REFLECTION FOR THE P5 REPORT
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The graduation topic with the title ‘Preservation for all. Transformation for new. Sustainable rehabilitation and renewal in the North of Dongsì in Beijing’ is part of the Research Studio which is called ‘History and Heritage vector’ and belongs to the Urbanism Department of TU Delft.

The relationship between research and design
The aim of the project is to achieve the sustainable rehabilitation and urban renewal in the North of Dongsì in Beijing. It is a traditional Hutong neighborhood with great historic value, which is considered as the heritage of Beijing, but it is suffering from the environmental deterioration and public space decline. In order to achieve the sustainable rehabilitation and renewal in a historic area, research contributes to the design in the following aspects:
Firstly, theories of Hutong and heritage help to redefine heritage in Hutong context, and contribute to the new approach of research and design in this project. Understanding what are the values and limitations of Hutong neighborhood is the base of design proposal generation. Because values and limitations decide what should be preserved or improved, and they closely link with the different spatial interventions in design process. Literature review, historic analysis, site observation and interview help to redefine the spatial and social values of heritage in the context of Hutong, and those values become the design objects.
The research is focus on the Hutong objects, public space and people approach, since the design tries to restore the relationship between people and public space.
Secondly, theory of organic renewal and sustainable development contribute to find the potential area for design. Meanwhile, they inspire the planning proposal in macro scale, and help to build the
scale system of this project.
Thirdly, research on the principle of ‘Hutong-courtyard' construction and people activities as well as theory of public space system give understanding on how spatial and social elements support to each other and the criteria of good public space. It provides inspirations for design proposal in meso and micro scale.
Finally, interviewing and observation provide perspectives of residents. Their activities and demands make great contribution on the pertinent design in context of Hutong in dynamic time dimension.

**The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab, the Urbanism track and the subject study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)**

Compare to products from past generations, it is more accurate to consider heritage as a process. ‘The History and Heritage’ studio provide the view that study a site in changing context. Hutong, the traditional residential neighborhood preserved from eight hundreds years ago in Old City of Beijing in China, is considered to suit for the graduation lab theme.
The North of Dongsi is a representative residential area with ‘Hutong-courtyard' structure, and it has experienced transformation both in spatial conditions and social structure caused by modernization, and the original good social space is disappearing in dynamic context, since it is a good example of to-be-renewed Hutong community to apply the sustainable urban renewal. Additionally, historic residential community is the suitable object to redefine the heritage in spatial, cultural and social dimension in changing context. It meets the main concern of the research group. Finally, as urbanism student, research should work in different scales. To understand the role of heritage in regional sustainable development, this project will also talk about how could the historic urban structure respond to the new requirements of urban development in three scales, including
human scale, neighborhood scale and urban scale.

**Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work**

The ‘History and Heritage’ research group suggests various methods combining historic analysis to approach the graduation project, since several methods are integrated in my research. Firstly, the aim of the project is the sustainable urban renewal in a historic residential area, since redefining the heritage in context of Hutong, find the values and limitations in spatial and social dimension are the main issues of this topic. Secondly, historic analysis combing with literature review helps to redefine the heritage in changing context of Hutong, and it is the base of the project. Thirdly, Historic analysis combing with literature review as well as observation is widely applied to find the spatial value and limitation of Hutong. Additionally, for social dimension, besides the previous methods, interview is necessary to find the value of social interaction. Meanwhile, interview also provides ideas in defining the spatial value and limitation in residents’ perspective. Besides, mapping and GIS analysis help to visualize and spatialize the findings during research. Finally, historic analysis combining with case study and literature review helps to critically review and discuss the previous experiences of urban renewal, and provide ideas for design proposal.

**Elaboration on the relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project result.**

The aim of my project is sustainable urban renewal both in environmental and social development, since it pays more attention
on the relationship between people and public space in changing context.

In wider social context, Beijing has grown as the cultural and political center of China, and it welcomes increasing migrants from other regions, since Hutong regeneration is important issue for improving the identity of Beijing. Meanwhile, Hutong has been very social space and provides much possibility in social-mix, since it could be the agent to deal with the issue of new immigrants for regional development. Additionally, Hutong renewal is an example to discuss the old neighborhood regeneration in wider context. On the one hand, Hutong can provide different spatial conditions from modern community, since the study of people activity in Hutong context can contribute to the typology of urban fabric. On the other hand, deal with the aging social structure in Hutong is significant for social development in other aging neighborhood. Additionally, heritage redefining and preservation are the main concern of my project. It could help to sustainable cultural and social development in wider context.

In wider professional and scientific context of old city renewal in China, general approach in urban renewal is more concentrate on preserving heritage objects, restore them as traditional form and improving building environment itself, but lack of attention on how people use the space. In this project, Hutong is not only object, it is also the public space system, and both space and housing need to be deal with.

My approach is an aggregation of historic, social and spatial research as well as restoring the relationship between people and environment. Specifically, this project tries to understand how public space and heritage objects change overtime. Meanwhile, people approach influenced by space and how it transit in different time are also taken into consideration. Accordingly, it makes contribution on definitions of Hutong and heritage, and helps to provide sustainable social and spatial development for urban renewal in wider context.
As a result, such a research on the topic was considered necessary for exploring new sustainable possibilities for the old neighborhood regeneration and heritage preservation.

**Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered in doing the research, elaboration the design and potential applications of the result in practice.**

The thesis project provided a design proposal to restore the relationship between people and environment, as well as preserve and promote the social interaction in Hutong community, in order to achieve the sustainable renewal and development in historic Hutong neighborhood. Accordingly, preserving the value of Hutong, which is redefined in changing context, and doing spatial transformation to respond to emerging requirements are the main concerns of my project. However, several issues should take into consideration and do further research, including threat and potential of this project. First is the threat of gentrification and changing social structure, just like other Hutong renewal project in Beijing. The original residents are the main intangible value of Hutong, but with the improvement of living conditions, the value of housing will go up in the real-estate market, it may results in gentrification in renewed Hutong community. Although there were some interventions to deal with the threat of gentrification in my project, such as introducing low-income groups like students and provide them social housing, it is interesting to do further research on what housing policy could help to preserve the social structure during urban renewal in the future. Second is the potential to deal with the traffic issue. The width of Hutong is difficult to meet the demands of car traffic, but people cannot live without a car. Accordingly, in this project, on the one hand, enough car parking can provide convenience for car traffic in exterior of Hutong. On the other hand, interior traffic will rely on walking and bike, since public bike are introduced to promote the
non-motorized traffic. Their aim is to provide a good and safe public space in Hutong neighborhood. However, the still cannot perfectly to deal with the problem, for one thing, people need healthy public space and it is also the value of Huotng, for another non-motorized traffic is difficult to meet all demands of a neighborhood with aging social structure. As a result, further research on the location of aging people and their movement should be continued.

From the program dimension, if there was other potential programs for Hutong community. Hutong development is closely link with cultural economy in existing context, and it is similar in my project, because there is great historic and cultural value in traditional urban fabric. But there are still ambitions of examining other possible programs in Hutong area like ecological function or smart community.

The research of the graduation project is easily to transfer and apply in other project. Firstly, the project is talking about the relationship between people and environment, including how public space transfer in changing context, how people use public space in different context as well as what spatial condition could promote the social interaction, they are essential for creating good public life, since it could be widely applied not only in Hutong area. Secondly, considering in the historic view and study the site transformation is the main approach of my project, and it is significant not only for historic area. Because understanding the spatial, cultural and social transformation in changing context will help to the notion of sustainability in any project. Thirdly, the design proposal tries to respond to different groups, not only the original residents but also the new immigrants, since this urban regeneration project could be considered as ‘the design for people’. It shows that each urban generation project is quite different, because the diverse social and spatial context, but concern of people could be widely applied in other generation process.

All in all, this project tries to express a value: both people and
environment are changing processes, and sustainability is to understand and learn from the changes.