man], trans. 李继宏 (Shanghai: 上海译文出版社, 2008).

137 Lei Yu, 城市公共性研究 [Research on the Publicity of Space] (南京(Nanjing): 东南大学出版社(Southeast University Press), 2005).

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Accordingly, the transculturation of public space seems to have achieved a comprehensive status quo: re-adapting 'Western' concepts by Chinese scholars and designers to analyse local issues of Chinese cities and society, greatly expanding the network of knowledge. In their 2009 essay *What is Authentic Urban Public Space,* Hong Kong-based Chinese scholars Zhu Chen and Min Ye concluded that public space in the post-war Western context is the platform for the coexistence of multiple social activities from urban and social perspectives and for public performances in political and philosophical terms. The study of public space headed towards merging several disciplines: the study of form, environmental-psychology, sociology, and philosophy. In their opinion, what the 'Western' concept of public space could provide was "a value basis to re-examine the urban environment in China and new perspectives for the social and cultural construct of a city."[138] Following this line of thought, parameters such as accessibility, inclusiveness, and social diversity have been utilised to evaluate the quality of urban spaces in Chinese cities.[139]

The understanding of a 'societal space', as we may call it, pushed the notion of public space towards the space of the society. It has marked a specifically situated stage of transculturation, a stage in which public space is reborn as a culturally specific notion. It opens up possibilities for new conceptual interpretations of public space in the specific context of modern Chinese society. These specific interpretations have proven that the transculturation of public space is no longer a literal projection of concepts and design ideas but a situated and independent network of knowledge, as Ortiz puts it, "no longer an incomplete version, but an alternative one."[140]

138 Chen, Zhu, and Min Ye. "什么是真正的公共空间? 西方城市公共空间理论与空间公共性的判定." [What is Authentic Urban Public Space? A Review of Western Public Space Theories and an Evaluation of the "Publicness" of Public Space]. 国际城市规划 24, no. 3 (2009): 45. Original texts: "西方学术语境下的城市公共空间概念及其价值判定为我们重新审视中国公共空间建设的价值观基础，探讨城市建设在社会人文方面的意义提供了一个有价值的视角。"

139 Kai Xu and Klaus Semsroth, "公共性的没落到复兴——与欧洲城市公共空间对照下的中国城市公共空间," [Fall and Revitalization of 'Publicness': Chinese Urban Space in Comparison with European Ones]. 城市规划学刊 3 (2013): 61-69. Xu), 徐磊青(Leiqing) and 言语 (Yu Yan). 公共空间的公共性评估模型评述 (A Review of the Evaluating Model of the Publicness of Public Space)." 新建筑 *(New Architecture)*, no. 01 (2016): 4-9.

140 Ortiz, xix.

3.4 From Loose Transmission to Structured Transculturation

By discussing the cross-culture transmission of the notion of public space from the West to post-reform China amongst Chinese scholars, this chapter has substantiated that the notion of public space in Chinese urban design theory is a new cultural phenomenon in its own right, rather than "a passive adoption to a clear and determined standard of culture", the existing Western models.[141] The term 'transculturation' is therefore instrumental in describing the Chinese notion of public space and how it has become what it is today. Furthermore, the concept of 'compressed transculturation' addresses the unique fashion in which the notion has been adopted and integrated within the Chinese context; in a short space of time, the process has developed from loose adaptions of design theories and methods excluding culture, to a structured understanding of the cultural and social meanings of public space. The three concepts this chapter has qualified as 'open space', 'human space', and 'societal space', respectively represent the results of the three stages of transculturation. Hence, the transculturation of public space is not only compressed in time — in as little as four decades — but also compressed in meaning.

Additionally, this chapter affiliates the transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design theory with a loose transmission of knowledge and ideas across cultures. Loose transmission refers to the loose and open way in which concepts travel from one cultural context to another with a change of their initial meanings. It partially maintains the primary meaning while simultaneously receiving new meanings, manifesting the processes of acculturation and deculturation in the three stages of transculturation. First, the understanding of public space as open space points to the fact that Western architectural and urban design knowledge was extracted from its socio-cultural basis and reinterpreted merely as a set of design references, instruments, and approaches. Such simplification of theories and ideas resulted in utilitarian adoptions of urban design for marketing and image production. Second, scholars, design professionals, as well as citizens resisted the loosely transmitted concepts and design ideas in the new context.

141 Ibid., lviii.

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The confrontation of this situation finally prompted the notion to regain its cultural layers in order to reconceive a comprehensive network of knowledge in China. The wrought concept of public space in Chinese urban design theory can only be seen as an alternative to the notion used in the West. Being in this way, it is no longer a restoration of the European and North American concept of public space but a new independent idea in the Chinese context: a 'transculturation'. Eventually, these transculturated concepts of public space could be considered crucial in the development of the Chinese urban design discourses, more crucial than any Greco-Roman or Indo-European origin, because these notions are not only more accessible for the Chinese-speaking general public but also are thoroughly modified according to the local conditions of China.

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Contemporary image of Ju'er Hutong Project (1994), Beijing (author photo, 2019)

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4 Communal Space

Re-conceiving Public Space within the Community Neighbourhoods

The culturally rooted construction of the collective realms and the transculturation of the notion of public space in urban design theory, together, determine a critical position needed to examine the evolution of public space in urban and architectural design practices. In post-reform China, urban and architectural design practices have engaged with public space mainly in three collective realms: i) the communal space in the residential realm (1980s-1990s); ii) the open space of the urban centre (1990s-2000s); and iii) the street as the realm in between (2010s onward). As exemplary places of everyday life in post-reform urban China, these collective realms have given public space a location in which it has been (re-)created in multiple ways by specific spatial and social conditions. The investigation of these three collective realms — respectively in Chapters Four, Five, and Six — via a series of case studies, centring urban design and architectural projects that pronounce the Chinese notion of public space, has shed new lights on the understanding of public space in post-reform Chinese cities.

The community is not only a social unit organising the Chinese society throughout history, and as such embedded in Chinese culture, it is also reflected in the organisation of the city, thus a physical reality related to Chinese architectural and urban tradition. As part of the everyday built environment, it entangles both domestic life and public life. The communal space, as a common space shared by the community, is exemplified by the courtyard type that is omnipresent in historical residential areas. The Chinese courtyard house (四合院, *siheyuan*) is generally recognised as a physical articulation of the community in China. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, some specific figures representing Chinese cultural heritage and urban tradition have not lost their relevance in the rapid modernisation process of Chinese cities, but rather played a crucial role in the development of dwelling and urban culture. In the recent decade, particularly in the historical social and spatial context, the community, as one of these figures, started to be re-engaged by architectural and urban projects to some debatable extent.

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Alongside a massive reconstruction of historic cities, a community-focused agenda revived and reformed planning, design, and research before the 2008 Olympic Games, which has been generally considered an epitome of the national opening-up policy. More so the focus of design on communities can be traced back to the era right after the 1978 reform when China started to re-engage with global economy as well as Western architectural and urban design culture, particularly the one from Western Europe and North America. "There have been numerous efforts to restore or rebuild pieces of the historic urban form even as much of it is being torn down."[142] At this crucial and demanding moment of urban transformation in the early 1980s, Chinese architects thrived on discovering new approaches to bringing back traditional Chinese architectural elements and enhancing the culture of community from the past, particularly in the conservation and renewal of historic areas of the cities. The historic city of Beijing was one of the places for pioneering experiments. Particularly the eastern urban area, or Dongcheng District (东城区), drew the attention. This chapter embanks with a project at the Ju'er Hutong (菊儿胡同, or 'Chrysanthemum Lane'), which has been one of the most representative housing projects in terms of reclaiming traditional architectural and urban heritage by means of modern design after 1978. This chapter also discusses its profound influence on the urban and architectural discourses and intertwined practices in China. Stemming from this critical project, this chapter then examines the communal space as a key for understanding and conceiving the notion of public space in the everyday living environment of contemporary Chinese cities.

142 Gaubatz, "New Public Space in Urban China: Fewer Walls, More Malls in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining," 81.

4.1 Transculturation of the Courtyard: Rethinking the Ju'er Hutong Project

The Ju'er Hutong serves as an exemplar because of several reasons. First of all, this housing project (1987–1994) has altered the theoretical focus of urban conservation and renewal in China. Since the 1950s, the historic centre of Beijing has been largely reconstructed to fulfil the goal of developing the city into the modern capital and political centre of China. This was the result of a debate on Beijing's city planning, introducing two opposing proposals for relocating the national political headquarter. Chinese architect and architectural historian Sicheng Liang and urban planner Zhanxiang Chen drafted an overall conservation plan in which a new political headquarter was located outside of the historic centre to the west.[143] In the other plan, which was actually implemented, headquarters were located along the most important street of the city, the Chang'an Street (**长安大街**) instead. This plan proposed to demolish some ancient walls and gates of the imperial city.[144] This radical step of modernisation re-constructed the historic centre of Beijing and articulated a 'look forward' attitude that prioritised development in the political, economic, and governmental climate of the nation.

Against this background, in the 1980s, the theoretical counterbalance was introduced with the experimental Ju'er Hutong Project. The Chinese architect and scholar Liangyong Wu[145] advocated a return to the historic value of this ancient capital, after witnessing it suffering from severe damages in the past decades.[146]

143 This plan is generally mentioned as 'Liang-Chen proposal' (**梁陈方案**)', which is named after the family names of the two generators, Sicheng LIANG (**梁思成**) and Zhanxiang CHEN (**陈占祥**). Sicheng Liang, Zhanxiang Chen, and Ruizhi Wang, **梁陈方案与北京** *(the Liang-Chen Proposal and Beijing)* (Liaoning Education Press, 2005).

144 Liangyong Wu, **北京旧城与菊儿胡同** *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)* (**北京** (Beijing): **中国建筑工业出版社** (China Architecture Industry Press), 1994).
Zhaofen Zeng (**曾昭奋**) is a Chinese architectural critic, emeritus professor of architecture at Tsinghua University, Beijing.

145 Liangyong Wu (**吴良镛**) is a renowned Chinese architect and urban designer, a leading Chinese architectural scholar, a professor of architecture and urban planning at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, and also a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). He is the first candidate in this academy from the field of architecture. See: Zhaofen Zeng, "**上下求索指点江山——《 城市规划设计论文集》 读后**," [Book review: urban planning and design essay collection.] **新建筑** *(New Architecture)*, no. 4 (1990): 68.

146 Wu has been a close colleague of Sicheng Liang, with whom he founded the faculty of architecture at Tsinghua University. He is also a proponent of Liang's 1950 conservation plan for Beijing.

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Supported by the municipality of Beijing,[147] this project proposed an integrative conservation plan that focused on preserving the main urban tissue of the historic city and its inherent spatial condition. As such, it not only acted as a figure of resistance to the contemporary ways of urban reconstruction, but also it represented a new attitude of urban (re-)development. Following the 'Reform and Opening-up' of the country, the complex assignment of new urban development mediated with historical conservation and cultural, social, and spatial values of the Chinese city.

Secondly, this project is important because it has addressed a particular public-private relationship enclosed in the traditional Chinese dwelling system through analysing the courtyard-house typology. It also elaborates on the design mechanism that has enabled this relationship in experimenting with a new dwelling type to meet the density requirement at the time. This chapter regards this way of considering the public and the private spaces in the traditional courtyard house a key to unlock the possibility of re-claiming the cultural substance of community in dwelling design.

Thirdly, this project is a first instance of transculturation in practice. In particular, its academic architectural and urban design underpinning relied on both global and local knowledge. Taking references from both sides, the project came along with the development of a new theory as 'the organic renewal', which has become the pedagogy for urban renewal studies in China. The underlying research, design, and implementation of the Ju'er Hutong are recorded in two significant publications: the 1994 book *The Old City of Beijing and its Juer Hutong Neighbourhood* (北京旧城与菊儿胡同) and its 1999 English edition, entitled *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing: A Project in the Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood.* Based on these two publications, this section explores how the project has uncovered the historical origin and design mechanism of the Chinese courtyard house and Wu's transcultural study of the post-war Western urban design theories.

147 The restructuring of the national economy from a central-planned economy to a market economy has led to the decentralization of governance and the reformation of planning institutions. The power of decision making for urban planning projects largely shifted to regional and municipal planning and governance institutions. (See: Richard L. Carson, Comparative Economic Systems: Transition and Capitalist Alternatives (ME Sharpe, 1997); Edward S. Steinfeld, Forging Reform in China: The Fate of State-Owned Industry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).)

4.1.1 Accommodating History and the Current Challenges

"If, say, the biggest dilemma in Beijing's urban development is between preservation and building, its housing development then magnifies this dilemma."[148] In *Housing and Inner City Renewal*, the third chapter of the 1994 book, Wu notes that since the 1950s, the urban development in Beijing's historic city has confronted two major problems in terms of housing renewal. First, the municipality of Beijing started to allow residents to build extra rooms in the existing courtyard houses to fit in more households after the Great Tangshan Earthquake in 1976.[149] The epicentre of the earthquake was located about 110 km east of Beijing. As a consequence, the courtyard houses that were initially designed for one family became overcrowded, due to the excessive self-expansion. Also, since the courtyard spaces were occupied by additional buildings and became 'courtyardless', the traditional courtyard houses lost their original quality (Figure 4.1).[150] Second, the prefabricated slab apartment buildings were massively built in the historic centre as a preferred housing type. The type introduced an easy and quick way to increase urban density. Since the beginning of the 1950s, China has been leaning from the Soviet residential planning model and largely implemented the model in urban development as a so-called advanced residential planning idea. Instead, the traditional courtyard-house type was cast apart, in danger of being abandoned in the drift of the modernised urban development.

As a modern housing type that was easy to design and produce, the slab apartment has been propagated over the traditional courtyard house since the 1950s. Wu pointed out that building such standardised apartment blocks in large housing estates in Beijing had ruined the historical urban fabric and its building scale.[151] According to the building regulations in North China, the entrances of those apartments should face the north, together with garbage pipes and bike parking.

148 Wu, 北京旧城与菊儿胡同 *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)*, 47. Original texts: "如果说北京在城市发展过程中充满了保护与发展的矛盾，则北京在城市住房建设上的这个矛盾就表现得更为突出。" (Author's translation)

149 Great Tangshan Earthquake (唐山大地震) is a magnitude 7.6 earthquake that hit Tangshan, a major city in Hebei Province of China in July 1976 (which is near Beijing). It caused more than two hundred thousand casualties. See Huixian Liu et al., "The Great Tangshan Earthquake of 1976," (2002).

150 Wu, 北京旧城与菊儿胡同 *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)*, 62.

151 *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing: A Project in the Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood* (UBC press, 2011), 92.

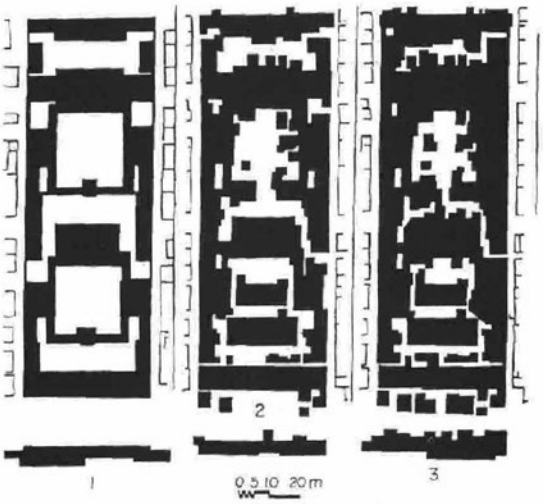

FIG. 4.1 The historical changes of courtyard house occupation in Beijing from the 1950s to the 1980s (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p.62)

The shady outdoor space towards the north, without greenery, could not be properly used as social space; the open spaces on the south side of the building got more sunlight but were often occupied by the residents of the ground floor, rather than shared among the residents of the entire building. This type of building was quickly built in Beijing's historic city, largely damaging the historical urban fabric and eliminating the community life. Wu criticised that it was so easy to design prefabricated slab apartments that many architects stopped exploring other possibilities in housing typology.

More importantly, Wu paid ample attention to the present 'street-lane-courtyard house system', a hierarchical structure based on a street, or '*jie*' (街), as an urban artery, giving access to several hutongs, each introducing gates to the siheyuans. This system figured as a structuring principle of the urban fabric on different scale levels in Beijing's historic city, as well as were recognised as consisting elements, which also framed a community-based living pattern in Beijing. Wu argued that preserving such a spatial structure and the embedded living tradition in urban renewal plans was crucial. Within the field of tension between preserving and building, he found a mutual position and drew the well-known concept of 'the organic renewal (有机更新).'

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The organic renewal is about creating a new urban fabric that complies with the inherent spatial patterns of the historic city.[152] In developing this theory, he compared Beijing to two European cities, Venice and Amsterdam, pointing out the fundamental role of residential architecture in forming unique urban identities. What these two cities in comparison had in common was a scheme of residential blocks that had created a unique pattern in their urban context. "The system and language of residential architecture in the two cities differ for their own beauty", he commented.[153]

As such, more than just densification based upon modern prefabrication and traditional urban principles, the goal of this urban regeneration project had been to typologically exploring ways to revive the community living environment within the historic city, while resolving the housing pressure generated by an additional population growth. The 'street-lane-courtyard house' structure became the preferred model.

4.1.2 The New Quadrangle: Towards the Prototype, Pattern, and Characteristics of the Courtyard House System

Stemming from the research on the specific patterns of historic Beijing, Wu experimented with a new dwelling typology in the Ju'er Hutong neighbourhood. He called this typology 'the new quadrangle (新四合院).' It followed the core concept of the courtyard house, which was based upon the prototype of the Chinese courtyard house. They shared a basic form with one courtyard surrounded by buildings on its three or four sides (Figure 4.2).[154] As a modern dwelling design, the new quadrangle entailed prototypical patterns and characteristics while, in its form and construction, it could meet the urban renewal goals better.

On the architectural level, given the presence of many shared courtyard houses in the old city, the architectural design of this new type first reorganised multiple households surrounding a courtyard space.[155] The new courtyard and the surrounding dwellings formed a basic model of building compound named 'the standard unit (标准院落).' Then the new quadrangle was born out of flexibly assembling these standard units into dwelling compounds (Figure 4.3). By adding up to three storeys, the new quadrangle could obtain the maximum density under the regulation and guarantee a pleasant living condition surrounding a courtyard.

152 北京旧城与菊儿胡同 *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood).*

153 Ibid., 59-61.

154 Ibid., 85-89.

155 Ibid., 117.

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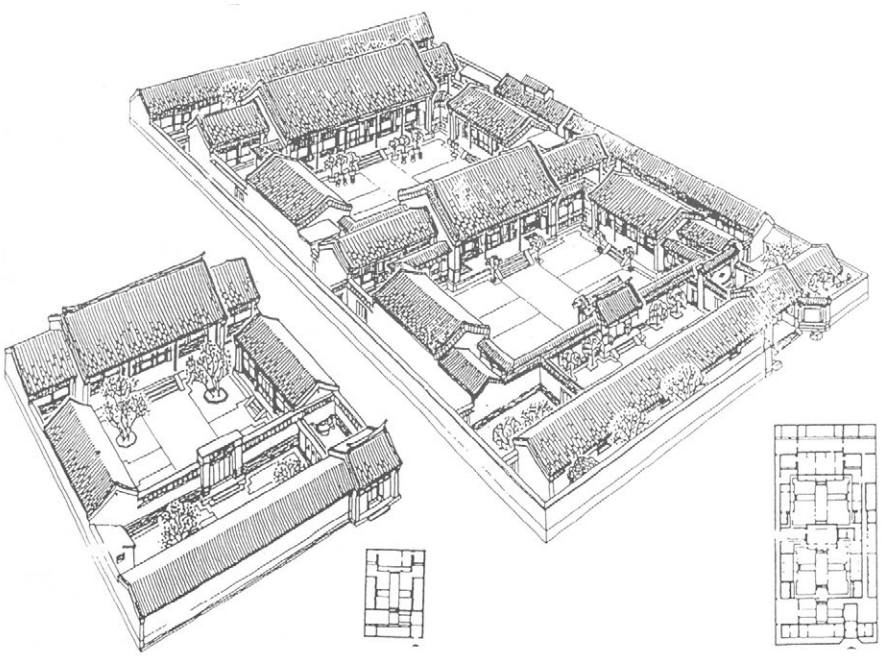

FIG. 4.2 An illustration of two types of Chinese quadrangle house (*the siheyuan*) (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p. 87)

On the urban level, its spatial organisation adopted a 'fishbone structure', underlying the 'street-lane-courtyard house' system. It revalidated a structure specific in the historical urban fabric of Chinese cities: a north-south oriented main street intersected by multiple east-west lanes that connected the courtyard settlements (Figure 4.4).[156] This spatial structure could be traced back to the larger houses of governmental officials and the imperial complexes built in the feudal times of China. Next to the main axis of the housing compound was the service lane (备弄, *beilong*), connecting the courtyards on both sides, like the shape of the fishbone (Figure 4.5). Wu considered this structure the key for organising traffic flows in the traditional courtyard settlement, based on which he designed a new 'courtyard-lane system' (院巷体系) in the Ju'er Hutong blocks (Figure 4.6).[157]

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid., 126.

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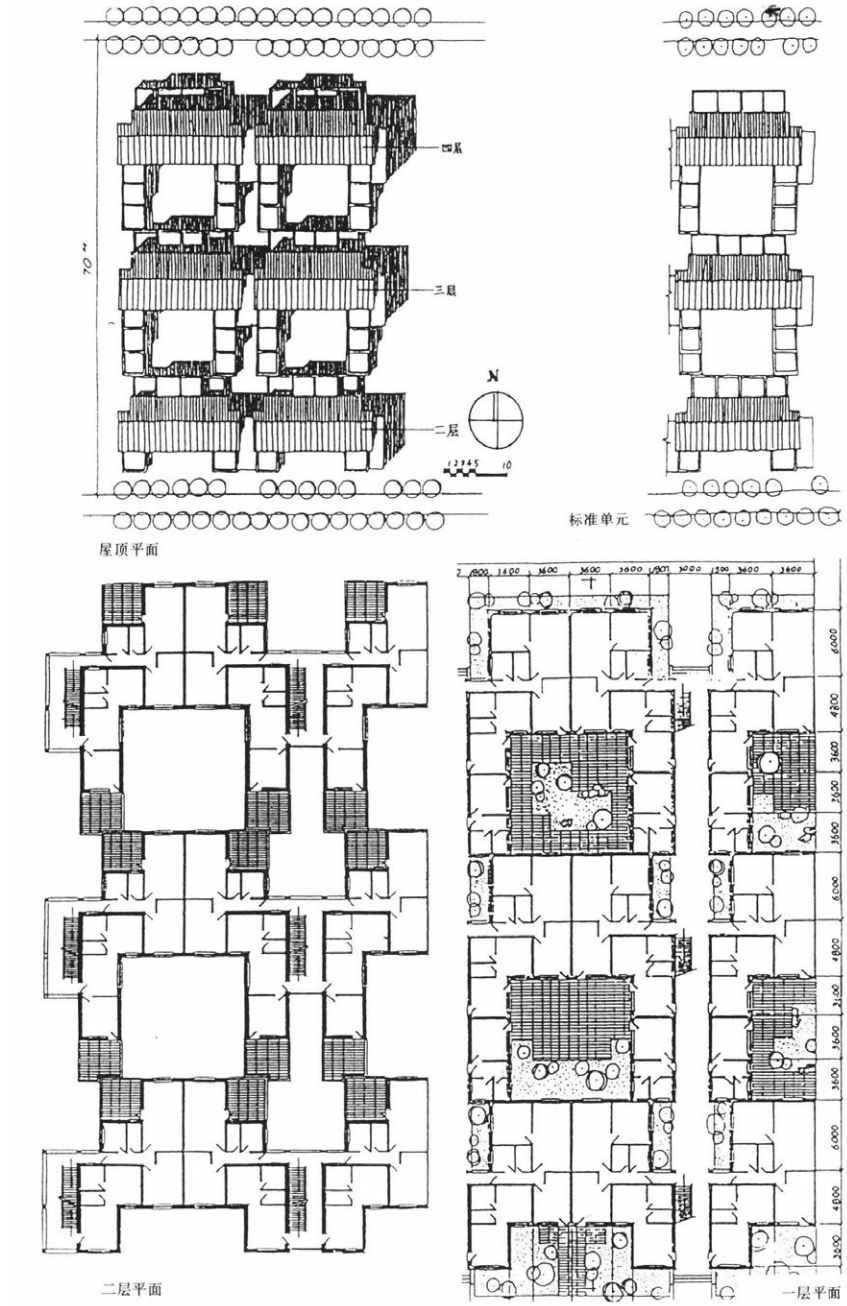

FIG. 4.3 An example of 'the standard unit' in the research phase. Top left: roof plan; top right: standard unit; bottom left: 1st floor plan; bottom right: ground floor plan (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p.124)

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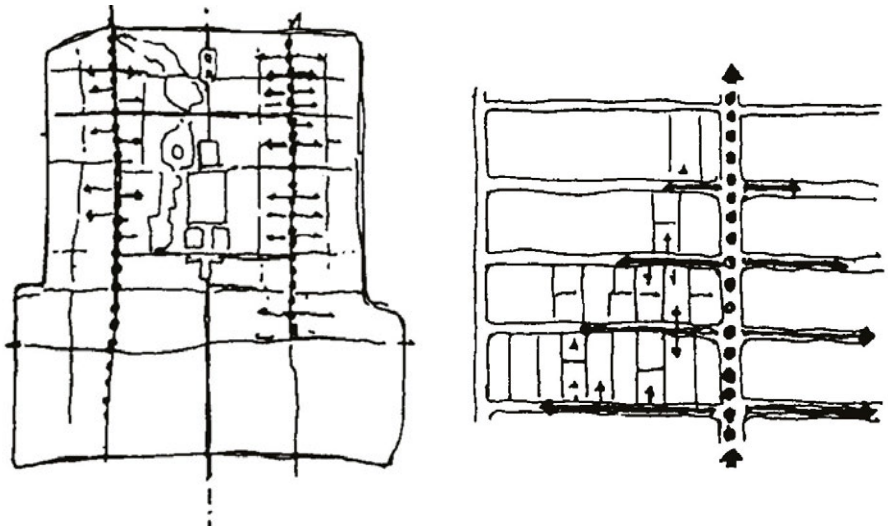

FIG. 4.4 The fishbone structure on the urban and neighbourhood levels (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p. 120)

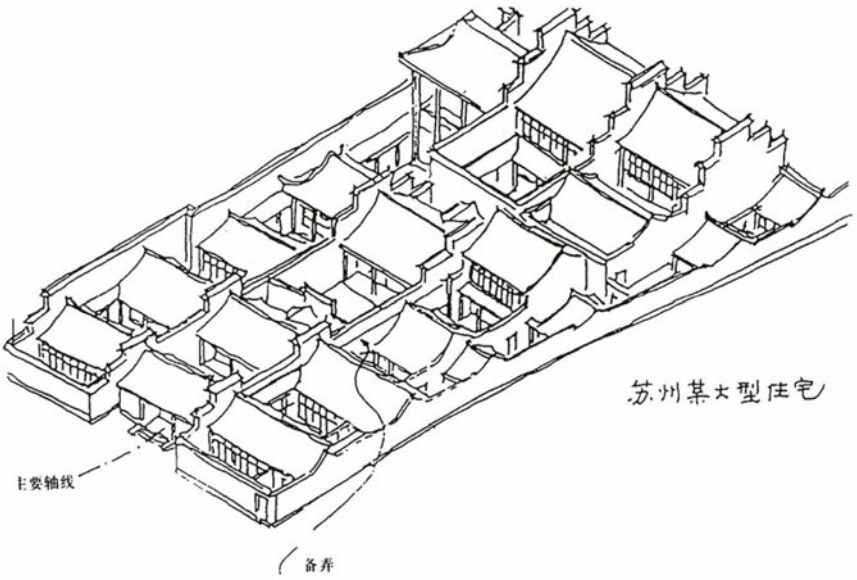

FIG. 4.5 A large dwelling compound of a governmental official in Suzhou, China, showing the *beilong* (备弄) (service lane) next to the main axis (主要轴线) in a fish-bone structure (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p. 120)

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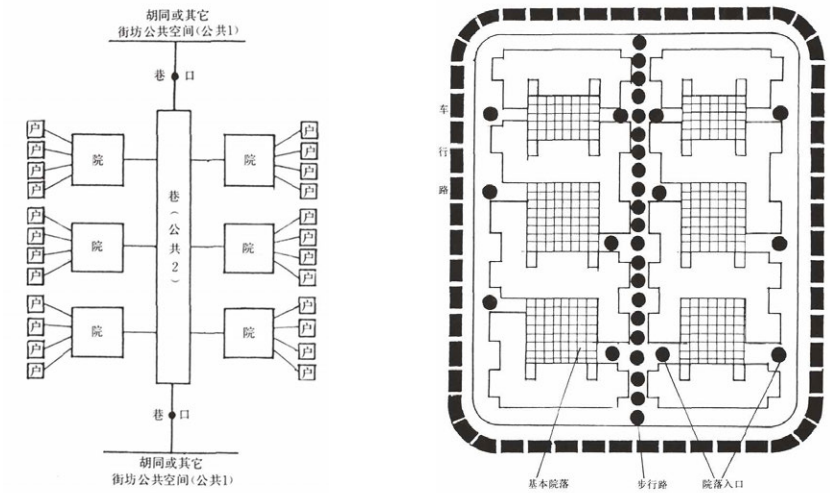

Translation of the texts on the pictures: Left: **巷(公共2)**: lane (public 2); **院**: courtyard; **户**: household; **巷口**: entrance to lane; **胡同或其他街坊公共空间 (公共1)**: the hutong or other public spaces in the neighbourhood (public 2). Here, the hutong space is considered the first-level public space, and the lane in the Ju'er Hutong courtyard as the second-level public space. It reveals varied degrees of publicness. Right: **基本院落**: standard courtyard; **步行街**: pedestrian path/street; **院落入口**: courtyard entrance.

FIG. 4.6 The new courtyard-lane system of Ju'er Hutong: spatial structure (left); transportation structure (right) (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p.127).

Embracing the character and lifestyle of both traditional Chinese dwelling and modern apartment is the most significant innovation of this new architectural typology. First, like the traditional Chinese courtyard house, it has both indoor and outdoor living spaces. The indoor is the apartment, and the outdoor is thus the courtyard. The courtyard is a spatial and cultural element rooted in the communal living culture of Chinese people. Its human scale initially guarantees a pleasant outdoor environment and encourages social interactions in the residential block. There are usually some trees in the courtyard, which are preserved from the previous house. With this touch of the nature and other facilities such as pergolas and benches, the courtyard has become an outdoor living room (Figure 4.7; Figure 4.8). Second, as a modern dwelling project, the new quadrangle has adapted to modern urban life by enabling individual privacy and flexibility in its function, as it can also be used as working space. This quality cannot be seen in the self-constructed shared courtyard houses, in which maintaining privacy and individual interests is nearly impossible.[158]

158 Concluded from ibid., 126-27.

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FIG. 4.7 The images of the courtyard and the lane of Juer Hutong, 2019 (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

FIG. 4.8 The image of the lane of Ju'er Hutong, 2019 (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

4.1.3 A Public-Private Relationship: Architectural Mechanisms of Communal Space

With the initial intention to revive the courtyard house typology in a modern dwelling design project, Wu significantly reconsidered the importance of communal life facilitated by the courtyard. "We should not merely consider the functionality of dwelling. Recreating something within the urban context is a much more difficult and complex assignment" — Wu strongly believed that an architectural typology is socially and culturally grounded.[159] In the housing system of a traditional Chinese city like Beijing, he analysed, the courtyard had always functioned as a common land for communal life in the neighbourhood: it gathered people from different social backgrounds, where mutual care between neighbours was developed without discrimination and hierarchy.[160]

159 Ibid., 100. Original texts: "我们不能仅仅孤立地满足于住宅本身的要求，还要结合城市环境进行再创造，当然这是困难的多，复杂的多任务。" (Author translation)

160 Ibid., 101.

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In recreating the communal living environment in the new dwelling typology, Wu focused on employing the urban-architectural mechanisms of the traditional courtyard house in his architectural design, and as such his project introduced certain public qualities.

The first urban-architectural mechanism was what he called 'the relativity of the inside and the outside (内外的相对性).' As mentioned in Chapter Two, the walled enclosure in traditional Chinese architecture and the city has resulted in a binary relation of the inside (内, *nei*) and the outside (外, *wai*) as a crucial interpretation of the private-public relationship enclosed in traditional Chinese dwelling. Wu put forward this concept of 'the relativity of the inside and the outside', elaborating that "the courtyard is an outdoor living room, an extension of the hall; extending this concept to the hutong, the courtyard is then an anteroom without roof."[161] Furthermore, he illustrated the speculated formation of the Chinese courtyard house in the book *Guan Tang Ji Lin* by Chinese litterateur and sinologist Guowei Wang in the early 1920s:

'(…) Build a unit with four houses and their anti-rooms towards four directions. Then build four rooms outside of four living-rooms, and they all orient to the courtyard. This is the most useful way of layout, and it is pleasing to the eye.'[162]

Demonstrated by the structure of 'one bright (room) and two dark (rooms)', the inside-outside relationship continued to exist within the dwelling compound, creating different degrees of privacy. The 'bright' refers the living room, which was connected to the courtyard through the porch; the 'dark' referred to the bedrooms that could be entered only through the living room, and thus were the most intimate parts of the compound (Figure 4.9). Wu argued that this spatial structure embodied certain aesthetic values, as the local people were so bound with the siheyuan both physically and emotionally.[163]

161 Ibid., 108.

162 Ibid., 107. Original texts: "……四阿者，四栋也，为四栋之屋，使其堂方向东西南北，于外侧四堂，后之为四室，亦自向东西南北，而凑与中庭矣。此置室最近之法，最利于用，而亦足以为美观。" Quoted from: 王国维. 观堂集林. 北京: 中华书局, 1959. (First written in 1923) (Author translation)

163 Ibid., 104.

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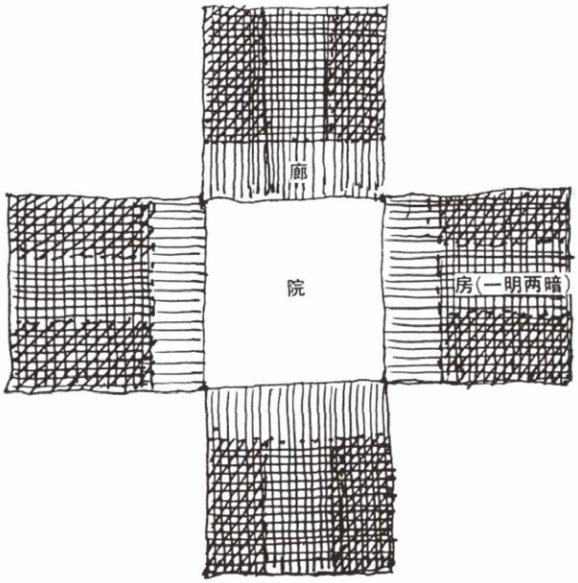

FIG. 4.9 An illustration of the spatial structure of a Chinese courtyard house by Wu. (source: Wu, Liangyong. The Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood. Beijing: China Architecture Industry Press, 1994, p.107)

Author translation of the texts on the illustration: **院**: courtyard; **廊**: porch; **房**: room; **一明二暗**: one bright (room), two dark (rooms)

The second architectural mechanism this project has uncovered is a public-private gradation in the dwelling space created by the 'street-lane-courtyard house' system. Following the spatial sequence from the street to the intimate home, one experiences a gradient transition from the most public to the most private environment. Within the courtyard house, one continuously experiences this transition from the courtyard as a communal space to the porch as a half-indoor connecting element, then to the indoor living room and eventually to the bedroom. "Perceiving from the city", as Wu summaries, "walking from the main street to the hutong and smaller lanes, then into the courtyard, is marching towards the private; perceiving from the domestic realm, going from the interior to the courtyard, then to the lane and the main street, one is gradually entering the urban world."[164]

164 ibid., 108. Original texts: "从城市看，从街道走向胡同、小巷，而到院落，以进居室，逐步在走向私密；就居住而言，从室内走向院落，走至小巷、街道，逐步通向城市世界。" (Author translation)

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4.1.4 A Transculturated Legacy

Like many other architectural and urban design discourses in the post-reform era, Ju'er Hutong Project engages with both Chinese architectural tradition and Western architectural and urban knowledge from the post-war period. Both the organic renewal approach and the design mechanism of the new quadrangle sprang from a transculturation of ideas, in which the Western post-war urban design theories played an indispensable role.

Much evidence has revealed that the organic renewal approach has been enlightened first by the organic decentralisation theory from Finish-American architect Eliel Saarinen.[165] Wu's encounter with Saarinen started at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the US, in the 1940s, where he acquired his master degree in architecture under the guidance of Saarinen. Not surprisingly, Wu was deeply influenced by Saarinen's writings, especially his 1945 book *The City: Its Growth, Its Decay, Its Future.*[166] Based on the organic decentralisation theory of this book, Wu formulated his fundamental argument that the historic city is an organic entity, and this quality should be preserved accordingly. Later on, the organic renewal approach was developed over the years during the early 1980s, based on several Western urban design studies with a particular focus on the 'organicity', wholeness, and spatial order of the historic city. As shown in Wu's various publications, the initial design proposal of the new quadrangle was already drafted in 1978, but the theoretical framework of the organic renewal came out later in the 1980s. Prior to the 1994 book, the research of Ju'er Hutong Project was first published as an essay in 1989. In this essay, entitled *Renovation Approach for the Residential Areas in Beijing's Old Town*, Wu refers to Christopher Alexander's 1987 book *A New Theory of Urban Design* when discussing the importance of urban design for the conservation and renewal of historic cities. He especially highlights the point that the key of urban design should lie in understanding 'the nature of order' embedded in the urban fabric.[167]

165 Eliel Saarinen, *The City : Its Growth, Its Decay, Its Future* (New York: Reinhold, 1945).

166 Wu wrote the preface for the Chinese version of the book, which was published in China in 1986, as 沙里宁 伊利尔, "城市: 它的发展, 衰败与未来," (北京: 中国建筑工业出版社, 1986).

167 Liangyong Wu, "北京旧城居住地区的整治途径: 城市细胞的有机更新与新四合院的探索," [Renovation approach for the residential areas in Bejing's old town: the organic renewal of urban cells and the exploration of the new quadrangle.] 建筑学报 *(Architectural Journal)* (1989): 18. In A *New Theory of Urban Design*, Alexander proposes that urban design should focus on recapturing the process by which cities develop organically.

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In the design concept, Wu tended to justify his preference of the courtyard typology by relying on several studies of architectural form, including the 1966 study conducted in the Martin Centre of Architectural and Urban Studies at Cambridge University. In this study, the comparison among the three types of buildings, the tower, the slab, and the court, has proven that the court form maximises the efficiency of land use.[168] Another study he has been concerned with is Rob Krier's 1979 book *Urban Space*. Krier also points out that new buildings should conform to the surrounding urban space.[169] In the case of Beijing, the courtyard house is seen as a significant basic component of the overall urban fabric, which needs to be preserved in urban renewal practice. The third example is the Vinetaplatz perimeter housing block in Berlin designed by Josef Paul Kleihues in 1978, which has appeared in Kenneth Frampton's 1980 book *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*.[170] This project has a comparable goal to that of the Ju'er Hutong, which is recapping a historical dwelling form, the nineteenth-century city block (in the case of Ju'er Hutong, the traditional Chinese courtyard house), and improving the living condition via this intervention. Besides urban design theories and built projects, he has referred to studies of housing guidelines to further demonstrate the advantages of the courtyard typology. For instance, the 1978 study, entitled *An Introduction to Housing Layout* by GLC, notes several advantages of the courtyard typology, including that it creates spatial enclosure and contributes to the characteristics of the urban environment.[171]

From a social perspective, Wu has found a solid conceptual support from the 1953 CIAM IX: the sense of belonging as "a basic emotional need, which can enrich the sense of neighbourliness."[172] Wu quotes Frampton's comment on the CIAM IX that the new generation of architects has responded to "the simplistic model of the urban core by positing a more complex pattern that would be more responsive to the need for identity."[173] The simplistic model echoed the slab apartment that Wu criticised, and his new courtyard house model could be this 'more complex pattern' with a strong identity. By the same token, he was inspired by Christian Norberg-

168 Lionel March and Leslie Martin, *Urban Space and Structures* (University Press Cambridge, 1972), 36-37. Discussed in: Wu, **北京旧城与菊儿胡同** *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)*, 96.

169 Rob Krier, *Urban Space = Stadtraum* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1979). Discussed in Wu, **北京旧城与菊儿胡同** *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)*, 96.

170 Kenneth Frampton, "Modern Architecture: A Critical History," (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 296. First published in "Modern Architecture: A Critical History," (Thames and Hudson: London, UK, 1980).

171 Greater London Council. Dept. of Architecture and Civic Design, *An Introduction to Housing Layout: A Glc Study* (Architectural Press, 1978), 23-32.

172 Frampton, "Modern Architecture: A Critical History," 271.

173 Ibid., quoted in Wu, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing: A Project in the Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood*, 91.

Schulz's 1980 study of architectural phenomenology, the notion of *Genius Loci*. Norberg-Schulz points out that architecture should satisfy the psychic needs of human beings.[174] This statement and the concept of *Genius Loci* have underscored Wu's quest for 'cultural meanings' embedded in the Chinese courtyard house, which he considers important to Chinese people's cultural disposition.

Hence, Ju'er Hutong Project has significantly contributed to the transcultural development of Chinese urban design in the post-reform era, which is influenced by Western knowledge in terms of both theory and practice. On the theoretical level, the organic renewal is not invented *ex nihilo* but built upon Western urban design studies, noted the theories of Saarinen and Alexander, amongst others. Wu's theoretical view on the city has also been influenced by Postmodern urban design studies. In the English publication of the project, he comments that "unfortunately, in China […] while much Postmodernist thinking has emerged since the early 1980s with regard to individual building design, urban design has experienced no such theoretical evolution."[175] To confront the topic of urban renewal in this context, learning from these Western references has been the first crucial step of transculturating ideas from another cultural context. On a practical level, the courtyard as a core element of the design is also a universal issue, which is discussed not only in China but also in other cultural contexts in the world. The Western examples of courtyard architecture have offered a solid support to Wu's account for preserving the traditional urban form of Beijing.

The built results of the project were under a heated debate due to the controversial image of the new quadrangle. Wu did not propose to renovate the existing courtyard houses in poor conditions but to 'rehabilitate' the city in a different way by inventing a new building typology with a reintroduction of historical features into it. 'A so-called new siheyuan but not the real one' — this project, which has woven the indigenous and the modern urban and architectural properties together, represents neither a local Chinese nor a global design, and can be considered a new urban and architectural phenomenon of the time.

174 Christian Norberg Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (Academy Editions, 1980).

175 Wu, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing: A Project in the Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood*, 92.

4.2 A Crucial Subject of Substantial Reflections

If the design project of Ju'er Hutong itself is a phenomenon of the time, the theory of the organic renewal that Wu developed is then a critical subject of substantial reflections in the urban regeneration debate in China. In the fields of theoretical debate, design practice, and planning policy, the organic renewal became a situated concept, a basic principle, and a point of departure to confront the emerging challenges in conserving and renewing historic cities in the twenty-first century.

4.2.1 Theory, Practice, and Policy Making

In the proceeding era, directly after the realisation of Ju'er Hutong Project, the organic renewal was a much-celebrated idea in China and constantly reflected upon in theoretical debates, especially among Wu's proponents, fellows, and students. Chinese architectural critic Zhaofen Zeng, a former colleague of Wu, promoted the organic renewal in his 1996 article and commented on the theoretical achievement of the Ju'er Hutong project as "far exceeding its actual results."[176] Wu's student, Chinese architect and scholar Ke Fang, inhered this approach as a theoretical framework in his exploration of the urban renewal of Beijing for the new century.[177] Fang participated in several research and design projects lead by Wu in the 1990s, including one design phase of Ju'er Hutong Project.[178] In his own work, Fang is deeply interested in the complexity of the city, which he believes could enlighten the renewal of historic cities in China. In his 1999 paper, he regarded the complexity of the city as a progressive perspective in urban planning and design theory in the West, referring to Christopher Alexander, Jane Jacobs, and Robert Venturi, among others.

176 Zhaofen Zeng, "Organic Regeneration: The Right Concept for the Development of Old Town," [有机更新: 旧城发展的正确思想——吴良镛先生《北京旧城与菊儿胡同》读后.] 新建筑 *(New Architecture)* 2 (1996): 34. Zhaofen Zeng (曾昭奋) is a Chinese architectural critic, emeritus professor of architecture at Tsinghua University, Beijing.

177 Ke Fang, "探索北京旧城居住区有机更新的适宜途径 (an Appropriate Approach to Organic Renewal in the Residential Areas of Old Beijing)" (Doctoral Dissertation, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 1999).

178 Liangyong Wu, ""菊儿胡同"试验后的新探索——为《当代北京旧城更新/调查·研究·探索》一书所作序 (New Study of Ju'er Hutong Rest, New Preface for Renovation of Old City in Beijing Today: Investigation, Research, Exploration)," 华中建筑 18, no. 3 (2000): 104.

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He took Ju'er Hutong Project as a critical example that represented the theoretical progress of this complex view on the city as an organic entity in the urban design theory of China.[179]

Ju'er Hutong Project also paved the way for the emergence of the idea of urban architecture in China in the late 1990s, which viewed architecture as part of the urban context. The Chinese architect and urban designer Wenyi Zhu[180], among others, praised Wu's exploration of the courtyard building system as "a Chinese concept of the urban architecture that indicates a future direction." Because, according to Zhu, the new courtyard system it developed changed the conventional understanding of the traditional Chinese city dominated by the idea of axis and wall system. Instead, he described this new understanding as 'yard around yard': the city is no longer structured and defined by walls, but conceptually, it can grow freely and indefinitely based on the unit of the yard.[181] The theoretical framework of the organic renewal inspired many similar studies on other Chinese cities with a historical background similar to Beijing, both doctoral theses and research papers, which further explored the topic of urban renewal in the twenty-first century.[182]

Besides the evolution of theory, the impact of Ju'er Hutong Project especially on the practice of urban renewal was direct and evident in the 1980s. It even caused a regressive trend in urban renewal practices, which tended to copy the form of traditional architecture to maintain the original urban identity of Beijing. One of the most representative but criticised examples of this trend is the renovation of the Liulichang[183] in 1985. The Liulichang, originally a coloured glaze factory, was transformed into a marketplace in the seventeenth century, selling books and stationery.

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179 See: Ke Fang, "复杂之道: 寻求一种新的旧城更新规划设计方法 (Reasoning the Complexity: Seeking for a New Way of Planning and Design for Urban Renewal)," *City planning review* 23, no. 7 (1999).

180 Wenyi Zhu (朱文一) is a professor of architecture and urban design at the Tsinghua University, Beijing, and the founder of the architectural office Zhuwenyi Atelier. He has been engaging with architectural and urban design theory, education, and design practice.

181 Wenyi Zhu, "跨世纪城市建筑理念之一: 从轴线(对称)到"院套院"," [Cross-century concept of the urban architecture: from axis to 'yard around yard'.] 世界建筑 *(World Architecture)*, no. 1 (1997): 68-69.

182 Fang, "探索北京旧城居住区有机更新的适宜途径 (an Appropriate Approach to Organic Renewal in the Residential Areas of Old Beijing)."; Ling Zhu, "旧住区人居环境有机更新延续性改造研究——以沈阳市为例 (the Research of the Organic Renewal and Sustainable Rebuilding of Old Residential Area's Living Environment: Taking Shenyang for Example)" (Doctoral Dissertation, Tianjin University, 2007); Chun Wu, "大规模旧城改造过程中的社会空间重构" (Doctoral Dissertation, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 2010).

183 Liulichang (琉璃厂) means 'coloured glaze factory'; Liuli is the glassy paste for the production of ceramic glazes. Berthold Laufer and Henry Windsor Nichols, "The Beginnings of Porcelain in China," *Nature* 100, no. 2512 (1917).

As such, it became a gathering place for literati and scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In composing renewal principles for the Liulichang at the end of the twentieth century, the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design referred to 'the organic renewal' principle, proposing that the renewed Liulichang should not only meet the modern functional requirements but also maintain its historical identity. However, the actual result turned out installing traditional roofs onto the newly built projects to make it look like the historical buildings next to it. This sheer reduction of a comprehensive renewal approach to reproducing Chinese traditional building forms soon became an architectural design fashion in the 1980s, which was criticised as 'a retro trend',[184] or kitsch, in other words. In essence, the organic renewal principle behind Ju'er Hutong Project never merely focused on a single building but collective patterns in the historic city. Although Wu was commissioned decision-making responsible for Beijing's urban development, it appeared to be hard to duplicate the successes of Ju'er Hutong in another project, as the Zeitgeist was echoed through in a simplified form of retrofitting, ignoring underlying research on the urban and architectural properties of Beijing.

The influence of the organic renewal reached a new level since being adopted by the local municipal planning institution to compile planning and development strategies for Beijing. In 2000, the Beijing Municipal City Planning Commission drafted a conservation plan for twenty-five historic areas of Beijing, and twelve institutions were invited to participate in this project.[185] Making a comprehensive plan for a historic area of this scale was considered unprecedented in Beijing and the whole country since the 1950s. This project aimed for preserving the traditional cityscape and cultural relics by proceeding the organic renewal "in a gradual and measured way." This strategy soon became a consensus in historical urban conservation in China.[186] Wu was appointed the director of the evaluation group for this conservation planning and was delighted to witness the implementation of his idea of the organic renewal to a broader spectrum of the city. In the evaluation report published in 2002, he comments:

184 Zeng, "上下求索指点江山——《 城市规划设计论文集》 读后," 71. Original texts: "这种 '维护' 的方针及其思想，正复合当前建筑创作中复古主义思潮的需要，甚或它就是复古主义思潮本身。这是建筑创作和城市规划指导思想的严重倒退。" (Author translation: this strategy and idea of 'protection' fits the current need of a retro trend in architectural design, or it is even the retro trend itself. This is a severe setback in the ideology of architectural design and urban planning.)

185 Published in 2002 entitled *Conservation Planning of 25 Historical Areas in Beijing Old City*, the final report entails to show the municipality's determination and awareness of historical conservation, and more importantly, as a medium to enhance communication between the municipality and the citizens on this subject. See: Beijing Municipal City Planning Commission, "北京旧城25片历史文化保护区保护规划 (Conservation Planning of 25 Historic Areas in Beijing Old City)," (Beijing: 燕山出版社 (Yanshan Press), 2002), 3.

186 Ibid., 4.

'It is still not late to preserve the old city, but we also have a long way to go. The Conservation Planning for the 25 Historic Areas in Beijing's Old City is creative, in which the organic renovation and preservation in terms of the unit of courtyard has been agreed upon by all. The preservation work on the old city has much to do, especially on the organic renovation and dynamic conservation.'[187]

4.2.2 The Emerging Social Class

In the project report, the comprehensive evaluation of the spatial and social conditions of these twenty-five areas demonstrates an increasingly complicating demographics in the historic city. After two decades of development since the 1980s, the historic centre seemed to have been re-inhabited by emerging new classes: entrepreneurs, official institutions, foreign investors, as well as middle-class consumers. The inhabitants presented a significant difference in social status and income, as well as in housing condition and lifestyle.

The seemingly complicated and multi-layered social reality in the historic city largely refined the goal and pattern of urban development. The fact that the types of agents involved in the projects became much more diversified radically altered the position of this historic area within the city and the types of habitats. The large-scale involvement of private enterprises in financing planning and design projects led to a different scenario of development in the late 1990s from that of the 1980s.[188] Driven by new interests of emerging stakeholders, the goal of urban generation in the historic areas no longer merely, if at all, focused on improving dwelling conditions as in the 1980s; instead, it seemed to have headed towards what Sharon Zukin described in *The Cultures of Cities* "cultural strategies of redevelopment", creating "a cultural space connecting tourism, consumption, and style of life."[189]

187 Ibid.

188 Kang Chen, Gary H Jefferson, and Inderjit Singh, "Lessons from China's Economic Reform," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 16, no. 2 (1992); Patrick Bolton, "Privatization, and the Separation of Ownership and Control: Lessons from Chinese Enterprise Reform," *Economics of Transition* 3, no. 1 (1995).

189 Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," 80-83.

The Grand Shichahai District (大什刹海地区), the largest one (301ha) among the twenty-five historic areas, has illustrated this alteration of development strategy just west to Ju'er Hutong. Since the late 1990s, with the hutong branded as one of the biggest attractions of Beijing,[190] vernacular architectures were restored into restaurants, hotels, and art studios, becoming a site for cultural tourism and a seedbed for gentrification. The emergence of some novel programs, such as traditional handicraft shops, fine restaurants, Western-style bars and live houses, transformed the hutong into a place for new leisure and social experiences, generating a different mode of public interaction from previous eras like the 1980s and the 1990s. The hutong was turned into a place for chasing living standards, a site of high commercial value, and a vision for the city's image, satisfying local elite classes, private investors, and governmental sectors. It seems no longer an everyday living place but to have become a scarce urban resource in terms of spatial property, social dynamics, and symbolic value, offering new identities to the city's public realm (Figure 4.10; Figure 4.11).

In the development of tourism and associated programs, the vulnerability of the historical relics and the residents started to manifest when the areas fell into the control of private interests and profit-driven activities. In this situation, the right to common resources, including public spaces and other facilities, was largely threatened. Beneath the bustle of tourists, the social dynamics that co-evolved with the spatial transformation in such a tourism-transformed historic area have posed new challenges to the regeneration of community and public space.

190 Junran Yang and Nawei Wu, "商业开发对旧城保护与更新改造的影响分析——以北京什刹海历史文化保护区烟袋斜街为例," [The impact of commercial development on the conservation and renewal of historical towns: taking Yandaixiejie in Shichahai historical district as an example.] 北京规划建设, no. 1 (2014).

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FIG. 4.10 A café on a street of Shichahai historic area (source: author photo, 2018)

FIG. 4.11 A couple shooting wedding photos in the Lama Temple area, Shichaihai (source: author photo, 2019)

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4.3 Designing for Another Reality: The Redevelopment of Community and Public Space

In the recent decade, the relevance of Ju'er Hutong Project has eventually been situated at a pedagogical level, figuring as a conceptual basis on which younger generation architects develop their insights and projects on the regeneration of community and public space. At the beginning of the 2000s, the municipality of Beijing, in collaboration with Tsinghua University, initiated a community co-building movement that mainly focused on small-scale renewal projects. These practices referred to Ju'er Hutong's renewal strategy more as a general guiding principle in planning and design practices. Now, the western urban area, or Xicheng District (西城区), south of the Forbidden City, drew the attention. The regeneration of the Dashilar (大栅栏) area was a primary example. In preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing went through massive planning, design, and reconstruction activities. The Dashilar area, as a key historic site, received its first renewal plan in 2003. The goal was to reintroduce historical urban design elements and imbue them with new meanings in the modern era.[191] Regardless of the results, the initiative of this project was similar to that of Ju'er Hutong, which is re-engaging with traditional architectural forms in new buildings in order to improve the living environment.

In 2011, the Dashilar Conservation and Renewal Project was launched, initiating "a systematic planning and micro-level organic renewal strategy"[192] that focused on community building and local culture. In developing this proposal, the leading research and design group Sans (三思, '*san si*', or 'think twice') targeted several problems in this area, such as complicated land ownership, scarcity of social space and public facility, overly high density, poor living condition, and unpleasant neighbourhood vibe. All of these issues were investigated previously in Ju'er Hutong Project in the 1980s. Besides, at the initial stage of the project, an open working platform named Dashilar Platform was established, involving multiple actors in the design process — the municipality, planners, architects, artists, and businessmen — to explore and practise a new mode of organic urban renewal.[193]

191 "北京大栅栏 (Beijing Dashilar Area)," 世界建筑导报, no. 4 (2006).

192 Sans. 2011. "大栅栏更新计划." Sansi.info. https://www.sansi.info/zh/dashilan. (accessed in 2019)

193 Rong Jia, "大栅栏更新计划: 城市核心区有机更新模式," [Dashilar renewal plan: the organic renewal of urban core area.] 北京规划建设 *(Beijing Planning Review)*, no. 6 (2014).

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As addressed by the Dashilar Platform, the hutong space is created by residents' long-term sharing and compromising in their daily life, revealing an urgent demand of public spaces in the communities.[194]

The various realised projects and envisioned urban realities during the period from 2011 to 2015 have shown different forms and possibilities of urban regeneration on a community scale, with a particular focus on regenerating public space. For instance, the 2015 Beijing Design Week exhibited a variety of projects surrounding three main themes as 'new hutong spaces', 'creative compound courtyards', and 'reuse of old houses', with a common goal of reconstructing the communal space for the interests of the local residents and the city.[195] Among the regeneration projects implemented during recent years, public space as a common initiative was regarded from different perspectives and intervened by different design apparatuses.

The Beijing-based architectural firm ZAO/Standard Architecture[196] did two projects in the historic area of Beijing from 2013 to 2016, experimenting with new organic renewal ideas. Chinese architect Ke Zhang, the founder of ZAO, was critical about the commonly implemented urban renewal strategies in Beijing's historic city, which followed either a commercial estate development mode to increase density by demolishing old buildings and building higher floors, or a so-call kitsch-style renovation strategy that focused on decorative construction of buildings to make it look 'traditional.' Also, due to a lack of public spaces and public facilities in the hutong area, Zhang continued, many people moved away to the outskirt of the city to live in modern apartments.[197]

194 大栅栏跨界中心, "大栅栏更新计划 (Dashilar Project)," 北京规划建设, no. 1 (2016): 27. Original texts: "胡同空间是一个长期处于邻里共享、妥协，积淀了住民对其私有及公共空间的加建与改造愿望和行动的结果。" (Author translation)

195 Ibid., 24.

196 ZAO/Standard Architecture (标准营造), founded by Ke Zhang in 2001, is a leading new generation design firm engaging practices of planning, architecture, landscape, and product design. (http://www.standardarchitecture.cn)

197 Ke Zhang, "标准营造:"微胡同" (Standard Architecture: Micro Hutong)," 北京规划建设 *(Beijing Planning Review)*, no. 1 (2016).

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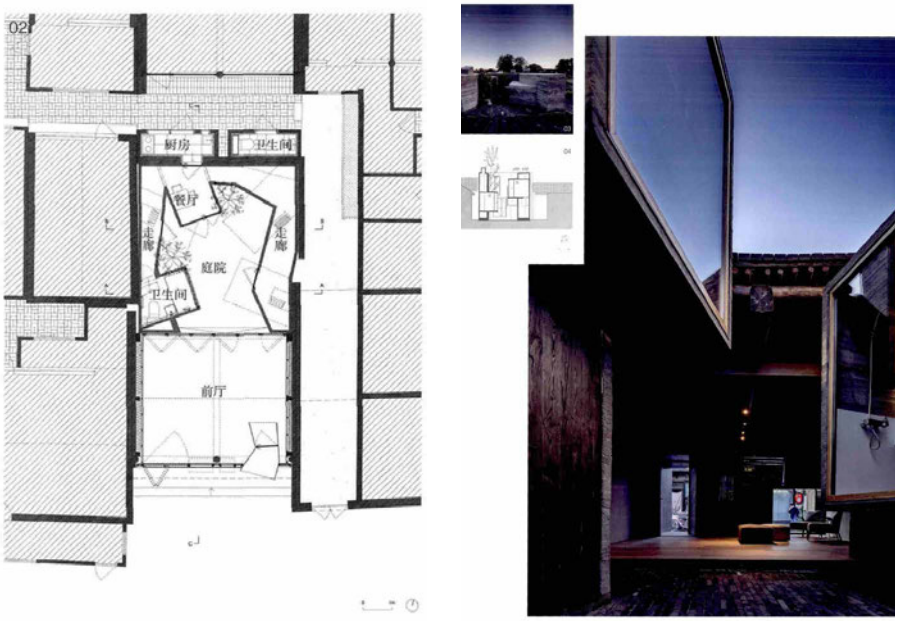
Against this background, the first project 'Micro-Hutong (微胡同)' explores how to enable cohabitation and maximise use of the courtyard house. The project practised housing renewal on an extremely small scale: a 35 m^2 traditional courtyard house comprising two households. This condition urged the design to redefine the boundary and the characteristics of the courtyard by opening the anteroom towards the inside and removing the wall between the courtyard and the room (Figure 4.12). In this proposal, the anteroom and the courtyard together became a flexible urban living space accessible for the public, a transitional part between the private living section and the public street, or the urbanity.[198] By inviting people in the neighbourhood to this 'public' living room, this design intervention has forged a direct connection between the collective living space and the urban context.



Translation of the texts in the left image: 厨房, kitchen; 庭院, courtyard; 卫生间, bathroom; 餐厅, dining room; 走廊, corridor; 前厅, anteroom

FIG. 4.12 Ground Floor Plan of Micro-Hutong/The anteroom seen from the courtyard (source: Zhang, Ke. 2018. "胡同里的小天地: 北京 "微胡同" Micro Hutong in Beijing." 室内设计与装修, no. 4: p.29)

198 "胡同里的小天地: 北京 "微胡同" (Micro Hutong in Beijing)," 室内设计与装修, no. 4 (2018): 28.

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The specificity of this project resides in an exclusive understanding of the hutong as 'public space for inhabitation' or 'inhabitable public space.'[199] The courtyard functions as a social space open to the urban public and a place inhabited as part of the domestic realm, simultaneously. In this way, the edge of the public realm has been redefined, and the boundary of the private realm has been softened. The meaning of a 'micro' hutong not only refers to its excessively small scale but also to the fact that it articulates the public quality of the hutong on a purely architectural level.[200] Through contemporary architectural languages and materials, the project has seized in its grasp an essential characteristics of this collective dwelling environment: the public and the private, the domestic and the urban realms overlap and permeate each other.

Subsequently, Zao did another dwelling renewal project named 'Co-Living Courtyard' in the Baitasi (白塔寺) historic area of Beijing, which in-depth explored a new mode of organic renewal in renovating a 150 m^2 shared courtyard house[201] into a new co-living place. The 'co-living' in the design concept means both living collectively in this typical shared courtyard and 'co-living possibilities of private and public dimensions'.[202] In renovating the existing buildings, the design proposed three types of architectural space: an 8 m^2 living unit, a linear public exhibition area, and a 4.5 m^2 functional block — comprising a kitchen, a bathroom, and a storage space — inserted into the common area. With these three elements, the design recreated three courtyards of different sizes and reconstructed the layout of this courtyard house to allow for a co-existence of public and private spaces. However, different from the 1980s' legacy, the Co-Living Courtyard Project avoided big gestures of demolition or new construction. Instead of rebuilding the blocks, the project renovated the existing building with the materials and colours of the traditional courtyard house, using contemporary architectural languages to interpret its own organic renewal principle.

199 "标准营造:"微胡同" (Standard Architecture: Micro Hutong)," 14. Zhang notes that 'the hutong in essence is a public space to live in'. Original text: "胡同本身就一种供人居住的公共空间。" (Author translation)

200 In ibid.

201 The shared courtyard house is also called the messy courtyard house, which is translated from the Chinese word '大杂院'.

202 Yuxiao Chen, "共生院, 北京, 中国," [Co-living Courtyard, Beijing, China.] 世界建筑 *(World Architecture)*, no. 10 (2018).

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This project has arguably represented another perspective and design apparatus of the communal space in a contemporary historic area. One of the important issues this project addresses is public and private spaces in the dwelling realm. However, in dealing with the courtyard space, the project does not stem from the social nature of the communal space that defines the public-private relationship and associated practices in the traditional Chinese courtyard house, and thus it is criticised as "detaching from what was there before and denying the informality characterising the existing space."[203] Instead, it is more focused on improving the infrastructure and architectural quality to create a decent living condition in the hutong, and then applying the intervention to other houses.

In terms of dealing with informality in this context, another project named 'Humble Hostel' by Hi Design (The Institute of Innovative Store) from 2013 to 2014 articulates a third perspective and apparatus regarding the communal space: it has investigated the communal space with minimal interventions. By creating a mini hostel, it demonstrates how a commercial-initiated project can also contribute to the characteristics of the communal space. The initial goal of the project was to develop a courtyard hostel prototype within shared courtyard houses, which could return the privately occupied courtyard spaces to the public and collective use. The design proposed a 'humble response' to the residents' self-constructed kitchens that fully occupied the courtyard: it installed an adjustable living unit comprising a bed and a desk, which could return some courtyard space to the residents when the hostel space was not fully used. The freed-up courtyard space then could be used for leisure activities, bicycle parking, or as a place for social events hosted by the residents (Figure 4.13).

203 Comments by Silvia Lanteri in "共生院, 北京, 中国," [Co-living courtyard, Beijing, China, 2016.] 世界建筑, no. 7 (2019): 53.

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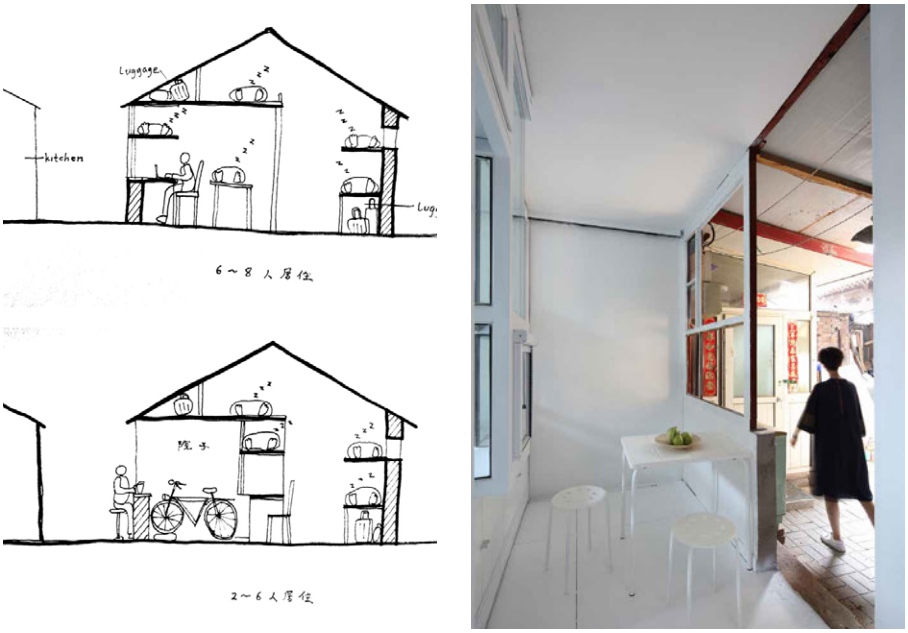

FIG. 4.13 A sketch of the design concept and the spatial structure of the hostel by Hi Design (upper: apartment for 6-8 people; down: apartment for 2-6 people) /An image of the built project (source: Design, Hi. "Humble Hostel and the Story Behind." http://www.hisheji.cn/discovery-share/archi-design/2015/12/01/18391/.html)

The complicated property ownership and social relations in the shared courtyard houses (大杂院, *dazayuan*) urged the architects of Hi Design to come up with a flexible architectural solution and carefully negotiate with the residents in every step of the design and construction process. As the process demonstrates, this project has engaged a collective effort of multiple participatory actors, both human and inhuman, material and social. It has encompassed the sharing of communal resources, such as building materials and energy, and hiring workers from the same community.[204] The concept of a humble design refers not only to the adjustable living area it has created but also to a humble attitude towards the existing community: even the clients of the hostel also need to constantly negotiate with the residents of the unit to share the courtyard space.

204 Hi Design, "Humble Hostel and the Story Behind," http://www.hisheji.cn/discovery-share/archi-design/2015/12/01/18391/.html.

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4.4 Communal Space: Mediating between Dwelling and Urban

In the study of a prime type of collective space in the urban and architectural design practices of the post-reform era, this chapter has related the Chinese notion of public space to the communal space. With a particular focus on some historical neighbourhoods in Beijing, it has reviewed several critical projects from different eras since the 1980s. The Ju'er Hutong Project, as the major exemplar, has revealed a particular way of confronting the historic city and re-conceiving community life in the era of radical urban modernisation. In this housing study and design practice, Liangyong Wu has made a critical step in exploring the Chinese traditional courtyard-type settlements, which has been under a tenure debate in Chinese architecture and urban design. The project is also a result of transculturation, merging a modern dwelling concept with the traditional urban pattern. It is both a transcultural solution for housing regeneration in historic urban contexts and a pedagogy for the next generation research and practice of urban renewal.

As a contemporary practice of courtyard architecture, Ju'er Hutong Project has informed the conceptual base, the characteristics, and the design of the communal space in Chinese architecture and urban design. As an architectural and spatial element (the courtyard) in the dwelling realm, the communal space can be defined first as the material expression of community. Among the contemporary architectural practices this chapter has analysed, the communal space is more and more interpreted as a public space in terms of both spatial function and social engagement. In concept, its meaning takes shape in the intersecting actions of the domestic and the public realms; in practice, it is conceived as a platform that mediates between the dwelling and the urban realms, representing a way of operating a collective realm of the city in architectural space.

Stemming from the Chinese dwelling culture and practice, the communal space also figures as the first critical type of public space in contemporary Chinese cities. The capacity to accommodate both dwelling and urban activities and mediate between the two realms is an essential characteristic of the communal space. The Micro-Hutong by Zao is an example of making this characteristic operational in architectural design. This characteristic is a possibility that needs to be unlocked and managed by architectural and urban interventions through contemporary architectural languages and materials, and it will help architecture and urban design intervene in the ongoing transformation of Chinese cities more adequately.

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The Bell Tower and stairs, Xi'an (author photo, 2019)

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5 Civic, Symbolic, and Commercial Space

Transforming Public Space in the Urban Centres

The understanding and practice of public space in the post-reform era has evolved not only in the practice of dwelling and community but also in the construction of the central areas of the city, where business centres, commercial districts, municipal headquarters, and cultural programmes are located. From the late 1990s onward to the first decade of the twenty-first century, the overarching forces of globalisation and modernisation propelled the emergence of new types of spaces in the redeveloped and new urban centres in China. These types represent a renewed interest in constructing the urban public realm; this has resonated with the reformed economic perspective and political aspire on Chinese cities on a global stage.

Notably, this evolution does not stand independently from Chinese urban development as a whole. Considering the history of Chinese cities, a longer trajectory to develop new central areas separate from residential and communal realms are found. Here, open spaces for public life are able to emerge: the marketplace, the public park, and finally, the city square. The marketplace (市场, *shichang*), is one of the first urban open spaces that equals a place of social diversity and free communication in the Chinese city; it was already introduced in the tenth century, a period when the walls between urban quarters were torn-down in the Song Dynasty.[205] In the later Qing and Republican eras, during the beginning of the

205 See Chapter Two of this thesis.

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twentieth century, another type of open space was introduced — the public park (公园, *gongyuan*) — and functioned as an early modern citizenry in the Chinese city. Public parks were designed under the influence of Chinese state governors and elite classes who used the fashionable Western parks as an aspirational reference.[206] Moreover, throughout the twentieth century, the city square is a third example of open space outside the residential areas. City squares newly accommodated various social and leisure activities emerging in the Chinese city. They profoundly addressed the cross-cultural assimilation of Western urban design practices, especially in their roles as urban green and civic space. Likewise, public interiors — such as the newly emerged mix-used shopping centres (购物中心) — were pervasively used for social activities in the post-reform Chinese cities.[207]

Subsequently, through various urban and architectural design projects, these spaces gave rise to new horizons regarding the notion of public space in the contemporary Chinese context. The increasing scholarly attention on social life in urban spaces in Chinese cities often used the city square and the public park as preeminent examples, especially in urban sociology and cultural studies. According to such academic reviews, the spontaneous activities that often relate to urban leisure, entertainment, and cultural activities have projected a popular image of public space in contemporary urban China. This therefore links a cultural significance of public space to the multiplicity of everyday spatial practice.[208]

Although many of these insights come from investigating social practices in such urban spaces, it is important not to ignore the design interventions that have generated the physical platform for these practices. In China's recent urbanisation, open space has become a vital element of urban development and a generator of public life in a reformed society. As shown in the following cases, the making of these open spaces in the (re)development of the central city and new centralities has not only profoundly engaged with global examples and ideas, but has also shaped and idealised public spaces in culturally contingent ways: serving the purposes to construct civic space or as symbolic spaces to embody the historical and cultural identities of the city.

206 Shi, "From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing." Qian, "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China."

207 See Gaubatz, "New Public Space in Urban China: Fewer Walls, More Malls in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining."

208 Anthony M Orum et al., "Public Man and Public Space in Shanghai Today," *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (2009); Qian, "Public Space in Non-Western Contexts: Practices of Publicness and the Socio-Spatial Entanglement." ibid., 27.

This chapter unravels this process to shape and idealise public space through three case studies of open space in the post-reform era, focusing on two Chinese cities, Xi'an and Beijing. The three cases are Bell-Drum Tower Square, Beijing Olympic Park, and Parkview Green urban complex (or mixed-use mall)[209], as evolutions of the city square, the public park, and the marketplace, respectively. These three projects, although they have been developed in different periods since the 1990s and stem from different backgrounds, since the 'Reform and Opening-up' of China, they are all frequently engaged in the recent urban development and provocatively shape urban public life. These three projects respectively reflect three visions of public space: as civic space, as symbolic space, and as commercial space. By investigating these specific cases, this chapter addresses how Western urban and architectural design approaches and practices outside the historic residential areas have also integrated with local urban traditions and design cultures, resulting in hybrid forms of public space in post-reform Chinese cities.

5.1 Civic Space: Bell-Drum Tower Square

The city square, especially referring to the type that emerged in the twentieth-century modernisation of Chinese cities, is not indigenous to Chinese traditions. As stated in Chapter Three, it is intentionally designed as a public space as a result from the transculturation of Western urban design knowledge and practices. The Bell-Drum Tower Square (BDT Square) of Xi'an, designed in 1995 by the Chengdu-born Chinese architect Jinqiu Zhang,[210] is the exemplar of this movement. This project demonstrates a nuanced interest to construct a central city square through its focus on spatial qualities and civic functions of the space instead of monumentality.

209 Bell-Drum Tower Square of Xi'an: 西安钟鼓楼广场; Beijing Olympic Park: 北京奥林匹克公园; Beijing Parkview Green urban complex: 北京芳草地城市综合体

210 The architectural society of China, "首届梁思成建筑奖获得者张锦秋院士及主要代表作品," http://www.chinaasc.org/news/127840.html.

5.1.1 From Monumental Space to Civic Space

The BDT Square is centrally located in Xi'an, surrounding two historical monuments from the fifteenth century: the Bell Tower (**钟楼**) and the Drum Tower (**鼓楼**). As the only historic city in China whose ancient city wall has been completely preserved, Xi'an is one of China's most representative and wholesome ancient capitals. In the sixth century, the city was named Chang'an and served as the capital of the Tang Empire. As the starting point of the Silk Road, it was one of the most important cities in the network of the global economy. Unlike that of Beijing, the shape of Xi'an's historical city wall is rectangular and symmetrical, and Bell Tower is located on the central axis of the historic city. This location is also at the intersection of the four main avenues, named after the four cardinal directions: north, south, east and west (Figure 5.1).

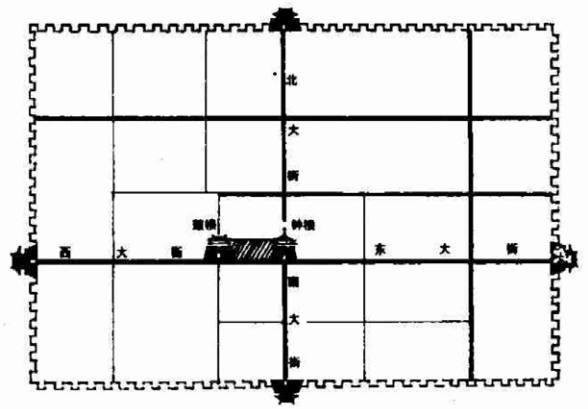

FIG. 5.1 The illustration of the location of Bell-Drum Tower Square by the architect Jinqiu Zhang (Translation of the texts in the image: **鼓楼**, Drum Tower; **钟楼**, Bell Tower; **北大街**, North Avenue; **南大街**, South Avenue; **西大街**, West Avenue; **东大街**, East Avenue) (source: Zhang, Jinqiu. "**晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计**." **城市规划** 6 (1996): 36)

Due to its geographical centrality, Bell Tower is also symbolically crucial to the city and thus one of the most important landmarks of Xi'an. Additionally, Drum Tower is located northwest to Bell Tower, in front of the busiest market streets of Xi'an — the Huiminjie (**回民街**), or Hui people's street, and the Huifang (**回坊**), or Hui shop alley, in the midst of an area where Muslim Hui communities have lived since the Tang Dynasty (Figure 5.2; Figure 5.3).[211] Since being built two decades ago, BDT Square has been regarded as the billboard of Xi'an; it acts as a front window that reflects the cultural property and socio-spatial transformation of the city.

211 Present since the Tang Dynasty

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FIG. 5.2 The location of Bell Tower, Drum Tower, and the square in the old city of Xi'an (source: author drawing, 2021)

FIG. 5.3 The view of Bell Tower and the square from the top of Drum Tower (source: author photo, 2018)

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In the pre-reform era, monumentality of historic buildings was much more emphasised in the spatial development of the city centre. The 1953 Master Plan of Xi'an proposed two squares, respectively centring the two historical monuments. After the plan's realisation, four important public buildings, including municipal headquarters and an international hotel, surrounded Bell Tower Square.[212] The style and atmosphere of the square were politically dignified in order to be used as a place for special national events. For example, the public gathering at BDT Square to commemorate Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1976 is one of those illustrative events.[213] Hence, political forces and governmental conditions more dominantly contributed to the making of the city square at that time than factors such as economy.

After the 1978 reform, the new political, economic, and governmental conditions also initiated architectural and urban design practice reform in Xi'an. In 1983, the historic centre of Xi'an welcomed a new planning proposal that intended to combine the two squares into one with greenery and facilities for resting and entertainment. The plan also reconsidered the spatial relation between the built and the open spaces by making a strict guideline for height control of the surrounding buildings. It guaranteed a visual connection between the two towers.[214] Although this proposal was not realised initially due to an insufficient budget, one could sense that the meaning of the square(s) moved from political monumentality and governmental representation to an orientation for everyday life. It also illustrated the emerging perspective of the urban design practice in favour of making open spaces in the central city.

Importantly, in 1995, Chinese architect Jinqiu Zhang was commissioned to design the new BDT Square, and significantly altered the position of the central square. When making the decision for the masterplan, Zhang insisted on proposing a civic-oriented square instead of a politically-oriented one. This further shaped the role of BDT Square at the centre of the city. Zhang discussed the definition of the square with the urban planning authorities, arguing that the central square of a city was not necessarily political in meaning, and the surrounding buildings did not have to be museums, administrative offices, or conference centres. Rather, it could be a

212 Jinqiu Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)," [Zhonggulou square design.] 城市规划 *(City Planning Review)* 6 (1996).

213 Xi'an Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, *In 1976, Citizens of Xi'an Commemorated Priminister Zhou in Front of the Bell Tower*, Exhibition (2018).

214 Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)."

square for everyday life.[215] To compile inspirations to activate everyday public life, she used squares in European cities surrounded by restaurants, cafes, and shops as a precedent; she additionally took interest in these examples due to her background as an architectural historian. Similarly, Zhang proposed to surround the square with restaurants of local cuisine and shops to bring more urban life to this central square of Xi'an. Eventually, the 1995 city plan adopted the initial idea to connect the two towers. The two squares became one. Accompanying this central public square was the plan to construct an additional lowered shopping street and to develop the square's underground space for commerce and leisure.[216]

In her 1996 article published in City Planning Review[217], Zhang calls BDT Square "an unprecedented project that represented the spirit of the new era", because it is "a large-scale central square that did not exist in ancient Chinese cities" and "a product of urban modernisation."[218] In Zhang's concern, modernisation is not only defined by the 'modern functions' the plan proposed, such as leisure, entertainment, and commerce, but more so by the presence of public space in the city. She explicitly claims that the modernisation of a city is not defined by the number of high-rise buildings but by public spaces that serve the everyday life of citizens. BDT Square is therefore a strong articulation of this view:

We should not judge the modernisation of a city by how many high-rise buildings are built, but instead we should look at how many public spaces the city has. Only by this can we know if the planners and developers of this city have kept the people in their mind.[219]

215 See web article: 凤凰网陕西频道, "张锦秋先生和她的城," 壹讀 (Repost), https://read01.com/zh-sg/myPBPg.html#.YFidIS9Q2t9.

216 Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)," 37.

217 城市规划 (City Planning Review) is a Chinese urban planning journal founded in 1977. (http://www.planning.com.cn/WKE2/WebPublication/wkTextContent.aspx?navigationContentID=896d52e4-2e20-4da2-b4af-ce9d4d18dce8&mid=CSGH)

218 Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)," 39. Original text: "这样大型的城市中心广场在中国古代城市中毕竟不曾有过，这是城市现代化的产物." (Author translation)

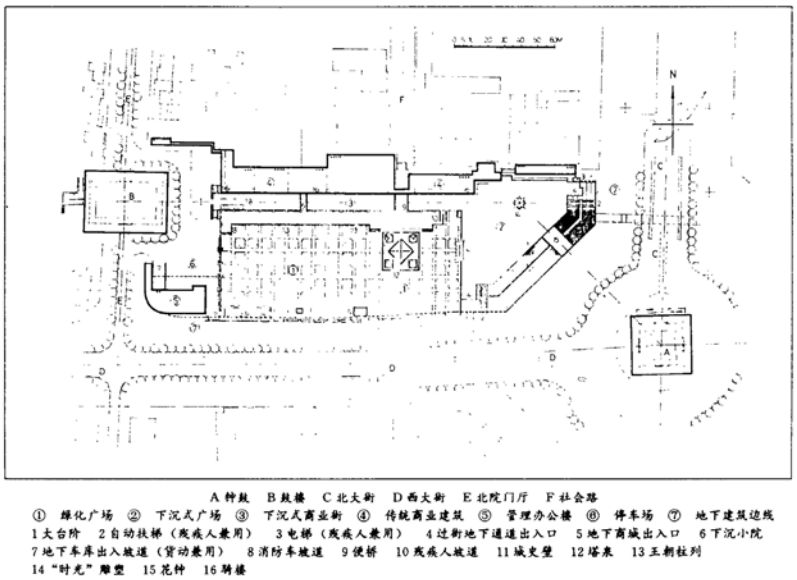
219 See web article: 长安范儿, "张锦秋: 西安"盛唐风貌"复原者," https://www.163.com/dy/article/EC0FR5OT0525HAAA.html. Original texts: "要评价一个现代化的城市，我认为不是看盖了多少高层建筑，超高层有多少？而是要看有多少城市公共空间，这才能够说明这个城市的规划建设者心里是否真正有老百姓。" (Author translation)

The altered meaning and function of a city square as civic space derives from altering its physical form, and thus a responsive engagement with the discipline of urban design. Zhang claims that urban design is "the only approach to improve the spatial quality for the life of citizens"[220] and therefore, she utilised it as a major tool to conceive the master plan for BDT Square. To fulfil the primary goal to improve the quality of urban space, the design of the square followed several principles, which include: to highlight the view of the two historical monuments, to improve spatial qualities of the city centre by means of greenery, to separate auto traffic from pedestrian, and to reasonably re-arrange different forms of entertainment, leisure, and commerce.

The resulting square integrated the monuments, as well as the existing and new buildings — including the Huiminjie — into a continuous spatial sequence and experience. In the masterplan, the two monuments are connected by a variety of open spaces, including a green leisure space, a sunken square with stairs, and an underground space using the existing building along the square (Figure 5.4). Hence, a series of spaces with different functions and forms are created for the urban public, and provide different places for various activities (Figure 5.5-5.7). The outdoor greenery allows for stationary activities, whereas the hard-paved grounds are appropriate for open-air events. There is both a quiet space for resting and staying introduced, as well as a bustling shopping street. The indoor area has combined large-scale indoor shopping spaces with more human-scale traditional commerce and small shops.[221] Zhang's design proposal also relied on the construction of a civic space, critically positioned at the heart of the city, and made ambitions to diversify the programmes and activities, and therefore influence the human dimension in terms of scale and the historical continuity.

220 Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)."

221 "和而不同的寻求," 建筑学报, no. 2 (1997): 32-33.



Translation of the texts: A. Bell Tower B. Drum Tower C. North Avenue D. West Avenue E. Entry to North Square F. Shenhui Road. ① Greenery square ② Sunken square ③ Sunken shopping street ④ Traditional commerce ⑤ Office building ⑥ Parking lot ⑦ Underground building boundary; 1. Big stairs 2. Escalator 3. Lift 4. underground path 5. Underground mall entrance 6. Sunken yard 7. Underground parking entrance 8. Fire truck ramp 9. Bridge 10. Disabled ramp 11. Urban history wall 12. Tower fountain 13. Columns 14. Statue 15. Clock of flower 16. Arcade

FIG. 5.4 Master Plan of Bell-Drum Tower Square (source: Zhang, Jinqiu. "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计." 城市规划 6 (1996): 37)

FIG. 5.5 Sunken square with stairs for both resting and open-air activities (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

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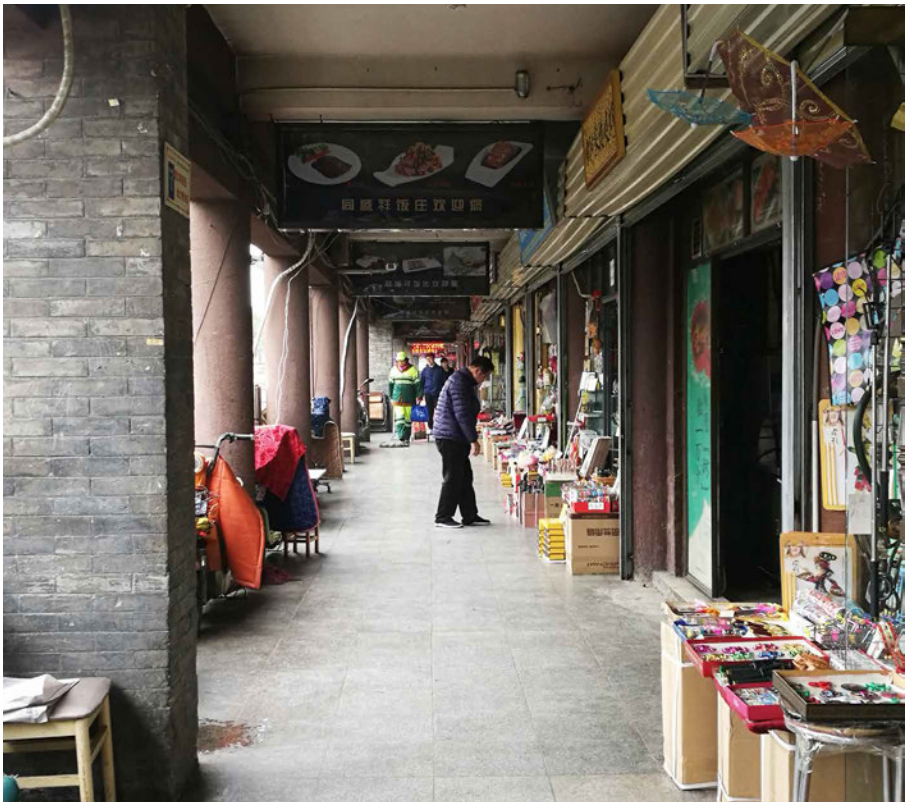

FIG. 5.6 Traditional marketplace plinth shopping area (source: author photo, 2018)

FIG. 5.7 Garden area for stationary activities (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

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The construction of BDT Square is not a single gesture of the civic reformation of the city centre, rather, represents an enduring and embedded strategy towards evolving public space in the Chinese context. At the Fifth Congress of World Historical Cities held in Xi'an in 1996, a document entitled 'Xi'an Manifesto' was approved and promoted conservation strategies for the historic city achieved by obtaining experiences from other countries.[222] The manifesto set the goals to develop Xi'an into a city with both the vibe of a modern metropolis and a city with an identity reflecting traditional culture, and in this way fulfil the requirements of the new century modernisation.[223] This manifesto not only supported urban projects for leisure, entertainment, and commerce but also stimulated infrastructural developments such as pedestrian and underground traffic systems, which integrated BDT Square into the broader urban network — making it an important hub in the city.

5.1.2 Embodying Tradition: The Meaning-Oriented Form

The urban design practices shown here employ cross-cultural references to European squares too. These references orient BDT Square to embrace civicness, while allowing age-old commerce to continue, and improve the general quality of the urban environment for the public. At the same time, the form and features of the square have revealed another significant aspect of this project, which incorporates another traditional Chinese concept in the modern urban fabric forming the notion of public space in practice: the symbolism of space, enabled by a meaning-oriented design approach.

The creation of the design was, as Zhang mentioned, a process of "seeking a harmonic and new urban environment," in which the style of the square should be in harmony with the monuments.[224] Zhang initially captured the importance of Bell Tower and Drum Tower as meaningful icons of the city in her design concept.

222 Xi'an has been a member of The League of Historical Cities (LHC) as the associate in the board of directors, together with a bunch of other cities such as Konya, Ballarat, Ljubljana and Shiraz. The league was founded in 1987 in Kyoto, Japan, a global organisation for exchanging knowledge and experience regarding the conservation and development of historical cities.

223 See: Jingxin Liu and Zhenggang Su, "西安钟鼓楼广场地下空间开发利用与古城保护 (Development and Utilisation of Underground Space at Zhonggulou Square in Xian City and Preservtaion of the Old Cities)," 地下空间 *(Underground Space)* 17, no. 3 (1997): 163.

224 Zhang, "晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计 (Zhonggulou Square Design)," 39.

As the idiom 'morning bell, evening drum (**晨钟暮鼓**)' implied, Bell Tower and Drum Tower used to be time reporting devices in ancient times: metaphorically meaning to make people alert and awake.[225] The sound of the bell and the drum was used to announce hours of dawn and nightfall respectively. As references to determine the time of a day, the two towers were closely related to city governing. This square supported the gathering of vigorous commercial and leisure activities and busy traffic, which became a locus of public life here in the city.

More specifically, the design of BDT Square has taken elements and patterns from traditional Chinese architecture and urban form in both concrete and abstract fashions to represent the discourse of the towers and the history of the city. For instance, multiple parts of the square are designed to echo the form and meaning of Drum Tower. The architectural form of the tower is recalled in the contour line of the glass roof fountain on the square, which has been cut into the same triangle shape (Figure 5.8).[226] As one of the main components of the square, the pedestrian commercial space highly resembles the traditional Chinese market street in terms of form and ambience. In its urban and architectural design, the façade of the existing hotel building is made open, and the rooms along the street are re-used as shops, creating an active street-front by displaying commodities at the door. Heading towards Drum Tower in the west, the pedestrian commercial street has reinforced the strong presence of the Drum Tower both visually and symbolically (Figure 5.9). A reference to the historic city is exemplified in the design ornaments of the square. The large green space has adopted a square grid pattern as a metaphor representing the archetypical urban form of ancient Chinese cities (Figure 5.10). North to the green square are twelve columns engraved with characteristics of the twelve dynasties in which Xi'an was established as the national capital.[227] These columns again introduced implicit civic references through imagery in ornaments and reliefs representing or recalling the cultural memory of the city.

225 The tradition of clock striking in the morning and drum beating in the evening to tell the time comes from the tradition within the Buddhist temple. Later, the 'morning bell and evening drum' may also mean 'the passage of time'. See: Xianyong Li, "In the Mountains" **唐代 "山中"**, from the Tang Dynasty (around 873 A.D.)

226 Zhang, "**晨钟暮鼓，声闻于天 — 西安钟鼓楼广场城市设计** (Zhonggulou Square Design)," 39.

227 The twelve dynasties included: Western Zhou (1046-771 BC), Qin (9th century–206 BC), Western and Eastern Han (206BC- 9AD, resp. 190-195AD), Xin (AD 9–23), Western Jin (312-316AD), Zhao (318-329), Former and Later Qin during the Sixteen Kingdoms (351-385, and 384-417), Western Wei (535–557), Northern Zhou (557–581), Sui (581-605), and as mentioned before the Tang dynasty (during 618-684, and 705-904).

FIG. 5.8 The contour line of the glass roof fountain echoing the Drum Tower (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

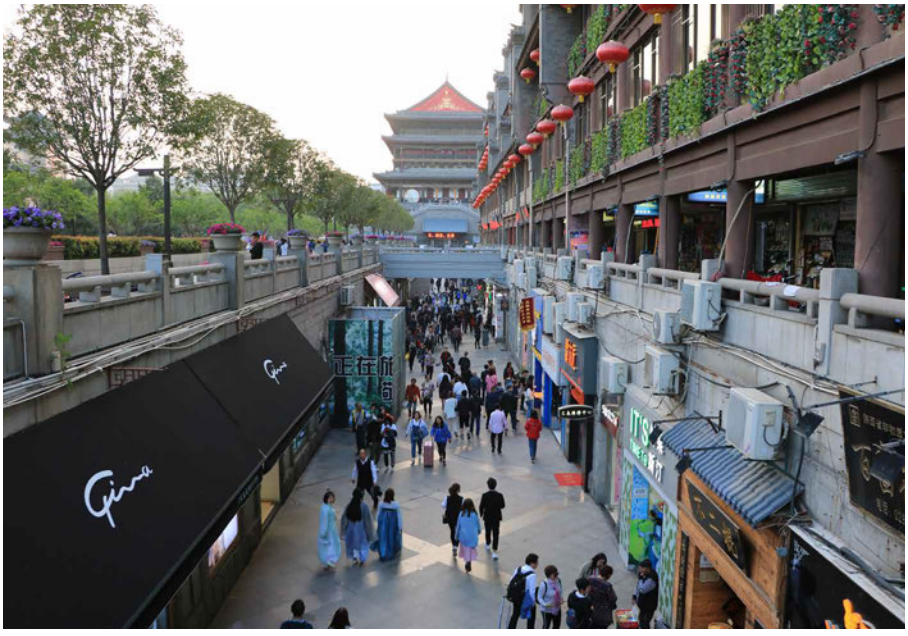

FIG. 5.9 The shopping street (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

FIG. 5.10 The square grid pattern of the green space (source: VR-Lab, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft, 2020)

In line with the design of BDT Square, the archaic architecture style of the Tang Dynasty has been crucial for Zhang's architectural and urban design practice. It made her one of leading figures concerning the re-development of the city. Her particular design style was implemented in many notable architecture and urban design projects in Xi'an, ranging from provincial museums to historic parks.[228] With these works, Zhang was labelled as the creator and practitioner of the 'new Tang style'.[229] In response, Zhang herself stated that her retro-Tang architecture and urban design re-introduced spiritual and meaningful constructs instead of being merely a retrofit application. By introducing symbols and symbolic elements with reference to traditional Tang architecture, her work implemented the traditional Chinese conception of space to modern public space emerging in the post-reform era.

228 Jinqiu Zhang, "江山胜迹在 溯源意自长——青龙寺仿唐建筑设计札记," 建筑学报 *(Architectural Journal)* 5 (1983). "传统空间意识之今用—"三唐" 工程创作札记," [Recalling the Traditional Spatial Awareness.] 古建园林技术, no. 3 (1990). "西安博物馆设计(Xi'an Museum Design)," 建筑学报 *(Architectural Journal)* 3 (2007).

229 See: 'New-Tang style' is a translation of '新唐风' by the author.

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This meaning-oriented design approach emerged within the context of globalisation and cross-cultural exchange. In her 1997 article published in Architectural Journal, Zhang points out that at the turning point of the (twenty-first) century, the East is faced with "a collision and fusion between modern and tradition, foreign and local cultures."[230] The assimilation of foreign cultures is not simply transplantation, or copying, but taking references in multiple dimensions, and inevitable positioning architecture as a subject of cultural property in the process. Practising architecture in this context is about the coordination of heterogeneous elements from multiple cultures.[231] In her design practices, Zhang explores her way to reconcile modern architectural ideas and techniques from the West with Chinese urban and architectural ancient traditions, which can be understood as 'embodiment'. Space, as such, is a representation of meaning in bodily or material forms. Hence, the embodiment of cultural tradition, history, and identity has become another crucial aspect to create public spaces in urban centres, adding another dimension to the Chinese notion of public space in the post-reform era. (Figure 5.11).

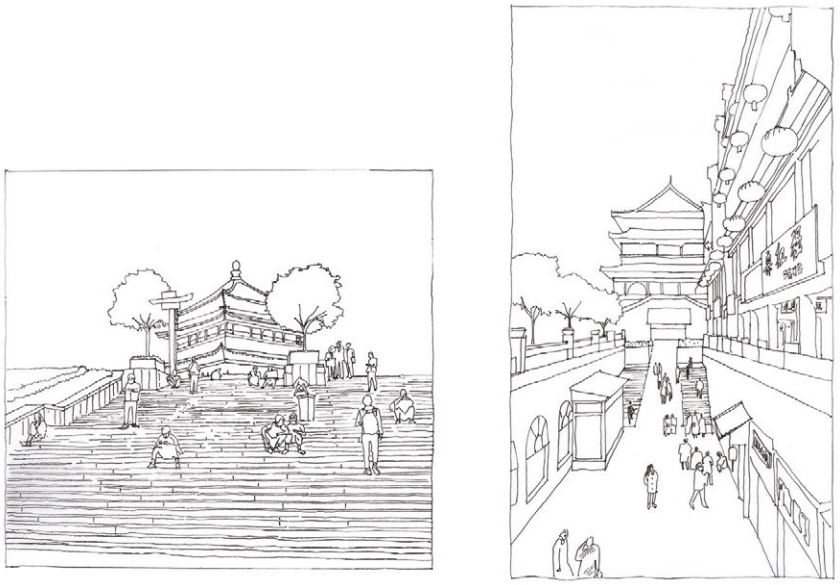

FIG. 5.11 Sketches by the author demonstrating that the BDT Square has combined the civic stairs and the marketplace in its design; this displays coordinating elements from two different urban and architectural cultures (source: author drawing, 2021)

230 Zhang, "和而不同的寻求," 31. Original texts: '东方正面临着现代于传统，外来文化与传统文化的冲撞与融合.' (Author translation)

231 ibid.

5.2 Symbolic Space: Beijing Olympic Park

Briefly introduced in Chapter Two, the public park has already been a significant product of modernisation in Chinese cities since the late nineteenth century. Yet the emergence of a wider understanding of Chinese public space in a global era has also been witnessed beyond the notion of the public park. After evolving throughout a century, the public park has not only become an indispensable popular place for leisure in Chinese cities, but it has also been granted new roles. Parks were created as venues for national and global events. Today, these parks represent another type of public space in post-reform urban China: this chapter positions this concept as 'symbolic space.' One of the most remarkable articulations of this new role of the park is shown through the Beijing Olympic Park. As a mega-scale international event, the 2008 Olympic Games exerted tremendous influence on the city of Beijing in terms of urban development and changing spatial, social, and cultural conditions. In this process, Beijing Olympic Park became a symbol of the city, if not the country. The project constructed a public space using a representation of collective identities and values in material spaces by introducing and emphasising symbolic references in its design.

5.2.1 Symbolising Public Space

In 2002, the project committee of the Olympic Park (**奥林匹克公园**), consisting of three parties concerned with its planning[232], started an international tendering and selected eight design agencies to participate in a competition for the master plan of the principal venue. The design team formed by the US-based design firm Sasaki and the Beijing Tsinghua Urban Planning and Design Institute won the competition in 2003 with their essential concept 'an axis towards nature.'[233] As this concept implies, the park would be planned along the central axis of Beijing's inner city. From south to north, the plan consists of two parts, a neatly organised linear central zone and a large area of open green space as the forest park. The central zone is where the most important Olympic venues and facilities are located, together with all the other programmes besides sport — such as culture, exhibition, office, and commerce. The grand axis of the city continues to the north of the plan's centre and ends at a forest park (Figure 5.12).

232 The three organisations are the Beijing Municipal Commission of Planning, Chaoyang District People's Government of Beijing Municipality, and Beijing Gardening and Greening Bureau.

233 Sasaki and Beijing Tsinghua Urban Planning and Design Institute, "**通向自然的轴线——北京奥林匹克森林公园及中心区景观规划设计简介**," **建筑学报**, no. 6 (2004).

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By creating a large organic area with green and water, the forest park represents the nature that the city is blended with.

The approach of symbolic public space is initially reflected in the location choice for this significant Olympic project. It was placed at the north end of the central axis of Beijing, where the forbidden city originated and seated, the Ming palace complex forming the foundation of the imperial city.[234] This placement decision is not considered coincidence but, to some extent, presented as an inevitable result. It has connected the grand discourse of the Olympic Games to the cultural history of the city and the country, physically represented by its central axis.[235] The Olympic Park has extended the central axis by five kilometres, including three metro stops. Sasaki claims that this monumental level of scale emphasises the significance of the central axis.[236] This connection has situated the Olympic Park within the spatial, social, and cultural contexts of Beijing, symbolising a new and modern icon of the city.

The symbolism of the Olympic Park is not merely reflected in its position within the urban fabric, but also emphasised by an underlying metaphorical design approach: incorporating ancient Chinese cosmology in this highly modern project and using imagery of traditional cultural elements. One example is the incorporation of a numbering scheme with symbolic meanings in the spatial layout of the park. The length of the five-thousand-metre central axis of the park is intended to represent the five thousand years' history of civilisation. The axis consists of five sections. The choice of the number 'five' comes from the five major periods of the history of China. Moreover, the design of the water system — echoing the two lakes in the historic centre, Shichahai (什刹海) and Zhongnanhai (中南海) — has adopted the figure of the Chinese dragon. The tale of the dragon surrounds the National Stadium, serving as a backdrop to highlight this most crucial construction in the park. Through these metaphors, the Olympic Park has woven a civic symbolic incarnation into the design of public space (Figure 5.13).

234 The construction of the palace began in 1406.

235 Feifei Feng, "中轴线与北京奥运," [The centural axis and the Beijing Olympic Games.] 北京规划建设, no. 3 (2004): 10. Original texts: "奥运会本来与城市中轴线是没有必然联系的，但北京奥运公园的选址使得两者产生了密切的关系，由此它们之间也就有了相互作用和影响。但它的出现并不是简单的偶然性在某种程度上是有其必然性的."

236 Sasaki, "2008 Beijing Olympics: A Three-Part Plan That Satisfies Immediate Landscape Design Needs While Also Anticipating the Future," https://www.sasaki.com/projects/2008-beijing-olympics/.

FIG. 5.12 Master Plan of the Olympic Park (source: Sasaki. (2002). 2008 Beijing Olympics: A three-part plan that satisfies immediate landscape design needs while also anticipating the future. Retrieved from https://www.sasaki.com/projects/2008-beijing-olympics/)

FIG. 5.13 Symbolic schemes and metaphors applied in the urban and landscape design proposal of the Olympic Park (source: Sasaki. (2002). 2008 Beijing Olympics: A three-part plan that satisfies immediate landscape design needs while also anticipating the future. Retrieved from https://www.sasaki.com/projects/2008-beijing-olympics/)

Ultimately, symbolism is maximised by the architecture as a crucial component of the park in the end, supporting the Chinese civic identity. Since the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games, the National Stadium 'Bird's Nest' and the National Aquatics Centre 'Water Cube' have become recognised worldwide, supported by their distinctive architectural styles, materials, and structures (Figure 5.14). Considered a 'dramatic' structure, the National Stadium articulates extreme complexity, whereas the National Aquatics Centre compensates with a 'pure and softer' appearance.[237] Realised by a collective effort of global and local experts[238], the two buildings not only represent the nation's step into the global stage, but also exemplify transculturation, through recognised, even idealised, national emblems of sport.

237 Huadong Li, "新世纪中国建筑的印记—北京奥运建筑设计综述 (Inprint of China's Architecture in the New Century)," 世界建筑, no. 4 (2004).

238 The global exchange of architectural knowledge and service has largely contributed to the success of the two Olympic architectural projects. The design of the National Stadium was created by a joint effort of the architect team Herzog & De Meuron, project architect Stefan Marbach, and led by chief architect Xianggang Li. The National Aquatics Centre was created by an association of global and local composed by PTW Architects, Arup, China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCDE), and China Construction Design International (CCDI). See: https://web.archive.org/web/20080606051308/http://www.arup.com/eastasia/project.cfm?pageid=2184 ; http://www.ptw.com.au/ptw_project/watercube-national-swimming-centre/

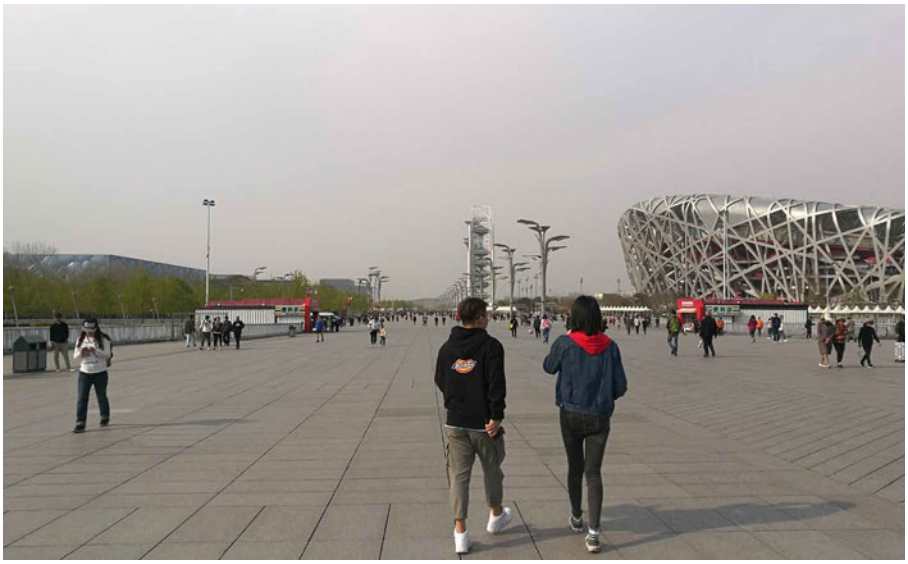

FIG. 5.14 The National Aquatics Centre ('Water Cute') and the National Stadium ('Bird's Nest') (source: author photo, 2019)

5.2.2 Re-imagining Symbolic Public Space

In addition to creating a cultural symbol that confirms the Chinese cultural identity, another goal of the Olympic Park project was to initiate a redevelopment of the surrounding urban areas. It proposed various civic-oriented functions and programmes as well as a long-term development plan for the adjacent districts.

First, the Olympic Park has a fairly different spatial structure and function compared to other public spaces in Beijing that represent similar identities. For instance, compared to the Tiananmen Square, which can be considered as an iconic space on the central axis of Beijing and a potent example of symbolic and civic space, the Olympic Park articulates a different, more contemporary modern focus in spatial design. The Tiananmen Square, designed in the 1950s, reflects "the tradition of representing power through the central axis"[239] by its unitary form and function, rigidly defined boundary, and sacred forms of the surrounding buildings; the accessibility and movement of visitors to the square are also strictly regulated.

239 Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*, 171.

On the contrary, the Olympic Park has open boundaries and diverse spaces for public leisure, supported by urban green, sports, cultural activities, and commerce. Along the axis the network of public spaces is enlarged with indoor malls, like the Xin'ao Shopping Centre (新奥购物中心) and Rainbow Department Store (天虹商场). With their design, Sasaki especially informs the design briefs of the National Stadium and the National Aquatics Centre too, in order to "form a gateway to civic spaces of the urban district."[240] While the Olympic Park may not directly assert power on this outcome, the design has portrayed a nuanced image of symbolic public space, representing a new urban reality in which civicness, and, to lesser degree, commerce, are brought together.

Moreover, besides spatial composition, the social and cultural activities taking place in the park also form the characteristics of the park as public space. Despite being such a unique place for special events, the Olympic Park does not dissociate from the everyday practices of emerging modern public life. One illustrative example is the spontaneous gathering of people for square dancing in the open spaces between buildings on the east side of the central pedestrian path (Figure 5.15). As a popular social and leisure activity in contemporary China, square dancing is seen in public parks, city squares, and neighbourhood spaces in almost every Chinese city. The Olympic Park has become an optimal place for this practice due to its size and accessibility. Hence, Beijing Olympic Park as a symbolic public space has staged both collective images of the nation and the practice of everyday life.

This intention of civic transformation is most evident in Sasaki's comment regarding the end of the Olympic axis of Beijing with a forest park as 'a grand civic gesture', as it has created a large public green space to be enjoyed by all.[241] Furthermore, the forest park blends recreational space with natural areas, which is different from the traditional urban green areas in Beijing that are associated with historical sites and monuments (such as the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and Beihai Park).[242] This gesture, according to Sasaki, has broadened the scope of development of public space in the city by setting a new example.[243]

240 Sasaki, "2008 Beijing Olympics: A Three-Part Plan That Satisfies Immediate Landscape Design Needs While Also Anticipating the Future".

241 "The Olympics: Past, Present, and Future," https://www.sasaki.com/voices/the-olympics-past-present-and-future/.

242 The Temple of Heaven (天坛), the Summer Palace (颐和园), and Beihai Park, or the Winter Palace (北海公园) are all representative historic parks in Beijing.

243 Sasaki, "The Olympics: Past, Present, and Future".

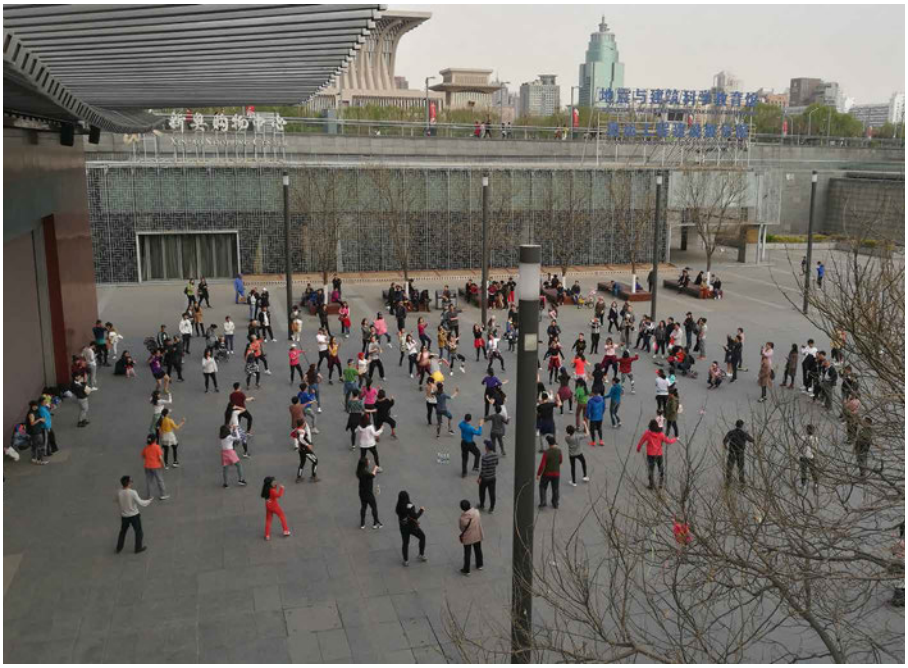

FIG. 5.15 Square dancing at Beijing Olympic Park (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

Whereas the emergence of public parks in Chinese cities sought to open up imperial properties to larger groups in society in line with the civic reformation at the beginning of the twentieth century, a hundred years later, the Olympic Park project has introduced one of the largest public parks in Beijing, driven by modernisation and embedded in a more open and globalised urban context. The Olympic Park has reimagined symbolic public space in the twenty-first century Chinese city, adding civic meanings and commercial functions to the monumental site in order to strengthen collective identities, thereby influencing a future-oriented transformation of the urban centre towards a hybrid reality of symbolism, civicness, and to lesser degree, economic reform.

5.3 Commercial Space: Beijing's Parkview Green Shopping Centre

The commercial public space, represented by an urban public interior, is the third new type of urban space that this chapter investigates. The shopping centre and the department store are prevailing types of commercial urban development in the recent modernisation of Chinese cities. They were assimilated and developed from the shopping centres and the department stores that emerged and prevailed in North America and Europe during the twentieth century, and subsequently spread throughout the world. While being 'a malleable architectural type' that travelled across geographical and cultural territories[244], the shopping centre has been a controversial type regarding the topic of public space in the West. Since the late twentieth century, it has been criticised as marking the end of public space linked with lacking social and civic meanings and being purely dominated by private interests and consumptive practices.[245] After landing in China, the shopping centre initially experienced a similar story, but alternated its path into an acculturated course driven by particular political, economic, and governmental conditions coming along with Chinese urbanisation.

5.3.1 Urban Complex: The Case of Parkview Green

During the last ten years in particular, the growing online shopping industry (网购, *wanggou*), started to alter people's consumptive propensities in China. Eventually, this trend dominated daily shopping by use of smartphones. As a result, the shopping mall, as originally introduced, gradually turned into a secondary choice for actual consumer needs. In order to maintain its competitiveness against the changing economic conditions caused by online shopping, the shopping mall gained a new form as the so-called (urban) 'complex' (综合体, *zongheti*). As an evolved version of the shopping mall, the urban complex first appeared in nearby South-East Asian countries with tropical climate, providing a diversified commercial, leisure and entertainment programme. These complexes featured large-scale indoor spaces covered by roofs. People favoured such places because they offered a fully air-conditioned environment and a variety of social and cultural activities.

244 Janina Gosseye and Tom Avermaete, eds., *Acculturating the Shopping Centre* (Routledge, 2019).

245 Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space.*

Substituting the idea of shopping centres, the urban complex has become a new archetype in China in the recent two decades.[246]

The rapid emergence of the urban complex contributed to fast urbanisations and their associated quick profits in the real estate industry. This building type characterised by generic style and uniform lay-out was criticised as a clone product. Associated with this design practice, critics target, as they do in Western cities, the privatisation of public space by control and surveillance in places, such as enclosed atriums, malls, and commodification of social space into sites of consumption.[247] In China, too, this new type of space was categorised as one of such new public spaces. These public spaces "are generating simultaneously a new dynamism and experiencing a devaluation of the public sphere."[248] This statement may be true from a political, economic, and governmental point of view, but one can hardly deny that in contemporary Chinese cities, public life is largely taking place inside these urban complexes. From its spatial, social, and cultural condition, it encapsulates a variety of functions and experiences like offices, dining, sports clubs, salons, as well as education and other civic programmes.[249] In fact, this upgraded version of the shopping mall has become a widely used public space in Chinese cities.

Parkview Green in Beijing (also commonly known by its Chinese name Qiaofu Fangcaodi, 侨福芳草地), serves as a third case study, and is an ample example of making a commercial project into a new place for urban publics, while generating a new dynamism of the public realm. Located in the Central Business District (CBD) of Chaoyangmen Outer District (朝阳门外) and the east of Beijing's historic centre (Figure 5.16), the privately-owned Parkview Green is designed by the Hong Kong -based firm Integrated Design Associates Ltd. (IDA) in collaboration with partners including the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design (BIAD) and Arup.[250] The design and construction of the project lasted twelve years, after its initial design concept being drafted in 2000. The building was finally opened to the public in 2012.[251]

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246 Chris Abel and Lin (translator) Zhu, "生活在同一屋顶下: 北京可持续发展新模式 (Life under One Roof: Beijing's New Model of Sustainability)," *Architectural Creation*, no. 1 (2015).

247 Sophie Watson, "The Public City," in *Understanding the City: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*, ed. John Eade and Christopher Mele (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 54. See also: David J Madden, "Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park," *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 118.

248 Gaubatz, "New Public Space in Urban China: Fewer Walls, More Malls in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining."

249 See also: Angèle Cauchois, "China's Malls Offer New Arenas of Socialisation," Modu Magazine, https://www.modumag.com/in-brief/chinas-malls-offer-new-arenas-of-socialisation/.

250 Integrated Design Associate Ltd., "Parkview Green (Fangcaodi)," http://www.ida-hk.com/project/parkview-green/.

251 Shudong Li et al., "北京侨福芳草地综合体设计随感 (Design Stories of Parkview Green Fangcaodi)," 建筑创作, no. 1 (2015).

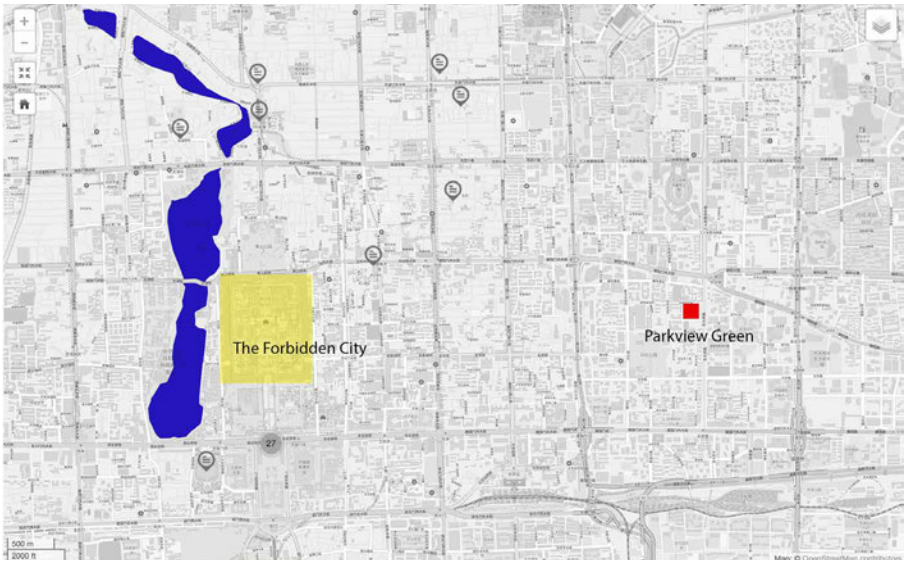

FIG. 5.16 The location of Parkview Green in Beijing (source: author drawing)

5.3.2 Re-assembling Publics in Commercial Development

After its opening, the building immediately attracted a giant crowd of visitors with its fascinating indoor installations and art sculptures: the urban complex even became a tourist attraction. Although Parkview Green was a costly project, it did not receive the similar criticisms that were associated with the mega Western Modernistic complexes with features featuring machine-like functional zoning and excessive spaces. Instead, by elaborating the design of common spaces that attract and assemble different urban publics, the Chinese design countered the reported problems of such complexes in Western cities associated with the loss of urbanity[252], and thus the 'loss' of public space.

The case of Parkview Green is interesting foremost because while drafting the design concept, developers already intended to challenge the conventional way of developing large mixed-used commercial projects.[253] Emphasising and initiating a social space was the first crucial point of the design concept.

252 Rong Zhou and Ken Yeung, "回忆未来: 有关 "侨福芳草地" 的城市札记 (Recollecting Future: Notes on Parkview Green)," ibid.

253 Ltd., "Parkview Green (Fangcaodi)".

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Parkview Green consists of four buildings under a triangular glass roof. In the centre is a courtyard-like atrium delineated by stairs, bridges, and extended terraces of the surrounding buildings, and it is connected to the outdoor sunken garden. Due to the three-dimensional connections, people from surrounding area can easily reach the central atrium. This setting generates multiple ways to encounter publicness, not only between people, but also between people and architectural spaces.

Secondly, the design of Parkview Green also embraces the established Western concept of a 'city within a city'[254] and the Chinese concept related to 'village in the city'[255], with the aim to return to the characteristics of rich urbanity. Spatial, social, and cultural complexity and diversity, two important qualities of a traditional livable city, are articulated by the various aspects of the design: particularly, its highly compound of programmes and mixture of functions. The ambiguous functional division and the intertwining traffic flows of the complex connect the diverse civic programmes organically, similar to a real city, with conventional functions — such as retail, quality catering, and office — along with unconventional programmes — such as gallery, exhibition hall, and clubhouse.[256]

The design of Parkview Green elaborates the social and cultural dimensions of Chinese public spaces as urban complexes, not only through the intricate spatial organisation, but also through an interior design with distinct symbolic features as eye-catching elements. The sculptures have attracted visitors: they create an artistic visual atmosphere and offer cultural programmes (Figure 5.17–18). The art programmes have extended the complex beyond solely a shopping destination or a leisure place for the weekend commercial activities; for example, Parkview Green provides a stage for free art exhibitions in combination with commercial activities and events.[257] As such, the space is open to and enjoyed by a broader public. In this sense, Parkview Green posits an alternative symbolic form and appearance in this type of commercial space for the urban public.

254 See Harteveld, *Interior Public Space: On the Mazes in the Network of an Urbanist*, 460–70.

255 See Bruno De Meulder, Lin Yanliu, and Shannon Kelly, *Village in the City* (Zurich: Park Books, 2014). Stefan Al et al., *Villages in the City: A Guide to South China's Informal Settlements*, vol. 1 (Hong Kong University Press, 2014).

256 Li et al., "北京侨福芳草地综合体设计随感 (Design Stories of Parkview Green Fangcaodi)."; Zhou and Yeung, "回忆未来: 有关 "侨福芳草地" 的城市札记 (Recollecting Future: Notes on Parkview Green)."

257 Jie Zhang and Peng Liu, "行走于艺术与技术之间——北京侨福芳草地 (the Parkview Green)," 建筑技艺, no. 11 (2014).

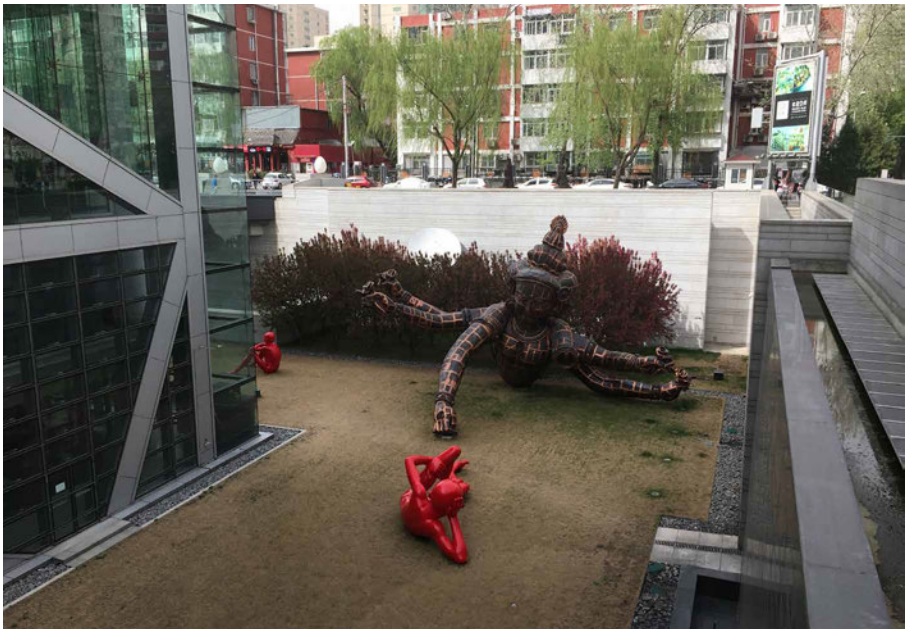

FIG. 5.17 Sculptures in the sunken garden (source: author photo, 2019)

FIG. 5.18 Sculptures in the interior of the building (source: author photo, 2019)

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5.3.3 Connecting Global and Local: The Commercial Space

The realisation of Parkview Green, chiefly led by Integrated Design Associates, has profoundly engaged with global design discourse and alternative cultural perspectives. However, despite its highly modern image, the urban complex articulates intricate connections with intertwined public-private relations in traditional Chinese architecture.

The founder of the Integrated Design Associates, Winston Shu, although professionally educated in the West and pursued his early career at Foster+Partners in London[258], has not been detached from his Chinese cultural heritage. His deep interests in traditional Chinese architecture are reflected in the conception of spatial, social, and cultural conditions as designed in Parkview Green. Arguably, these conform to the Chinese courtyard house archetype, within a CBD context, rather than in a residential area. The exterior of the complex appears rather geometrical and rational, thus sharply contrasting its miscellaneous and ambiguous interior. This reflects a binary of inside and outside within archetypical Chinese architecture.[259] Shu claims that this approach is inspired by the characteristics of the traditional Chinese garden, which is not obviously visible on the outside, yet has a completely different and detail 'universe' inside.[260]

The form of Parkview Green seems, on one hand, to originate from the archetype of the Chinese courtyard house; yet on the other hand, acting as an urban complex, it is accessible to the city and is integrated into the larger urban networks. Its connection with the urban context is realised by an almost two-hundred-metre-long pedestrian bridge that diagonally transects its atrium space, which is independent of commerce in the complex (Figure 5.19). This bridge allows passersby and users to walk through the space without patronising any shop. The bridge is duly labelled as an 'internal landmark' of the mall[261], and as a connection between the public interior and the broader public realm — opening up to other publics.

258 Winston Shu (徐滕) is a Chinese architect from Hong Kong and the founder and principal of the Hong Kong-based architectural firm Integrated Design Associates. See: http://www.ida-hk.com/team/founder/

259 See Chapter Four.

260 Zhou and Yeung, "回忆未来: 有关 "侨福芳草地" 的城市札记 (Recollecting Future: Notes on Parkview Green)," 14.

261 Ibid.

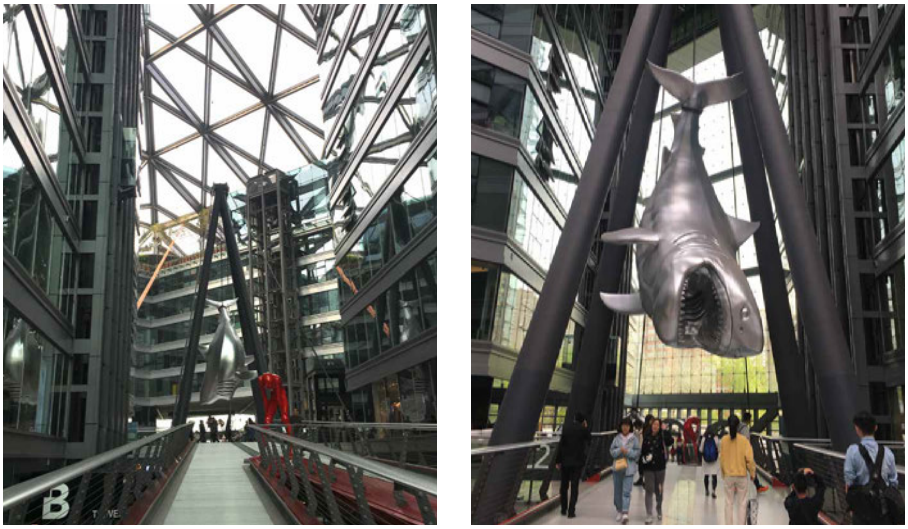

FIG. 5.19 The pedestrian bridge as an 'internal landmark' connecting the interior with the city, as an extension of the urban realm (source: author photo, 2019)

Similar to the European and American department store of the 1990s, Parkview Green gave rise to new horizons of consumption-led social experiences in public spaces. In *The Cultures of Cities*, Zukin defines such trends as a sociality that follows the common pursuit of commodities.[262] As addressed here in Chapter Two, in China, this sociality is fundamentally rooted within the city: in the Chinese marketplace. Throughout Chinese urban history, the marketplace has never been merely a trading and consumption space, but always as a place for gathering and communication, exemplifying functional and social plurality, and the intimate manner of communication. These features of the marketplace are encapsulated in the historical streets of the past and in the contemporary mix-used mall. This comparison suggests that the urban complex type resonates with the sociality of consumption space cultivated in the Chinese marketplace.

Besides implicitly responding to Chinese tradition, the urban complex exemplifies a new form of public space in Chinese cities driven by consumption and inspires new patterns of sociality, particularly among young generations and new middle class. As these users wander the interior space, taking selfies and socialising with friends, they enjoy being the fashionable part of society; further, Parkview Green also offers a pioneering experience of art and aesthetics. From this perspective, the commercial

262 Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," 189.

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space as a concept plays an important role in contemporary urban life in China as it stages a new public culture that (re-)combines shopping, leisure, and entertainment (Figure 5.20).

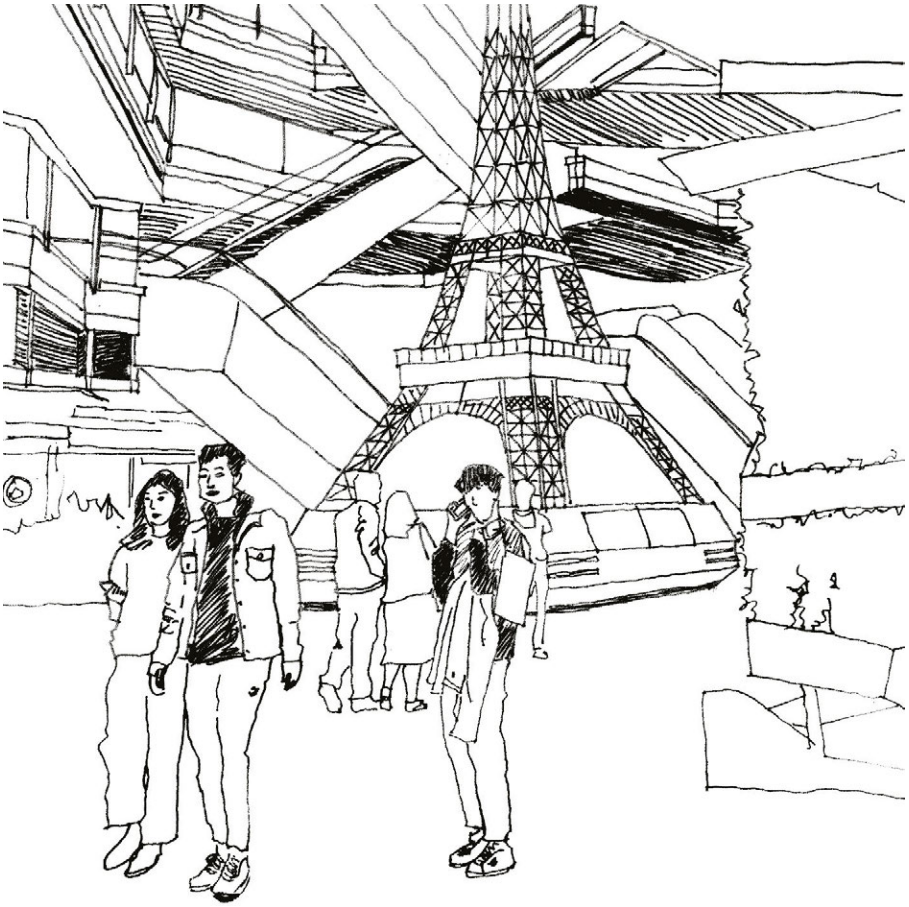

FIG. 5.20 Sketch of the interior showing the style and vibe of Parkview Green, an illustration of the urban complex as a stage for a new public culture that combines shopping, leisure, and entertainment (source: author drawing)

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5.4 Public Space in the Urban Centre

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been a persisting interest to redevelop the central areas of Chinese cities towards modernisation and global competitiveness. In this process, public space acts as a tool to reform urban centres in order to fulfil urban development goals, and as a means to stage visions of urban public life. Considering this perspective, this chapter has investigated public space in the urban centres — both outdoor urban spaces and a type of public interior — that represent the redevelopment of urban centres during the three decades following the 'Reform and Opening-up' of China. As global urban types were introduced in the post-reform Chinese context, their urban and architectural designs have highlighted particular ways of understanding and constructing the Chinese notion of public space outside the community and residential space in Chinese cities: specifically, as civic space, symbolic space, and commercial space, as displayed in Bell-Drum Tower Square, Beijing Olympic Park, and Parkview Green.

The first case, BDT Square of the 1990s, emphasised a civic representation of the city centre by prioritising civic functions of the space: it focused on improving the quality of the urban environment and the diversity of everyday leisure activities for the well-being of all type of citizens. Created in the early 2000s, Beijing Olympic Park exemplifies the second type of public space as symbolic space and holds a strategic role in constructing the image and global competitiveness of Chinese cities in the twenty-first century. It is designed to represent reformed collective identities subjected to political, economic, and cultural goals, which went along with the opening-up of the country. Parkview Green urban complex exemplifies the third type of public space — commercial space — in the 2010s' global city. As a commercial interior with urban qualities that accommodate social activities, it assembles the urban public through the common pursuit of consumption, however whereby a different sociality also emerges and contributes to the public culture of contemporary Chinese cities.

From a close inspection of these three cases through spatial property, design approach, and social practice, common features of all three spaces are recognised and identified as being present in hybrid forms. BDT Square combines a modern civic square with commercial facilities and symbolic historic monuments; Beijing Olympic Park merges symbolism of the city's historic civic axis modestly with commerce; and Parkview Green introduces a commercial space with features of a civic centre through its activities and programmes, and further, adds symbolic value by means of art. Therefore, considering the importance of these three cases, hybrid forms

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of public space are well recognised and accepted in Chinese cities with special considerations for: first, these new public spaces that possess central positions in the city have accommodate modern public life; and second, they establish meaningful connections with either the past, representing a Chinese cultural tradition, or with the future, as an emblem of the political, economic, and governmental visions for the Chinese city. Through form, these urban and architectural types are created, and through practice and meaning, they are situated in the Chinese context.

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Hutong scene, Beijing (author photo, 2019)

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6 Fluid and Dynamic Space

Lively Streets as Negotiated Public Space in the Intersecting Networks of the City

Part of this text has appeared previously in modified form in Wenwen Sun, "Negotiated Public: Investigating the Streetscape of Beijing's Old City," in AESOP 2019 Conference - Book of Papers (Venice, Italy: AESOP, 2019).

Addressed in the previous chapter and throughout the entire thesis, a rapid modernisation process in the post-reform era, propelled by global exchanges of knowledge and ideas, has largely changed China's urban landscape and its public realm. Among others, the straightening, widening, and paving of streets is considered another major effort to remake Chinese cities.[263] The re-development of streets has not only changed the means of commuting and transportation but also altered the way of experiencing the city. As "primary intersections between the individual and the city"[264], the street network connects the communal realm to the anonymous urban realm, and as such, it is a third and last fundamental exemplar to understand public space in post-reform Chinese cities.

The Chinese street that this chapter examines contests the concept and practice of public space at a local scale, rather than a city-wide scale. This perspective comes from the observation that many spontaneous activities and witnesses of everyday life spill out of the built spaces, especially in the historic areas in Chinese cities. Such observations find their parallels in the theoretical debates on public space mainly in

263 Joseph Esherick, Remaking the Chinese City : Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950, (Honolulu: University of Hawaiì Press, 2000). 2.

264 Margaret Crawford, "Blurry the Boundaries: Public Space and Private Life," in *Everyday Urbanism*, ed. John Chase, Margaret Crawford, and John Kaliski (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), 26.

the US during the 1990s, such as the works of Nancy Fraser, Margaret Crawford, and Sharon Zukin. Although these studies have not yet been fully and explicitly engaged in the contemporary debate of urban design and architecture in China, they put similar emphases on such phenomena. Fraser contests the normative political and civic ideals of the public sphere (referring to Habermas's notion of the öffentlichkeit) in her 1990 essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, addressing the plurality of competing publics beyond "the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public."[265] Following Fraser's sounding discourse, Crawford's research on the public spaces of some American cities projects the contestation of concept into the physical built environment, identifying "other sites of public expression" excluded by the official expression of architecture in urban development.[266] Embedded in the city, Crawford's depiction of 'everyday space' in her important article *Blurry the Boundaries:*

Public Space and Private Life sheds new lights on the undefined social practices in the so-called marginal urban spaces (such as the garage sale in Los Angeles).[267] From a different angle (urban economy), Zukin also acknowledges the crucial role of everyday experiences and gestures of citizens in (re-)making and (re-)defining public culture. In her 1995 book *The Cultures of Cities*, Zukin argues that the public culture of a city is "socially constructed on a micro-level."[268]

In contemporary urban China, some phenomena are comparable to the cases mentioned in these works in terms of conflictual and transient practices of public space.[269] In the late 2010s, similar perspectives and arguments can be found in sociological studies of public space in China. Chinese geographer Junxi Qian argues that "urban publics are not merely abstract ideological constructions, but enlivened by concrete, situated practices;" the fluid and dynamic nature of public space is "not always explicable in terms of normative political and civic ideals" but is instead ensured by everyday life and practices.[270]

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265 Referring to the definition of the public sphere by Jürgen Habermas in Strukturwandel der öffentlichkeit, 1962
(The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society, translated in English in 1989). Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," 61.

266 Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles," 5.

267 John Chase, Margaret Crawford, and John Kaliski, eds., *Everyday Urbanism*, Expanded edition ed. (New York, N.Y.: Monacelli Press, 1999). Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities." Peter G Goheen, "Public Space and the Geography of the Modern City," *Progress in Human Geography* 22, no. 4 (1998).

268 Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," 11.

269 Despite the significant differences in the cultural and political systems and in the urban histories of USA and China

270 Qian, "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China," 17-18.

Siding with their arguments, this chapter is particularly interested in the micro socio-spatial practices on the streets of Chinese cities and how they are understood and informed by design practices. Taking the historic centre of Beijing as a case study again, this chapter investigates a specific type of street, the lane or *hutong*, which mediates between the artery street and the courtyards, and in this way, it forms the grid system of the historic city.[271] During the post-reform period, the developments of housing, shopping, leisure, and entertainment in Beijing brought about many changes to the historic centre in the dwelling condition, street profile, and social activities. The area represents a challenging urban context of contemporary China where history faces new urban developments, local context confronts global force, and traditions encounter new urban cultures. In such a context, the micro-level practices on the street reflect a different picture of the public realm from the repetitive and generic one created by the High-Modernist planning of the city: narrow rather than broad, human instead of mechanic, and self-grown other than planned.

This picture visualises an expression of the street tattooed with cultural characteristics and other meanings apart from commuting and transportation, which inspires a last layer in understanding the notion of public space in Chinese cities.

By the case study of Beijing again, this chapter frames an understanding of the street in contemporary urban China as a 'negotiated public space' that manifests fluid and dynamic characteristics. In general, the act of negotiation is conducted by two or more parties to decide on one particular issue or to achieve a common goal. On one hand, the urban spaces created by hutongs seem part of the communal realm, in which the social dynamics of personal connections play an important role. On the other hand, these spaces have become attractive for tourists and visitors of various origins and backgrounds. Residents and visitors encounter, mingle, and collide on these streets, manifesting different spatial and social dynamics from those of the purely communal space. The notion of negotiation provides a novel perspective to review and understand the fluidity and dynamics of space embedded in the situated practices of everyday life — not by intentional design. As such, this last chapter is largely based upon observations and interviews, and less on literature. Furthermore, this perspective hopes to inspire future debates on the transformation of Chinese cities and practices of public space among architects, urban designers, and other actors involved in this process.

The research of this chapter employs both ethnographic and analytical design methods to investigate the streets of some old neighbourhoods in historic Beijing,

271 See Chapter Four.

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including visual analyses, photography, interviews with the residents, and analytical reduction drawings. In this manner, it documents and studies how spatial practices articulate a negotiated public realm, respectively regarding the use, the design, and the management of the street spaces. The use is related to the appropriation of the street by different social groups. In the studied areas, appropriation is mostly realised via social agreement and spatial conflict as ways of negotiating rights to public spaces. The design includes both realised interventions and design initiatives that confront the informal interventions produced by the residents. The management refers to how the function and spatial order of the streets in the hutong is maintained by additional spatial interventions and rules.

6.1 Negotiation of Use: Spatial Practice

The idea of negotiation in public space emerged from observations of the spontaneous uses and conflictual practices on the streets of Beijing's old city. The hanging of personal laundry above the designed public facilities defies the formal expression of urban public space; similarly, people inhabit the street by bringing out their chairs and tea tables from their living rooms, as if the street were their private ground; same with some grocery shops: their fruit stands occupy the front door space beyond their property, displaying commodities for public viewing and purchase. At first glance at this perplexing condition, people seem to exhaust the maximum availability of the street as a common property.

6.1.1 Common Agreement

Being in the hutong, one can clearly sense that what can be conceived as public and private uses within the street spaces, reflecting respectively more personal and collective realms in the Chinese city, does not seem to be determined by property. Rather, they do by some kinds of agreement among the residents themselves. This common agreement presents a different logic in using public space and an attitude towards it: public space sometimes can be 'privatised' in the condition of others' agreement. 'Setting up a common agreement' comprises the basic meaning of negotiation.[272]

272 Oxford English Dictionary, "Negotiation."

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One way of establishing a common agreement in the hutong, amongst others, is making a personal claim on the street. Displaying private belongings such as home furniture, vehicle, and laundry on the street is a conspicuous example of this social practice. The places where people make such a statement are often particular: the crossing of two alleys, the street corner, or in front of their doors, where they have the best view towards the surroundings (Figure 6.1; Figure 6.2).

FIG. 6.1 Examples of claiming street spaces by chairs and practising the space in the hutong (source: author photos, 2017-2019)

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FIG. 6.2 This bench is one of the few public benches that are frequently used by the residents, because it is at the crossing of two streets. This was observed and confirmed by a resident at Xianger Hutong in an interview in 2019. He explained that this place guaranteed the best view on what was happening in this hutong. (source: author photo, 2019)

FIG. 6.3 The contrast in bike parking between the two sides of the door at the interviewed household (source: author photo, 2019)

Besides displaying personal items, one can find simultaneously different approaches in making agreements. When a conflict of interests occurs in using the street spaces between two neighbours in close proximity, people set up a rule to defend the territory in a more implicit way through a long period of repetitive practices. In an interview with a hutong resident, he showed me the unique pattern of bike parking in front of his door: the left side was fully parked while the right side was empty (Figure 6.3).

"This is because," he explained, "the neighbour living in the right door does not want bikes parking next to his door, but we do not care so much." About how this has become a common agreement in the community, he put further, "some time ago, he had been keeping moving away bikes from his front door area for about two months, and that was perhaps how he set up this rule."

The idea of the common agreement illustrates that the street has been negotiated to become a public realm or a private territory not by land property or public rules but rather by autonomous spatial practices. Sometimes the common agreement is made explicit by personal occupations of the street space, and in other cases, it is more veiled behind the social dynamics of the community.

6.1.2 Spatial Conflict

The second specific act of negotiation in using the street is the spatial conflict, which refers to the conflictual spatial practices occurring on the street due to the diverging needs and interests of different social groups. As the English-American urban designer Donald Appleyard notes, "[…] streets have always been scenes of conflict. They are and have always been public property, but power over them is ambiguous."[273] The conflicts manifested by spatial practices in the hutong have contested the meaning of public space in terms appropriation and ownership.

According to the research, the spatial conflict takes over in the negotiation process when people fail to set up a common agreement. One of the conflictual points one can discover through observation and interview is the catch basin for rainwater in the hutong. In many places, the water wells that are supposed to be used for drainage have become dumping points for left-over food and rubbish. The dumped food often blocks rainwater from going down, which has deteriorated the street environment. To battle against this uncivilised behaviour, some residents first attempted to negotiate through written communication by putting a sign on the wall: "do not pour rubbish to the catch basin." However, this initial attempt to set up a common agreement failed in changing the situation. Eventually, people have to put a cover on the catch basin to physically prevent rubbish dumping (Figure 6.4).

273 Donald Appleyard, 1987. Forward. In: A.V. Moudon, *Public Streets for Public Use* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987).

FIG. 6.4 The covered catch basin and the warning sign on the wall (source: author photo, 2019)

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Taking a close look at the urban transformation process in the past years, we can understand that the spatial conflict is also a result of the emerging inequality in the right to public spaces caused by external forces. In Beijing's old city, the rise of real estate development since the 1990s and the massive development of tourism since the 2000s are decisive in this sense.[274] Notably, the cultural values embedded in the historic city generated an opportunity for developing tourism: within five years, many traditional courtyard houses were sold to real estate developers and private business entities.[275] The rapidly evolving gentrification changed the demographic structure of the old city, and the boosted domestic and international tourist trade largely threatened the limited public facilities in these urban areas.[276] The economic benefit brought by tourism development exacerbated the spatial and social conditions of the hutong. Both posh courtyard houses as restaurants or offices and crowded shantytown style shared units existed in one urban block, inhabited by both global business elites and the urban poor, and displayed a polarised economic condition.[277] The enlarging economic gap resulted in vast tension among different social classes and turned the street into an explicit site of conflicts.

Representatively, the arrival of automobiles, among the political, economic, and governmental changes affecting the spatial, social, and cultural conditions of the hutong, has generated a crucial point of conflict. Since the 1980s, the hutong area has been forced to accommodate cars despite its limited traffic capacity. The rising private car ownership in the area during the past decades and its associated parking requirements intensified the issue of spatial scarcity in the hutong. This resulted in many social confrontations articulated by conflicts on the street. One demonstration of the problems was the placement of old and broken bikes underneath the back window of a house or along the street. These bikes, which seemed like "pieces of art installation," were placed purposefully by some hutong residents to stop car packing next to their windows.[278]

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274 See Chapter Four about the development of tourism in Beijing's old city.

275 Ke Fang, 当代北京旧城更新: 调查, 研究, 探索 [The contemporary urban regeneration of Beijing: investigation, research, exploration] (Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, 2000). "Thinking on the Old Beijing City Preservation from the View of Urban Design," 世界建筑 *(world architecture)* 10 (2000).

276 Examples can be found in an interview after the renewal project of the Qianmen area from 2006 to 2009, published in an online article: Lutian Liu, "Can Beijing's Regeneration of the Old City Generate a New Life, or Just a New Fashional Topic? Is Old Beijing Dead?," Qdaily, https://www.qdaily.com/articles/33360.html. Original texts: "前门大街改造以后，以前在这里川流的街坊邻居们搬出了五环，很多老字号因为地租太贵就彻底告别了这里。" (Author translation: after the reconstruction of Qianmen Street, the residents of the neighbourhood here had to move out of the city centre, and many old trademarks disappeared because of the high rent.)

277 Jie Zhang, "Informal Construction in Beijing's Old Neighborhoods," *Cities* 14, no. 2 (1997).

278 Yifan Jia and Jinsheng Wu, 胡同印象 [The Impression of Hutong] (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2014).

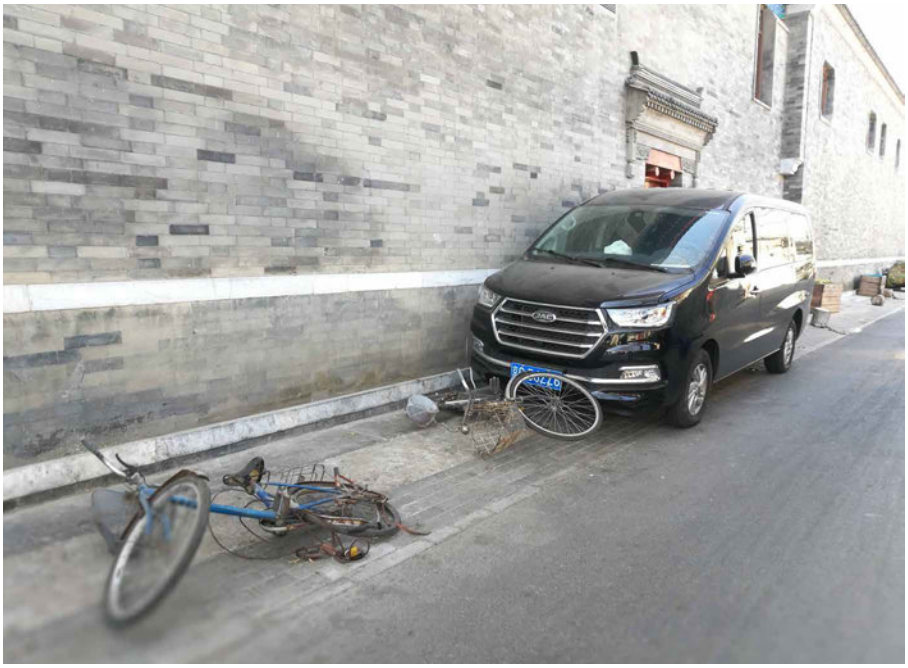

FIG. 6.5 The juxtaposition of two rusty bicycles and a car on the potential sidewalk (source: author photo, 2017)

Started already in the 1980s, this practice showcased people's struggle to refine the condition of being invaded by certain groups' privileged use of the street. Until the present, the bike trick is still used by car owners who have a designated parking place in the hutong to defend their property from others' occupation (Figure 6.5), who "effectively privatised public space to store a personal commodity."[279]

Conflict is a means of negotiation on the use of street space, which is more radical and practical than the common agreement. It reframes the idea of 'privatised' urban spaces into appropriation of public resources and re-negotiation of the unequal distributions of these resources. In this, conflict is also the material articulation of the layered social reality in the old city resulted from the co-existence of new comers and local residents in the rapid urban transformation. When looking at today's Chinese cities in this way, it raises the question of who controls public space that belongs to everyone.

279 Melissa Y Rock, "Interstitial Spaces of Caring and Community: Commodification, Modernisation and the Dislocations of Everyday Practice within Beijing's Hutong Neighbourhoods," in *Chinese Urbanism* (Routledge, 2018).

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6.2 Negotiation of Design: Ephemeral Intervention

'People with economic and political power have the greatest opportunity to shape public culture by controlling the building of the city's public spaces in stone and concrete. …The question of who can occupy public space, and so define an image of the city, is open-ended.' [280]

When seeing the ubiquitous laundry drying in the hutong, it may recall the statement made by Sharon Zukin in *The Cultures of Cities*. It might be one of the most illustrative examples of this questionable state of power in shaping the public realm. In the hutong, people have been smart and creative in using public facilities, such as utility poles, trees, and cables, to set up a space appropriated for drying their laundry (Figure 6.6). As in this case, the iron pole used for electricity has been spotted as a suitable tool to create their laundry device by installing a small piece of wood on the top of the pole (Figure 6.7). This additional device, simply a small wooden stick, has changed the nature of the pole from a public facility to a domestic tool. It is another demonstration of restructuring public space for the daily needs of domestic life.

This kind of practice, also understood as the informal structures reproduced by social actions,[281] is what can be called the 'ephemeral intervention' in an urban-architectural manner. Such actions, present short in time, demonstrate that not only the usage of street spaces but also that how the street could be designed and imagined is under negotiation. Different from the permanent interventions proposed by official city planning and design projects, the ephemeral intervention is personally-driven, temporary, and barely legitimate. Often initiated by individuals, it catalyses a change in the nature of the space. Thinking beyond the binary of design and appropriation, the two types of interventions — the permanent and the ephemeral — co-exist and collaborate in the hutong, offering a new perspective to the design of public space.

280 Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," 11.

281 Rock, "Interstitial Spaces of Caring and Community: Commodification, Modernisation and the Dislocations of Everyday Practice within Beijing's Hutong Neighbourhoods."

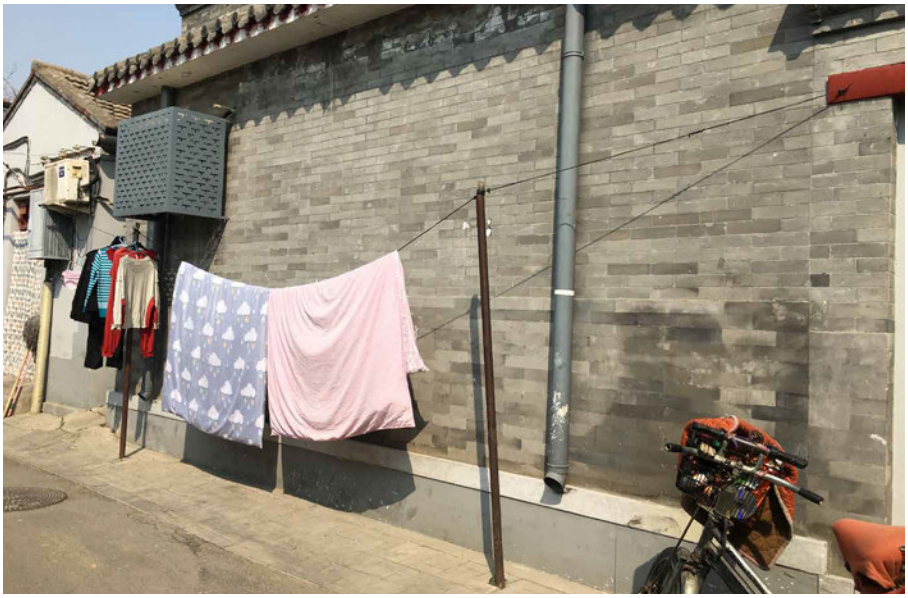

FIG. 6.6 Laundry drying on the street (source: author photo, 2019)

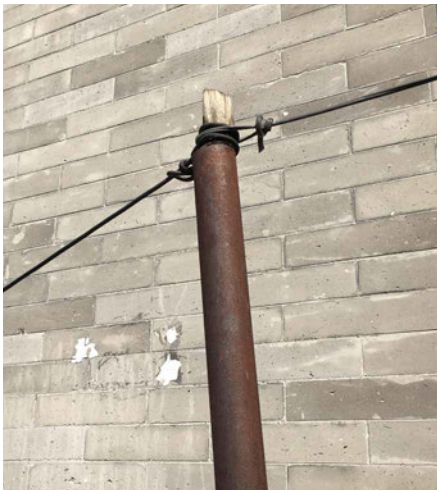

FIG. 6.7 The detail of the pole as a device for laundry (source: author photo, 2019)

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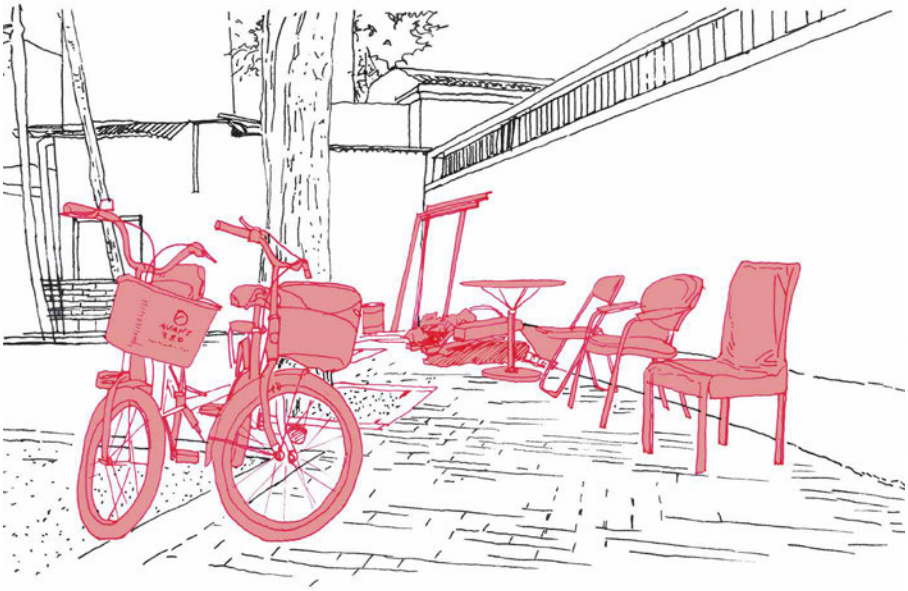

FIG. 6.8 The ephemeral interventions extracted from the urban environment and highlighted in red (source: author photo and author drawing, 2019)

Three examples can illustrate this. The first example is the crossing of the main street and the small alley, which has become a favoured place to stay and to gather among the residents of Houhainanyan Hutong (**后海南沿**) (Figure 6.8). This street corner, like many others, has been renovated with new ground pavements by a top-down regeneration plan for the old city during the past decade. Deviated from the initial plan, the street corner is turned into a controversial site by the ephemeral interventions. The ground, on one hand, is dirtied by a stack of waste, and its dark and oily surface indicates a lack of maintenance; on the other hand, unexpectedly, the street corner has still been claimed by chairs and tables and has become a social corner in the neighbourhood. The mingling of the chairs, the parked bikes, and the discards at this small corner demonstrates a negotiation between official interests of urban development and the residents' private needs of public space in the area.

Besides ground pavements, the municipality of Beijing also proposed benches, flowerbeds, signs, and other landscape sculptures as permanent interventions. They were either for refurbishing the street environment of the hutong area or, according to the residents, blocking illegal (unlicensed) developments of shops and cafés (Figure 6.9).

FIG. 6.9 Potted artificial plants along the street (source: author photo, 2019)

The second example is the Yuechunfang Hutong (乐春坊) of Baimi Community (白米社区), one of the renewed hutongs in the afore mentioned Shichahai historic area with almost completely renovated facades and street profiles. As permanent design interventions, the benches and plants placed along and at the corner of the street seem to aim for improving the public facilities and encouraging people to use the street as public space. But it turns out that these benches are only occasionally used by some passing-by tourists, and most of the time are occupied by laundries, as the line above the bench hanging bedroom items indicates (Figure 6.10; Figure 6.11). The bench's hardness and the laundry's softness not only present a striking visual contrast but also, in the form of conflict, indicate a negotiation between the designer's idea and people's perception and use of the urban space (Figure 6.12; Figure 6.13).

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FIG. 6.10 Tourists resting on a bench in Yuechufang Hutong neighbourhood (source: author photo, 2019)

FIG. 6.11 A line above the bench hanging bedroom items (source: author photo, 2018)

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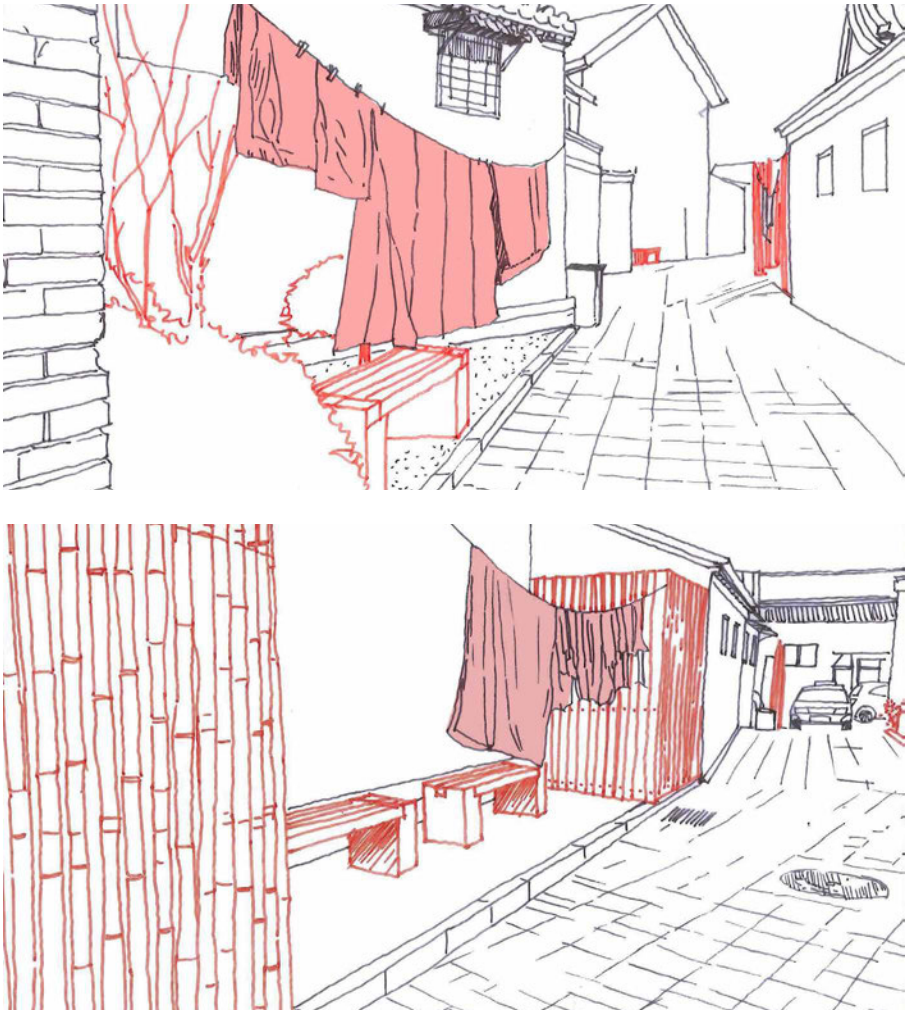

FIG. 6.12 The drawings have mapped the two types of interventions from the photo: the bench and the vegetation as the permanent interventions (red outline, no filling) and the hanging laundry as the ephemeral intervention (black outline, red filling) (source: author drawing, 2018)

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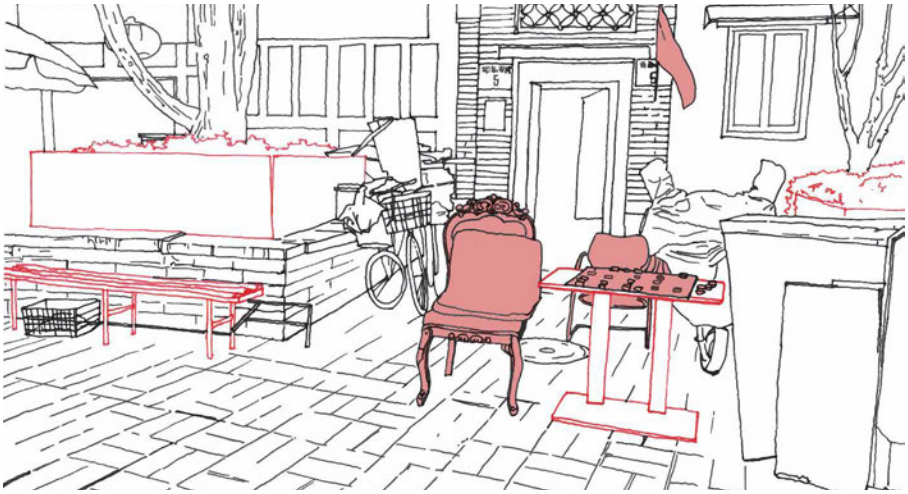

FIG. 6.13 Analysis of the permanent and ephemeral interventions in front of a house (source: author drawing)

The third example at Qianhaixi Street (前海西街) does not show the abovementioned controversy; quite on the contrary, it presents a harmonious co-existence of ephemeral spatial practices and permanent design interventions. The minimal design intervention, a small stone table in front of a door, is well recognised and used by people and has become a place for regular social activities in the neighbourhood. Joined by a private armchair, it is used for chess-playing or just for sitting.

In contrast, the metal bench along the pedestrian is only used for storing iteams underneath. The success of this minimal design intervention lies in the fact that it coincides with the local cultural habits and allows for the residents' self-design. It facilitates the cultural habit of using front-door area as an extension of living room, and thus supports and is supported by ephemeral interventions that the residents create (Figure 6.13).

The prevailing of ephemeral interventions in the hutong has demonstrated that the making of public space is by nature a constant negotiation among different actors involved (see other two examples in Figure 6.14). While the permanent intervention represents the will of city governors to shape the urban environment, the ephemeral intervention articulates people's claims to the city; while designers offer their insights on public space through projects and propositions, citizens tend to restructure it with their actions and practices. Such realities thus challenge us to rethink the role and limitation of urban design and architectural projects in shaping the urban public realm.

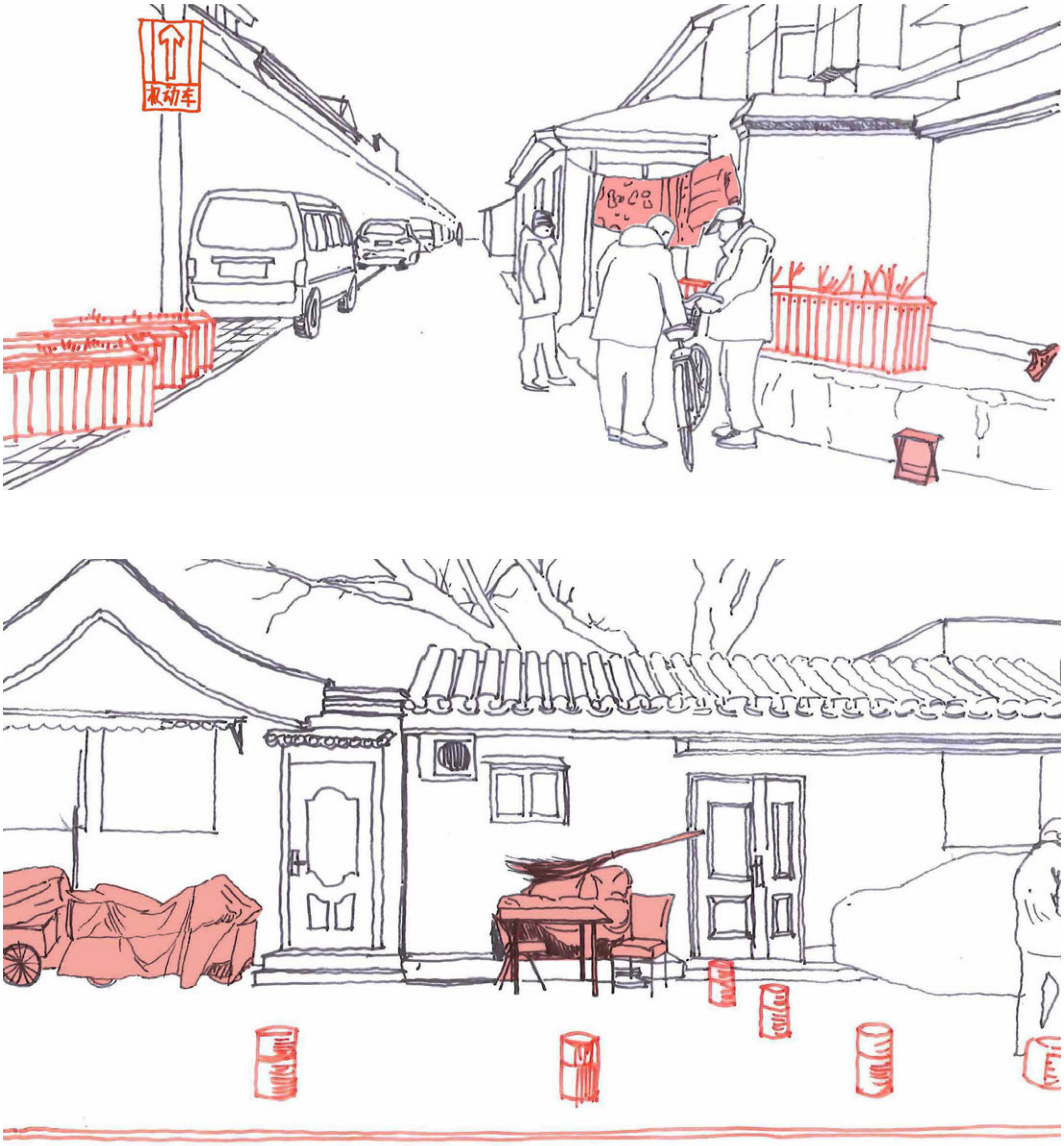

FIG. 6.14 Examples of mapping the permanent and ephemeral interventions in the observed street scene (source: author drawing, 2018)

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FIG. 6.15 'The Scagnèl' exhibited at the Dashilar Platform (source: Sans三思. 2020. "Part II 社区建设: 公共设施." https://www.sansi.info/zh/community-building.)

During the past decade, several urban regeneration projects have been implemented in this area, which initiated a debate about how to revive the culture and urbanity of historic cities through the power of design.[282] The controversial results of street renovation demonstrate that design will not be empowered without understanding and incorporating the social and cultural characteristics embedded in the practices of public space in a particular urban context. In the above-mentioned case studies, the negotiation between the permanent and ephemeral interventions is also a negotiation between the designer and the user, the public and the private, the personal and collective realms in the Chinese city. This is a crucial characteristic that urban designers and architects need to pay ample attention on when taking initiatives in this urban context.

In the recent decade, architects and urban designers of different cultural backgrounds started to observe and consider the practice of ephemeral intervention as a crucial characteristic of the hutong. In the discussed and well-known Dashilar urban renewal project for instance, several proposals have focused on improving street facilities by small interventions such as landscape furniture, greenery, sitting facility, and parking solution. Italian architect Luca Nichetto designed a set of stone stalls along a street of Dashilar area. This project, named *Scagnèl* (meaning 'little stall' in Venetian dialect), aimed to resolve the lack of public facilities in the hutong area. Nichetto came up with this idea after visiting the site and spotting the local residents bringing their chairs and sitting along the street (Figure 6.15).[283]

282 See, for example, the launching of an urban regeneration project named 'Encountering Shichahai' in 2016. Ao Yang, ""遇见什刹海"之"九个院子": 九组建筑师的旧城微更新," ArchDaily, http://www.archdaily.cn/cn/793229/yu-jian-shi-cha-hai-zhi-jiu-ge-yuan-zi-jiu-zu-jian-zhu-shi-de-jiu-cheng-wei-geng-xin.

283 大栅栏跨界中心, "大栅栏更新计划 (Dashilar Project)," 31.

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FIG. 6.16 Design proposal of the Hutong Folding Wall (source: KUO Space, 'Hutong Folding Wall,' Dashilar Platform)

Another street renovation project that explores this characteristic is the 'Hutong Folding Wall' by KUO Space in 2016. This project stands out initially due to its concept to search for a different logic in defining space in this traditional urban context. It defines this logic as the interchangeable division of the inside and the outside of architectural space and the dissolved boundary between them. As a result, the design primarily intervened on the boundary: the walls of the courtyard houses. It built a foldable device equipped with chairs and plants on the wall to not only reorganise the street space but also transform the wall "visually into something more (Figure 6.16)."[284] This design concept coincides with the nature of the ephemeral intervention as a cross-boundary practice. By temporarily and partly transforming the street into a domestic space, this practice shows that there is no clear-cut division between the communal space and the lanes, and neither is between the personal and collective realms.

Another interesting point of this project is that it describes these informal practices as lifestyle, raising the question "how to improve the *hutong* environment while keeping its compatibility for different lifestyles."[285] The diverse ways of using spaces represent diversified lifestyles in the hutong. While others see the hutong as crowed, messy, and overly used, the designers of KUO consider this condition as a 'lifestyle wisdom', which can be an alternative for the modern urban life in big cities. Again, this concept of lifestyle regards the ephemeral investigation as part of the local cultural practice that should be profoundly considered in the design of public space.

284 KUO Space, "Hutong Folding Wall," Dashilar Platform, http://www.dashilar.org.cn/en/index.htm#B!/en/ing/iBeijingDesignWeek.html.

285 Ibid.

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6.3 Negotiation of Management: On Barriers

Another prominent feature of the street, observed in Chinese cities, is ubiquitous physical barriers and fences, not merely in the hutongs but also elsewhere. Chapter Two relates this feature to the idea of regarding public space as the realm of strangers, contrasting the social space constructed around the relational circle. In the realm of strangers, the care for the self surpasses the care for unrelated others, resulting in a blurry boundary between public and private territories in terms of social behaviour. In the rapid urban transformation of the recent decades, physical barriers appeared to be a common intervention to regulate these cross-boundary practices, which affected the public realm of the Chinese city.

6.3.1 Barriers for Maintaining Orders

Not only to separate different functions and territories, physical barriers seem necessary for maintaining orders in the public space in Chinese cities. Where the barriers are weakened or removed, chaos occurs immediately. The first order to be maintained is separation of different traffic flows. This seems especially crucial in the hutong. As addressed in this chapter previously, traffic is an important factor that causes spatial conflicts in the hutong. Physical barriers become the only effective means of separation when other measures, such as changing ground pavement and installing traffic signs, fail to clearly separate auto vehicles from pedestrian (Figure 6.17).

Parking is the second order that requires special measures to maintain. The patterns of parking in the hutong articulate a challenge in managing the street space. As this example demonstrates, although a row of stone posts is built to protect the bicycle shelter along the street from car occupation, they cannot prevent smaller auto vehicles from occupying the bicycle shelter (Figure 6.18). This means that the barriers need to be not only physical but also continuous. Only a physical and continuous setup of barriers can effectively regulate public behaviours in this context.

FIG. 6.17 The physical separation of car traffic from pedestrian (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

FIG. 6.18 The bicycle parking invaded by other vehicles (source: photo by Piero Medici, 2019)

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6.3.2 Design Initiatives for Managing the New Urban Condition

In recent years, urban designers and architects started to explore design possibilities to manage the spatial conflicts in the hutong. These projects and proposals explored alternative ways of managing public space by design rather than using sheer barriers. A 2013 project named 'Folding-Parking Claw' by WAX Architects[286] and the Beijing-based Laboratory for Creative Design (LCD) is one of such experiments, which intends to resolve the parking issues generated by the increasing number of auto vehicles in the hutong. 'Folding-Parking Claw' is a multi-functional parking regulating device that can be folded into different shapes, both 2D and 3D. As a spatial element, it is designed to block car parking and can be transformed into a device for other activities, such as sitting, lighting, and street sign (Figure 6.19). The device aimed to release the tension between cars and people, as well as to return public space to the local communities.[287]

FIG. 6.19 Folding-Parking Claw (source: Sans三思. 2020. "Part II 社区建设: 公共设施." https://www.sansi.info/zh/community-building.w)

286 WAX Architects is architectural firm based in Munich and Beijing, founded by Nicolaus Wabnitz and Feng Xu. See: https://www.wax-architects.com/about/

287 Sans三思. 2020. "Part II 社区建设: 公共设施." https://www.sansi.info/zh/community-building. Retrived in August 2022
大栅栏跨界中心, "大栅栏更新计划 (Dashilar Project)," 32.

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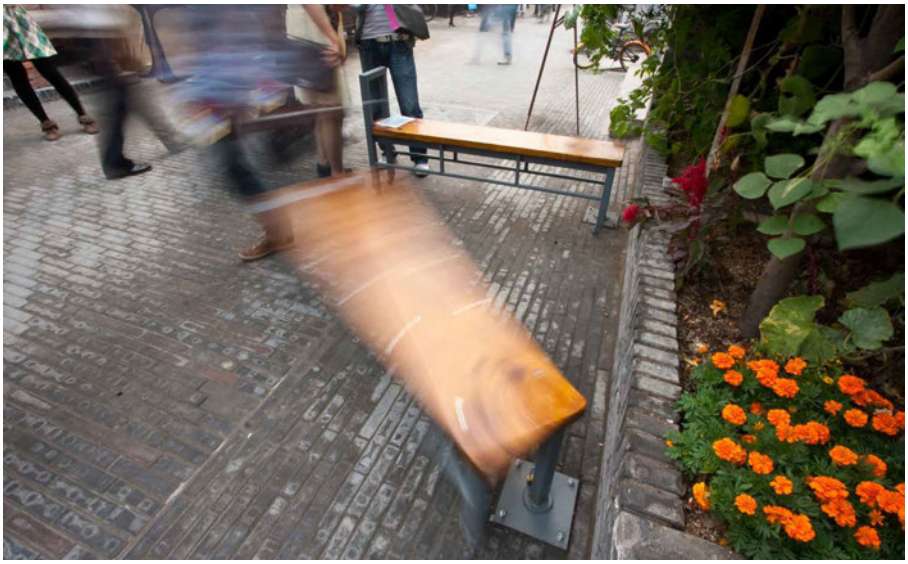

FIG. 6.20 Stop-Pavilion (停/亭) by Arup (source: Sans三思. 2020. "Part II 社区建设: 公共设施." https://www.sansi.info/zh/community-building.)

Dealing with the same issue, the project entitled 'Stop-Pavilion (停/亭)' by the British architectural firm Arup[288] has provided another flexible parking solution in the hutong, which can be operated by the residents themselves.[289] In order to improve the traffic condition in the narrow hutongs of Yangmeizhu Xiejie, or Yangmeizhu Byway (杨梅竹斜街), in Dashilar area, Arup designed a bench-like object, with one leg fixed to the ground and the other three installed with wheels. It can be rotated to define the street space in different ways: when it is in parallel with the road, it becomes either normal benches or flower shelves; when pulled perpendicular to the road edge, it functions as a device to block the parking space and to prevent cars from pulling in the hutong (Figure 6.20).

The unstoppable urban transformation has drastically changed the way street as a collective realm of the city is developed and managed in the recent decade. The ubiquitous and intense physical barriers represent the interest of top-down shaping and regulating of the city, while the design practices have explored the possibilities of bottom-up regulation of public space. In both cases, the established managing devices on the street have underscored negotiation as an essential aspect of this new urban condition.

288 Arup Group Limited is a British design firm founded in 1946.

289 Sans三思. 2020. "Part II 社区建设: 公共设施." https://www.sansi.info/zh/community-building. Retrived in August 2022.

6.4 The Emerging Order of Coexistence

This chapter, by investigating the spatial and social dynamics of a typical type of street in Chinese cities, the hutong, has elaborated on the fluid and dynamic characteristics of public space in contemporary Chinese cities. This characteristic is enabled by negotiations in three dimensions: the use, making, and managing of the streets. As such, the urban and architectural practices of the post-reform era relate the Chinese notion of public space to fluid and dynamic space.

Common agreement is the first form of negotiation concluded from how the street has been used or appropriated in the hutong. It shows that operating collective spaces is also ordering social relations. Beside common agreement, the collective use of the street is also negotiated through conflictual and contradictory spatial practices. These practices have not only materialised the contested nature of public space but also demonstrated the ambiguous ownership of collective spaces in contemporary Chinese cities.

The ephemeral intervention has redefined the relation between design and appropriation in this context. As the examples indicate, public space is produced and shaped not only by design interventions but also by social actions.[290] Thus, the design of public space should consider how to handle everyday life that manifests itself through interactions with space; it should focus on understanding the forms of these interactions and generate conditions to accommodate them.

The physical barriers that manage the order of the street as a public realm are another articulation of negotiation: a negotiation between the cultural tradition that maintains the features and sociality of the Chinese city and the rapid and unceasing urban transformation that generates new urban environment and problems. On one hand, the cultural perspectives of the relational circle and strangers characterise collective realms like the street in the Chinese city; on the other hand, the changes in the urban landscape generated by the spatial and social transformations require new measures to develop and regulate public spaces.

The street analysed in this chapter as 'fluid and dynamic space', in which objects juxtapose, activities overlap, and ideas collide, is an epitome of contemporary Chinese cities under the influence of globalisation and cultural exchange. It

290 Lu, *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949–2005.*

coincides with what Zukin has pictured as cities of "macro-level struggles between global and local cultures, public stewardship and privatisation, social diversity and homogeneity." These struggles manifested through 'micro-level negotiations of power' in a fluid and dynamic space like the Chinese street.[291] Through the street as a lens, we can see an emerging order in the public spaces of Chinese cities operated by negotiations between the collective and personal, modernisation and cultural tradition, global influence and local identity. This new order is articulated by the increasing mixture of spatial functions, overlapping of social activities, multiplicity of the public culture of the city. Recognising these assets add to the understanding of the Chinese notion of public space. Furthermore, this raises a next critical topic for urban designers and architects involved in the transformation of this part of the Chinese city: how to confront, comprehend, and coordinate the co-existence of different layers of society when intervening in the public space through design practices.

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291 Zukin, "The Cultures of Cities," 46.

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Sketches of different types of spaces discussed in this thesis by (author drawings)

7 Conclusion

This work is motivated by a realisation that the current research in the fields of architecture and urban design regarding public space in China is rather limited. Scholars tend to interpret public space solely through European and North American literature, and thereafter base theoretical and design studies of public space conducted in Chinese cities on such interpretations. Since China's 'Reform and Opening-up' in 1978, and the accelerating global exchange of architectural and urban knowledge and practice, 'public space' as a Greco-Roman originated notion has been increasingly debated and applied to many spaces in Chinese cities. Nevertheless, as the theoretical lens shifts, the features of public space that result from urban development are increasingly confronted with and contested by the changing spatial, social, and cultural conditions of the Chinese city. Although the culturally contingent nature of public space has initiated several debates in sociology and cultural studies in China — thereby inspiring a focus on the everyday practice of public life — such cultural contingency is not adequately considered in the fields of urban design and architecture.

In order to fill this gap, this thesis has investigated public space in the post-reform Chinese context from two angles: as a localised practice related to cultural traditions, and as a global concept that affects the body of knowledge and design practice. Study reveals that as a concept and spatial entity, public space is neither solely defined by social practices geared to cultural sensitivities and traditional values, nor is it entirely shaped by a spatial design and construction apparatus generated from a cross-cultural adaptation of Western concepts and design paradigms. Instead, under the intensive global cultural exchange of the post-reform era, the meanings of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture have been moulded by the encounter between the local cultural traditions that framed the understanding and practice of the collective realms and the global architectural and urban concepts that propelled the evolution of design knowledge and practice. This process corresponds to the concept of transculturation, which puts forward cultural encounter and exchange as a dynamic and integrating process that brings about a new independent phenomenon: in this case, the Chinese notion and practice of public space. The goal of this research is thus to determine i) the meanings of public space in the contemporary theory and practice of Chinese urban design and architecture; and ii) how and to what extent public space has been transculturated in the post-reform era.

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As this thesis addresses these aims, several subsequent questions emerged: what are the intellectual foundations that have determined the spatial and social construction of the collective space in the Chinese city before and during the arrival of Western urban design and architecture in China (Chapter Two)? How did the notion of public space evolve in Chinese urban design culture due to the global exchange of knowledge in the post-reform era (Chapter Three)? What kinds of spaces or spatial conditions are created in practice as public space by urban designers and architects and by people in Chinese cities in the post-reform era? What new ways of understanding, practising, and designing public space do these projects and spatial practices articulate (Chapter Four, Five, and Six)?

These subsequent questions have been discussed and answered respectively in Chapter Two through Six. Chapter Two examines the traditional construction rules and norms of the collective realm in Chinese urban history. Chapter Three has performs a thorough review of the transcultural development of urban design knowledge in the post-reform era centring on the notion of public space as 'open space', 'human space', and 'societal space'. Chapters Four, Five, and Six investigate various shared spaces in Chinese cities, ranging from communal spaces, and civic, symbolic, and commercial spaces, to fluid and dynamic spaces, while studying spheres of dwelling and community in the historic urban context — the courtyard and the *hutong* — to the spheres in the central city, such as the square, the public park, and the urban complex, where strangers mingle and public life takes shape.

In two crucial dimensions, this research reveals the Chinese notions of public space in the post-reform Chinese context. Firstly, it has modified the widespread notion that public space in urban design and architecture is primarily based on Western thoughts. In doing so, this work augments the current scholarly view on the notion of public space in China by discovering a conceptual framework supplied by the local developments of urban design and architectural projects in Chinese cities (Figure 7.1). Secondly, this research establishes transculturation as a useful lens through which the complex development of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture can be viewed, along with analysing the embedded features of public space.

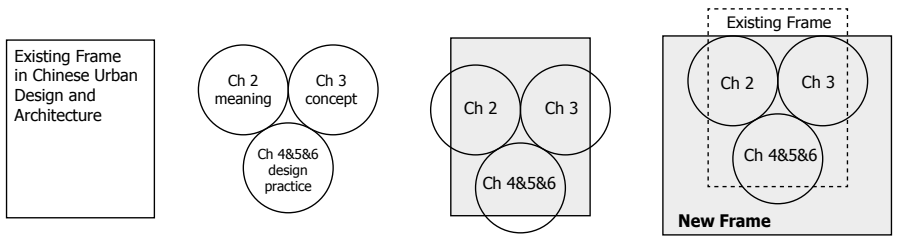

FIG. 7.1 Delineation of the research process (source: author drawing)

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7.1 The Organisation of Space and the Collective

From an urban and architectural perspective, investigating collectivity and the formation of collective realms in the Chinese city has primarily unlocked a retrospective reflection on the public realm. This research demonstrates that the public realm in the Chinese city can be understood via three distinct but intertwined collective realms: the relational circle, the realm of strangers, and the marketplace. The relational circle demonstrates that commonality has constituted the network of social space in both ancient and modern China, producing numerous enclosed social spheres and networks as well as the associated collective spaces. The realm of strangers represents the heterogeneous city that emerged during the urban development in the era of globalisation, corresponding to the Western ideal of the public and civic society. Lastly, the marketplace and its typological derivative, the market street, are archetypical public spaces in the Chinese city; as places for all strata of the society, they are significant social and symbolic collectives existed and evolved along with the Chinese city and its public culture.

The relationship between the first two domains has been described by Chinese urban and architectural scholars such as Liangyong Wu and Shiqiao Li, using a binary of concepts as *nei* (inside) and *wai* (outside). This binary construction is both conceptual and physical, both social and spatial.[292] In traditional Chinese society, the inside denotes the sphere of social circles, such as family, community, and economic interest group; the outside represents the unknown society where strangers are encountered. This contrast is translated into walled enclosures in Chinese urban and architectural design, and generally throughout the built environment. The result of this contrast produced architectural and urban archetypes such as the courtyard house, the walled city, and some modern successors such as the gated community. In these examples, the wall not only separated the common space from the outside world, creating the *nei-wai* spatial relation, but it also isolated the domestic realm from the rest of the urban territory — both in spatial terms and in people's imagination.

292 Wu, 北京旧城与菊儿胡同 *(the Old City of Beijing and Its Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood)*. Li, *Understanding the Chinese City*.

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Another important character of the *nei-wai* spatial binary is relativity. The inside and the outside are meaningful only in relation to each other, and the same can be said regarding the private-public distinction related to Chinese urban design and architecture in the city. This binary is demonstrated in the layered structure of collective space in traditional Chinese dwellings established with the most intimate inside realm, the living room, transitioning to the most distant outside space, the anonymous urban realm. Between these discrete extremes, two collective spaces are explored in this thesis. These spaces articulate the crucial characteristics of public space in Chinese cities: mediating between the residential areas and urban centres, between personal and collective actions, and between the dynamics of the street revealing a negotiable version of publicness, as manifested in the ways street spaces are used, designed, and managed. Such publicness is defined not by parameters such as ownership of land and public authority but by the collective culture in and social construction of public spaces in the Chinese city.

Except for a few areas in certain Chinese cities, the traditional urban fabric and the embedded collective spaces and practices have been largely displaced in the rapid urbanisation of the post-reform era. Modern gated communities have replaced the messy, intimate-scaled traditional urban blocks, and the walled city has been transformed into more open urban forms and infrastructures created by functional zoning strategies. Meanwhile, the growth of the heterogeneous collective realms where strangers mingle, interact, and come into conflict has introduced a new order into the public space of Chinese cities in the era of globalisation. These cities are now organised around a reconceived public-private division and a set of social practices associated with the spatial features of Western cities. This thesis labels this part of the Chinese city — which has expanded immensely in the past decades — the realm of strangers. The modern typologies of new open spaces addressed in this thesis, which have emerged since the 1990s, have also exemplified this aspect of urban development in the era of rapid globalisation and economic growth. They embrace heterogeneous urbanity while preserving traditions in the way they handle urban and architectural spaces. The preserved traditions are well exemplified by the form and culture of the Chinese marketplace, which are recalled and represented repetitively in modern urban developments. The collective realms of modern Chinese cities navigate between the social space of the relational circle and the realm of strangers, between the inside and the outside, and between the communal and the urban, with reappearing features of the marketplace, maintaining a dynamic balance through spatial developments and social practices, as well as transculturation.

7.2 Afterword on the Transculturation of Public Space: The Battle, Negotiation, and Integration of Meaning and Practice

At the heart of this project lies Ortiz's notion of transculturation. Reflected in artefacts, theoretical notions, and cultural practices, among others, transculturation is a common phenomenon in today's highly globalised world. The term describes the process and the result of encounters without hierarchies between different cultures; Ortiz prefers this to 'acculturation' or 'cultural exchange'.[293] As the prefix of the word *trans-* implies — 'changing or having changed from one thing to another'[294] — change is a fundamental element of transculturation. Additionally, in an introduction to Ortiz's book *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, Bronislaw Malinowski points out that a key to understanding the nature of transculturation is the phenomenon of integration, in which both sides of a cultural contact are re-moulded with significant changes.[295] That is, acculturation and deculturation happen simultaneously on both sides, creating a new cultural unity (neoculturation) sourced from both sides yet different and unique from one another.

The encounter between the Greco-Roman rooted Western concept of public space and the Chinese traditions to understand and practise the collective realms is an intensive and rapid process of transculturation. The Western notion of public space has been received in a modified form in Chinese architecture and urban design as a new culture; at the same time, the local condition of the Chinese city has both actively and passively negotiated with this introduction. This encounter has altered the epistemological[296] construction of public space in Chinese urban design theory, and, moreover, has recalibrated the approach to urban and architectural projects in Chinese cities. It has also revealed the way in which global phenomena and situated conditions have integrated, finding that mutual changes in the moulding of public space are provoked.

293 Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*.

294 Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trans. Retrieved 2021, from Cambridge University Press.

295 Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, lviii.

296 Epistemology was first cited by Scottish philosopher Ferrier in 'James Frederick Ferrier, Institutes of Metaphysic: The Theory of Knowing and Being (1854), 46.' Here it takes the meaning of "the study of knowledge, the philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge" from (1) Paul Edwards, "The Encyclopedia of Philosophy," (New York: Macmillian, 1967).; (2) Steup Matthias and N Zalta Edward, "Epistemology," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2010).

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This thesis demonstrates that since the 1978 reform, the transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture experiences a trajectory that consists of three periods: respectively, the 1980s to the mid-1990s, the 1990s into the 2000s, and finally, the past decade. The process to assimilate Western urban design knowledge as well as the changes to develop the public realm have followed alongside this trajectory. From these three significant periods emerged three ways in which the evolution of public space in the post-reform Chinese context has articulated the idea of transculturation.

First, from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, as China started to pursue a global standard of urban development, the discipline of architecture was propelled to engage with European and North American theories and urban design knowledge. Various urban design theories were loosely transmitted to China through approaches such as translation and transnational academic exchange. The concept of public space was acculturated as open space and defined by its material and formal properties. Meanwhile, Chinese cities went through a radical modernisation process with marked transformations in the living environment and urban landscape. In urban development practices, acculturation has resulted in the displacement of traditional settlements and communal life by the so-called modern slabs.

To Resist this ongoing displacement, local urban conservation practices, represented by the Ju'er Hutong Project, searched for urban and architectural alternatives to the modern ways of rebuilding the city. Such alternatives insisted on the Chinese ways of living and the cultural substance of community embedded in the traditional courtyard settlements. Meanwhile, they also looked for references from architectural and urban studies of the West that specifically resonated with traditional architectural and urban forms (the courtyard, for instance). In this case, the Western knowledge and ideas were applied only on the building level capacity to meet the new demands of density and living conditions. This was the first stage of transculturation, in which we see both aggressive acculturation by displacement and deculturation through resistance.

Second, from the late 1990s to roughly the end of the 2000s, the force of globalisation increased tremendously, and this was especially visible in the large-scale refining and redevelopment of the central areas of Chinese cities for global competitiveness. New urban types and thus new forms of practices were introduced in the city at the most central and significant locations in the city. This created open spaces that are used for social and cultural activities, global events, everyday leisure, and consumption.

Unlike the previous era, the acculturation of global models of public and collective (such as the central square and the shopping complex — and even the Olympic Park) did not entirely uproot the existing form and culture of commerce and leisure in Chinese cities during this period. Instead, the new manners to form and practise public space were transformed into spatial entities favoured by the local cultural regime due to incorporating symbolic references to form and image. This thesis has analysed this transformation from two angles. Namely, in the design practices, the global types were integrated with the local urban context through meaningful connections with the past and the future in form, composition, and representation. Exemplifying this phenomenon, both the square and the urban complex projects have (implicitly or explicitly) incorporated the marketplace as the traditional collective space of the city into their spatial design. This integration, realised by urban design and architectural interventions, has made public space into a hybrid form that accommodates urban life. In this new hybrid form, the Western ways of understanding and making public space have been acculturated as a frame, filled by the traditional Chinese architectural and urban space, including its symbolism and materials. This has resulted in new realities of public space, which this thesis identifies as civic space, symbolic space, and commercial space. Moreover, this thesis connects the local practices of the global urban and architectural types with the transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design theory. As shown, the understanding of public space from the 1990s into the 2000s was no longer based on the form of space, but on the social dimension of space. This evolution generated a humanistic approach to design. In the open space projects, careful consideration of social activities and diverse experiences of public life are found and consequently create collective spaces that bring heterogeneous groups together in the city.

The transculturation of public space in this period reached a more sophisticated stage, with the birth of new typologies and spatial phenomena. In the design cases exemplified in Chapter Five (city square, public park, and urban complex), public space acquires new meanings through design interventions that integrate global types with local urban history and architectural properties. By encompassing new forms of public practice and well-established traits of Chinese urban tradition in its imagery, public space has transformed its identity and become a ‘neoculturation’.

Third, since the beginning of the 2010s, the developments of public space, as a result of transculturation, have been embedded in new urban conditions that are highly complex in composition and social dynamics. We do not see a consistent pattern of urban transformation, but rather a layered reality of spatial, social, and economic conditions, which are still in a state of transition. Especially in historically significant cities, the former living areas became the new urban centre with elevated economic and cultural value and pushed residential spaces to the margin of the city.

The gentrification of former city centres, especially those with historic areas, has complicated the demographic composition of residents and reveals a conflict between the interests of globalisation and the local cultural and social realities. The microcosmic patterns of everyday street life of Beijing's historic city serve as an example of this phenomenon within one of the most gentrified urban centres in China. It demonstrates that in the negotiation between global practices and local conditions in this transcultural encounter, another type of public space of contemporary Chinese cities emerged from micro-level struggles over spatial property, economic value, and social identity in the use, making, and managing of public spaces. This fluid and dynamic public space represents 'the dynamics of ambivalent appropriations and resistances' that characterise transculturation, concluded by Fernando Coronil in his introduction to the 1995 version of *Cuban Counterpoint*.[297]

As discussed, the transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture has inhabited a situated stage throughout the previous decade, in which the current understanding of the Chinese notion of 'public space' approaches its counterpart rooted in the West. In this situated stage, public space is being reimaged and reconceived into an independent network of knowledge in Chinese urban design and architecture. As the transculturation of knowledge and practice proceeds, the understanding of public space will keep evolving and new spatial conditions will emerge from the unceasing acculturation and deculturation of form, practice, and meaning in the built environment (Figure 7.2).

Broadly speaking, this conclusion demonstrates the phenomenon of transculturation when knowledge and practice travel and reside in a new geographical and cultural context. More specifically, it shows how to perceive and understand this phenomenon in the fields of urban design and architecture.

297 Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, xli-xlii.

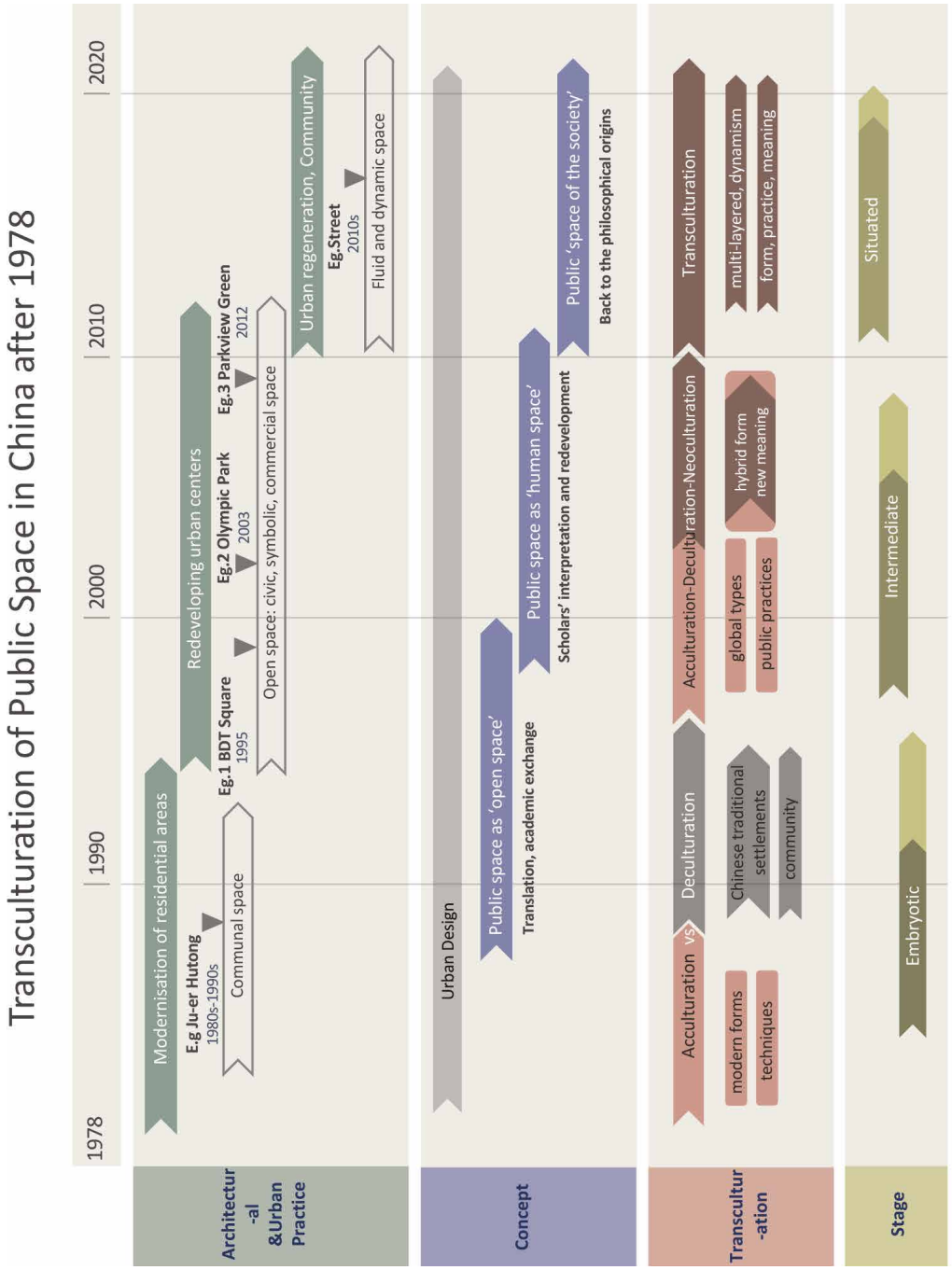

FIG. 7.2 Transculturation of public space in post 1978 China from the perspective of urban design and architecture (source: author drawing)

7.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

From the perspectives of urban design and architecture, the main aim of this thesis has been to elucidate the complex reality of how public space is understood, transformed, and therefore transculturated in the post-reform Chinese context. It has highlighted moments at which paradigmatic shifts in the discipline occurred, analysed key projects that have represented these shifts, and exemplified relevant theories of and design approaches to public space. Nevertheless, reflecting on the research process, the scope of this project is limited in several important ways.

The first limitation concerns the field expertise of the researcher. Although many disciplines address the public realm, this research focuses chiefly on urban design and architecture — while occasionally drawing on domains such as sociology, cultural geography, and environmental psychology, either to build up a theoretical basis for investigating the historical and social aspects of the public realm or to conduct empirical research on built spaces in the city. Acting as the researcher and reporter, the author has therefore interpreted these other domains from a non-specialist vantage including the concept of transculturation.

The second limitation lies in the type of theories and the volume of case studies that this thesis has been able to address. The theoretical view section covers Chinese publications — selecting the earliest published and most representative insights, and has excluded studies written by non-Chinese scholars and/or written in other languages. Besides, the scope of the addressed literature is limited within the field of urban design particularly and does not include wider study of urban development or urbanisation. Furthermore, the case studies do not consider the historic cities in Southern China, being aware that these cities have different development backgrounds and cultural characteristics, and globalisation has influenced them differently. The cases are chosen to represent the paradigmatic shifts in the urban practices of designing public space in the post-reform Chinese city. In the future, an expansion of this context would enrich the research findings to reveal more robust nuances in public space projects and in the way spaces are perceived and practised beyond the traditional northern Chinese cities.

In its current form, this thesis contributes to the scholarship that reassess the meaning of public space within the geographical and temporal context of modern China. By doing so, it informs how to address this topic in urban and architectural design practice from a Chinese perspective and moreover from a dialogic view between global and local. Concerning future possibilities, although this thesis achieves a scholarly understanding of the Chinese notion of public space from the disciplinary perspectives of urban design and architecture, the knowledge it develops can inspire practice-oriented research on public space within but not limited to the Chinese context. As culture will continue to be a field of engagement in urban development, urban designers and architects who work in globalising and post-globalising contexts must confront and comprehend the multiplicity and overlapping of spatial properties, social activities and conflicts that stem from the contact and evolution of architectural and urban cultures. In line with this investigation, future directions should develop transcultural research and design perspectives to facilitate negotiations between global forces of urban development and local architecture and urban design culture, in the pursuit to generate new ideas for the design of public space.

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Curriculum Vitæ

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Education

2022 Ph.D in Architecture. TU Delft, The Netherlands
Thesis Title: Chinese Notions of Public Space
Promotors: Dr. Arch. R. Cavallo; Dr. ir. M.G.A.D. Harteveld

2015 Master of Science (Urbansim). TU Delft, The Netherlands
Thesis Title: Design as a Mediating Instrument
Mentors: Dr. ir. M.G.A.D. Harteveld; Dr. ir. E. Stolk

2013 Bachelor of Engineering (Urban Planning). North Eastern University, China

List of Publications

Sun, W. "The Collective Realms in the Chinese City: Towards an Alternative Framework for Public Space." *Forthcoming.* Arena Journal of Architectural research. (2022)

Sun, W. "Public Space in Chinese Urban Design Theory after 1978: A Compressed Transculturation." The Journal of Architecture 25, no. 01 (2020): 65-76

Sun, W. "Negotiated Public: Investigating the Streetscape of Beijing's Old City." In AESOP 2019 Conference - Book of Papers, 3400-07. Venice, Italy (2019)

Yan, J., Sun, W. & Cannatella, D. “复杂关系网络下城市发展如何满足利益相关者诉求: 《城市中国》海外观察员第五期工作坊纪实”. Urban China (2018). 84: 140-142

Sun, H., Sun, W., & Dong, Y. “Design study of NEU campus based on ecological footprint.” Gong ye jian zhu (Industrial Construction) (2017)

Sun, W. & Stuijt, J. “Divining the Essence: The Battle between Research and Design and The Meaning of Text and Image in the Design Process.” In: Rocco, R. and E. Stolk, Eds. Methodology for Urbanism: Best Essays 2010-2012. AR2U090 Methodology. Delft, TU Delft (2012).

Contributed Publications

Cavallo, R., Harteveld, M. G. A. D., Kuijper, J. A., & Hoogkamer, S. S. (2020). *Architecture & Urban Design—Amsterdam and Boston: MSc 2 Elective Design Studio AR0067 Spring 2018–2019*. TU Delft Open.

Cavallo, R., Kuijper, J., van Ardenne, M., & Heuvelmans, J. (2018). *City of the Future/ Stad van de Toekomst*. TU Delft Open.

Teaching Experiences

2022 Design Tutor. Core 3 Studio. Fontys School of Fine and Performing Art, Academy of Architecture & Urbanism (NL)

2019 Tutor & Critic. MSc 2 Elective Design Studio: Architecture & Urban Design – Amsterdam Boston. Architectural Design Crossovers & Chair of Urban Design. Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft (NL)

2018 Tutor. MSc II Design Studio Mobility & Public Space in the City of the Future. Architectural Design Crossovers & Chair of Urban Design. Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft (NL)

2017 Teaching Assistant. Seminar Research Method: Probing into Precedents. MSc 3 Graduation Studio. Chair of Methods & Analysis. Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft (NL)

Conferences / Seminars / Workshops

2019 Presentation “Communal Space and Degree of Sharing: The Legacy and Inspiration of Juer Hutong Neighbourhood Project” at Care+ Conference, October 2019 (https://ca2re.eu/results/communal-space-and-degree-of-sharing-the-legacy-and-inspiration-of-juer-hutong-neighborhood-project/). Ghent, Belgium

2019 Presentation “Negotiated Public: Investigating the Streetscape of Beijing’s Old City” at AESOP 2019 Conference. Venice, Italy (9 -13 July)

2017 Presentation “Co-evolution of Collectives: Comprehending Complexity in the Redevelopment of Historical Urban Area in Beijing” at AESOP 2017 Conference. Ghent, Belgium (12 - 14 April)

2017 Presentation “A Cross-cultural Perspective on Collective Planning and Complexity” at Urban China Global Insights Panel Series: Habitat. Juan Yan (Organiser), Marietta Haffner (Participant), Maurice Harteveld (Participant), David Varady (Participant), Wenwen Sun (Participant), Daniele Cannatella (Participant). TU Delft, The Netherlands (27 November)

2017 Conference facilitator. EAHN, The Tools of The Architect. TU Delft. Delft, The Netherlands (22-24 November)

2017 Presentation “Chinese Notions of Public Space: The Transculturation of a Concept in Sino Urban Design Culture” at Peer-review Colloquium #18 (Reviewer: Prof. Adrian Forty, Prof. Murray Fraser, Prof. Ellen Braae). Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft. Delft, The Netherlands (27 October)

2014 Participation TU Delft team. TV 2020 Smart City Lab (with Dr. Luisa Calabresa). Università Iuav di Venezia. Venice, Italy

2014 Athens programme. Politecnico di MiLano. Milan, Italy (15-22 March)

Invited Critic / Guest Critic

2022 End of the Year Portfolio Presentations. Jury member. Fontys School of Fine and Performing Art (Architecture & Urbanism). Tilburg, NL (July 8)

2019 MSc 2 Design Studio: Architecture & Urban Design. Guest critic. Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft

2019 MSc 1 Studio: Datepolis. Guest critic (with Kees Kaan, Negar Sanaan Bensi, Paul Cournet). Chair of Complex Projects, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft

2017 MSc 3 & 4 Graduation Studio "Positions in Practice: Constructing the Commons in the Latin American Metropolis." Guest critic (Tom Avermate Klaske Havik Oscar Andrade Castro). Chair of Methods & Analysis, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft

Practice experiences

2016 Urban Designer. NL Urban Solutions B.V. The Hague, The Netherlands

2015 Coach for introduction program. TU Delft, The Netherlands

2011 Assistant Designer. Tsinghua Tongheng Research Centre for Landscape Architecture. Beijing, China

Professional Skills

Academic and practical fields
Urban design / Public space design / Urban planning / Academic research of urbanism and architecture / Cross-cultural research / Climate-neutral mobility

Design related software
Adobe Series (photoshop, illustrator, indesign) / Auto CAD / 3D modelling software / Microsoft

Languages
Native in mandarin Chinese / Academic and professional level of English / N2 certificate of Japanese /Basis knowledge of Italian and Dutch

Other
Climbing (bouldering & sports climbing); Piano & guitar; Painting

22#19

Chinese Notions of Public Space

Transculturation in Urban Design and Architecture after the 'Reform and Opening-up' in 1978

Wenwen Sun

This thesis investigates the understanding and implementation of public space in the reformed Chinese context, particularly from the perspectives of urban design and architecture, by referring to the complex process and result of transculturation (*transculturación*). It delineates how public space as a Greco-Roman originated concept traversed the urban and architectural cultures of post-reform China, merging and negotiating with the local conditions, and evolved into a new phenomenon in Chinese urban design and architecture. By analysing public space as a cultural phenomenon, carrying specific meaning, through specific concepts and designs, this doctoral research develops an interpretative framework within which the meanings and transculturation of public space in Chinese urban design and architecture can be understood and elucidates potential for future urban design and architectural practices. Theoretically, it moves beyond the conventional research on public space that is primarily based on Western thoughts, an Indo-European notion, and a Greco-Roman tradition. Practically, it paves the way for future development of the design of public space, highlighting the cultural, social, and spatial dynamics in Chinese cities *vis-à-vis* the related political, economic, and governmental conditions within the context of ongoing globalisation.

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