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Investigation into Shanghai Spatial Publicness

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Acknowledgments

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The basic logic: "*A* always consists in the blurring boundaries between *A* and non-*A*".
The *spatial publicness* as *dissensus* might consist in the blurring boundaries between *dissensus* and *consensus*, meaning presentation and social relationship, or representation and distance.
Liminality as an in-between status (instability, uncertainty, and temporariness) can be considered as the essence of *spatial publicness*.

In this sense, there could not be an eternal "public space" but a perpetual "*spatial publicness*".
1. "*Spatial publicness*" is used here to take the place of the tradition concept, "public space".
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Major Public Spaces in Contemporary Shanghai:

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Preface

This dissertation investigates *Shanghai spatial publicness* through a theoretical reflection on the essence of *public space*, empirical surveys of social spaces in Shanghai, and a response to the issue from an architectural perspective. The whole discussion pivots on a new concept "*spatial publicness*" that is deduced to overcome the defect of the conventional concept "public space", when confronting the complexity, fluidness and polysemy of contemporary urban phenomena. The new notion with the inherent nature of indeterminacy, instability and temporariness might facilitate disclosing the vibrant, but long-overlooked potential in Shanghai's social space. Lastly, some new strategies and tactics for promoting *spatial publicness* in recent architectural practices, including those in China, are explored in two ways — politics and art, two forms of *dissensus*. In fact, the whole dissertation (seven chapters) tries to answer the following three questions:

1. What is public space (*spatial publicness*)? (Chapter 1, 2, 3)

2. What is public space (*spatial publicness*) in the context of Shanghai? (Chapter 4, 5)

3. What can architecture (urban design) do for public space (*spatial publicness*)? (Chapter 6, 7)

All theoretical resources involved in the dissertation can be divided up into three categories: the first one comes under the heading of public space, public sphere, or publicness; the second refers to the theory of space and the discourse on aesthetics and politics, *dissensus* and *consensus*; the third is mainly about the studies of social spaces in Shanghai and China. The three topics represented by them – publicness, spatialness and locality – will converge on the main issue of the dissertation, namely, *Shanghai spatial publicness*. Their mutual relations can be illustrated by a triangular figure. [1]

Chapter 1: Meta-Spatial Publicness
The concept of *public space* is closely related to and easily confused with that of *public sphere* which is primarily concerned with political, philosophical and social fields. Imbued with metaphysical and political elements, the concept of *public sphere* can be defined as *meta-spatial publicness*. When *spatial publicness* or *public space* is discussed together, the concept is an ineludible departure.

Theories of Publicness

The Production of Space   Theories of Shanghai Social Spaces
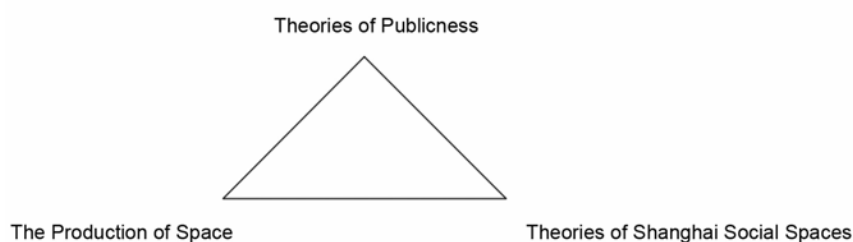
1. The triangular illustration, reflecting the major theoretical resources of the dissertation, would be constructed on three major aspects: firstly, theories of publicness, in particular the theories of Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Sennett, Hans Paul Bahrdt; secondly, Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and Rancière's discourses on aesthetics and politics; thirdly, theories of Shanghai social spaces — the classical research about Chinese social structure and urban space, especially about Shanghai.

There are several key theories about the *public sphere* introduced in the chapter, including the doctrines of Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Sennett, Hans Paul Bahrdt and Rosalyn Deutsche. Among all of them, Arendt's definition of the public realm as "two closely interrelated but not altogether identical phenomena" – *common world* and *public appearance* – is established as a keystone to navigate the slippery territory. Subsequently, the two essential facets of *publicness* will be replaced by two spatialized terminologies "distance" and "representation" in the next two chapters.

Chapter 2: Distance — Relational Equilibrium

The concept of "*distance*" represents the aspect of *social relationships* in *spatial publicness*. The equilibrium between social relations is maintained by *distance*, which manifests itself in the three dimension of spatial production: the physical, mental, and social. The research of Edward T. Hall, Richard Sennett and Erving Goffman echoes the fact that the success of public life relies on the existence of a set of *distance regimes*. However, the decline of public life was also attributed to the inflation of the codes — the institutionalization of a *distance regime* because the over-powerful *regime* would suffocate another aspect of *spatial publicness — meaning presentation*. The metropolitan personality like "indifference", "reserve", "aversion" described by Simmel is exactly an essential impediment to the birth of new public meanings. Moreover, the spatial segregation lasting from the 18th century to the present day demonstrates a trend of institutionalization of collective distance.

As an essential factor for the production of *spatial publicness*, *distance* finds itself in a subtle balance between its institutionalization and disappearance.

Chapter 3: Representation — Meaning Presentation

Signifying *meaning presentation* of *spatial publicness*, the term "*representation*" has three main connotations: 1) idea (discourse, ideology), 2) re-presentation (depiction, symbol), and 3) (political) proxy. Each of them plays a role in the production of public space. Since the end of the 18th century, the traditional concept has confronted its crisis that its competence to demonstrate dynamic social reality was called in question. To respond to this crisis, *performative*, a sudden transformation of aesthetics ideas, has emerged in all types of artistic genres and even in the political domain in the late 1960s. In *performative* events, *representation* has been supplanted by *presentation* or *presence* being a new form of *meaning presentation*.

The arguments about the *performative* in architecture are divided into two standpoints: "enabling stage" and "cultural technique". For the former, the mission of architecture lies in "how to support the *performative* activity", while the latter tends to argue that architectural material substance is a prerequisite and component of *performative* events. Their distinction bears witness to the two dissensual forms — politics and art (aesthetics).

The dialectic between *meaning presentation* and *distance regime* dominates the production and decline of *spatial publicness*. Jacques Ranciére's theses on the *distribution of the sensible*, especially on the relation between *dissensus* and *consensus*, might help in dealing with the dialectic mechanism.

Chapter 4: Genealogy of Shanghai's Social Space

(Social) Space is a (social) product. Through the examining and sorting of Shanghai's historical social spaces, a certain hidden continuity is found. A community gene has profoundly shaped the nature of Chinese society and urban space. This point can be proved through surveys on a successively spatial genealogy: *heyuan*, *lilong*, *danwei* and MRD. Each spatial type corresponds to a special social and political system. Instead of vanishing thoroughly, the bygone social spaces "may be intercalated, combined, superimposed", even "sometimes collide", and take effect in the present spatial production of Shanghai.

Resting on Ferdinand Tönnies' differentiation between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the academic mainstream argues that Chinese society is a rural society ruled by rituals in contrast with western society that is ruled by laws. According to this foundation, there is no authentic (or orthodox) public space in Chinese cities. The concept of *spatial publicness* questions this cliché, not only because the spatial codes of community as *consensus* have contained the ingredient of a common world, but also because the new *dissensus* would exactly occur on the border of *consensus*, such as spatial partition between the interior and exterior, closed and open, and introvert and extrovert.

Chapter 5: Spatial Publicness in Shanghai

The chapter focuses on the possible or existing conditions of *spatial publicness* by empirically analyzing current urban space. The empirical observations are conducted on the basis of typological classification, which are: 1) (politically) ritual space, 2) consumption space, 3) historical (symbolic) space, 4) neighborhood communal space, 5) parks and greenery land, and 6) metro stations. Every spatial type is illustrated with several instances.

All the six types can be generally subsumed under the category of public space. In addition, they are more or less connected with one or two facets of *spatial publicness*. The (politically) ritual space, historical symbolic space, and park & green space are related to *meaning presentation* in line with representation, while the consumption space, neighborhood communal space, and metro stations to relational equilibrium in line with *distance regime*. Their capabilities leading to the spatial *dissensus* are distinct from each other. Some possess a qualitative advantage over the others.

Chapter 6: Aesthetics Dissensus

Spatial publicness is bound up with the two aspects of *dissensus*: aesthetics and politics. The architectural practices covering both domains entail three pairs of paradoxes: that between architecture and space, between architecture as *consensus* and as *dissensus*, and be-

tween architecture as art and as politics.

For aesthetic *dissensus*, architectural practices need to create a special tempo-spatial sensorium by altering the everyday sensible configuration. They have to oscillate between autonomy and heteronomy, or between "projective architecture" and "critical architecture", in the terms of a recent academic debate. New Babylon conceived by Constant Nieuwenhuys from the late 1950s to the early 1970s and The Fun Palace designed by Cedric Price in the 1960s can be viewed as progenitors of the "projective practices". However, that Koolhaas' works insists on "combination of a law and freedom" might point an alternative way to aesthetic *dissensus*. Two projects, ZKM (1989-92) and Seattle Public Library (2004), are analyzed here in detail.

In the Chinese context, Steven Holl adopted in his two projects (*Vanke Center*, Shenzhen and *Linked Hybrid*, Beijing) a strategy defined by Frampton as "mega-form", in order to resist the isolated objects or private island in an increasingly privatized city.

Chapter 7: Politics Dissensus

For politics *dissensus*, architectural practices have spilled over into other domains (tactical urbanism, etc.) appertaining to *Situationist International*'s legacy.

Since the recent decade, a wave of activist practices has been rising in metropolises around the world. Its methodology can be labeled as "tactical urbanism", "guerilla urbanism", "D.I.Y. urbanism", or "interventionist urbanism", whose features can be simply enumerated as the following: provisional, short-term, fluid (time); local, communal, neighborhood (range); tactical, opportunistic, interventionist (technique); defiant, provocative, instigative (effect); and reused, mixed, built (approach).

However, a certain innate determinism brought by the teleology and causality implied in these practices might collide with freedom and equality demanded by politics *dissensus*. Therefore, the focus is turned around again and on blocking the "stultification" and keeping the *distance* in space. Lacaton & Vassal's works or some cardinal projects of landscape urbanism can be counted as strategies for setting up a platform without any pre-determined goal. There have already existed the similar urban activist practices in Chinese cities that happen in the artistic and also the architectural field, like the "people's architecture and city" of Hsieh Ying-Chun.

On the other hand, some architects still focus on improving spatial quality of open spaces. Their practices retreat from the direct involvement of social situation into the traditional domain of architecture — to articulate urban space. For example, the Shenzhen-based Urbanus is executing its bold plan of "urban gardenscape". The group names its practices "urban infill".

1   Meta-Spatial Publicness

This investigation into *spatial publicness*, as a dissertation of architecture and urban design, must be in touch with the spatial substance immanent in architecture and urban design. However, this does not mean that we have to return to such methodologies as physical determinism, functionalism and formalism. Needless to say, the issues on public space, in the traditional sense, have already absorbed many elements from the fields of philosophy, politics and sociology. Propelled by the development of the space discipline, especially by Henri Lefebvre's revolutionary theory — *the production of space*, research in architecture and urban design has also been deeply associated with social sciences over the past decades. This disciplinary collusion provides us a lens through which to observe public space. The following text will sort the theories, point out their defects, and summarize the basic principle of publicness.

1.1   Hannah Arendt: The Agonistic Model of Public Spheres

As the most creative political thinker of the last century, Hannah Arendt continues to enlighten us on the subject of public tradition through her works. However, because of her unique methodology and perspective, it is easy to discern a nostalgic tendency in her account of the decline of the public sphere. Her influential work, *The Human Condition*, is frequently treated as an anti-modernist political work.

While preoccupied with the flourishing public life in the polis of ancient Greece, Arendt took the rise of *the social* as the wrecker of the decline of public realm. In a sense, such rises and declines are two sides of the same coin, named modernity. "The emergence of society – the rise of housekeeping, its activity, problems, the organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere, has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen." [1] For Arendt, modern equality based on the conformism inherent in society made human beings no longer "actors" but "merely behavers", and its function is to produce and reproduce "labor power", producers and consumers ceaselessly.

It seems easy to substantiate Arendt's findings in our society. Governed by prevailing consumerism, city inhabitants have become what Arendt called "*animal laborans*", whose activities "are bound to the recurring cycles of nature". "The spare time of the *animal laborans* is never spent in anything but consumption, and the more time left to him, the greedier and more craving his appetites …eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption." [2]

In response to this, Arendt pins her dream of recovering the public sphere on the prototype of the public sphere in ancient Greece. Seyla Benhabib describes this view of the public sphere common to the "re-

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958), 38.
2. Ibid., 98, 133.

publican virtue" or "civic virtue" tradition as the "*agonistic*" model of the public sphere. [3] In the sphere, actors, their individual mortality notwithstanding, actively engage in worldly affairs, compete with their peers, "leave non-perishable traces behind, and attain an immortality of their own" through their ability to produce things — works, deeds and words. [4] Therefore, "the *polis* was for the Greek, as the *res publica* was for the Romans, first of all their guarantee against the futility of individual life, the space protected against this futility and reserved for the relative permanence, if not immortality, of mortals." [5]

Arendt divides fundamental forms of human activities into *labor*, *work* and *action*, which respectively correspond to three human conditions: *necessity*, *worldliness* and *plurality*. Undoubtedly, action, "as the activity occurs directly between men without the intermediary of things or matters", constitutes the authentic public sphere. Although the rise of society emancipated the *animal laborans* from the "toil and trouble" of labor, it did not change the necessity itself. [6] Moreover, with the advent of the machine age, these marks of laboring, namely the repetition and endlessness of the process, are branded on the work. Only through action and speech, can human beings cast off the purely repetition and mechanically recurring cycles, and reveal their unique distinctness to distinguish themselves.

As for our discussion on *spatial publicness*, something fundamental has been done in Arendt's elaboration of the term "public". In Arendt's view, the term signifies two closely interrelated but not altogether identical phenomena:

1. "*it means . . . that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity. For us, appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality.*" [7]

2. "*the term 'public' signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us . . . To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common . . . the world, like every in-between, relates and separate men at the same time.*" [8]

These two fundamental aspects of public spheres, which can be briefly recapitulated as *public appearance* and *common world*, are not coincident but overlapping. It is not difficult to find lots of phenomena corresponding to the two characteristics separately, but the unification of both is rare. There may be something common belonging to a social group, but occluded from public visibility, such as the exclusive open space of a gated community. Vice versa, something attracting all the attention of the public is not necessarily a part of the *common world*, just as those arrogant skyscrapers are not an incarnation of the common value.

Although Arendt was keenly aware of the two essential components of the public sphere, she did not drill down to a level of granularity in *The Human Condition*. To some extent, her emphasis was put on the *public appearance*, namely, the space of appearance brought forth by the congregation in the manner of action and speech. Apparently, it is not the heart of the matter in *The Human Condition* to ascertain

3. Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT press, 1992), 73-98.

4. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 19.

5. Ibid., 56.

6. Ibid., 125.

7. Ibid., 50.

8. Ibid., 52.

how the mutual relation between the *public appearance* and *common world* affect the production of public sphere. Like an explorer who can always discover some precious deposits, Arendt had no time for a halt to investigate them thoroughly. What she could do is just to leave a mark on them, then go straight towards the real destination in her mind — *vita active*. However, the mark left on the spot is sufficient for successors to find directions of the investigation into public spaces.

1.2   Jürgen Habermas: The Discursive Model of the Public Sphere

Another important theoretic model of public space is from Jürgen Habermas, namely the bourgeois public sphere — its rise, transformation, and disintegration. This public sphere originated from the rise of European civil society. Thanks to early finance and trade capitalism, a new, autonomous social stratum came into being, which was labeled as "bourgeoisie". It was different "from nobility, peasantry, and the lower strata of the town." The members of the stratum "were counted among the educated bourgeoisie, in the wider sense, which was strictly distinguished from the people, *le peuple*." [9]

"The fully developed bourgeois public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatized individuals who came together to form a public: the role of property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple." [10] In other words, *property* and *education* constitutes the entry requirements for the bourgeois public sphere. On the one hand, the status of property owners creates a situation whereby "their private interest – each his own – automatically converge into the common interest. Therefore, only from them was an effective representation of the general interest to be expected." [11] Meanwhile, there is also a consensus of conduct on an institutional level, whose generality and abstractness have a peculiar obviousness for privatized individuals. [12] On the other hand, the public clearly attained enlightenment and realized their subjectivity — a kind of psychological emancipation, through their cultivation, namely, the critical absorption of philosophy, literature, and art. The enlightened subjectivity helps to give a critical and problematic flavor to the bourgeois public sphere, which from the beginning of its birth had challenged the established authority of the monarch. [13]

According to Benhabib, the critical theory by Habermas has much in common with the republican model based on civic virtue by Arendt, in terms of the political participation and the widest-reaching democratization of the decision-making process. However, compared with Habermas' model, Arendt's theory expresses "more hostility towards the institutions of modern civil society" (like the market) "with highly differentiated spheres of economy, law, politics, civil and family life". "Virtue and commerce are thought to be antithetical principles." The political participation is defined in the republican (agonistic) model as a narrow political realm, which is accessible only to the "land-based gentry with civil virtue or the citizens of the polis". By contrast, it is "shifted towards a more inclusively understood concept of discursive will formation" in Habermas' critical theory. [14] Consequently, the public sphere

9. Jürge Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, tran. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT press, 1991), 255-6.

10. Ibid., 56.

11. Ibid., 96.

12. Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," 87.

13. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 52.

14. Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," 86.

is regarded as "the creation of procedures whereby those affected by general social norms and collective political decisions can have a say in their formulation, stipulation and adoption". Such a "practical discourse" could also work as a criterion to judge the public dialogues. [15] In this sense, the republic sphere model constituted by Habermas is labeled by Benhabib as "discursive public sphere", which is largely concentrated on the scope of the institution, discourse and public opinions, but less on materiality and city space. One of the excellent public spaces is the public opinions mediated by the news press.

Although Benhabib was effusive in her praise for the Habermasian model in contrast to the "agonistic" one and "legalistic" one, [16] taking it as the most compatible one with the questions of the democratic legitimacy in advanced capitalist societies, the issue may not be so simple as Benhabib thought. This point has even been demonstrated through Habermas' personal analysis. What Habermas discusses is not so much the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere as its decline.

A prerequisite implied in the "discursive public sphere" is the existence of a vis-à-vis, rational and critical small circle. In the golden era of the bourgeoisie, under the condition of the petty commodity exchange, such circles widely existed in salons, coffee houses and theatre lobbies. Through literature criticism, magazines and newspapers they exerted a strong influence on the politics of that time. However, confronted with escalating complexity and systematization of capitalism and fast growing communications networks, this early bourgeois public sphere tended to be inappropriate and institutionalized. The sphere has become defined by representative democracy plus the gradually privatized and commercialized media. Furthermore, the rise of welfare states brought about the shrinking of the classic functions of the family. A family increasingly lost its power to shape conduct, namely, the power as an agent of personal internalization or subjectivity. As a result, the disappearance of the autonomy of private people had already compromised the criticality of the public sphere.

In his work, Habermas endows this kind of public sphere founded on the "communication reason", "democracy", and "autonomy" with a high priority. Oliver Marchart calls it a "*meta-* or *super*-public sphere". The possibility of this so-called *meta-* or *super*-public sphere notwithstanding, just like the autonomous public sphere in the internet world, this special public sphere, "meta-sphere of rational, informal, normative deliberation" cannot replace other various "*partial*" public spheres, such as "*pre-rational* or *pre-*, *non-*, or *anti-democratic* public spheres". [17] In other words, the irreducible plurality and diversity of the public sphere is precisely the real precondition of the possibility of democracy, which means "no particular public sphere may claim the ontologically privileged status for itself", even the so-called "communicative rational" public sphere.

15. Ibid.
16. See Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," 73-98. In this essay, Benhabib distinguishes "three different conceptions of public space that correspond to three main currents of Western political thought." Hence, the view of the public sphere common to the "republican virtue" or "civic virtue tradition is the "agonistic" view", which is represented by Hannah Arendt. The second concept corresponding to the liberal tradition could be named the "legalistic" model and is exemplified by Bruce Ackerman's conception of "public dialogue". The final model of public sphere is represented by Jürgen Habermas' work, which is name "discursive public space". In Benhabib's view, this last model, which envisages a democratic-socialist restructuring of late-capitalist societies, "is the only one that is compatibles both with the general social trends of our societies and with the emancipatory aspirations of new social movements, like the woman's movement."
17. Oliver Marchart, "Art, Space and Public Sphere(s): Some Basic Oberservations on the Difficult Relation of Public Art, Urbanism and Political Theory," accessed June 01, 2013, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0102/marchart/en.

1.3 Richard Sennett: The Public Sphere as an "Impersonal" Sphere

Like Habermas, Sennett also interests himself in the public sphere constituted by the bourgeoisie in their rising stage of the 18th century. But unlike Habermas, Sennett's focus on the public sphere has shifted from the metaphysical discourse to those more concrete and physical urban realms, such as costumes, speeches, body gestures and codes of conduct. The prototype of Sennett's public sphere is a dramaturgical model — *Theatrum Mundi*, which was a longstanding and far-reaching analytical instrument for the public sphere in the western world. If there is something common between the public life in metropolises and the performance on the stages, it is the "spectators" that both metropolitan inhabitants and theatrical players have to face up to. They have to learn how to express themselves before strangers. Through a series of comprehensive historical records collected by Sennett, it is witnessed how the bourgeois in the 18th century European metropolis took advantage of some codes of beliefs that worked in both theatre and everyday life and "gave men the means to be social, on impersonal grounds". [18]

The overriding principle of "the codes of belief" is *impersonality*. It was through these codes that people "were able to detach behavior with others from personal attributes of physical or social condition". [19] Thus, an impersonal setting at a distance from the self, its immediate needs and its own feelings came into being. [20] Simultaneously, it brought about the experience of diversity.

In spite of the fact that both objects studied by Habermas and Sennett are the bourgeois public spheres of the 18th century, Habermas views Sennett's work as simply adding some characteristics of the *representative publicness* to the classic bourgeois public sphere. This opinion is obviously biased because Habermas neglects what Sennett continuously accentuates — "*impersonality*". As an idea of the civic humanist citizen and an abstract concept of "man", [21] the notion of "*impersonality*", just like the discursive reason stressed by Habermas, could be counted substantially as a rationalist consensus from the Enlightenment.

These codes of belief, which are workable both in theatre and on the street, was formed, Sennett says, "by two principles, one concerning the body, the other the voice. The body was treated as a mannequin; the speech was treated as a sign rather than a symbol. Through the first principle people visualized clothes as matters of contrivance, decoration, and convention, with the body serving as a mannequin rather than as an expressive, living creature. Through the second, they heard speech which signified in and of itself, rather than by reference to outside situation or to the person of speaker." [22]

The codes of belief based on the dramaturgical model – demanding the *impersonality* and suppressing the bodily features – has matched the theatrical idea of the performative art since the 18th century. According to the idea, any bodily *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) would pose a threat to his symbolic conveying and displaying in the form of script or score. [23] Hence, there existed a so-called literature-theater in the second half of the 18th century, which endowed the text of the playwright with a controlling authority, and attempted to eliminate the

18. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 64.

19. Ibid., 65.

20. Ibid., 85.

21. Rosalyn Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT press, 1991), 308.

22. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 64-5.

23. About this point, there will be a discuss in detail in the third chapter under the title of "representation".

influence from the sign of bodily *being-in-the-world*. [24] In the view of Sennett, that the personal features of players intrude into the performance precisely embodies the charismatic illusion in public spheres — the public was disciplined by the patriarchal personality and always keep quiet. [25]

As capitalist productive relations have been consolidated since starting in the 19th century, a relationship of industrial capitalism to urban public culture, a reformulation of secularism, and the weak strength in structure of public life in the *ancient régime*, [26] impaired the equilibrium between public spheres and private spheres. The psychological imagery pertaining to the personality was superimposed on things in public. "Only through acts of fantasy and projection," could the individual personality be enlarged to encompass the personality of a collective group. The bourgeois codes of the public culture – behaviorism, silence, and isolation – were also imposed on the underclasses, whom the bourgeoisie used to dominate and suppress. [27] As a result, the expression of the multitudes' interests would be kidnapped by one individual personality manifested in public.

According to Sennett, the 19th century crisis of the public life eventually resulted in the emergence of *intimate society*. The end of public culture concerned two "uncivilized" factors: *charisma* and *community*. The former is related to "players", and the latter to "spectators". The fundamental reason leading to both of them is that the prevailing ideology of intimacy destroyed the impersonal background of public communication — "the very equation of impersonality with emptiness itself creates the loss of humanity." [28] On the one hand, it converts the masses to "the passive spectators to a political personage who offers them his intentions, his sentiments, rather than his acts, for their consumption." They may lose the opportunity of revealing themselves to others through the sharing of a common, collective personality. On the other hand, driven by a "supposedly humanitarian desire to erase impersonality in social relation", people refuse to negotiate, and continually purge the outsiders from the community. "The pursuit of common interests is destroyed in the search for a common identity." [29]

Eventually, Sennett claims in this work that, with the fall of public man arising from the destruction of the impersonal convention, the fall of public man led to the decline of the public sphere.

1.4 Hans Paul Bahrdt: The Public Sphere as a Social System with Incomplete Integration

Bahrdt's investigation of public sphere was inspired by Max Weber's concept of city, who defines a city in the economic sense as a settlement "where the local population satisfies an economically significant part of its everyday requirements in the regular, local market, and a significant part of the products bought there acquired or produced specifically for sale on the market by the local population or that of the immediate hinterland." [30] "A city, then, is always a market center," [31] or a *market settlement*.

A corollary from the Weberian city concept is that the market, espe-

24. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004), 131.
25. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 275.
26. Ibid., 19.
27. Ibid., 254.
28. Ibid., 260.
29. Ibid., 261.
30. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkely: University of California Press, 1978), 1212-4.
31. Ibid.

cially the market in medieval cities, was a spatially prototypical form of publicness (public sphere). People have enough freedom to withdraw themselves at any time from the market events because the market is not a closed system where all members would be completely involved. [32] In this regard, what happens in the market cannot be fully determined through the market order. It is the incompleteness, openness, and flexibility of the market that guarantee the arbitrariness of contacts among one another. In Bahrdt's view, the *incomplete Integration* (*unvollständige Integration*) or *fragmentary Integration* (*lückenhafte Integration*) is the negative premise of public spheres. [33] By comparison, private spheres are characterized by "the conscious construction and cultivation of social and physical environment that become a self-closed system". [34]

In such an incalculable open system, the chance of individuals to be discernible appears only in transient contacts, which would only divulge some snippets to others. This means the main way to understand mutually is "*pars pro toto*". In order to achieve the goal, firstly, the individual's behavior should be acclaimed, or his manner must be *conventionalized* (*stilisiert*); secondly, some common and united principles should be embodied by the behavior so that it can be recognized as creditable by other people. [35] His individuality would be more prominent above the rest, and must be simultaneously placed under the framework of common restrictions. A form of self-representation conforming to these two requirements was called "*Repräsentation*" by Bahrdt. For him, publicness comes into being in the place where the communication and compromise would come up owing to the special behavioral conventionalization. [36]

In addition to the *Repräsentation*, there is another form of self-presentation — *courtship display* (*Imponiergehabe*). Bahrdt uses the term describing the mating behaviors between animals to refer to some ostentatious self-presentation, which seeks to enunciate the great otherness in a literal and extended sense regardless of the collective framework. [37]

It is unique for Bahrdt's delineation of public spheres to start from the Weberian city concept and take the *incomplete integration* for the essential prerequisite of public spheres. The Bahrdtian model of a public sphere as an unclosed place leaves plenty room for "*negative image*" [38] and is a social place with uncertainty, albeit, this uncertainty is still revised by the framework of "common value". In a way, the Bahrdtian concept is in accordance with Rosalyn Deutsche's judgment of the public sphere, the social space without *positivity* and *certainty*. Nevertheless, his public spheres have been ossified so as to be an absolute antithesis of the private sphere in his explication. With regard to the problem of urbanity, he thought the polarizing between the public sphere and the private spheres is a basis form of urban socialization. For him, there is a formula that the polarity and interrelationship between public and private spheres takes form more strongly and the life of a settlement, sociologically speaking, is "more urbanized". [39] Some European scholars consider the argument as a critical standard to evaluate the city's

32. Hans Paul Bahrdt, *Die Moderne Großstadt: Soziologische Überlegungen zum Städtebau*, ed. Ulfern Herlyn (Opladen: Lesk+Budrich, 1998), 86.
33. Ibid., 86-7.
34. Ibid., 99.
35. Ibid., 91.
36. Ibid., 91-2.
37. Ibid., 92.
38. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 277.
39. Bahrdt, *Moderne Großstadt*, 83.

urbanity. To be honest, it is questionable whether the standard is still appropriate for the city in other cultural contexts. [40]

From Arendt to Bahrdt, the observers oriented their ideal models of the public sphere towards the societies before the individualist revolution. An implicit idea of the orientation is that the rise of industrial capitalism compromised urban public spheres. As Bahrdt noticed, a new stratum, the industrial worker, different from the old *Bürgertum* in medieval cities and the bourgeois in the 18th century, arose from the industrialization. Accompanied by this, a third living domain, which can be counted neither as a public sphere nor as a private sphere, began to dominate the spatial formation of cities after World War II, especially in new city areas. The spatial pattern, named by Bahrdt as "*industrial feudalism*" and "*oikos of great companies*", [41] is normally characterized by a relatively autonomous territory occupied by the great institutions and enterprise, which is always enclosed with hedges, walls and fences, and even protected by private security. The emergence of this third domain implies the decay of the public sphere, the collapse of the medieval ideal, and the failure of the polarization between public and private spheres in the modern society. In this regard, Bahrdt's reaction was similar with those of above mentioned authors, that is, maintaining an intensive distance to the modern society.

1.5 Rosalyn Deutsche: The Public Sphere as a Debatable and Conflictual Sphere

While more and more scholars identify public spheres as a sphere (space) of *consensus*, the art historian and critic, Rosalyn Deutsche provides a totally different angle to observe public spheres. For her, a public sphere is generated by conflict and debate, not by *consensus*, albeit, the latter is the resource to rational and procedural meta-rules. That is to say, a public sphere is not a space of *consensus*, but rather *a space of dissent*.

Deutsche's concept of the public sphere is derived from Claude Lefort's concept of *libertarian democracy*, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's concept of *radical and plural democracy*. What Deutsche tries to do in her seminal essay *Agoraphobia* is to infiltrate new theories of "radical and plural democracy" into the public and private art discourse.

A cardinal point in the new perspective consists in that "the hallmark of democracy is the disappearance of certainty about the foundations of social life". [42] This argument about the uncertainty of democracy, based on Lefort's ideas "that have since emerged as key points in discussions about radical democracy", [43] actually serves as a cornerstone for Deutsche's theoretical adventure in the field of public spaces.

For Lefort, "the unity of society can no longer be represented as an organic totality", because of "the fact that the place from which power derives its legitimacy is what Lefort calls 'the image of an empty place'." [44] By contrast, "under the monarchy, power was embodied in the person of the King who, in turn, incarnated the power of state," which "derived from a transcendent source — God, Supreme Justice,

40. Walter Siebel, "Urbanität ohne Raum: Der Möglichkeitsräume," in *Mögliche Räume*, ed. Diethild Jornhardt, Gabriele Pütz, and Thies Schröder (Hamburg: Junius Verlag GmbH, 2002), 32-3, or, "Wesen und Zukunft der europäischen Stadt," in *DISP-The Planning Review*, 141 (2000): 28-34.
41. Bahrdt, *Moderne Großstadt*, 155.
42. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 272.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 273.

or Reason." This emptiness or void of power resource amounts to the *dissolution of the markers of certainty*. Thus, "democratic power cannot appeal for its authority to a meaning immanent in the social." To compensate for the loss, public spaces were constructed to negotiate and communicate the meaning of the social. Therefore, society as a totality is impossible. Precisely because of the impossibility, the legitimacy of debate is recognized in the public sphere. [45]

As a result, Deutsche argues, "democracy and its corollary, public space, are brought into existence, then, when the idea that the social is founded on a substantial basis, a *positivity*, is abandoned. The identity of society becomes an enigma and is therefore open to contestation." [46] The absence of the *positivity* means "negativity is part of the identity of society as a whole", and "no complete element within society unifies it and determines its development" because there always exists some "constitutive outside" that blocks its completion. The relationship between a social identity and its "constitutive outside" is termed by Laclau and Mouffee as "antagonism", which "affirms and simultaneously prevents the closure of society, revealing the partiality and precariousness – the contingency – of every totality." [47]

Thus, the above mentioned *contest*, *debate* and *conflict* constitute the basic value of Deutsche's public sphere. According to this principle, she begins to challenge the indisputable, unanimous and univocal tendency in public space, and to worry about the profound antipathy towards diversity and plurality in urban space. "Social space is produced and structured by conflicts," wrote Deutsche, "with this recognition, a democratic spatial politics begins." [48] Applying the theories of radical and plural democracy, she attempted to re-theorize the public art and public space, and to fight on several fronts against various detriments or a reduction to diversity and plurality, or the unification of public space:

- She opposes the practices that manipulate the public art as an embellishment of urban space or as a means of gentrification for property speculators. For example, the homeless were expelled by the upper-middle neighborhoods from the Jackson Park in New York in the name of "the quality of urban life".
- She also opposes that conservatism and liberalism "continue to associate public space and democracy with the goals of building consensus, consolidating communities, and soothing conflicts" [49] because the plurality and controversy hidden inside public spaces might be reduced, even eliminated finally.
- For her, the Habermasian ideal of a singular, unified public sphere "transcend concrete particularity and reaches a rational – non-coercive – *consensus*." [50] A Kantian ideal for public spheres is followed and reflected in Habermas' thought, who believes that the discursive-rational public sphere can ensue from the free exchange of opinions in an intellectual market place, as the public space would in the free market. What both the sphere and space are grounded on is a kind of *commensurability* which exists widely in science, art and politics since the Enlightenment. A similar viewpoint mirrored in art practices is the ideal of a "unifying –

45. Ibid., 273-4.
46. Ibid., 274.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., xxxiv.
49. Ibid., 282.
50. Ibid., 287.

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hence, public – aesthetic" based on the so-called "*impartial or disinterested subject*", which originated from the idea of "*republic of taste*" envisioned by those Enlightenment aestheticians. In Deutsche's account, the "republic of taste", founded on solid, universal principles, represents an obsession with pursuing the *common good*, imparity, and disinterest in the aesthetic realm. Nevertheless, same as the Habermasian political republic, it "only attests to a desire both to control conflict and to secure a stable position for the self". [51]

- She repudiates the economic determinist logic coming from the Neo-Marxist left, especially the doctrine advanced by David Harvey and Fredric Jameson. Both of whose social theories with a fundamentalist logic privilege the class struggle, which eventually boils down to the manifestation of economic relationships. With this priority, all social struggles, demonstrations, contests, and debates would be subordinate to a single antagonism — relations of economic production and classes. Although critics with a similar view firmly condemn the conservative homogenizations of the general public, while vigorously defending the plurality and diversity in public spaces, these critics ignored the potential implicit in the social space. This is because their fundamentalist logic debilitates their comprehension of diversity and difference in social conflicts. [52]

1.6   Flaws and Conclusion

Although these five theories have reached various conclusions about the public sphere separately, there are still several limits which we must encounter, when applying the concepts and theories to urbanism, especially in the field of urban design and architecture. The limits include nostalgia, elitism, (im)materiality, spatiality, and euro-centrism.

Nostalgia: The historical methodology is broadly applied in the research. If people are dissatisfied with the reality, their customary tendencies are to turn back and contrast the contemporary insufficiency with the previous glory. Historical archetypes only serve to highlight the current shortages.

For instance, Arendt's ideas of political action and public realm are centered on her obsession with the politics of the ancient Greek city-state, namely the *polis*. In contrast to her apparently unstinting praise of the classical *polis*, she casts serious doubt on modern society. The critiques even became a kind of abhorrence. Her major theoretical work, *The Human Condition*, is generally perceived as an anti-modernist political work. However, the ideal public life from the pen of Arendt was based on such an obvious inequality as the oppression of slaves, women, non-citizens, and non-Greeks by *polis*. "She fully understands that the conditions which gave rise to it — the existence of small, largely homogenous populations organized through a relatively simple division of labour (which included slavery) and bound together by religiously based social consensus — cannot be duplicated in the modern world." [53]

51. Ibid., 310.
52. Ibid., 317.
53. Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," 86.

Her use of the *polis* is intended to retrieve the action ability of human beings with the help of this ancient paradigm. However, the inherent prejudice against "the rise of modern society" disregards the fact that precisely "*the social*" – "the narrowly political realm on the one hand and the economic market and the family on the other" [54] – could emancipate the exploited groups from the "shadowy and hidden place", the household realm.

Similarly, what Habermas and Sennett are concerned about is the bourgeois public spheres in the 18th century. Whereas such spheres presented the unprecedented vigor in that age and still profoundly influenced our social life and political system with their legacies, they have been "declined" and "transformed" since the beginning of the 19th century. The spheres' golden age lasted only for almost half a century. For the two authors, the development of social productivity and productive relationships, especially the rise of industrial capitalism and emergence of social welfare states, primarily led to an unsustenance of the public sphere. This kind of idea, like the fundamentalist logic mentioned by Deutsche, enshrouded the theorists' judgments and made it hard for them to identify the potential of social diversity. Eventually, in their accounts, the destiny of the public sphere is no more than "loss", "decline", or "break-up".

Bahrdt, along with the theorists, also built his argument on an ancient model — the medieval city and its open market, while lamenting the deterioration in the publicness of modern society.

Without exception, these thinking modes dominated by nostalgia are always enveloped in pessimism, and meanwhile are at a loss as to how to proceed. Imprisoned in the historical prototypes, the thinkers invariably overlook the new possibilities of the public spheres in the present. For that matter, we cannot help questioning, "is something the matter with our society on earth, or our theories of the public sphere? Is it necessary to restore our living environment to the former condition carried by those classical public models, or otherwise, to call for a new concept to interpret contemporary phenomena in urban spaces?"

Elitism: Parallel to the nostalgic model, the elitism will unavoidably surface in these theories. Historically, the public sphere as a paradigm consisted in small circles formed only by elites in their eras. To maintain such a circle, a high cost would be paid under any circumstances. Their access depended on the property autonomy, educational certification, personal freedom of citizenship, even requirement of ages and genders — women and children were excluded for a long time from the public spheres.

For instance, in terms of the size of the public spheres, one assembly of the Athenians in the agora in the democratic era was "less dense than a football crowd, more dense than the crowd in a typical shopping mall, approximate to the midday density in the square of modern Siena." [55] When the slaveholder acted and spoke freely, other persons were incarcerated in a "dark household realm". The slavery is immoral, but necessary for the polis. Likewise, the mature bourgeoisie's public

54. Ibdi.
55. Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1994), 56.

spheres demanded its members' "fictious identity", which was composed of the role of property owners and the one of human beings. Both were the preconditions of the public spheres. Those "*plebian*" (uneducated people), workers and farmers, who were undereducated and without private property, were almost surely evicted from the spheres.

Only through vis-à-vis communications rather than intermediary media could the elitist circles survive. As public communications have broken through the territorial rustication – with the help of the improved techniques of the new media and long-distance transportation – the public spheres within the narrow circles have become more and more difficult to be sustained, and eventually broken down.

(Im)Materiality: The theorists strove to answer how public spheres are constructed as intellectual conceptions or political ideas. However, the discourses of the public sphere did not address issues of urban morphologies or the linkage between public activities and urban built environments, which the discipline of architecture and urban design precisely concentrates on. This was because, for the thinkers, a public sphere is an ideological sphere, and the physical environments are only its (passive) sediment or result.

Among all of the cases, Habermas' concept shows the least interest in the material aspect. His model of the public sphere, which as a pure metaphysical realm almost needs nothing physical to support it, is also the most institutionalized one. The bourgeoisie could discuss newspapers, articles, novels, debate literary and art criticism, and publish letters wherever they wanted — salons, coffee houses, and theatre lobbies. By virtue of modern techniques, these activities can be completely transferred into cyber-space where all kinds of virtual forums, homepages, and bulletins, or real-time communicative tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, can replace the function of the former real space. For Habermas, the urban physical space is no more than a container, a passive container completely irrelevant to its content. The meaning of physical space itself is irrelevant to the production and constitution of public spaces.

Relatively speaking, Arendt has confirmed the great worth of the material world – artifacts – to the public sphere. The man-made world of things – particularly the things produced by mortals, such as works, deeds, and words – is an indispensable condition to fulfill the "worldliness". "Within its (artificial world of things) borders each individual life is housed," as Arendt argued in the beginning of her work, "while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all." [56] Analogously, there are more emphases on the physical dimension in the work of Sennett, Bahrdt and Deutsche. The public sphere or public space as meaning exchange does not merely take place purely at the institutional and discursive level, but could be stimulated also by costumes and behavioral modes of urban residents, arrangements of architecture, and symbolic presentations of public arts. Compared with the purely discursive-rational perspective, the latter seems to be more comprehensive and more practical.

56. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 7.

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Nevertheless, if we go into more details and ask, "how could the built environment operate in the production of urban space, and which effect?", nobody, except Bahrdt, afforded an explicit answer. Although Arendt provided a positive evaluation to man-made environments philosophically, how it is accomplished is still nebulous. Moreover, in contrast to Arendt's hymn to the durability of artifacts, we might doubt, "are those artificial objects without durability, those consumer goods with swift coming and going, categorically unhelpful to improve the publicness of urban spaces?" Even Bahrdt's method and conclusion, which consciously introduce the urban design angle into the sociological thought, must be carefully reconsidered, because of great changes of the original social conditions.

Spatiality: The discussion on the "public space" appears so complex because the concept comprises two equally important but also intertwined elements — "publicness" and "spatiality". According to Lefebvre's spatial *triad*, the spatiality refers to, primariliy, the *physical*, which is defined through the practical-sensible (*le pratico-sensible*); secondly, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstraction, which is defined through the philosophy and mathematics; and thirdly, the *social*, the realm of projects and projections, symbols and utopias, imagery, and even desires. [57] According to this perspective, the doctrines or discourses about the public sphere can be counted as the mental space due to their shortage of the materiality. In this sense, these theories may be named as the theory of *meta-spatial publicness*.

As we can see, the canonical slogan – "space is social construction" – has readily gained the acceptance with all these authors. However, it is only one side of the production of space. The other side is that *the social sphere is also spatially constructed*. The key difference between both the understandings is that, "in the first case, space is still seen as a passive mass, i.e. as the result of social construction processes, while in the second case, space itself assumes the role of a social actor." [58]

Eurocentrism: In their studies of publicness, Arendt, Habermas, Sennett, and Bahrdt were neither interested in nor capable of touching upon the urban phenomena of the cultural circles outside of Europe. Although they did not directly place the European values above other civilizations, the single angle implicit in their theories makes the discussion on Others intentionally or unintentionally slip into such dualisms like "developed and undeveloped", "civilized and barbaric", and "advanced and backward". According to the traditional European view, the "authentic" public space does not exist in Asian cities, when an European paradigm is adopted as the sole criterion. People who insist on this dualism would be apt to disregard the particularity in diverse cultural contexts and the public potential resulting from them as well. Therefore, when applying the classical works to the concept of and problems of publicness in Shanghai's urban space, we must be alert and avoid this implicit Eurocentric viewpoint.

Conclusion: After these theories of the public sphere (publicness) [59]

57. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 11.
58. Marchart, "Art, Space and Public Sphere(s)".
59. From now on, I will use the word *publicness* to replace the normal concept of *public sphere*. Although the two terms assume different form, the meanings out of both are indistinguishable, or simply same. Moreover, *publicness* is a concise basis for the new concept of *spatial publicness*.

are sorted and compared, it is necessary to make a brief summary for the subsequent discussion on *spatial publicness*.

In the series of the theoretical studies of publicness, the connotation of "public" identified by Arendt can be regarded as the philosophical basis and epistemological departure point for the analysis of public affairs. That is, *"public" (publicness) signifies two closely interrelated but not altogether identical phenomena — public appearance and common world. Compared with private spheres, public appearance means public spheres are open, manifest, and visible, rather than hidden, introvert, or invisible. This implies that visibility is a characteristic of public spheres. Meanwhile, common world indicates public spheres do not belong to any individual but to the collective, not to any single group but to the whole of society.*

In my view, publicness is precisely derived from the dialectic balance between the two aspects of "public". Public appearance represents an aspect of publicness — meaning presentation, while the common world means power struggle or relational equilibrium. In fact, all the theories recited above can come down to the two aspects respectively. Whether the Habermasian public sphere based on discursive reason, the *impersonality* emphasized by Sennett, or the "*Distanz*" in the *incomplete integration* stressed by Bahrdt, they are all relevant to the dimension of the *common world*. In other words, any public sphere must be the result of a certain equilibrium, to which the competition between different social agents gives rise. To maintain such equilibrium of power, these agents have to arrive at a certain *consensus* so as to guarantee some common values, principles, or standards related to their *common world*. Notwithstanding this, it is definitely insufficient for publicness that only this equilibrium of power occurs. The authentic value of publicness is owing to the dimension of *public appearance*, its competence for *meaning presentation*. Only by disrupting the equilibrium, would some new meanings be able to gain opportunities for their self presentation. At this point, the *meaning presentation* on the public scene always keeps an elusive affiliation with the *consensus*. The public sphere as debates, contests, conflicts expounded by Deutsche, the spontaneous presentation in performance described by Sennett, or the "*Repräsentation*" defined by Bahrdt, all of these are closely connected with the dimension of *public appearance* in publicness.

Hence, the publicness or public sphere as the dialectic balance emerges from the interplay and collision between the two categories — *public appearance* and *common world*, so to speak, between *meaning presentation* and *relational (power) equilibrium*. Some research about publicness lays particular stress on the *relational (power) equilibrium/common world*, while others on *public appearance/meaning presentation*. By contrast, we may consider the publicness as the balance between *consensus* and *dissensus*, which correspond to *common world* and *public appearance* respectively. Moreover, the dialectic balance is unstable. The peculiar and paradoxical logic of Jacques Ranciére's philosophy may be borrowed here to account for the ambiguousness. It can be simply stated as: *A always consists in blurring the boundaries*

between A and non-A. [60] *Dissensus*, then, as a basic value of publicness, always consists in the blurring boundaries between what is considered common (*consensus*) and what is considered dissident (*dissensus*). The blurring boundaries between both are exactly where publicness happens. The very logic also discloses one essential public property — publicness does not exist in an eternal and constant place designated clearly by the conventional concept of "public space", but in the equivocal domain governed by the dialectic process between *consensus* (*common world/relational equilibrium*) and *dissensus* (*public appearance/meaning presentation*). However, most theories of publicness, including Arendt, Habermas, Sennett, Bahrdt and Deutsche, care only about one aspect of publicness, namely, either *consensus* or *dissensus*. They pay little attention to the real impetus of the existence and production of *publicness* — a subtle balance. When facing up to complicated and mutative conditions of modern society and the unsuitability of their historical models in the present, most of the theorists simply bemoan the "demise of public sphere (space)" by instinct, instead of reflecting upon the flaws in their theories or methodologies.

60. Steven Corcoran, editor's introduction to *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, by Jacques Ranciére, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 3.

2 Distance – Relational Equilibrium

The former chapter concluded that *common world/relational equilibrium* and *public appearance/meaning presentation* constitute two crucial facets of publicness. In this chapter and the next, the two facets will be spatializedly re-conceptualized under Henri Lefebvre's theoretical framework of *the production of space* and Jacques Rancière's discourses on *aesthetics* and *politics*. In favor with the re-conceptualization, the physical and symbolic properties will be retrieved in the research on *spatial publicness*. The properties, which the discipline of architecture and urban design mainly concentrates on, are overlooked by the theories of meta-spatial publicness.

The spatialized results of *common world/power equilibrium* and *public appearance/meaning presentation* are "distance" and "representation". Furthermore, distance and representation are matched evenly with *representations of space* and *spaces of representation* in the production of public space, respectively.

2.1 The Production of Public Space

Lefebvre's *the production of space* is characterized by a trialectical thinking that subverts all traditional modes of minds and take-for-granted epistemologies. With this trialectics, he intends to break through the stability, coherence and unitary chased by the old epistemologies, and to maintain constant evaluation, disorder, unfixedness and radical openness corresponding to lifeworlds. Based on the ontological trialectics of spatiality, historicality and sociality (i.e., social production of space, time and *Being-in-the-world*),[1] he posits the spatial trialectics, which means, if (social) space is a (social) product, the process of spatial production is effected through the mutual trialectical relations among *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *spaces of representation*.

Specifically in terms of the production of public space, we can describe at length the elements of the public *triad* as the following in the manner of Lefebvre:[2]

- In the conventional sense, what the discipline of architecture and urban design always deals with and tries to exert an influence on is *spatial practice*. In terms of the public space, the usual public spatial types, like plaza, park and street, all boil down to public spatial practices, which secrete the space of a society and contain specific spatial competences and performances only evaluated empirically by every society member. More accurately, the public spatial practice is *accessibility*, and public space is, in essence, a freely accessible space. These public spaces (e.g., plaza, park and street) have a certain cohesiveness to guarantee their *accessibility*. The *accessibility* itself is a complex that for Stephen Carr consists of three subtypes — the physical, visual and symbolic (for this discussion, the latter two can be merged into one — symbolic

1. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Malden: Blackwell, 1996), 71.

2. The following three points of public *triad* are deduced from the Lefebvre's definition of spatial *triad* and adjusted slightly, which includes *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *spaces of representation*. The issue about the *triad* in more details are discussed in Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33 and 38-9 (see chap.1, n.57).

access). [3] Nevertheless, neither the cohesiveness nor *accessibility* is always workable. A common but paradoxical fact is that, although the usual public spaces are mostly considered as freely accessible for everyone, their *accessibility* is mostly only physical rather than symbolic. This divergence of the public *accessibility* echoes the fragility of the cohesiveness that *representations of space* try to impose on public practices.

- *Representations of space* are conceptualized spaces, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocrats, and so on. The architectural and urban design, social administration and urban management can be counted as *representations of space*. For the pubic space, its representations may be exemplified by the polarization between public and private spheres, with which Bahrdt accounts for urbanity. On the basis of Bahrdt's argument, Walter Siebel elaborates on the concretization of the polarity with four dimensions, namely the juristic, functional, social and material/symbolic. [4] Underpinned by these concrete dimensions, not only are the boundaries between both spheres rigidly demarcated, but the public spatial practices are also endowed with cohesiveness and stability. Finally, these spatial stipulations evolve into some self-evident factors tied to orders, knowledge, codes and "frontal" relations. By systematic observation and analysis, a set of spatial codes can be disclosed, which impact practically on urban spaces through their interventions and modifications in spatial textures.

- *Spaces of representation* are direct *lived* spaces related to "inhabitants" and "users". As complex symbolisms, they overlay physical spaces (the *perceived*), making symbolic use of their objects. In Lefebvre's discourses, *spaces of representation* are linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life without much chance to publicly appear. I want to reconsider this viewpoint here. The *spaces of representation* cannot be confined in those covert and clandestine areas, but are capable of manifesting themselves in urban spaces, taking up challenges, or delivering supplements to those "front" relations or dominated spaces. The *spaces of representation* appearing in public, comparable with what Laclau calls *constitutive outside*, [5] always prevent the complete totalization of a system, as well as symbolize themselves by differentiating themselves from the system. This means that the extreme case, a closed system, is never attainable. In my view, where the public space, or rather, *spatial publicness* surfaces is an in-between realm, an ambivalent realm, between the "total" topography structured by *representations of space* and *constitutive outside* initiated by *spaces of representation*.

If acknowledging shortcomings of publicness theories (deficient in spatiality and materiality) and architectural theories (careless with social dimensions and living spaces), we may couple both ideas under the rubric of the production of space to obtain a unitary understanding of

3. Stephen Carr et al., *Public Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 150.
4. Walter Siebel and Jan Wehrheim, "Öffentlichkeit und Privatheit in der Überwachten Stadt," *DISP-The Planning Review* 153 (2003): 4.
5. Marchart, "Art, Space and Public Sphere(s)" (see chap.1, n.17).

publicness at the theoretical level. In this regard, the two cardinal aspects of publicness manifest themselves in two forms: first, the common world is related to the *representations of space* that manipulate the spatial practices into achieving the equilibrium of agents or the stability of social structures; second, the presentation of meaning is linked with the *spaces of representation* that appear publicly as different meanings through their superimposition on physical spaces.

This does not mean that social relations attach singularly to *representations of space*, or that only *spaces of representation* bring about the presentation of meaning. As previously stated, the unruliness and constant evolution inherent in the spatial trialectics remain the flexibility and fluidity among the *triad* elements. Every element in the *triad* does not thoroughly rupture itself with the others, but is inextricably bound up with one another: *representations of space* present special meanings for relational regulation and systematic stability; conversely, *spaces of representation* can interfere with the social equilibrium by inscribing symbols and signs into urban textures and representing the repressed, but unassimilated otherness. To a certain degree, *representations of space* can be converted into *spaces of representation*, and vice verse.

Drawing on the ideas of the production of space, I will use the term "distance" to delineate the common world where social relations are balanced by *representations of space* in the manner of manipulating spatial practices, the term "representation" to describe the public appearance of *spaces of representation* that superimpose themselves on physical spaces, and the term "spatial publicness" to denote the dialectical and inexorable process between representation and distance and to substitute the conventional concept "public space".

2.2   *Distance: A Prerequisite for Publicness*

If the incomplete integration (*unvollständige Integration*) is the negative requisite for publicness, the *distance* between individuals, or rather, between the individual and collective, is the pre-condition for the emergence of publicness too. The tension, vigour, variation and self-consciousness in public life are partly attributed to the existence of the distance that not only forms an objectifying collective consciousness, but also cultivates the individual subjectivity distinct from the collective will. [6]

For a long time, immediate and face-to-face relations have been established in traditional large families (clans) and collectivist groups, where small circles are maintained by personal acquaintants, with aid of ethical principles, consanguinities, or ideologies. Likewise, when people are plunging into ecstasy at a pop concert or public assembly within totalitarian societies, a zero-distance situation happens, where the individual identity is suspended. In these situations, the compromised distance leads to the devastation of personal privacy because the individual gives up his *self* and immerses himself in the collective without any distance. Bahrdt regards this kind of publicness as a *denatured publicness*, which he calls "pseudo-publicness (*Scheinöffentlichkeit*)". [7]

The distance is not an invariant constant, but a changeable outcome

6. Bahrdt, *Die Moderne Großstadt*, 102 (see chap.1, n.32).

7. Ibid., 102-3.

out of the fluctuation of social relations and power equilibrium. In this case, it has contained the dimension of common world in its own rights. Recognizably, the matters reflected in conventional communities bear on a special distance regime — an institutionalized hierarchical distance, and the suspension of individual identities or devastation of privacy amounts to a regime of zero-distance. Distances, whether the public distance, hierarchical distance, or zero-distance, bring about the power and relation equilibrium, although not all of them can facilitate an emergence of common world.

2.3   *The Spatial* Triad *of Distance*

Distance as a human interrelation in public environments is substantially the scale of the personal space. It mirrors the degree of closeness between each other. In respect of the public and private realm, distance must be the outer boundary of privacy, which determines the size of distance.

Similar to the production of space, distance remains something of spatiality consisting of three dimensions: the *physical*, *mental*, and *social*. Generally speaking, the physical distance may correspond with the social distance (e.g., social status, position and role) and the mental distance (e.g., inclusion vs. exclusion, acceptance vs. aversion) properly, which are both strongly influenced by the social morphology and cultural attributes. In his seminal work *The Hidden Dimension*, American anthropologist Edward T. Hall has identified a set of "uniform" distances with the intimate, personal, social and public zones by matching the physical distance to the social and mental distance:

- *Intimate distance* (0 to 45 centimeters) is the distance at which intense feelings are expressed: tenderness, comfort, love and also strong anger.
- *Personal distance* (0.45 to 1.30 meters) is the conversation distance between close friends and family. An example is the distance between people at the family dinner table.
- *Social distance* (1.30 to 3.75 meters) is the distance for ordinary conversations among friends, acquaintances, neighborhoods, co-workers, and so on. The sofa group with armchairs and a coffee table is a physical expression of this social distance.
- *Public distance* (greater than 3.75 meters) is defined as the distance used in more formal situations — around public figures or in teaching situations with one-way communication or when someone wants to hear or see an event but does not wish to become involved. [8]

The investigated samples from which the *proxemic* classification systems were deduced were compiled from observations and interviews with middle-class, professional, white adults, and mainly natives of the northeastern seaboard of the United States. As Hall himself admitted, the generalizations are not representative of human behavior in general, or even of American behavior in general. [9] This premise of the *proxemic* patterns has been concealed and overlooked when they are applied as a

8. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, INC., 1969), 113-25. The text is quoted from Jan Gehl's summary. In Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, tran. Jo Koch (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1987), 71.

9. Ibid., 116.

Figure 2.1: **White Collar Workers' Morning life in a Metro Station, Shanghai.** People's Park Station at 8 o'clock. Photo: Tian Ming, Gold Award of the 23th National Photographic Art Exhibition, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://www.360doc.com/content/12/0501/06/8176916_207815811.shtml`.

universal scientific tool. Moreover, the coalescing patterns between the space requirements and the social activities, relationships, and emotions are so fragile that actors in a concrete situation have to make certain adjustments. In some crowded occasions (for example, in subway carriages), people tend to take advantage of certain gadgets (e.g., iPhone, newspaper and mobile) to enlarge the mental or social gaps, when their spatial envelopes are undermined due to the radical shrinkage of their mutual physical distances (see Figure 2.1). Another situation appears to be the opposite — when the physical distance is augmented far beyond bodily capability, new tele-communication tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter and mobile-SMS) will be utilized to construct virtual networks for social contacts and to diminish psychic distances between one another.

In a stable society deficient in social mobility, the size of personal space (distance) is relatively solidified. This solidification does not mean the scale of a distance is fixed. Instead, the size, position and influence of personal spaces may fluctuate, but be easily defined according to a set of steady social codes (like hierarchy). This commonly happens in traditional societies. However, premised on market exchange and labour division, it is difficult for the modern city as an aggregate site of strangers to maintain such stable and static relations. Consequently, new social and psychic mechanisms will be automatically evolved to balance the uncertainty of the size of personal spaces.

In western culture, a general metaphorical method, the dramaturgical model, is widely employed to grasp these distance phenomena and to analyze public social life. What Erving Goffman calls "mask" and Richard Sennett "role" can be taken as two workable dramaturigical instruments to approach the problem of public life. Before we go into details about the two methodologies, their epistemology foundations need to be briefly articulated.

2.4   Body – The Dividing Line

Like the production of space, the public-private dichotomy starts from the body. Generally, the primary division between the public and private departs from the separation of the inner *self* and outer world. Personal thoughts and feelings, deemed as immaterial and soft existence in contrast to the outer and hard physical reality, are the most intimate space. From this point, privacy is bound up with the innermost and egoistic consciousness, while publicness with the physical and outer world. Under the circumstances, the mind and body are dichotomous. Descartes supposed the mind is essentially non-physical, thinking, and has an autonomic distinction from the body. On the basis of this idea, he posited the famous proposition "*Cogito, ergo sum*". Here, the mind equates to thinking, namely the "ego" or *self*.

Descartes' dichotomy set a border between the inner *self* and outer world at the body: on the one hand, the mind is not independent of the body, but hidden in the head; on the other, only through bodily mediation can the outer world be sensed and understood by the mind, and also only through behavior patterns, languages and gestures can the body communicate with the outer world. [10]

In the theatre performance, the materiality arises out of corporeality (*Köperlichkeit*), spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*) and phoneticality (*Lautlichkeit*). [11] Therein the body plays a key role. It is the tension between the actor's phenomenal body (his bodily *In-the-World-Being*, or *leibliches In-der-Welt-Sein*) and his playing role that constitutes the most significant thing of theatrical and performative theories. [12] This tension exerts not only influence upon symbolic presentation — a kind of representational relation, but stipulates also the border (distance) between the inner *self* and outer world. Philosophically premised on the above stated Descartes' dichotomy of mind vs. body, the actor's body is separated into two parts — the phenomenally sensible body and role-enacting semiotic body.

Similar to the theatre performance, the sharp distinction between the public and private has been drawn on the body in public too. The body possesses public and private characters together.

In terms of the radical literature-theatre (*Literaturtheater*), the actor's body, the carrier of symbols and signs (scripts), must eliminate as much impacts of fleshly *In-the-World-Being* upon spectators as possible. In order to gain a "pure" semiotic body, the embodiment of performance presupposes "*Entkörperlichung* (disembodiment)" or rather, "*Entleiblichung* (de-fleshization)". [13] That the fleshly part is repressed could help to keep the border of the inner *self* and outer world under control and distinguish the public from the private. Inserting mediations (distance) between the public and private spheres is common in theatrical and performtive activities, and also in social activities. The latter circumstances are just what theories of "mask" and "role" try to deal with.

10. Ali Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (London: Routledge, 2003), 9.

11. Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 129-242 (see chap.1, n.24).

12. Ibid., 129.

13. Ibid., 133.

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2.5   Mask and Role

Erving Goffman, an American sociologist, points out "a crucial discrepancy between our *all-too-human selves* and our *socialized selves*." [14] In order to ensure our behaviors to be appropriate, proper, and polite, and to stand up in everyday secular performances, it is necessary for us to wear a mask to maintain a relatively stable socialized *self* and to revise an all-too-human *self* driven by "variable impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to the next". [15] When this happens, an expressive coherence will be achievable, whereby the all-too-human *self* is related to the bodily *In-the-World-Being*, and the socialized *self* is related to the role-enacting bodies of actors.

The mask is a kind of conduct established through social disciplines. It consists of some normal routines, relying on such expressive equipments as *setting* and *personal front* to supply the scenery and staging props for human action. [16] Moreover, the mask constructs the screen and mediation between the all-too-human *self* and socialized *self*, and meanwhile, settles the size and distance of personal spaces in different occasions. Nevertheless, the distances from the mask are not equal, because of their dependence on the hierarchical distribution of the social status and character. For example, those at the top of the pyramid possess the greatest size of the personal space.

From Goffman's perspective, people strive to present positive images in the *frontstage*, while concealed truths are revealed in the *backstage*. This division of social scenes is not the distinction of the public and private as much as that of the open and closed. The presentation in the *frontstage* may be of the public appearance, but may not necessarily belong to the common world. In this case, the mask as a regulated distance of social communication does not aim to preserve the equality of distances, but instead varies with the personal identity, status, and property. Here the problem is, Goffman's mask doctrine focuses on the generalized and fixed social situations where the society is "static, historyless", and "derives from his belief that in human affairs people seek always to establish a situation of equilibrium." [17] In such a society, it does not matter to distinguish the public from the private.

The distance issue went forward by Sennett's role theory. The "role", which, in Sennett's view, makes public life a kind of "impersonal encounter", is more effective to preserve equality in individual interactions than the "mask".

During the *ancien regime*, [18] the European cosmopolitan cities had become an aggregation of strangers out of migrants. People had to create a set of codes of belief suitable for a more undetectable milieu, which worked both in urban spaces and on theatre stages. The citizens in streets and actors on stages, facing strangers and spectators respectively, alike utilized these codes of belief to eliminate the effects from the personal characters and social attributes on public communication, so that the public milieu was turned into the *impersonal* sphere, and citizens could be sociable and free to express themselves. Given the fact that the individual physiological and social specificity is probably equivalent to the bodily *In-the-World-Being* in the *role* mechanism, the

14. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956), 36.

15. Ibid., 36.

16. Ibid., 13.

17. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 36 (see chap.1, n.18).

18. The term *ancien régime* is often used as a synonym for feudalism, but Sennett follows the usage established by Tocqueville to refer to the 18th Century, specifically to the period when commercial and administrative bureaucracy grew up in nations side by side with the persistence of feudal privileges. Quoted in Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 47.

Figure 2.2: **The Cafe Foy in the Palais Royal, 1789.** An engraving by Bosredon, from William H. Ukers, *All About Coffee* (New York: The Tea & Coffee Trade Journal Company, 1935), 92.

specificity must be leveled in favor of the public role-playing. The "*Entkörperlichung* (disembodiment)" or "*Entleiblichung* (de-fleshization)" is the process of distance formation in public communication. On account of the equal distance, personal attributes do not interfere with the public, while the individual intimacy is shielded from its exposure in the public sphere. Such codes of belief functioning both in the theater and on the street are summarized by Sennett as following: 1) the body was treated as a mannequin; 2) speech was treated as a sign rather a symbol. [19] Both principles brought the *Entkörperlichung* (disembodiment) into effect (see Figure 2.2).

The mode of how to handle the personal attributes can distinguish the role from the mask. The personal identity, social status, and even official position can serve as personal *frontstage* in the role mechanism to appear publicly. Those involved in the staging manifestation of representative publicness all amounted to "personal attributes such as insignia, dress, demeanor, and rhetoric — in a word, to a strict code of 'noble' conduct." [20] Conversely, such personal attributes are intentionally repressed by the role mechanism, for the sake of setting up an effective communication among strangers rapidly. Whether the personal distance is equal or not is the substantial criterion for distinguishing the mechanism of the role from the one of the mask.

As mentioned before, the body as a border of the public and private possesses dual natures, suggesting that the body is actually an indivisible unity. However, the manipulation of the body by the mask or role can all devastate its spatial unity and organicness, either by means of exiling the body from the public space (*role*) or from the private space (*mask*). The public-private dichotomy, originating from the dualism of the inner *self* and outer world, and also from that of the mind and body, is a *representation of space* in essence, and belongs to the long-standing epistemological tradition in Western metaphysics. The absolute public-private opposition can contribute to cogitating and perceiving urban spaces, but it also overlooks and ignores their integrity and organicness, and reduces them to the simple polarity and split. Provided that the distance regime of the public space has been gradually institutionalized, it has impaired the quality of the public space in turn.

2.6   The Institutionalization of Distance

For Sennett, the *ancien régime* refers to the period when the bourgeoisie grew up in nations side by side with the persistence of feudal privileges. In this period, the bourgeoisie borrowed, on the one hand, the social etiquette from feudal nobles to constitute communicative modes; on the other, the urban public life did not totally repudiate the active participants from low strata, inasmuch as the bourgeoisie were relatively debilitated and the disciplinary conduct codes were not mature to be imposed on the public life. This was especially the case for those *le people*. With the bourgeoisie playing a leading role on the political stage, their lifestyles became fairly prevalent in every field of social life. The distance regime, suspending personal attributes for equality, has been institutionalized. The stricter the suspension regulation was in

19. Ibid., 64-5.
20. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 8 (see chap.1, n.9).

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public occasions, the broader the oppressed range was.

This kind of changes initially happened in the public theater where spectators were subjected to silence rules. "To sneer at people who showed their emotion at a play or concert became *de rigueur* by the mid-19th Century. Restraint of emotion in the theater became a way for middle-class audiences to mark the line between themselves and the working class. A 'respectable' audience by the 1850's was an audience that could control its feelings through silence; the old spontaneity was called 'primitive'. The Beau Brummell ideal of restraint in bodily appearance was being matched by a new idea of respectable noiselessness in public." [21]

These absolute disciplines to restrain audience feelings –- talking in the midst of the play seemed bad taste and rude – arose from the theatres in the 19th century European metropolises. They were even intensified by some staging devices, such as dimming the house lights. The equal distance among public roles began to be absolutized and institutionalized in the *ancien régime*. While "the body was treated as a mannequin" and "speech was treated as a sign rather a symbol" were associated with actor's performances, these silence disciplines had been extended onto spectators, and as a consequence, the distance between actors and spectators had been solidified. The spectators had lost their power to interfere with the playing and to express themselves, with the positions between them and actors increasingly falling into fixedness. The relinquishment of the power is not, as Sennett suggested, because of the vanishing "impersonal" grounds, but the expanding effect of this impersonal rule on the other way around. So to speak, Sennett's accounts of "the fall of public man" twist the causal relationship exactly.

The institutionalized distance in theaters may be also identified by the changes of the interior spatial arrangement in theatres. Boxes, balconies, and other seats surrounding stages were removed, auditoria were merged into the isolated island in the dark, and stages were spotlighted as an independent autonomy zone. Thus, the connections between actors and spectators were thoroughly split by these spatial methods, which serve as a spatial representation for theatrical playing . In order to achieve an exact and faithful reproduction of scripts, the interference irrelevant to playing must be rejected.

At the same time, the institutionalized distance loomed over the urban spaces and public life in the 19th century too. The *flâneur* was a typical image of the bourgeoisie at that time. In his seminal work *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin has depicted ties between the *flâneurs* and spaces of exchange — the arcades, where the *flâneurs* found their due places by retreating themselves from the public life and ensconcing themselves in crowded populations like theatrical spectators. The public gestures of urban residents underwent a rapid transmutation from the active participation and spontaneous expression in the 18th century to the passive experience and sober restraint in the 19th century. What is more, the 18th century arcades turned into the prelude of the 20th century shopping malls, while the *flâneurs* were the ancestors of the contemporary consumption society.

21. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 206.

Figure 2.3: **Rue de Paris, Temps de Pluie, 1877.** By Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894). From Anne Distel ed., Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist (Paris: Abbeville Press, 1995), 153.

In Simmel's canonical article *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, he elucidates how communicative distances of modern metropolises become institutionalized on a spiritual level. The reasons, in his opinion, boil down to that economic exchange principles penetrate deeply into the social life, and dominate urban citizens' modes of behaviors and thoughts. Because the money economy and intellect "share a matter-of-fact attitude in dealing with men and with things . . .(and) the intellectually sophisticated person is indifferent to all genuine individuality, because relationships and reactions result from it which cannot be exhausted with logical operations",[22] some rationality takes place and dominates human communications. Observed by Simmel, the urban life in Berlin between the end of the 19th century and the begin of the 20th century had grown more and more sophisticated and diverse, so that they had to evolve a set of self-defending and self-preserving mechanisms in their psyches, which Simmel ascertains as *reserve*, *aversion*, *repulsion*, *indifference*, and so on (see Figure 2.3). As Simmel wrote:

> If so many inner reactions were responses to the continuous external contacts with innumerable people as are those in the small town, where one knows almost everybody one meets and where one has a positive relation to almost everyone, one would be completely atomized internally and come to an unimaginable psychic state. Partly this psychological fact, partly the right to distrust which men have in the face of the touch-and-go elements of metropolitan life, necessitates our *reserve*. As a result of this *reserve* we frequently do not even know by sight those who have been our neighbors for years. And it is this *reserve* which in the eyes of the small-town people makes us appear to be cold and heartless. Indeed, if I do not deceive myself, the inner aspect of this outer reserve is not only *indifference* but more often than we are aware, it is a slight aversion, a mutual *strangeness* and *repulsion*, which will break into hatred and fight at the moment of a closer contact, however caused.[23]

These psychological phenomena – reserve, indifference, strangeness,

22. Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. and trans. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950), 411.

23. Ibid., 415-6, emphasized by author.

aversion and repulsion – can be considered as the exaggeration and metamorphosis of mental distance across all of metropolis residents. The institutionalized mental distances were rooted in the similarly institutionalized social life thanks to the exactness of the money economy, which makes the city life become a calculation. "Money, with all its colorlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; respectably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific value, and their incomparability." [24] The organization principle of the money economy, the *commensurability*, finally leads to the abstraction of public space.

2.7   Disciplining Public Spaces

The institutionalization of personal spaces (distance) – bourgeois silence rules, metropolitan reserve and indifference, and so on – springs from the socialization and internalization of the principles intrinsic to the economic exchanges. To be more precise, the institutionalization is the "abstract space" under the pen of Lefebvre. The passivity and silence of the public are spatially inscribed , echoing the fact that the bourgeois spatial initiative builds on "a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contract, as it were, of non-violence." [25] A space like this kind is at the mercy of a "spatial economy", which

> "valorizes certain relationships between people in particular places (shops, cafés, cinemas, etc.), and thus gives rise to connotative discourses concerning these places; these in turn generate 'consensuses' or conventions according to which, for example, such and such a place is supposed to be trouble-free, a quiet area where people go peacefully to have a good time, and so forth. As for denotative (i.e. descriptive) discourses in this context, they have a quasi-legal aspect which also works for consensus: there is to be no fighting over who should occupy a particular spot; spaces are to be left free, and wherever possible allowance is to be made for 'proxemics' – for the maintenance of 'respectful' distances." [26]

Lefebvre holds that "the spatial consensus …constitutes part of civilization much as do prohibitions against acts considered vulgar or offensive to children, women, old people or the public in general." [27] This "civilization" actually pertains more to the manageability of the public space. Thus, in the name of safety, any provocation, transgression, game-playing is formally and categorically dislodged from public places and located in the clandestine, covert and underground sites, where spaces of representation shows up, with a pure, transparent and tidy, but monotonous, dull and unimaginative public space being left. In these prescribed ways, the distance consensuses regulate the behaviors and discourses of collective and individual subjects, as well as the spatial competence and performance. Essentially, the consensuses can be regarded as a kind of spatialization of the disciplinary power, which relies not merely on omnipresent CCTV cameras, the mobilization of private security and policing patrols, but also on citizens with self-disciplining personalities. Specifically, citizens' policed behavioral manners and mutual surveillance can keep the peace and separation within the public space in a routine manner (see Figure 2.4).

24. Ibid., 414.
25. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 56.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 57.

Figure 2.4: **Tobias Zielony: The Group, 2010.** Tobias Zielony was born in 1973 in Wuppertal, Germany. From 1998 to 2001, he studied documentary photography at University of Wales, Newport in UK. For more than ten years now, Tobias Zielony's photography has been centering on young people encountered on the urban and social margins of Western welfare states. The places where he finds his themes are that where the modern achievements are falling apart and the promise of a community has lost its enchantment. Accessed June 10, 2013, http://www.liarumma.it/thumbz2.php?ar=48&mi=1&ma=18&pg=1.

The four-part classification system – the *proxemics* patterns – introduced by Hall in *The Hidden Dimension*, "is restrictive (and reductive) as compared with 'gestural'", as Lefebvre claims. [28]

In modern society, the excessive emphasis on personal freedom and intimacy can aggrandize spatial distances, and definitely compromise another essential public quality — *meaning presentation*. When people have to meticulously preserve an equal distance from one another, to some degree, diverse forms of public presentation will be suppressed. The public space, being deprived of its capacity for presenting kaleidoscopic meanings, is losing its *raison d'être* and becoming what Sennett describes as the "dead public space". This space ends up being a disciplinary space, a space where social authority only allows univocal meaning to appear.

This situation can be proved by subway stations in which distances are institutionalized and public communication is disciplined radically. In most cases the stations are indeed concerned with public affairs: there are lots of passengers arriving, departing, waiting, or lingering in them. Yet with professional management, maintenance, and operation of the expansive infrastructures, the spaces are hence instrumentalized and yield to traffic demands for safety, convenience, and efficiency. The subway stations are consequently more "publicly used space" than "public space". By the same token, those diverse activities common in other places will be automatically screened out by unduly assertive technocrats. Lefebvre conceptualizes the spaces as "dominated space (dominant space)" in contrast to "appropriated space". It is the latter that can allow meaning to arise from difference.

2.8   Community – Institutionalized Collective Distance

The institutionalization of distances can be perceived in the *proxemics* categories at the individual level and also embodied through

28. Ibid., 217-8.

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spatial separation at the collective level. The most common morphology of the spatial separation is residential communities, whose their spatial isolation, frequently mirroring a group's identity, is essentially an institutionalized distance of collective spaces.

Not coincidentally, since the end of the 19th century, the guidelines of residentially spatial practices in advanced capitalist countries have recognized the principles of labor division and effective management required by the mass industrial manufactures. Through the guidelines, the principles have been simultaneously applied to the production of space. During the first half of the last century, community patterns based on collective identity were proliferating to varying degrees, whether in the communist Soviet Union, the liberalist United States, continental European countries with welfare system, or even in socialist China in the Far East. The quality of public spaces and diversity of urban life fell prey to the communalization of urban spaces and the institutionalization of collective distances, with the development of city exposing a tendency towards anti-urbanization.

An early instance of the institutionalized collective space appeared in Paris, the spatial mutation undertaken by Georges-Eugène Haussmann in the 1850s and 1860s. Haussmann did not intentionally create spatial segregation. However, in company with the demolition and reconstruction of old districts, removal of slums, and speculation of real estate, the class distinctions of the rebuilt districts were consolidated by his urban surgery. The previously celebrated vertical segregation – craftsmen, their employees and merchants intermingled and lived in multi-story buildings together – could no longer survive under the pressure of the speculation and the division of labor. The urban districts had become homogeneous economic units, each with its own class attributes. [29] As Sennett said, "Baron Haussmann began to build a new legal, administrative, residential wall for the city in the late 1850's, a wall that was unlike the previous walls only in that it was no longer a physical structure." [30]

The worse spatial segregation proceeded from progressive movements for social improvement and the development of new transport technologies in the 19th century (e.g., the roll-out of the rail network). In intellectuals during the era, there were both a good will of improving the working-class's living conditions and anxiety that the unsegregated and low-quality slums would evolve into a source of illness and revolution. Premised on these mentalities, some left-leaning reformers and socialist activists anchored their hopes on the idea of the "garden city" initiated by Ebenezer Howard. The idea was a offspring of the utopian socialism movements. Certain communalizing seeds implied in utopian socialism were dispersed by the spread of the garden city movement via all kinds of spatial practices of new towns, *Werkssiedlungen*, and zoning. At the same time, the institutionalization of collective spatial distance had been strengthened.

As with the experiment of *New Harmony* conducted by Robert Owen and *Phalanstère* by Charles Fourier, what Howard conceived was a self-contained, closed settlement with a distinctive tag. A typical garden city (town) has a regular limit — 32,000 people living on circa 400 hectares

29. David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 239-40.
30. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 134.

Figure 2.5: **Westhausen.** From DW Dreysse, *May-Siedlungen: Architeckturführer Durch Acht Siedlungen des Neuen Frankfurt, 1926-1930* (Frankfurt am Main: Dieter Fricke Verlag, 1987).

of land surrounded by a much larger area of permanent green belt. [31] Although Howard's ideal lavished fresh air and arcadian nature upon the working-class, its anti-metropolitan obsession with the provincial craft culture compelled the city (down) to depend economically on several isolated factories, which actually could neither offer sufficient job opportunities and wages, nor adequate social life. Such a fault seems to be very common in these implemented projects instructed by the similar ideas.

In the 1920s, almost 20 years after the first Garden City, its German advocates, such as Ernst May and Martin Wagner, realized some variants "sharply diverging from the anarchist-cooperative sources of the Howard-Unwin tradtion" in Frankfurt and Berlin, respectively (see Figure 2.5). [32] Backed by the strategy under the government of the Social Democrats in the Weimar period, the housing complexes was more collective than their British prototypes, aiming to be an effective spatial instrument for the reproduction of the labor force. No wonder, therefore, that the spatial production heralded the spatial implementation of *Wohlfahrtsgesellschaft* after World War Two. [33] And no wonder either, that "after Frankfurt May went to design model cities in the Soviet Union", [34] through which his enormous influence was further exercised over young socialist China. Combined with the communal tradition of the peasantry and the organizational principle of the Communist Party, the spatial representation bred a special spatial type dominant in Chinese cities for almost 30 years, namely the *danwei*.

The fear and disgust for disorganized cities at the initial stages of industrialization, and the pursuit of a clear division and efficient organization of industrial production, appeared in Le Corbusier's urban design too, such as *La Ville radieuse* for a reconstruction of Paris, a contentless skyscraper-utopian, or *Charte d'Athènes* with its zoning principle of dividing urban environments rationally.

Consequently, the spatial production of postwar cities tended to be communalized, no matter whether in capitalism or socialism, no matter whether based on market forces (like the villa communities of the white middle class in the U.S.A.) or driven by state power as social production units (like model cities in the Soviet Union and *danwei* in China). These community spaces, akin to Bahrdt's *industrial feudalism*, were self-supporting and relatively autonomous spatial units just like the sealed *Großoikos*, hence neither public nor private spheres.

2.9   Complexity and Contradiction in Distance

The distance regime indicates the dimension of social relations in spatial publicness. It is a regulatory mechanism for relational equilibrium.

The concept of distance is as complex as the concept of space. Its complexity is reflected in the following aspects: 1) distances do not merely refer to physical distance in a narrow sense, but rather entail the *triad* spatial dimensions — the physical, the mental, and the social; 2) distances spread between individuals, between collectives, and between an individual and a collective. Sometimes, the individual distance is

31. Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 93.

32. Ibid., 123.

33. Ibid., 121.

34. Ibid., 124.

inversely proportional to the collective distance. While the distance between social groups is gradually augmented or ossified, the individual distances within these groups may vanish. This precipitates collective spaces into a non-public and non-private state; 3) distances can regulate human relations and adjust internal consciousness and public behaviors, either in the form of physical boundaries or of symbolic mediation (i.e., of *representations of space*); 4) manifestations of distances are diverse. In terms of personal distances, their scales may be equal or unequal. A case in point, Goffman's "mask" theory suggests a state of unequal distances, while Sennett's "role" depicts the distance regime of equality.

The distance, especially the equal distance between individuals, is the fundamental prerequisite of spatial publicness. The people engaging in public affairs owe their freedom – either speaking and participating, or idling and withdrawing – to the distance regime of equality. It is the existence of equal distances that keeps the public space open. Based on that, we may say this *sine qua non* of public spaces is synonymous with Bahrdt's "incomplete integration", Sennett's "impersonality" (i.e., intentionally suspending personal attributes in social communication), or Arendt's "in-between" (i.e., the world relating and separating men at the same time as a table located between those who sit around it [35]).

This is not to say that the system of equal distances definitely gives rise to the public space. The vigor of urban spaces can be suffocated as much by the institutionalized distance regime with absolute equality as by that under social hierarchies. The latter regime, generally speaking, is both unequal and institutionalized. The distance is not a constant. The so-called "equal distance" is merely a transient moment in comparison with the so-called "unequal distance". [36]

Therefore, the subsequent issue is how to deal with the distance regime of equality, which simultaneously constitutes the precondition of public spaces while allowing the institutionalizing and institutionalized equality (e.g., the abstraction of the public space described by Lefebvre — a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contract of non-violence). All these distance regimes, whether social, mental, or physical, can transform public spaces into a kind of transparent and orderly, but lifeless and uncreative places. The institutionalized distance eventually jeopardizes another crucial quality of public spaces — meaning presentation. In other words, the institutionalized distance regime as a representation of relational equilibrium disciplines the public space to screen out possible disequilibrium, which is triggered by the novel, but sometimes dissident meanings. In this case, the distance of the public space is excessively enlarged and serves as a power instrument. One of the drastic effects is the visual surveillance and self-disciplining in panopticism delineated by Foucault, which unavoidably leads to the fall of the public space.

Hence, public distances lie on a subtle point of balance where individual intimacy and personality can neither be encroached on, nor can the public space evolve into the community space denying personality and difference, nor can the distance regime turn overtly powerful. To retain individuals' personality and intimacy in public communication is not

35. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 52 (see chap.1, n.1).
36. See the detailed discussion in Section 3.7, "*Consensus* and *Dissensus*".

supposed to occur at the cost of depriving their motivations and rights for meaning presentation in an institutionalized distance regime. If that happens, public spaces will become dead and meaningless space.

In conclusion, the distance supporting public spaces always situates itself in a dynamic balance achieved through the constant reconfiguration and struggle of social relations. The ceaseless disturbance and recovery of relational equilibrium bear exactly witness to the quintessence of *spatial publicness*, wherein the distance swings subtly between its institutionalization and disappearance.

3   Representation – Meaning Presentation

In the previous chapter, the concept of distance associated with *common world/power equilibrium* was discussed. Corresponding to *public appearance/meaning presentation*, the notion of representation reveals another facet of the production of *spatial publicness*. Here, this notion will be examined and spatializedly re-conceptualized. At the end of this chapter, Rancière's theories of *consensus* and *dissensus* will be adopted as a guide to shed light on the relationship between representation and distance.

3.1   Representation – The (Re-)Presentation of Meaning

As a classical concept of western epistemology, the representation refers to "a set of practices by which meanings are constituted and communicated. Such representational practices produce and circulate meanings among members of social groups." [1] The moment when the concept took shape coincided precisely with the beginning of the Classical Age (1600-1800), as Foucault termed it. Since that time, many intellectual activities, such as scientific research or artistic creation, have been devoted to establishing a series of cognitive instruments in order to interpret the operating logic of the natural world, understand the truth, and transform and reconstruct reality. One of the tools was and is representation.

A consequent and important change in philosophy was that the dichotomy had come to predominate within the tradition of classical metaphysics. Philosophic writing, theoretical thinking and everyday talking during the Classical Age, epitomized by René Descartes' Rationalism, began to distinguish the lifeworld in light of such cognitive models as "mind-body", "subject-object" and "internal-external". One of the basic logics implicit in the representational modes (dichotomous modes) is *identification* that the two categories or elements of the binary opposition are identical, and the former (mind, subject, *res cogitans*) must be the echo, reflection and mirror of the latter (body, object, *res extensa*). Furthermore, this correspondence and match must be seamless and undifferentiated. When attaining to achieve this exact identification, the system of sounds and sights is a representation, namely *re*-presentation. Nonetheless, it costs too much to constitute such a precise and lossless correspondence between the binary oppositions: representational practices tend to ignore the discrepancy between the lifeworld and representation, and to exclude the un-replaceable or un-manifested (or un-represented) in order to obtain a pure, transparent and nearly hermetic dichotomy between representation and reality.

Another basic logic implied in the representational mode is *hierarchy*. In the course of the identification, the part related to mind, subject and *res cogitans* has authority to interpret the other including body, object and *res extensa*. In the end, the dichotomous reality is dissolved into the representation. The hidden hierarchy gives not only the representation priority over reality, but also the author of the representation

1. Ronald John Johnston et al. ed., *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 703.

over the reader of the representation. The prerogative is also enacted in places where the representation participates in or constructs reality. More than reflecting reality, the representation seeks to locate all objects within its system of symbols and significations by concealing or excluding the unrepresented. Eventually, the effect constructed by the representation takes the place of authenticity and annihilates its substance.

Given that the representation – as systematized and structuralized practices of meanings – must bear coherence or cohesiveness *a priori*, it has already implied an ingredient of the common world, or, we can say, it is the semiotic presentation of the distance regime. Social relations maintained by representations thus acquire the same coherence and equilibrium between their agents. All the same, the public appearance of difference is the fundamental value of the public space. In addition, the meanings of difference, as "constitutive outside (Ernesto Laclau)",[2] usually float away from an integral, unitary and closed representational structure, and exist on its periphery. Because of this, the conventional connotations of the representation concept are not suitable for the discussion of *spatial publicness*. We need to expand and reinterpret the connotations further.

In fact, the rise of meanings from difference was coeval with the so-called "crisis of representation". When the Classical Age fell into decay around the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the concept of representation, regarded by Heidegger as a fatal flaw in western philosophy, gradually lost – in the face of modern complex society – its binding effect, its competence to interpret the lifeworld, and its universality to stipulate the orders of things. The previously "unrepresented" has since attained more visibility by breaking through representational frameworks. The crisis of representation indicated the decline of the classical mode of the public sphere on the one hand, as Habermas, Sennett and others observed, but on the other hand, it also showed the signs of dynamic *spatial publicness*.

According to the interpretations from *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, the concept of representation has three key connotations in different contexts[3]: 1) idea (*Vorstellung*, including the mental status in the broad and narrow sense, which reproduces or is deduced from a previous mental status); 2) depiction (*Darstellung*, i.e., structuring illustrations through all kinds of images, symbols and signs); 3) representativeness (*Stellvertretung*, i.e., the elected agents in the political decision-making in modern society). The senses of this concept are so abundant and flexible that they may entail all aspects of the production of space. Probably for this reason, the equivocality and polysemy inherent in the concept enable Lefebvre to replace the generally applied but heavily restricted concept — *ideology*, and to improve his spatial analysis. In *The Production of Space*, ideology and knowledge (*savoir and connaissance*) are subsumed under the rubric of representation.[4]

In fact, Lefebvre's usage of representation has been involved with the two dimensions demanded by spatial publicness. The term representation in *The Production of Space* intermingles what is suggested

2. Marchart, "Art, Space and Public Sphere(s)," (see chap.1, n.17).

3. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, ed., *Historischen Wörterbuch der Philosophie,* Band 8 (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 1992), 790. Actually, the entry categorizes four essential meanings of representation, which are: 1) "idea (*Vorstellung*)" in a broader sense; 2) "idea" in a narrow sense; 3) "depiction (*Darstellung*)"; 4) "proxy (*Stellvertretung*)". To be simpler, the first and second meaning are merged here.

4. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 44 (see chap.1, n.57).

by the notion of *representations of space* with that by the notion of *spaces of representation*. Therefore, the term signifies twofold practice of meaning in a broad sense, wherein one corresponds to the *conceptualized*, which is established by means of realistic, objective and scientific elements, while another to the *lived*, which is underpinned by the imagination out of the body, and is symbolized by the body. [5] In other words, the *savior* concerns mental spaces filled with certainties, and the *connaissance* produces *spaces of representation*, the immediate spaces linked with symbols and images.

In many ways, the discrepancy between the *common world* (relational equilibrium, *consensus*) and public appearance (meaning presentation, *dissensus*) is an extension of the difference between the twofold sense of Lefebvre's representation. As we said before, representations (of space) have been tied to distance regimes. But in terms of *meaning presentation*, more attention should be paid to *spaces of representation*. The meanings carried by them, as "constitutive outside", lie on the periphery of the integral, unitary and coherent structure. These meanings are roughly equivalent to the "defixation" coined by Ernesto Laclau, which can prevent *representations of space* from producing an integral and closed system, and entitle the marginalized, overlooked and repressed social agents to express themselves openly and manifest their existence. In that case, those released expressions do not blend into the spatial practices driven by *representations of space*, but become the main reason why the spatial practices cannot retain coherence forever. In this sense, Deutsche treats debates, contests and conflicts as the fundamental value of the public space because they are the sole way to make *spaces of representation* public.

A big opportunity that *spaces of representations* can remove the straitjacket imposed by *representations of space* happened alongside the crisis of representation. This is revealed in several respects, which are all related to the concept of representation.

3.2   The Crisis of Representation in Architecture

Architectural representations of space do not merely exist as forms and symbols in designs. More importantly, they can play a substantial role in social and political practices by impelling spatial practices. "Their intervention occurs by ways of construction — in other worlds, by ways of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms." [6]

The powerful intervention of (architectural) *representations of space* in social tissue and spatial texture can be confirmed by the broad influence of postwar modernism. After the war, the Keynesian welfare system became widely accepted in politics and economy, as western industrialized nations confronted with the pressure of urban reconstruction. For such welfare states, rationalistic ideas with the aim of mass industrialization and modularization were able to relieve the stress of reconstruction and meet the egalitarian expectation of welfare systems.

5. Christian Schmidt, *Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft: Henri Lefebvre und die Theorie der Produktion des Raumes* (München: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 2005), 219-20.
6. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 42.

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Figure 3.1: **Pruitt-Igoe Collapse Series, April 1972.** The second, widely televised demolition of a Pruitt-Igoe building that followed the March 16 demolition. Pruitt-Igoe was a large urban housing project loacted in American city of St. Louis. It was also the first large independent work designed by Architect Minoru Yamasaki. Soon after its completion in 1956, living conditions in Pruitt-Igoe began to decline. By the late 1960s, the complex had become internationally infamous for its poverty, crime, and segregation. Its 33 buildings were torn down in the mid-1970s. The event has been viewed by theorist Charles Jencks as an icon of modernism's death. See "Pruitt-Igoe," last modified May 04, 2013, `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pruitt-igoe_collapse-series.jpg`.

7. David Harvey, *The Condition of Post-modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 298.

8. Nikolaus Kuhnert et al., "Editorial: Die Krise der Repräsentation," *Archplus* 204 (2011): 6-7.

9. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 318 (see chap.1, n.21).

Apparently, the architectural version of Keynesian economic-political principles is modernist tenets. Due to their rationality, precision and universality, these rationalist guidelines were deployed as state-leading principles to help reestablish social relations and alter spatial forms in postwar cities. Under the aegis of these spatial principles, spatial and social relations matched the Fordist and Taylorist organizational principles more exactly. The architectural principles affected greatly the reformation of social tissue and spatial texture.

Soon, the modernist principles seemed to be overtaken by the crisis of representation taking place during the economic transition from Keynesianism to Neoliberalism. That the US-dollar was no longer qualified as the true measurement of the currency value due to Richard Nixon's 1971 decoupling the greenback from the old standard effectuated not simply the deregulation and liberation of labour and capital markets, but triggered "the crisis of representation" as well. According to David Harvey, "the breakdown of money as a secure means of representing value has itself created a crisis of representation in advanced capitalism." [7] The stable relationship between form and content lasting from the Classical Age to the modernist period was severed, bursting with freely disposable signs and freely convertible content. In parallel, occupying spaces and ascribing meanings occurred more speculatively. Cities and architectures plus their histories become an arbitrarily retrieved database. [8] Graphic representations as cultural and symbolic capital started to supersede knowledge-based representations and to become raw material of identity production. Though fashionable and brand-new, the picturesque tags formed by unrestrained copy-and-paste are absent any authenticity. In a similar vein, the cultural capital is inflated, devalued and, finally, obsolete (see Figure 3.1).

For that matter, Deutsche insists that "the notion that there is a crisis of, and inadequacy in, representations of the social world is only possible against the background of a belief in previously stable, univocal, and impartial – that is, adequate – representations, and illusion that justifies efforts to reinstate traditional authority." [9]

In my opinion, the crisis emergent in (architectural) *representations of space* was a deepened and aggravated representational dilemma of modernism extending in the postmodernism period. Neither modernism nor postmodernism can overcome the dichotomous discrepancy between representation and reality. What postmodernism did was simply produce more representations (multi-representations, historical representations, or pseudo-representations) to veil the impotence of the modernist dogma — "form follows function". In any case, there is no opportunity for the suppressed "constitutive outside" at the edge of dualistic systems – the body – to emancipate and present itself.

3.3   The Crisis of Representation in Politics and Art

The performance of representation in legal-political theories consists actually in articulating and hierarchising a stable social structure, and in establishing topographical relations among various elements. The political representations originated initially from efforts to demon-

Figure 3.2: **Crowd Marching Protestors with Sign Reading "Sorbonne Teachers Against Repression", May 10, 1968.** Photo by Serge Hambourg. From Serge Hambourg, *Protest in Paris 1968* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Hood Museum of Art, 2006), 54.

strate the part-whole relationship within the hierarchy of late medieval western Europe. They are qualifications of a sort authorizing certain upper strata to manifest a social ensemble in an especially prominent and comprehensive way. There is no more classic example than the representational domain, Habermas' "*representative publicness*", out of late medieval feudal aristocracy. This public sphere performed the duty to reveal power symbols in public (qualifications for representing peasants, commoners, townsmen, clergies, and so on). As Habermas suggested, "the staging of the publicity involved in representation was wedded to personal attributes such as insignia (badges and arms), dress (clothing and coiffure), demeanor (form of greeting and poise) and rhetoric (form of address and formal discourse in general) — in a word, to a strict code of 'noble' conduct."[10] Up to now, this kind of staged representation still survives in church rituals such as liturgies, Masses and processions.

The incipient public spheres of bourgeoisie had evolved from this very representative publicness. The sense of representation in political realms, then, has been narrowed to "the decision-making [taking] place through an elected deputy with free mandate in parliament".[11] The representative publicness in the late Middle Ages has been upgraded via bourgeois public spheres into an institutionalized public sphere — representative democracy. In this process, another role of bourgeois public spheres, public opinion, has been also consistently institutionalized or commercialized. This vicissitude, more like a collapse of the public sphere than the transformation as Habermas argues, has catalysed the crisis of representation in political realms, which is exemplified by the media-ization of politics on the one hand and the privatization or commercialization of the mass media on the other. Either the democratic program whereby political representatives are elected, or the public media based on rational-critical consensus, has deviated widely from a reality that is supposed to be represented by both. Representative democracy has been incapable of voicing various appeals out of kaleidoscopic interests (see Figure 3.2), and the mass media has also lost its

10. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 8 (see chap.1, n.9).

11. Ritter and Gründer, *Historischen Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 812. Trans. by Yang Shan.

Figure 3.3: **Duchamp-Fountaine.** The original Fountain by Marcel Duchamp, 1917, photographed by Alfred Stieglitz at the 291 (art gallery) after the 1917 Society of Independent Artists exhibit. See "Fountain (Duchamp)," last modified May 22, 2013, `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_(Duchamp)`.

12. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 320.

13. Peter Weibel, "Art and Democracy: People Making Art Making People," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 1030.

14. Ibid.

criticality long since.

The static correspondence between representation and reality is being disintegrated by permanent movement – "becoming (*Werden*)" – of social relations in the political public sphere. A similar crisis arose, when the Habermasian paradigm of the univocal, elite-governed public sphere was challenged by the "phantom public". This phrase, coined by Walter Lippman in 1925 and again cited by Bruce Robbins in 1993, suggests that, in both the public and public opinions, there is a kind of fleeting nature, a *phantom* character, which renders both amorphous. For Robbins, the term "public", implying an ideal of social coherence, is itself irremediably deceptive and, moreover, oppressive. [12] Conversely, there are more *sub-* and partial public spheres, which cannot be gauged by the obsolete category of bourgeois public spheres in the wake of globalization, informatization and urbanization. In fact, the phantom character is just the nature of democracy. The public sphere amounts no longer to the unique pattern that is of universality and is qualified for representing all social groups. Even in the ascendancy of bourgeois public spheres during the 18th century, some oppressed *plebeian* public spheres existed.

Similarly, participatory democracy takes on "phantom" public characters in contrast to representative democracy. Participatory democracy, or rather, a participatory public sphere, calls not just for citizen's initiative, but also innovation in techniques for its representation and presentation. Art, as one of these techniques for presenting meaning, is being broadly applied in political spheres.

Just as politics went through the vicissitude of its representations, art underwent the crisis of representation too. The crisis of art happened, when painting was deprived of the authority to explicate the visual. Suffering from the pressure from the advent of new media (like photography) that can record reality vividly, painting is not an immediate and accurate representational instrument any more. This insufficiency coerced painting into dislodging reality from its portrayed objects. Instead of depicting the real object (lifeworld), themes of painting were diverted to color, chiaroscuro, geometry and other abstract formal ingredients. This reached its peak in Malevich's paintings around 1915. [13] To expand representational subjects, even all the previous representational tools themselves such as brushes, canvases and frames were used. Ultimately, the genre chose the route of self-dissolving in parallel with thematic alienation. As far as the latter is concerned, ready-made articles became displayed objects in the field of sculpture, [14] as Duchamp did in his famous work (*Fountain*) — he submitted a real used and industrially manufactured urinal to the Society of Independent Artists exhibit in 1917 (see Figure 3.3).

Artistic genres – painting, sculpture, drama, and the like – all shared a common belief: a contempt for *re*-presenting real objects (i.e., excluding structural delineation). In other words, the competence in *re*-presenting reality previously belonging only to professional artists had been deconstruct and abandoned by sensitive artists themselves in the age of "mechanical reproduction". On the one hand, to deconstruct

and abandon representing power unprecedentedly emancipated the represented (object, body and *res extensa*) in the weak position of representational relations; on the other, some of artists in the transitional period, especially those modernists, guided art into another kind of absolute — a contempt for *re*-presenting reality becomes equated with insulation from reality. Only by holding a radical anti-representation gesture can modern art keep its autonomy. As a result, Alexander Rodchenko asserted "representation never again" in 1921. This attitude can be traced everywhere whether it was in Mondrian's cold abstraction, in Schönberg's atonality, or in Picasso's cubism.

When the modernist autonomy gradually fell into decline during 1960s and 1970s, a new artistic movement named performance art became widespread, coinciding with the tendency for anti-representation. As Mark Rothko claimed, "art is a form of action", or to be more precise, "art is not only a form of action, it is a form of social action."[15] This tenet was soon incarnated in creations of a new genre — action painting, which identified bodies and actions with painting tools and material, took the perceptible present as its theme, and displayed spontaneous emotion and impromptu action on the canvas as "an arena in which to act".[16] Rosenberg argues, " what was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."[17] The redefinition of art by action painting, shifting the emphasis from object to action or treating art as a production process rather than final outcome, laid the foundation for many successive art movements from Fluxus to Conceptualism, from Performance Art to Installation Art and Land Art. Not only that, these novel movements broke through disciplinary boundaries within the arts, connected artistic fields like music, theater and dance, and became a kind of trans-discipline, or even, anti-discipline practices of the arts. That the arts are dedicated to producing the living present can be epitomized by performance art. As a reactive outcome of the crisis in artistic fields, performances supply platforms for public appearance of "the meaning of difference".

3.4 Beyond Text – Aesthetics of Performance

While conventional representations have suffered their crises in varied fields, new meanings have been liberated with the assistance of new expressive means. Representation began to mutate into presentation. Direct presence of things sublates the mediating function of representation. To explore the role of representation in the production of spatial publicness, it is necessary to return to the dramaturgical models discussed in Chapter 2. What is more, as stated above, the novel instruments enabling meanings to directly appear, came primarily from innovation in artistic performances.

There is a subtle affiliation between public spaces and dramatic performances, not only because the latter is one of the archetypes of the former, but also because the latter is an efficient instrument to explore public life in the occidental context. The affiliation stems from natural spatiality and publicness in dramatic performances: as some feedback-loops (*feedback-Schleife*, Fischer-Lichte) between actors and

15. Ibid.
16. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News* Vol.51, No.8, Dec. (1952): 22.
17. Ibid.

18. Fischer-Licht, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 29 (see chap.1, n.24). Trans. by Yang Shan.

spectators are set up through a performance, spatial relations emerge. Furthermore, all public spaces are heavy with performativity that results in "people-watching", one of the most popular activities commonly oberseved in public spaces. It is on account of this affinity that the artistic innovation provides an opportunity for the promotion of the public space. Erika Fischer-Lichte defines performance art as the following:

> Instead of producing works, the artists increasingly create *events*, in which not only they *per se* but also the recipients, the observers, audiences and spectators are involved. Thereby the conditions of artistic production and reception have been changed in a decisive aspect. The artistic work, detached from its producer as well as from its recipient and existing independently, no longer functions as a central and pivotal point of the process. The work arises as object from the creative activity of the artist's subject and is committed to the perception and interpretation of the recipient's subject. Instead of that, we have to deal with an event, which is, through the action of different subjects -–- artists and audiences/spectators, stimulated, kept in operation, and ended. In this way, the relation between material status and sign status of the used objects and executed actions in the performance is changed. The material status does not coincide with the signifier status, but rather detaches itself from it and claims its own life. This means that the immediate *effect* of the objects and actions is not dependent on the meanings, which people can ascribe to the actions and objects. But the effect appears completely independent of the meanings, sometimes even early, but in any case beyond the attempt of meaning ascription. As events that possess the particular characteristic, the performances of the different arts open up for all participants – i.e., artists and spectators – the possibility to experience transformations in their developments — to change themselves (see Figure 3.4). [18]

The above paragraph encapsulates two cardinal features of performance: 1) a transmutation of the subject-object relationship, 2) a transmutation of relations between material (referring largely to bodies in theatrical performances) and signifiers (signs). There is a constant transformation of the *feedback-loop* between actors and spectators in performative actions revolving around enactments. In this *feedback-*

Figure 3.4: **The Performance of Living Theatre.** Photo by Dölf Preisig. From Erika Billeter, *Paradise Now: Ein Bericht in Wort und Bild* (Bern: Rüten+Loening Verlag, 1968), 126-7.
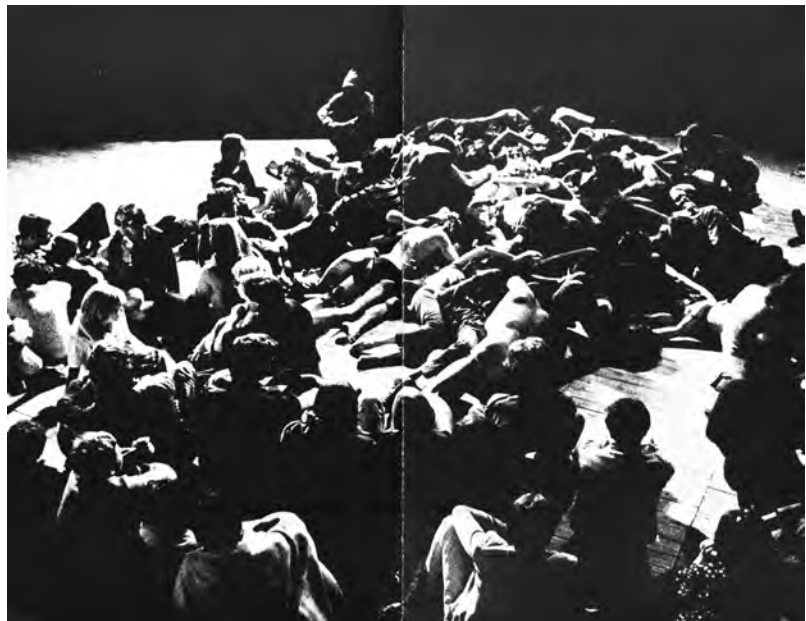
loop, actors and spectators are not simply producers and recipients, respectively. Spectators are likely to be involved in generating and implementing artistic events at any time, and actors have to cede their leading roles sometimes. In the course of performances, a *co-subject* —- actors and spectators present themselves all at once —- comes into being, and the rigid dichotomy between subject and object gets broken. Expressing meanings and creating effects are not pinned on some eternal works any longer, but realized by a type of *constant-becoming* events, scenes and atmospheres, which owe their instantaneity and unpredictability to *constant-becoming (Werden)*. It is instantaneity and unpredictability that undermine materiality and symbolism of artistic creations, mitigate their function as the bearer of signs and codes (representation), and offer spectators new possibilities that they are capable of expressing and freeing themselves out of a subordinate position.

These characteristics of performance practices are the very limits that traditional artistic and representational practices cannot overstep. The hierarchical power relations implicit in representation are borne out by the fact that artistic creations as signifying practice are reserved only for artists to produce representational items such as signs, images and symbols. Audiences and spectators remain as passive recipients staying immobile in thrall to the artist's authority. In the binary opposition of mind-body, subject-object and creator-recipient, the former gains its preponderance and the latter completely evaporates in representations. For this reason, space is the sole preserve of the architect; performance is the exclusive responsibility of the régisseur and actor; image is the single task of the photographer, painter and sculptor; and politics is the unsharable province of the politician.

3.5 Spatial Performance – A Technique for Presenting Meaning

The representational crises in architecture, art and politics prompt performance to be a technique for expressing meanings of difference in such fields. Whether it is protest from social agents, practice in everyday life, communication of uncognitive experience and knowledge, or even realization of bodily habits, they all widely adopt performative instruments. Meanings of difference out of these variegated kinds of spatial performances have been profoundly involved in the production of spatial publicness.

According to Fischer-Lichte, the staging strategy of the modern performance art comprises three interrelated factors: 1) mutual bodily contact, 2) role-reversal between actors and spectators, 3) formation of community. [19] The three factors can all perform a task to disrupt institutionalizing elements inherent in performances and to facilitate the production of new spaces of representation (in the continuously changing *feedback-loop* between actors and spectators) and new meanings.

Above all, direct bodily contact removes distances between actors, between spectators, and between the actors and spectators. Unlike those restrained by the bourgeoisie codes of conduct in the 19th century theaters, today's spectators are encouraged to discard their elegant and quiet manners throughout viewing a performance. The bodily contact,

19. Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 62.

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20. Ibid., 80.

then, will demolish spectator's perception of roles portrayed by actors, and actor's bodies are not vehicles for displaying signs, but bodily *In-the-World-Being* appearing on stages. Secondly, spectators are treated as equal participators entering into performances and compose *co-subjects* with actors. During role-reversals, it is impossible to completely control actor's reactions and mutual influences between spectators and actors. The simultaneous presence of both parties renders an aesthetic performance political because the role-reversal is essentially a procedure of disempowerment or empowerment (i.e., artists give up their privilege of being creators of representations and performances). Artists share authorship and defining-power with spectators who are hence converted from passive watchers to active participators. In a sense, a role-reversal is exactly a process of democratization. [20] This dynamic procedure quickly spills out of the narrow field of the arts and works as a political instrument for social expression.

Additionally, the bodily contact and role-reversal between actors and spectators bring forth a community between them. It is real, but also fictional; is symbolic, but also social; is partial as it springs up in a specific moment of performances, but also temporary because it happens not throughout the whole process of performance but only in a limited timing. Due to its looseness, provisionality and partiality, the community is not an equivalent to the (theatrical) community under totalitarianism, such as a theatrical community in the Nazi era, which was produced by a performance in a *Thingsstätte* at the great expense of disregarding personality and finally dissolving it.

Together with continuously disavowing and reconfiguring body's competency in setting a boundary between individuals in performances, a theatre is not incarcerated in the rigorous regime of representation, nor exists as a kind of autonomous artistic genre serving only as a symbolic bearer. This performative aesthetics has penetrated through almost every artistic field (painting, sculpture, music, installation, etc.) and become their shared idea. Furthermore, the aesthetic phenomena started to blossom into protest cultures, political actions, and youth subcultures during the 1950s and 1960s (see Figure 3.5). Political activists made use of this aesthetic technique to prompt a metamorphosis from a representative democracy to a "performative" one.

The form of publicness justifiably underwent a transformation from an institutionalized, bourgeoisie-leading sphere to an improvised, even

Figure 3.5: **The Woodstock Festival.** The event was held at a dairy farm near the town of Woodstock, New York. During a sometimes rainy weekend, thirty-two acts performed outdoors in front of 400,000 concert-goers. It is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in popular music history and been referenced in many different ways in popular culture. Photo from http://www.woodstock.com, accessed September 28, 2013.
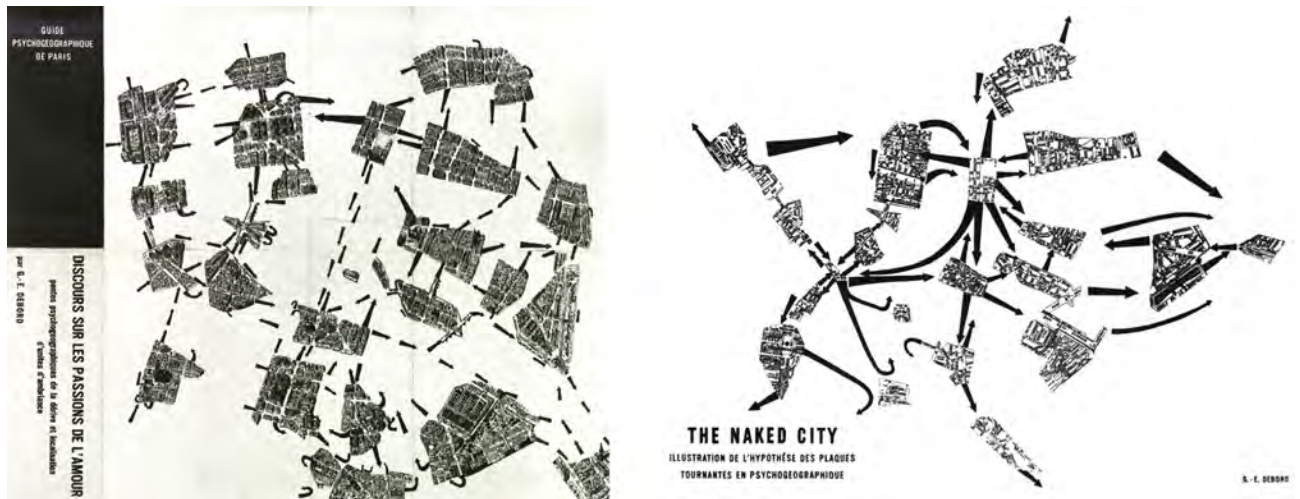
anarchist one that is realized as an uncertain social realm often by appropriating spaces. Under the guise of transgression, provocation and ludicness, the expressive potential of the body was provoked to smash up the institutionalized spatial consensus, say the "silence rule" or "a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contract of non-violence". By virtue of a role-reversal, the citizen's initiative can be stimulated, and the metropolitan reservedness or indifference can be revised. A performance, or precisely, the bodily production of space, dismantles the distance barrier between individuals and brings new spatial possibilities.

As the modern avant-guard arts showed their "anti-art" gesture, in some senses, their forms erased artistic autonomy and inaugurated confusion about the border between art and life, "elegance" and "worldliness". Since then, art becomes more like social action. The performance can thus assume responsibility for deconstructing inherent distances among individuals and for stimulating their initiative. Staging strategies were exercised abundantly in the political movements in the 1950s and 1960s. The movements were organized according to artistic principles with the aim of constantly offending existing social systems, production relations and spatial representations. In turn, new artistic gentries are continuously nourished by protest culture, pop culture and political practice, thereby expanding artistic boundaries and creative potential and repudiating formidable representational systems and the cultural hegemony of capitalism.

The collision brought by a performance also destabilized the superiority of "public space". The ironic, game-like and non-violence expressive modes expand the perceptive range of the masses and reconfigure the boundary and status of public spaces, as evidenced by the relentless re-occupation and re-appropriation of traditional public and private spaces. This spatial appropriation can be sheer symbolic, or alternatively, directly behavioral, just as protestors of *Occupy Wall Street* encamped in Zuccotti Park. The kind of spatial practices does not erupt overnight. It has its roots in an avantgarde movement between the 1950s and 1970s — Situationist International (see Figure 3.6). The movement had anticipated these contemporary activities and

Figure 3.6: **Guide Psychogéographique de Paris and The Naked City by Guy Debord with Asger Jorn.** *Guide psychogéographique de Paris*: discours sur les passions de l'amour, 1956, screen-printed map. The map was collaged from the Plan de Paris à vol d'oiseau (1956), a magnificent perspective rendering of the city. *The Naked City*: illustration de l'hypothése [sic] des plaques tournantes en psychogéographique [sic], 1957, screen-printed. This, the second and simpler of Debord and Jorn's psychogeographic maps, was by far the most famous image to come out of situationism, and perhaps deservedly so. Its arresting, matter-of-fact design simultaneously mourned the loss of old Paris, prepared for the city of the future, explored the city's structures and uses, criticized traditional mapping, and investigated the relationship between language, narrative, and cognition. From Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998), 21, 60.

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developed many principles and methods of spatial practices that are still enlightening the design disciplines at present. For example, it was committed to "the re-exploitation of reality (*Wiedergewinnung der Wirklichkeit*)" or "space production of second order (*Raumproduktion zweiter Ordnung*)" by virtue of "*Dérive*/city-walk", "*Détournement*", and "revolution of everyday life". [21] The influence out of Situationist International and its later-comers on architectural practices will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

3.6   *Presence and Atmosphere – the* Lived *Space*

Theatrical performances can generate an aesthetic effect and spatial situation disrupting the mind-body dichotomy and belonging to both subjects (spectator's consciousness and actor's mentality) and objects (spectator's and actor's bodies) together. Fischer-Lichte treats this effect as "presence (*Präsenz*)". What is heard and seen by participators in performative presence is invariably what happens, shows and disappears then and there.

In fact, presence is a kind of "*lived*" spaces (*spaces of representation*). Issuing from performative activities, presence is not expressive but performative. It has the potential to undermine coherence and closedness constructed by systematic representations, inasmuch as it is closely linked to living experience, and hence indecipherable and unconceptualized. By the same token, some dissident meanings have the opportunity in presence to be shown.

Depending on intensity of performative effects, the concept of presence is subdivided by Fischer-Lichte into "*das schwache Konzept von Präsenz* (163)", "*das starke Konzept von Präsenz* (166)" and "*das radikale Konzept von Präsenz* (171)*". Even in the field of architecture and urban design, it is easy to find some evidence supporting the conceptual division of presence partly. Spatial perception of material properties in architecture (e.g., tactility, texture, weight, color) can be classified as the weak concept of presence (*das schwache Konzept von Präsenz*). Those warm, protective and resistant values inherent in a house, described by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*, represent delicate and attractive quality of this "weak presence". Moreover, the mysterious and quasi-religious ambience created by Louis I. Kahn's and Tadao Ando' works resembles the state in "the strong concept of presence (*Das starke Konzept von Präsenz*)" (see Figure 3.7).

But as for the radical type of presence, to identify its counterpart in architecture is difficault. The "radical concept of presence" arises from the radical subversion of the hierarchical relation between a figure displayed by an actor and his phenomenal body. When spectators become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs, there is energy in the radical situation, which is produced by spectators and actors as a transforming force that can involve and mobilize all members. This force or energy features prominently in the *lived* space. Unfortunately, the energy, the force and the radical performance become a gap that is insurmountable simply be architectural means. The energy cannot be generated purely from perception and ecstasy of physical substances

21. Nikolaus Kuhnert et al., "Die Produktion von Präsenz: Potenziale des Atmosphärischen," *Archplus* 178 (2006): 25.

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Figure 3.7: **The Courtyard at Twilight, Salk Institute for Biological Studies.** Photo by Roberto Schezen. From Joseph Rykwert, *Louis Kahn* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001), 70.

or spatial patterns, but relies on the living and their immediate actions. Mostly, architecture does not have an ability to move and act in its own rights. Even so there are some mobile buildings, they are not living things.

The weak and strong types of presence can be summed up with another concept — *atmosphere*. As Böhme argues, atmosphere belongs neither to *Ding* (object) nor to subject utterly, but rather to the spatial situation in-between both. This is because both subject and object are dyed through presence of things, people and environment constellation (i.e., through ecstasy to them). [22]

Atmosphere is always enlisted in long-lived architectural practices as a device to control the spectator's perception at the service of religious and political authority. Today, it is elevated to a technique resistant to iconographical representations and their rear power relations under the conditions of architectural commercialization, symbolization and visualization. For example, Herzog & de Meuron's works insistently convey a deliberate contempt and negligence of iconographical representations through elegantly tectonic details and surfaces in the works. [23] Nonetheless, matters might be complicated. Architectural practices on the basis of atmosphere will slip into the very antithesis they seek to avoid. "The danger of material allurement – or attenuatedly, of mate-

22. Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre: Essays zur Neuen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 33-4.
23. Rafael Moneo, "Celebración de la Materia," quoted in Rebecca Schneider, "Hausreste: Herzog & de Meuron und Performance," in *Herzog & de Meuron: Naturgeschichte,* ed. Philip Ursprung (Montréal, Québec: Canadian Centre for Architecture, Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2002), 225.

rial effect – out of architecture accrues, together with the potentiality of social relevance. A danger, which lies in its control over effect and its proximity to 'covert allurement' out of advertisement, marketing and behaviourism."[24] As we have seen over the last decade, Herzog & de Meuron's exquisite works have been rapidly enthroned as new urban icons in the context of globalization, and been converted into a certain fetishism about building materials as well. Eventually, architectural efforts to break through the commercialization, symbolization and visualization fall into a Sisyphean dilemma.

The architectural limit – architectural atmosphere or presence can never reach the intensity of the radical presence provoked by performative actions – is a divisive issue within the theme of architectural possibility of publicness too. There are two altitudes towards the limit and relationship between architecture and performance. One of them, obviously, is discontented with the inability of architecture to realize people's subjectivization. Architects with this view attempt to go beyond the traditional purview of the discipline and to shift their attention to immediate activitism, wherein architecture only exists as technical assistance while implementing the radical presence. Another attitude, by contrast, still values ontological meanings from architecture itself for public appearance. Insistent forms of architecture own the power to maintain the sense of shared and common ambitions and to promote an inquisitive impulse to lead to subsequent civic engagement. In fact, whether the radical presence triggered by living bodies and actions or spatial atmosphere created by architectural forms, all characterize the *lived* space. They present meanings in public in different ways — politics and aesthetics, which are united by a common thread — Rancière's notion of the "distribution of the sensible".

Premised on this, the two attitudes mentioned above are relevant to presenting meanings via different architectural approaches. Two ideas of "enabling stage" and "cultural technique" matching the two attitudes will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.7   *Enabling Stage or* Performative Kulturtechnik*?*

If architecture is short of a capacity to act in its own right and to generate a living force fostering people's subjectivization, a series of interrelated concepts based on theatrical art – performance, performativity and performative action – might diverge from conventional architecture. These concepts refer to processual enactment of theatrical and artistic actions. The architectural thinking on performance will finally rest on the point that "*how to support the performative activity better*", wherein the stress is "*to enable*" or "*to perform*": "to design a space, which inspires active behavior in and against the space, in order to, for example, divide it according to situations and to organize it according to places (of private and public life)."[25]

In light of this view, the performativity of architecture is not so much owed to the fact that architecture is a physical entity *per se*, as the fact that architecture is a platform for political performance able to modify spatial textures. If such an "*enabling stage*" is created, the staging space

24. Kuhnert et al., "Produktion von Präsenz," 25. Trans. by Yang Shan.

25. Nikolaus Kuhnert et al., "Situativer Urbanismus," *Archplus* 183 (2007): 19. Trans. by Yang Shan.

Figure 3.8: **Add on. 20 Höhenmeter.**
For six weeks "add on. 20 höhenmeter" transformed Wallensteinplatz in Vienna into a centre of artistic interaction. Peter Fattinger, Veronika Orso and Michael Rieper presented the sculpture as a usable object, able to communicate and interact with the general public. The basic structure of "add on" was a platform reaching up to twenty meters high. Each day there was a show performed by multidisciplinary and multicultural artists. Accessed June 01, 2013, `http://www.add-on.at/cms/cat23.html` or `http://www.acfny.org/press-room/press-images-texts/the-vienna-model/`

amounts to a "performed space" (see Figure 3.8). [26] Spatial performativity is, in effect, a mixture of the performativity out of (architectural) spaces and people. Some practitioners have ventured further. Their spatial practices seek to instigate direct bodily performance in a dialogic situation, such as practices of Situationist International mentioned before (detailed discussion of the movement and other practices in Chapter 7). All pioneering practices by Situationist International are tasked with immediately generating the *lived* space.

Not all scholars will agree that architecture only plays an auxiliary and secondary role (like to serve as a provoking platform) in performative activities. Some of them attempt to retrieve the competence of architecture itself in presenting meanings. For example, Sophie Wolfrum believes that architecture is *per se* a *performative Kulturtechnik* (performative cultural technique), whose material substance is the premise and component of performative events (*Ereignisse*).

This position is justified on the grounds of the distinction between architecture and other plastic arts. Unlike painting, sculpture or something else, architecture does not distance its users from itself. As people use or enter a piece of architecture, they have become a part of architectural aesthetic reality, with their bodies involved with the production of the space. Physical participation evacuates an architectural situation from the fixation with visualization widespread in traditional artworks. As Wolfrum suggested, "in the architecture, we are co-players (*Mitspieler*)". [27]

Different from a completely meaning-free open space (actually, this kind of space does not exist, any urban space carries more or less a given meaning), architecture releases its own meaning in a performative situation. Moreover, only through bodily motion, can the architectural meaning be fully unfolded and developed.

This argument for architectural performativity is based on two aspects: on the one hand, architectural material substance as a premise and component has been tightly woven into the fabric of performative

26. Christopher Dell, "Die Performanz des Raums," *Archplus* 183 (2007): 142.
27. Sophie Wolfrum, "Performativer Urbanismus," in *Woodstock of Political Thinking*, ed. Tilmann Broszat, et al. (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2010), 57-64, or, from *Publikationen of Lehrstuhl für Städtebau und Regionalplanung, TUM*, accessed September 28, 2013, `http://www.stb.ar.tum.de/fileadmin/w00blf/www/DOWNLOADS/PublikationenTexte/Performativer_Urbanismus.pdf`.

Figure 3.9: **Oslo Opera House.** The building, designed by the Norwegian architectural firm Snøhettais, situated in the centeral Oslo. It is the initial component of the urban renewal of the Bjørvika neighborhood to transform the run-down harbour area into a modern part of Oslo. The carpet-like roof of the building angles to ground level, inviting pedestrians to walk up and enjoy the panoramic views of Oslo. The angles and paving materials are skateboard-friendly. The marble-clad roofscape forms a large new public space in the landscape of the city and the fjord. Photo by Yang Shan.
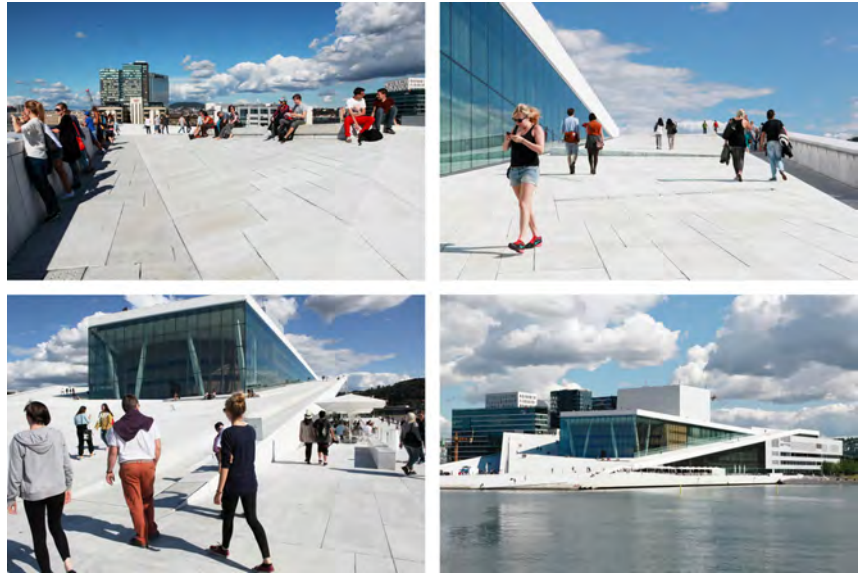
activities; on the other, only performative activities can advance architecture unfolding its own meaning fully (see Figure 3.9). The two points of architectural performativity – material substance and bodily motion – intertwine with, rely on and also benefit each other.

Wolfrum's perspective reappraises the meaning out of architecture in performative situations, rather than relegating architecture simply to a stage, a facilitator, or worse, an irrelevant membrane. Moreover, in her article she suggests that, in order to open scope for actions, architecture must manifest conciseness (*Prägnanz*). Here, conciseness means articulated spaces, dense atmosphere, aesthetic complexity, form and material. [28] All of them belong to the special aesthetic capability of architecture, to its performative repertoire.

With the new cognition of architectural performativity, Wolfrum also seeks to retrieve the loss caused by the growing divide between urbanism and architecture. After all, urbanism has been gradually categorized as a scientific discourse and lost its cultural kernel since a long time. This understanding of performance can justifiably raise a new concept — "performative urbanism". This kind of urbanism, based on architectural competence in peformativity, is sharply antagonistic to graphic urbanism. While the former realizes itself in "a cultural event, a situation of usage, motion and in-there being", [29] the latter consists just of unique, spectacular, or sublime images produced by architecture. In graphic urbanism, architecture is not tasked with unfolding situations, but only with exhibiting and conveying signs.

As stated previously, the two positions about the relationship between architecture and performance reflect, in fact, two mentalities of architectural roles in the productions of spatial publicness. The belief in an "enabling stage" lays particular stress on the political aspect of public spaces. It has little confidence in architectural efficiency in constituting political publicness, given the fact that politics cannot be achieved only through architectural practices indeed. Conversely, the belief that architecture is *per se* a *performative Kulturtechnik* shows more interests

28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

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in the sensible and aesthetic dimension of architectural spaces. Aesthetic meanings of architectural forms are the connective currency that enables a humanized and actionable public microcosm. The insistent form with the power of its presence is always an important tool in the designer's arsenal.

The opposition between the two attitudes incarnates three pairs of paradoxes: the one between architecture and space, between architecture as *consensus* and as *dissensus*, and between architecture as art and as politics. The concrete role of architecture and urban design in the arts and politics will be further discussed in more details in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

3.8   Consensus and Dissensus

The tension between *distance* and *representation* is still opaque. To step forward into the core of the relationship between them, or, between relational equilibrium and meaning presentation, between *common world* and *public appearance*, it is necessary to introduce Jacques Ranciére's discussion of *consensus* and *dissensus* here, which have an innate affinity with the two cardinal elements of *(spatial) publicness*. Furthermore, art and politics, qua two singular domains of human thought and activity, are yoked together in his unique theorization whereby problems of *spatial publicness* can be examined in its entirety, since both the public space itself and the discipline of architecture and urban design involve aesthetic and political problems in spatio-temporal horizons together.

All Ranciére's thoughts, such as *consensus* and *dissensus*, art and politics, are based on a conceptual innovation of a *distribution of the sensible* (French: *le partage du sensible*). The key concept "unites the discussion of philosophy, politics, art, aesthetics, and cinema, all of which are conceived as practices of creating, distributing and redistributing the sensible world." [30] It is beyond doubt that architecture or urbanism can be also subsumed under this category.

The French formulation, "*partage*", implies two senses that are easily lost in translation, but still critical and revealed in Rancière's analysis: the concept of *partage du sensible* "refers at once to the conditions for sharing that establish the contours of a collectivity (i.e., "*partage*" as sharing) and to the sources of disruption of *dissensus* of that same order (i.e., "*partage*" as separating)." [31] The understanding of "*partage*" indicates *liminality* hidden in the conceptual foundament — a *distribution of the sensible* that is a form of inclusion and of exclusion at once, in other words, refers to *consensus* and *dissensus* simultaneously.

Provided *spatial publicness* is a specific *distribution of the sensible*, the two aspects of the former concept can be well mapped onto the two senses of the latter. That is to say, *common world* vs. *public appearance*, *social relations* vs. *meaning presentation*, and *distance* vs. *representation* might correspond with *consensus* and *dissensus*, respectively, with *liminality* infiltrating *spatial publicness* steadily.

First of all, a leaning towards a *common world* has emanated from the concept of *consensus*, which has taken in distance factors. *Consen-*

30.   Joseph J. Tanke, *Jacques Rancière: An Introduction* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 1-2.

31.   Davide Panagia, "'*Partage du Sensible*': The Distribution of the Sensible," in *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 95.

sus decisively presupposes lots, shares and parts assigned to individuals and groups. It also constitutes an underlying code or order to mark a dividing line dictating what is counted as the perceptible and sensible, or otherwise, as merely the noisy, invisible and insensible. Thus, such distance régimes as *mask* and *role* discussed above are part of *consensus*: a *mask* renders our behavior proper and maintains a relatively stable *socialized self*, while a *role* represses appearance of personal characteristics.

In Rancière's interpretations on the political field, the concept "the *police*" is frequently used as the equivalence to *consensus*. The *police*, in his view, actually equates to "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution." [32] The essence of the *police* lies in the absence of void and supplement in partition of the sensible. [33] However, it is due to emptiness without inherent content or void without specific grammar of its own that equality is able to emerge, while practices disavowing *consensus*.

In such a way, *public appearance* is administrated by the *police* or *consensus*, which only allow the proper to be visible and vigorously dissipate the troubled and troubling things. The institutionalized distance régimes naturally appertain to the *police* or *consensus*, for example, "a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contact, as it were, of non-violence" in public spaces suggested by Lefebvre. [34] The "agreement", "pact", or "contact" attempts to keep a common world under control and make it stable and balanced by distributing the spatial parts, confirming the requisite and qualification of public appearance, and designating what is proper and what is aggressive. It can also be counted as *consensus* that urban everyday life shows a tendency towards polarization between public and private spheres because Bahrdt's tenet ensures a rigid antithesis between the public and private and then ossifies the two spheres. The polarization eventually leads to a consensual *distribution of the sensible*.

Like the analogy between *consensus* and *common world* (the *conceived*), *dissensus* can be commensurate with *public appearance* or *meaning presentation* (the *lived*). [35] If *consensus* is a self-evident cognitive framework to stipulate a sensory world, then the task of *dissensus* is to interpose rupture, break, and dispute into *consensus*, to overturn and re-configure the so-called "proper" relationship between what a body "can" do and "cannot" — between bodily spatial capacity and incapacity, and to "multiply 'litigious objects and disputing subjects' in the midst of the supposed tranquility of consensus." [36] *Dissensus* disintegrates the superficial harmony and thorough configuration maintained by consensus, through making visible what previously went unseen.

What springs up in spatial performances, such as the staging protest in a political movement, purposeless appropriation of normal spatial functions, or improvising enactments played by artists, can be reckoned a kind of *dissensus*. For that matter, the spatial performances offer a supplement to the consensual democracy — representative democracy,

32. Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 28.

33. Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, by Jacques Rancière, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 36.

34. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 56.

35. Naturally, it is important to remind ourselves that there is not an absolutely equivalent between Rancière's theories and ideas and Lefebvre's, between the conceptual couples, although the concept of *consensus* and *dissensus* bear a striking similarity with common world (*representations of space*) and public appearance (*spaces of representation*).

36. Tanke, *Jacques Rancière*, 62.

or create a fissure in dominated space through spatial occupation.

"Art and politics each define a form of the *dissensus*, a dissensual re-configuration of the common experience of the sensible." [37] In Rancière's views, politics is not defined as a specific form of the exercise or struggle of power, and art is not a form of stylistic or formalist game about the beauty. "Conversely, however, art and politics can be understood, such that their specificity is seen to reside in their contingent suspension of the rules governing normal experience." [38]

Furthermore, the equality principle in *dissensus* contributes to surmount the constrains of some theories of publicness. The "equal distance" regime, which scholars like Habermas, Sennett or Bahrdt insistently identify with an prerequisite of the public space, contravenes the equality principle of *dissensus*. In Rancière's view, equality never results from an institutionalizing constant, but is inversely a presupposition of contingent and alternative action. "Politics has no object or issues of its own. Its sole principle, equality, is not peculiar to it and is in no way in itself political. All equality does is lend politics reality in the form of specific cases to inscribe, in the form of litigation, confirmation of the equality at the heart of the *police* order." [39] If so, the so called "equal distance" is only a historical moment relative to dominant distance regimes as *consensus* (e.g., a despotic hierarchy), which the "equal distance" as certain transient *dissensus* once challenged and overturned.

Its lack of foundation makes politics happen infrequently. It attaches itself to the *police* and takes place in a gap, fissure and border of the *police*. If a thing is political, it must provoke the confrontation between *police* (consensual) logic and egalitarian logic that was never set up in advance. [40]

This ambiguous status inherent in Rancière's particular equality logic can be conveyed by a basic logic about aesthetics and politics throughout his essays. That is, "*A* always consists in the blurring boundaries between *A* and non-*A*." [41] Politics, then, consists only "in the blurring boundaries between what is considered political and what is considered proper to the domain of social or private life." Owing to such an egalitarian contingency, there is neither permanent politics although there is always power forms, nor is there permanent art although there is always theater, music and painting. [42]

Modeled after the above logic, the problem of *spatial publicness* can be described as a specific kind of *public appearance* consisting only in the blurring boundaries between what is considered as what is considered as *distance* (relational equilibrium) and as *representation* (meaning presentation). The ambiguity, or more precisely, the *liminality*, is reflected through this complexity of *distance* and *representation*. Additionally, it can be also claimed that there is not permanent *spatial publicness*, although there are always urban public spaces such as plazas, parks, and streets.

The principle along with its nature – contingency (*liminality*) – exercises a decisive influence on the disposition of *spatial publicness*.

As yet, with the aid of Lefebvre's and Ranière's theoretical frameworks, several points of the central concept of *spatial publicness* can be

37. Jacques Rancière, "The Paradoxes of Political Art," in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, by Jacques Rancière, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 140.

38. Corcoran, introduction, 1 (see chap.1, n.60).

39. Rancière, *Disagreement*, 31-2.

40. Ibid., 32

41. Corcoran, editor's introduction, 3 (see chap.1, n.60).

42. Maria Muhle, Einleitung to *Die Aufteilung des Sinnlichen: Die Politik der Kunst und Ihre Paradoxien*, by Jacques Rancière, ed. and trans. Maria Muhle (Berlin: b_books Verlag, 2006), 7.

ascertained as the following:

- The subtle balance between *consensus* as *common world* and *diss-esnus* as *public appearance* gives rise to *spatial publicness*, which is located in the blurring boundaries between both. In this regard, *dissensus* refers to a dissident outside, which, in terms of the production of public space, indicates meanings of difference are superimposed on public spatial practices. And *consensus* refers to a distance regime, through which representations of space manipulate spatial practices to achieve a power and relation equilibrium between social agents.

- In contrast to the notion of *spatial publicness*, the conventional concept of public space, would be ossified into regular spatial types in the fields of architecture and urban design at least, attendeing given codes of conduct. It is the concept of *spatial publicness* that enables potential for publicness to be disenthralled from some spatial archetypes. The urban public sphere might emerge whenever and wherever *dissensus* breaks through *consensus*.

- As *dissensus*, *spatial publicness* comprises two aspects — art (aesthetics) and politics, which are all involved by architecture and urbanism. Politics bears on the "political processes of *subjectivisation*" and aesthetics on "the practices and modes of visibility of art", by which the fabric of common sensory experience is reconfigured. Architectural and urban design need to deal with artistic and political situations together.

- The paradoxical logic, namely *liminality*, dominates the characteristic of *spatial publicness*. As *in-between* status, *liminality* demonstrates temporal contingency and spatial uncertainty. In essence, it is unstable and changeable forever.

- The polarization between publicness and privacy *per se* is a kind of *consensus*, when a dividing line between publicness and privacy, or between public space and private space, is so settled that the line undermines the flexibility of *spatial publicness*.

- If the so-called prototypes of public spaces cannot guarantee existence of *spatial publicness*, it is doubtful whether they could be widely acclaimed as an inevitable precondition of *spatial publicness*. While in Asian cities, especially Shanghai, there are neither so-called "standard" types of the public space nor the social prerequisite instigating the public space (civil society), it is still possible for us to research the possibilities of *spatial publicness* in these contexts, given that the local spatial and social environments can be counted as *consensus*, and therefore, they have already implied a dimension of *common world*. This point will be elucidated in the next two chapters consecutively.

4 Genealogy of Shanghai's Social Spaces

Under the concept of *spatial publicness*, some new opportunities emerge in the investigation of Shanghai's urban spaces. More possibilities of publicness will be dug out, which is largely beyond the scope of traditional public spaces and excluded by the ideologies behind them as well.

Before discussing Shanghai's social spaces, it is necessary to interpret the reciprocity between social spaces as everyday practices and that as *spatial publicness*. First, based on the perspective from the new concept, the spotlight can be turned from classic but isolated public spaces to urban ordinary spaces shaped by our life and then shaping it in turn. Second, everyday codes of conduct or gestures formed in social spaces have powerful and long-term effects on publicness through urbanite's performance. Third, the conventional understanding of space in China seems short of systematic and logical cognizance of the public space. Both real scarcity of typical public spaces and theoretical poverty in their research push us into the field of everyday life and vernacular urban spaces to find the new possibility of *spatial publicness*.

4.1 Gemeinschaft *versus* Gesellschaft

Amid all studies of China's social space and public spheres, it is impossible to elude a pair of primary concepts, which were put forward by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies and share the same name with his canonical work *Gemeinschaft* und *Gesellschaft* in 1887. The two opposite concepts, community vs. society in English, have already been a standard gauge for social analysis and permeate so many of researches on publicness.

According to Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* refers to the human congregation based on unmediated and organic relationships — the natural relationships (a) "rooted in pure instinct and pleasure", (b) "maintained chiefly by accommodation to each other", or (c) consolidated through the intellectual forces of memory. [1] The *Gemeinschaft* by *blood*, of *place*, and of *spirit* are three main types of communities, from which three definite types of relationship derive, namely kinship, neighborhood and friendship (or comradeship). [2] In essence, the community as a "complete unity of human wills" is not a loosely associated conglomerate, but organically grows into a totality.

Comparatively, *Gesellschaft* is generated from purposeful and reconcilable associations for personal interests. In *Gesellschaft*, "everyone is out for himself alone and living in a state of tension against everyone else." [3] Nothing can keep up contact between each social member more than exchange effecting the equality between power subjects through forming "the content of the fictitious social will". There is an objective and general quality that can be called *measurability* in this social will.

"Thus *Gemeinschaft* must be understood as a living organism in its own right, while *Gesellschaft* is a mechanical aggregate and artifact." [4] "In *Gemeinschaft* they stay together in spite of everything that separates

1. Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society*, ed. Jose Harris, trans. Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 22-4.
2. Ibid., 28.
3. Ibid., 52.
4. Ibid., 19.

them; in *Gesellschaft* they remain separate in spite of everything that unites them." [5]

We can treat *Gesellschaft* – to be more precise, the civil society – as social morphology with institutionalized personal distances in contrast to *Gemeinschaft* as the one with institutionalized collective distances, because in *Gesellschaft* "the various spheres of power and activity are sharply demarcated, so that everyone resists contact with others and excludes them from his own spheres, regarding any such overtures as hostile." [6]

The two antithetical concepts are broadly used as a diagnostic tool to analyze Chinese society. One of the most classical and influential works is *From the Soil* (*Xiangtu Zhongguo*) written by sociologist Fei Xiaotong. By describing ethos and structure of Chinese society, the book defines the traditional society as a social pattern founded on an agricultural mode of production and restricting daily activities to a solitary and isolated scope. He claims it as a rural society (*xiangtu shehui*). In reference to Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and Emile Durkheim's *organic solidarity* and *mechanical solidarity*, Fei identifies the traditional Chinese society as one based on ritual and customs (*lisu*) and the Western society as one based on law and reason (*fali*), separately. [7] The difference between the two societies, as Fei suggested, lies "in the force used to maintain order and in the nature of the social norms". [8] *Li* (rituals) are publicly recognized behavioral norms and maintained by tradition as accumulated social experience. [9] So *li* are inherited via education where the less enlightened majority are to be taught by the educated, well-bred gentlemen (*junzi*) who have a deep understanding of rituals and ethical codes.

Li might amount to the Rancièreian *consensus* [10] and operate in the manner of the Foucaultian discipline, in point of fact that *li* partitions and divides what is seen and unseen, audible and inaudible, and shares itself as a part of a common world.

In the following genealogical examination of Shanghai social spaces, a community gene profoundly embedded throughout every historical phase will be found. However, the overemphsis on the community-society contrast causes an unexpected consequence: the understanding of real urban life and space in Shanghai has been reduced to a value judgment about civil society or democracy. The logic – to presume the (civil) society is the necessary and sufficient condition of publicness – is rather rigid.

Obviously, the social morphology of community indeed breeds some negative factors for publicness. Many commentators dismiss the community as enemy of publicness. For example, Sennett has attributed the isolated community as a harmful factor to the fall of public man. In his view, amidst face-to-face contacts in a community, an imaginary personality is projected onto a few of celebrities and "gradually lead[s] the group into thinking of itself as an emotional collectivity", but "at that point the face turned to the outer world becomes rigid." [11] According to this opinion, the public interests are ruined in the pursuit of communal identity. Iris Marion Young also reiterated that the ideal of univocal and

5. Ibid., 52.
6. Ibid.
7. Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society* (A Translation of Fei Xiaotong's *Xiangtu Zhongguo*), trans. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 41-2.
8. Ibid., 95.
9. Ibid., 95-7.
10. In *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tönnies already introduced the notion of *consensus* into the account of *Gemeinschaft*. He said, "Reciprocal binding sentiment as the peculiar will of a community is what we shall call *mutual understanding* (das *Verständnis*) or *consensus*. This is the special social force and fellow feeling that holds people together as members of a whole." Therefore, the rituals (*li*) can be regarded as this "reciprocal binding sentiment as the peculiar will of a community". Ibid., 32-3.
11. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 305 (see chap.1, n.18).

Figure 4.1: **Nanjing East Road, Shanghai, Early Nineties.** Photo by Robert van der Hilst. Accessed June 04, 2013, `http://www.robertvanderhilst.com/shanghai/phpslideshow.php?directory=.&currentPic=11`.

hierarchical community has a logic of identity which leads to a scanty level of publicness, because 1) the ideal of community as unification of particular persons through sharing of subjectivity poses the denial and elimination of differences within and between subjects, [12] 2) the illusory ideal of immediate presence of subjects wrongly identifies me-diation with alienation and also denies differences in the sense of time and space distancing. [13] With social members indulging themselves with mutual friendships between peers with similar status and income and severing the linkage with strangers, the public life ends up collapsing in the rise of decentralized, self-sufficient and face-to-face communities functioning as autonomous political entities.

Similar to the above persuasive perspectives, a good number of remarks about Chinese urban reality and public spaces come into our views. Qin Hui, one of the well-known historians and sociologists, ar-gued, "the so-called Chinese city was essentially not of city and more collided with city than countryside. Thus, in a sense that there were not citizens in China, Chinese are all peasantry (as a member of community with the personal bondage of agricultural civilization), whereas they are not the farmer." [14] Even in architectural discourses a similar perspective has been already attested. Ma Qingyun, an architect and scholar with overseas educational background, sums up the characteristics of Chi-nese city in his article *Chinese Urbanism* as follows: anti-autonomy, anti-urbanism, leveling of differences, and total urbanization. [15] In his eyes, a jumbled ethos, brought about by its bygone dominators (such as the emperors of Qing Dynasty with their nomadic background or Chairman Mao of the Communist Party with his rural and farming background), haunted Chinese cities over such a long period that they consistently resist the influence from western urban civilization (see Figure 4.1).

Admittedly, these observations indeed grasp some main features of Chinese cities. Even so, the criterion premised on urban civilization of civil society in the opinions is too preconceived to help find out the potential hidden in realistic phenomena, and leads the study of Chinese

12. Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Commu-nity and the Politics of Difference," in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 432.

13. Ibid., 433.

14. Qin Hui, "The Problem of the Chinese Peasantry in History and Reality," accessed June 04, 2013, `http://www.aisixiang.com/data/detail.php?id=704`.

15. Ma Qingyun, "Chinese Urbanism," in *Totalstadt: Beijing Case*, ed. Gregor Jansen (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2006), 349-52.

public spaces to a dead end.

Indeed, it cannot be denied that there is not an authentic public space in Chinese cities, which is equivalent to its western counterpart. But this does not mean the failure of *spatial publicness* there. Conversely, even for those classical public places in European or American cities, there is no guarantee that publicness must occur. Detecting *spatial publicness* in Shanghai would not be beset by the perfect European formula (including its social foundation — civil society) anymore. We need not immerse ourselves in the glib cliché that there is not an authentic public space in China. If the code of *Gemeinschaft* is *consensus* (actually Tönnies had already understood it as a *consensus*), it should be admitted that, first, the code *per se* – either a behavioral code in a community or an institutionalized collective distance between communities – already contains a dimension of a *common world*; second, the *spatial publicness* as *dissensus* exactly arises on the verge of this *consensus*, which means the *dissensus* as *liminality* must be attached to the *consensus*.

In fact the black-and-white contrast between publicness and privacy shifts in the modern West over time. In most cases, what passes for the public space is no more than that Manuel de Solà-Morales defines as *collective space*. In his words, "collective space is both much more and much less than public space. If by the latter we mean solely that which is publicly owned. The civil and architectural, urbanistic and morphological richness of a city is that of its common spaces, that of all the places where daily life is carried out, represented and remembered. And perhaps it is increasingly true that these spaces are neither public nor private, but both at once. Public spaces that have come to be used for particular purpose or private spaces that have taken on a community function." [16]

An obvious pragmatic attitude is set out by Morales in this account. It purges the bias and prejudice from stereotyping ideology, respects the value of everyday life, and tries to preserve the uncertainty residing in the everyday quality. In a way analogous to Morales' idea, a notion of "public domain" is advanced by Dutch political scientists and urbanists Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp. In the book named *In Search of New Public Domain*, they substitute the old concept of "public space" with the new one of "public domain", which is defined as "those places where an exchange between different social groups is possible and also actually occurs". [17] What interests them is "the concrete, physical experience of the presence of others, of other cultural manifestations, and of the confrontation with different meanings associated with the same physical space". [18] From their analysis, the public space needs to be freed from the battle field of ideologies (otherwise following this yardstick, only several urban squares at specific times would qualify as public space, for example, Wenceslas Square of Prague, Tian'anmen Square of Beijing, or Brandenburg Gate of Berlin in 1989). The battle and exchange of everyday symbols, such as vernacular architecture, daily clothes, ethnic tradition, festivals and parades, have already brought about *spatial publicness*.

16. Manuel de Solà-Morales, "Public Spaces/Collective Spaces," in *A Matter of Things*, by Manuel de Solà-Morales, Kenneth Frampton, and Hans Ibelings, trans. Peter Mason and Debbie Smirthwaite (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2008), 187.

17. Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In search of New Public Domain* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2001), 11.

18. Ibid., 12.

Furthermore, those spatial representations once echoing former social *consensus* (inscribed in those ubiquitous vernacular buildings) bear the collective memory and power of place in their own rights. A past community space could evolve into the space of representation fostering a "counter-space" in opposition to current socio-political structures. [19] Especially, suffering from globalization and the *space of flows* claimed by Manuel Castells (flows of capital, labor, elements of production, commodities, information, decisions and signals), current *spaces of representation* that were *representations of space* once play a critical role in challenging dominant relations and manifesting underlying life-styles or the past.

Hence, it is oversimplified and crude to judge a spatial quality following the high-handed logic (*Gesellschft* = civil society = publicness vs. *Gemeinschaft* = rural society = rurality) and to disavow the unfitness within the narrow-minded expectation of what a public space is supposed to be. Shedding ideological bias and holding tolerance, perhaps we can unearth something different taking place in Shanghai urban space despite some leading community codes.

4.2   Chaxugeju, Heyuanzhuzhai *and* Li-Fang [20]

A traditional Chinese city is always described as a colossal congregation of villages. As Barbara Münch wrote, "in contrast to European cities, the Chinese cities in the period of the emperor were not furnished with special privileges for their 'citizens'. They did not distinguish themselves legally from villages and know unitary administration under the conduct of a mayor." [21] This delineation may be generalized with the notion "rurality (*Ruralität*)" coined by German urbanist Dieter Hassenpflug. For him, "in the term 'rurality', the public and private space is not differentiated yet. This corresponds with the pre-social, namely collective (*gemeinschaftlich*) (familial, cooperative, and tribal) nature of country life." [22] Undoubtedly, the exposition of rurality can be traced back to Bahrdt's polarization of public and private spheres and Tönnies' antithetical concepts of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*. Moreover, it is more germane to Max Weber's economic concept of the city, whose embryo was a market settlement. [23] Along a similar thread, Qin Hui, Ma Qingyun, and Barbara Münch all drew their own sweeping conclusions about the spatial nature of Chinese cities.

These observations, simply put, are indeed in accord with the traditional social structure that telescopes from outer relationships to the self as a center and is connected by kinship, neighborhood, or other social relationships. This social structure looks like an array of concentric circles happening at the moment when "a stone is thrown into a lake". [24] The pattern is defined by Fei as *chaxugeju* (differential mode of association) and is used to "describe analytically the patterning of Chinese society through nonequivalent, ranked categories of social relationships". [25]

Egocentrism and elasticity characterize the social pattern. The former exists just as a spider always centers on its own web, while the latter is featured throughout the key relationships — kinship, which

19. Dolores Hayden, "Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University, 1997), 111-33; or Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997).

20. *Chaxugeju, heyuanzhuzhai,* and *li-fang* are spellings in the form of sound-based *pinyin* (a romanization system introduced in the 1950s). The actual meanings of the terms refer respectively to: 1) the differential mode of association, 2) walled courtyard housing, 3) an urban institution in ancient China. In the following texts, the terminology concerning Chinese conditions will also be spelled in the form of *pinyin*.

21. Barbara Münch, "Verborgene Kontinuitäten des Chinesischen Urbanismus," *Archplus* 168 (2004): 44.

22. Dieter Hassenpflug, "Die Theatralisierung des Öffenlichen Raums," in *Was ist los mit den Öffenlichen Räumen? Analysen, Positionen, Konzepte*, ed. Klaus Selle (Dortmund: Dortmunder Vertrieb für Bau- und Plannungsliteratur, 2003), 128.

23. See the discussion in Section 1.4.

24. Fei, *From the Soil*, 63.

25. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng, "Introduction: Fei Xiaotong and the Beginnings of Chinese Society," in *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, by Fei Xiaotong, trans. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 19.
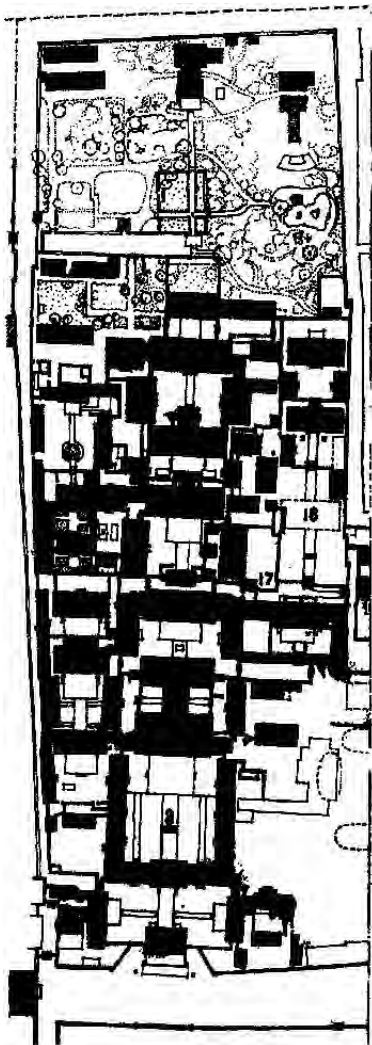
Figure 4.2: **The Temple of Confucius, Qufu, Shandong.** The Temple is the "original", largest and most famous of the temples of Confucius in China and East Asia. From Li Yunhe, *Cathay's Idea: Design Theory of Chinese Classical Architecture* (Tianjin: The Press of Tianjing University, 2005), 150.

is "woven by marriage and reproduction can be extended to embrace countless numbers of people — in the past, present, and future".[26] As these highly elastic relationships extend too broadly and overlap themselves too complicatedly, it is necessary to rest them on hierarchical differentiation to figure their mutual distances.

The self-centered and elastic quality in Chinese social relationships renders boundaries between public and private spheres ambiguous. Fei distinguished the notion of egocentrism with the one of individualism that brings about an equality and constitutionality between individuals and collectives. The ripple-like circles characterized by elasticity also cause the relativity of the dividing line between groups and individuals, between others and selves. That is to say, standing in a circle, one can claim that all his actions for this circle are part of the public,[27] but for others outside this circle, the same actions are definitely private.

The pattern of *chaxugeju* has been faithfully projected onto the spatial configuration of traditional Chinese cities, as evidenced by *heyuan* and *li-fang* on the architectural and urban level respectively. A traditional city presented itself in this ripple-like way in which a relational wave spreads out firstly from a courtyard house (*heyuan*), then to a courtyard group (*li-fang*) formed by several *heyuan*, finally to an enlarged city with multiple *li-fang*.

One of crucial spatial elements was the wall that formed spatial "skeletons" and even became an icon of Chinese cities. Walls constituted boundaries of concentric circles ranging from the Great Wall (nation), city walls (city), to courtyard walls (household). If a wall is about yang, then yin is manifested in a courtyard — the center void of concentric circles (of course, magnificent buildings are the center as well). Depending principally on the two elements, spatial distribution in a courtyard house or walled city agreed perfectly with the differential and ranked mode of association out of Confucianism, namely the *chaxugeju* (see Figure 4.2).

Walled courtyard houses also prevailed in old Shanghai prior to its opening in 1843. Although their local forms was a little different from the standard model in North China – for example, a shrinking courtyard named *tianjing* (well of heaven) surrounded by three wings – some major principles of spatial arrangement were still kept in the southern variants. These basic principles were (a) walled enclosure, (b) axiality, (c) north-south orientation, and (d) courtyard.[28]

Apart from the architectural ingredients, an ancient city institution, *li-fang*, also spoke of the ripple-like social structures. According to Guanzi (c. 723 or 718 B.C. – 645 B.C.), a politician and philosopher in the Spring and Autumn Period, the *li-fang* institute would:

> "organize [the country proper] so five households will constitute a neighborhood (*gui*), with each neighborhood having a leader (*zhang*); ten neighborhoods will constitute a village (*li*), with each village having an office (*si*); four villages will constitute a community (*lian*), with each community having a chief (*zhang*); ten communities will constitute a district, with each district having a governer (*liangren*)."[29]

In the same way, a capital city could be divided into blocks by draughtboard avenues. The blocks, with name of *li*, *lüli*, or *fang*, were enclosed

26. Fei, *From the Soil*, 63.
27. Ibid., 69.
28. David Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 27.
29. Guanzi, "Xiao Kuang", in *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China* (Volume One: VIII), trans W. Allyn Rickett (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 20.
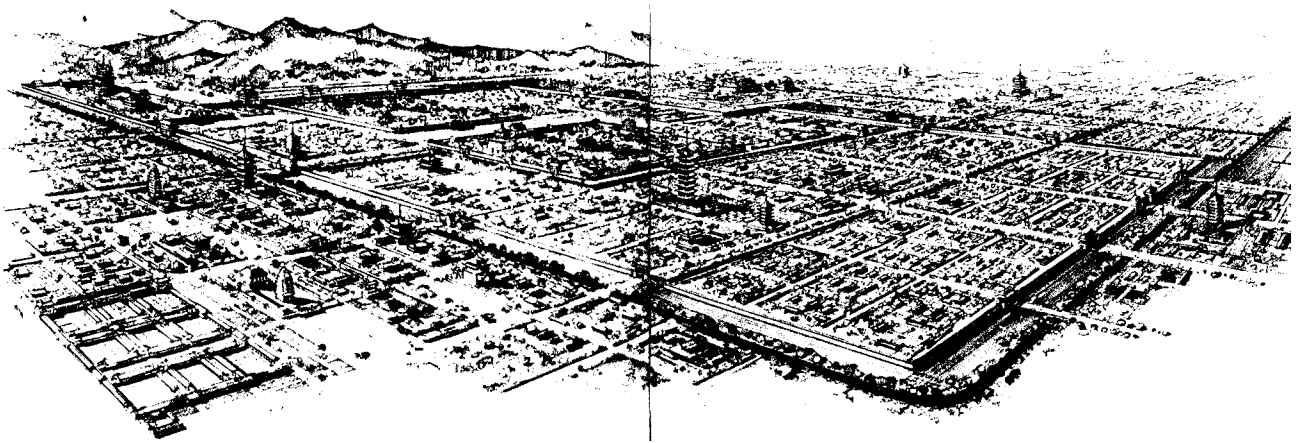
by walls and similarly subdivided into smaller parts with cross- or I-shaped roads. The parts, that is, those walled courtyard houses, were the essential spatial units making up the walled city. Even more, the closeness of compounds was reinforced by administrative means: each *fang* or *li* was classified according to occupations, official positions, or ranks, being staffed by a chief (*lizhang* or *lizheng*) who was in charge of surveillance and management of inhabitant's daily behaviors (see Figure 4.3).

This rigid institution had failed since the Tang Dynasty (619 - 907 AD). It had been already eroded when facing the challenges of flowering Buddhism and flourishing commerce. Commercial and religious activities gradually united together to form the temple fair — a primitive public space for ancient China. [30]

Despite its collapse, the impact of the *li-fang* institution live on in Chinese mentality and today's urban reality. Just as the isotopic space of the *li-fang* and courtyard housing did, homogenous spatial molecules still dominate urban structure in China. Apart from this spatial consequence, the failure to set up an equality and constitutionality between individuals plunges the Chinese social structure into an unequal distance regime indicated by Goffman's "*mask*". [31] It also leads to intrinsic indifference and selfishness of Chinese in urban public surroundings. Even today, the inappropriate behavior of Chinese tourists in public places frequently become a common topic. This is attributed to the ingrained tradition, but also to their long-term isolation from world civilizations so that they do not know how to behave as public actors.

4.3   *Early Citizenship,* Lilong *and Early Public Space*

Based on the idea of economic rationalism, Weber distinguished occidental cities from oriental ones. The former was exemplified by European cities in the antiquity or medieval era, while the latter by cities in Islamic region, India and China. However, "Weber's linkage of China's apparent failure to achieve capitalism with the failure of Chinese cities to resemble European cities, in other words, their failure to develop economically 'rational' urban associations and a 'commune - autonomous' form of urban settlement — has spawned numerous meditation on the nature of Chinese cities and their relation to European cities." [32] At least

Figure 4.3: **A Forest of Buddhist Pagodas and Temples in the Capital Luoyang, the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534).** The illustration depicts the Buddhism thrived in the Captial Luoyang that was strictly structured by the *li-fang* institution in the Northern Wei Dynasty. From Li Yunhe, *Cathay's Idea: Design Theory of Chinese Classical Architecture* (Tianjin: The Press of Tianjing University, 2005), 108-9.

30. Dong Wei, "Urban Institution, Urban Renovation, and Work-Unit Society: Market Economy and Change of Contemporary Chinese Urban Institution," *Journal of Architecture*, 12 (1996): 39-43.

31. See the discussion in Section 2.5.

32. Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1995), 42.

the city of Shanghai after its opening to foreign trade did not conform to this Weberian typology. Certain unique features blending with western elements were integrated into its social and economic formation, and into its everyday and public spaces.

The city of Shanghai was not an irreplaceable city for China at the outset. To go from a typical small fishing village to the largest financial center in the Far-East took almost one hundred years, although the time span is remarkably short for other Chinese cities. In this period, the spatial structure and social relations of the city underwent a tremendous transformation on the one hand, and also retained their inherent components persistently on the other.

After the Opium War, the British colonizer enforced the opening of Shanghai as a treaty port on the Qing government in 1843. This initiated the breakdown of Shanghai's self-contained urban structure and connected the city with the global capitalist web at that time. From 1842 to 1911, local Chinese communities had oscillated between two opposite poles — the tradition pole and western commercial civilization, and yet it finally grew to be a hybrid of both.

At the outset of the opening of the treaty port, merchant organizations formed by immigrants were woven from the native-place and common-trade ties, performing an analogous function of an European guild to some degree. The commercial associations, on the basis of regional, patrilineal and fellowship identity, always possessed particularistic and monopolistic privileges in their own fields. However, these associations named *huiguan* and *gongsuo* simultaneously took charge of some administrative running such as valorizing price, determining salary, supervising repayment, negotiating bankruptcy, adjudicating disputes and providing public service relating to education, charity, worship and entertainment. Bolstered by these trade federations and associations, a social sphere arose beyond a sheer private sphere and lay in an ambiguous realm between national, municipal authority and private interests. Such a sphere might dovetail partly with the Habermasian public sphere in a middle field between state and society, but a tendencies towards mutual cooperation and conciliation between government and society in Shanghai's model is more obvious than the tension-charged and clearly divided state in the Habermasian one.

The "public" activities were to be held routinely in *huiguan* buildings growing out of the traditional walled courtyard houses (see Figure 4.4).

Given their spatial flexibility, the courtyard houses can be grouped and reconstructed to fulfill different functions like theatre, school, temple, altar, almshouse, and so on. Further, every *huiguan* building allowed each regional group the self-conscious expression of their identities. As a strong native-place factor in sentiments and associations, the buildings drew a distinction between new immigrants and native residents.

Over the same period, a novel urban civilization had firmly taken root in the zone controlled by foreign colonizers and been immediately dispersed throughout the whole city. Together with western life-styles, spatial elements from the West, such as monuments, grand avenues and

government edifices, were soon imitated by local Chinese communities. By the late 19th century, an urban public park in the modern sense emerged in the city. *Zhangyuan* (Zhang garden), [33] a private villa purchased by an affluent merchant Zhang Shuhe in 1882, was free to the public three years later. This 1.5-hectare villa garden, at the southern end of the present Taixing Road, had been the largest gathering place of public activities for almost 20 years. More noticeably, it was not only a common amusement park, but also a popular place for political assemblies. [34]

While the Chinese communities in Shanghai between 1842 and 1911 still retained many pre-modern factors like a native-place identity or common-trade ties, and were a kind of quasi-civil society, a fresh and genuine middle-class had risen in conjunction with completely new social spaces between 1912 and 1937 (the city's heyday as scholars term it). Never is it excessive, however, to emphasize that neither the stratum nor the social spaces were the replication of a western counterpart.

After the 1911 revolution, the city modernized and prospered swiftly due to its half-century accumulation of productivity after the opening, the weak national power, and the fall of imperialist forces in World War I. New social strata, whether the national bourgeoisie, proletariat, intellectuals, or petty bourgeoisie grew mature in Shanghai over this period. Similarly, the early Chinese citizenship, including petty intellectuals, company employees, bottom artists, small proprietors and students, started occupying the center stage of the urban life. The connections among them came not just from a common native-place background and friendship anymore, but from education, occupations and business activities as well. Majority of them were still immigrants, but began to share similar social and vocational status. Simultaneously, commercial civilization (consumerism), Shanghai-style culture, new entertainment and foreign culture had an effect on the emergence of this citizenship

33. The Chinese notion of "*yuan*" contains two-fold meanings: *yuanlin* (garden) and *gongyuan* (park). "*Gongyuan*" is a specific term referring to modern urban park. Modern park (*gongyuan*) initially appeared in the concessions of Shanghai in 1868, which was established by the concessional authority, the municipal committee, who spent taxes (public funds) from Chinese and foreign merchants on constructing them. At first Chinese named them "*gongjia huayuan*" (official garden), which were then abbreviated to *gongyuan* (park) by abroad students with reference to the Japanese. At that time, "*gongjia huayuan*" were a totally fresh thing for Chinese and brought about some incidents like flower picking. The municipal committee used the incidents as excuse to deprive Chinese of their access to the parks. This indirectly motivated Chinese Community in concessions to build their own park, like *zhangyuan*. See Yu Lei's Dissertation, *Research on the Publicity of Space* (Nanjing: Southeast University Press, 2005), 71.

34. As a public space of Shanghai in the late Qing Dynasty, one of the most distinctive points of *zhangyuan* was that it worked as a place for assembly and speech of all circles in Shanghai. According to the historical data, at least 39 large assemblies were held from December 1897 to April 1913. The place welcomed all kinds of ideas and claims regardless of revolution or restoration, radicalism or conservatism. The place even facilitated the emergence of the identity of the Shanghainese and the finalization of Shanghai dialect. See Xiong Yuezhi, "Zhangyuan and Shanghai Society in the Late Qing," *Southern Weekly*, April 04, 2002.
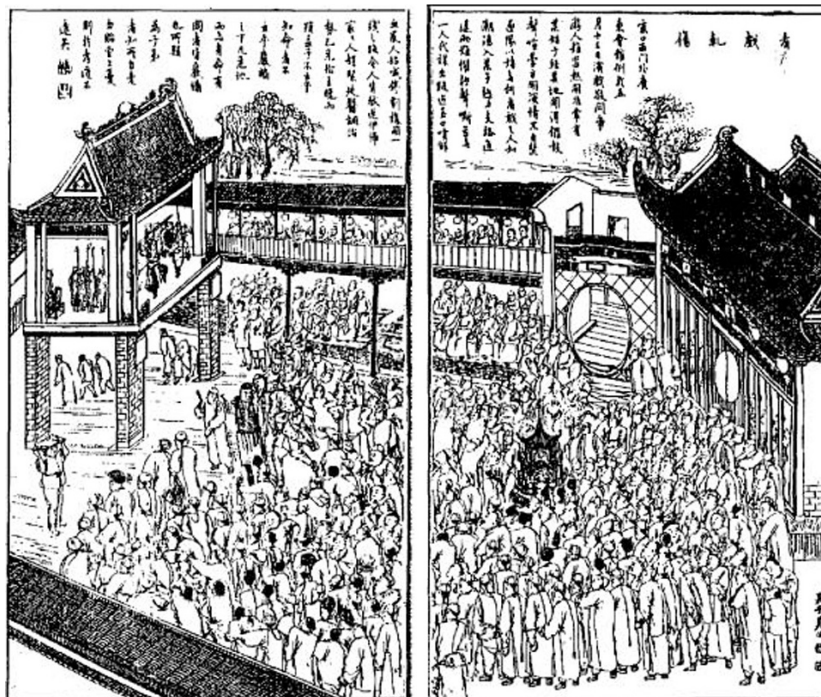

Figure 4.4: **The Performance of** *Huiguan* **Opera.** The illustration depicts a Guangdong Huiguan opera performance which was held to worship the god Guandi. Source: Dianshizhai Huabao (Dianshi Studio Pictorial Newspaper), 1983 Guangzhou reprint of Late-Qing edition (1884-1898), from Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*, 108-9.

Figure 4.5: *Lilong*-Housing in Luwan, 2000. The picture depicts the urban texture of Luwan District at the heart of Shanghai in 2000. The *lilong*-housing formed the background of urban space. But the drastic development of mega-structures and skyscrapers together with the subsequent large-scale demolitions has damaged this particular spatial texture. From SMI (Shanghai Municipal Institute of Surveying and Mapping), *Atlas of Aerial Views of Shanghai* (Shanghai: Shanghai Scientific and Technical Publishers, 2001).

too.

Spatially, the *lilong*, a particular residential mode in Shanghai, ripened in this phase. [35] By the 1940s, almost 80 percent of Shanghai's population, mainly the middle class, lived in the new housing. [36] As a mongrel of western town houses (terrace houses or row houses) and Chinese courtyard houses (courtyard enclosed with three wings in the *Jiangnan* area), the *lilong*, at the start, were only a temporary measure at first to cope with the refugee problem caused by the *Taiping* Uprising in 1853, but owing to the real estate speculation, it promptly prevailed as a residential pattern peculiar to Shanghai and other concessional cities (see Figure 4.5).

This kind of collective housing, segmented by a fish-bone lane network with several rows and a main column, kept its contact with the outside only through a principal portal. The spatial arrangement of these alleyway-houses and their names with the endings of "*li*" or "*fang*" remind us their tinge of the traditional *li-fang* system. [37] Filled with privacy, safety and comfort and achieved through walls and gateways, the spatial enclosure was soon accepted by Shanghainese. The walls and gateways separated *lilong*'s everyday life from the outside world.

The closedness of a *lilong* space, though strong, is far less than its predecessor — the courtyard house. The historian Lu Hanchao argues, "the people of Shanghai did not develop a sense of identity based on the alleyway compound or, in a broader sense, based on the neighborhood." [38]

And even more, various kinds of business activities had been intermingled with residence in the alleyway-houses (see Figure 4.6). Bookstores, printing houses, schools and other cultural facilities, *qianzhuang*

Figure 4.6: **Sunday.** From Luo Xiaowei and Wu Jiang, *Shanghai Longtang* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1997), 163.

35. With the opening and developing of cities as treaty port at the beginning of the 20th century, *lilong* house became the main residential modes of various concessions, like Shanghai, Tianjin, Qingdao and Hankou. But the most typical and well-kept are in Shanghai, as far as wideness of influence and diversity of types are concerned.

36. Luo Xiaowei, "Das Lilong-Haus: Eine Weit Verbreitete Wohnform im Alten Shanghai," in *Peking, Shanghai, Shenzhen: Städte des 21. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Kai Völcker and Dirk Luckow (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2000), 210.

37. The *baojia* system was the means to extend political control from the national capital down into the neighborhood where ordinary people live. A plan to establish the *baojia* in Shanghai was proposed as early as 1927, immediately after the formation of the Shanghai Special Municipality (*Shanghai tebieshi*). The proposal aimed to establish a several-layered neighborhood organization under the administration of districts (*qu*), in which five households (*hu*) would form a basic neighborhood unit known as the *lin*, five *lin* would form a *lu*, and twenty *lu* a *fang*. See Lu Hanchao, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 218. From Lu's account, we can see the obvious similarity and affinity between the *baojia* system and *li-fang* system, which as governance instrument are still available till now in the form of *hukou* (household registration system), *jümin weiyuanhui* (resident's committee), and *jiedao banshichu* (street office).

38. Ibid., 224.

(traditional Chinese banks), petty banks, pawnshops and other financial institutions, bathhouses, restaurants, law firms and other service amenities, plus groceries, rice stores, "*tiger stove*" (hot water store) and other living utilities established themselves there. [39] Additionally, Shanghai's earliest Chinese-run university (Datong University) was also founded in 1924 in an alleyway compound named Nanyang Li. [40] These features of everyday life do not quite fit into the concept of rurality (deficiency in a clearly public-private antithesis). Instead, the dense collective residential areas are more analogous to the typical urban blocks in Manhattan from Jane Jacobs' pen, where, 1) the order of public spaces is "kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves," [41] and 2), a private-public balance exists "between its (neighborhood's) people's determination to have essential privacy and their simultaneous wishes for differing degrees of contact, enjoyment or help from the people around." [42] In Lu's account, the dense living conditions and physical closedness of residents in Shanghai's alleyway houses had contributed to the unorganized "neighborhood watch" and outdoor pubic communications in summer nights such as chatting, playing instruments and chess. [43]

Alongside the *lilong* dwellings, there was a fresh cascade of other new spatial types and lifestyles at the heart and busiest zones of the city: boulevards, cinemas, theatres, department stores, parks, libraries, and so on. These spatial elements have made up the spatial skeleton of contemporary Shanghai and are essential scenes of its cityscapes. Where they locate are the significant spatial nodal points and tourist-riddled sites of present Shanghai. These crucial spaces and their effects on Shanghai's spatial publicness will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.4 Socialism, Danwei *and* Gongren Xincun [44]

After Chinese Communist Party (CCP) defeated Chinese Nationalist Party and took over the city, it instantly launched a socialist reconstruction of urban society and spaces, which complied with its own ideology. The reconfiguration of cityscapes commenced with the novel social, political and economic (spatial) units — work-unit compounds (*danwei*), and their variations — worker villages (*gongren xincun*). The process was impelled from the top down. More importantly, what the *danwei* changed was not simply the urban physical form. The *danwei*, "a two-fold bearer of an urban space and instructional construction", was "a continually spatialized process of grass-root social organization and urban construction regulations, and a constantly institutionalized process of everyday spaces of the worker's living in the new villages.". [45] Up to now, both the *danwei* and *gongren xincun* still play a non-negligible role in the production of urban China's spatial structures and resident's daily conduct codes.

The work-unit compounds (*danwei*) and worker's villages (*gongren xincun*) did not come about overnight. Before that, European left-wing intellectuals, activists and socialists had already conducted such a spatial

39. Ibid., 167-88.
40. Ibid., 175.
41. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), 32.
42. Ibid., 59.
43. Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights*, 232-3.
44. *Danwei* and *Gongren Xincun* are the pinyin form of the work-unit compound and the workers' new village respectively.
45. Yang Chen, "Institutionalization of The Daily Life Space: An Analysis of the Framework of Worker's Villages in 1950s Shanghai," *Journal of Tongji University (Social Science Section)* vol.20, no.6 (2009): 38.

experiment. A prototype of the *danwei* can even date back to the era of early utopia socialism when Robert Owen and Charles Fourier put their ideas into practice. In all these spatial conceptions and practices, two principles had been retained throughout subsequent socialist spatial practices: firstly, cities were seen as the main culprit responsible for proletarian impoverishment, the extreme economic inequality, epidemics of disease and crime, or outbreaks of riots; secondly, architecture or other spatial techniques possess the competence to design a new society. [46]

The direct influence upon Chinese spatial practices of the *danwei* and *gongren xincun* came from the concept of "neighborhood unit" [47] put forward by American sociologist Clarence A. Perry and the concept of "new unit of settlement (NUS)" [48] and "micro-district" (*mikrorayon*) by Soviet planners after World War II. In fact, essential principles of the Soviets quite approximate to the American ones. All three are self-contained spatial units precisely delimited through public and educational facilities, forming urban spaces in a homogenous, scattered and cellular way (see Figure 4.7).

Through a Chinese cultural screen, these foreign concepts have been accepted and developed into a new spatial type — *danwei*. As witnessed by David Bray's investigation, a mixed impact upon the *danwei* consists of community codes of Confucian ethics, organizational forms of agricultural communism before 1949, and also Soviet spatial modes. This made the *danwei* different from its American and Soviet models: firstly, plenty of the *danwei* were a rearrangement of old urban quarters on account of a fund shortage, except the new ones invested by the state. These *danwei*-practices exacerbated the already sharp difference between city and countryside; [49] secondly, the closedness of the *danwei* was absolute. Walls returned to the main architectural method of enclosing borders again. Not only that, the communication between the *danwei* and the outside world was entirely cut off with the aid of other socially administrative technologies including the household registration system (*hukou*), internal security department (*baoweike*), personal files system (*renshi dang'an*), residential committee (*juweihui*), street office (*jiedao banshichu*), local police station (*paichusuo*), unified job-assignment system (*tongyi fenpei*) and other managing methods; [50] thirdly, the *danwei* was an independent society with universal functions. A *danwei* entity could embrace living, educational, commercial, cultural, medical and other basic facilities satisfying comprehensive demands of daily life, but meanwhile rein in its employees' independence and free communication by its spatial closedness. Consequently, *danwei* was physically enclosed in a standardized spatial form (covering both its general planning and its individual buildings) with a strong collective identity shared by its members.

A variation of the *danwei* was the worker's village (*gongren xincun*), which was detached from the productive area and formed a relatively independent district adjacent to it (see Figure 4.8). Numerous worker settlements once existed in Shanghai, because before 1949 the city had been the largest industrial center in China and trained the first genera-
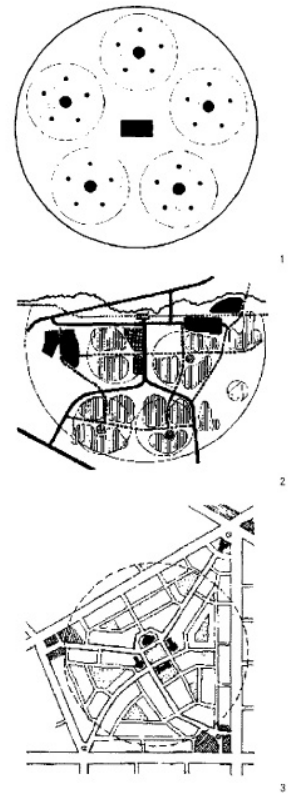

Figure 4.7: **The Layering Structure of Residential District.** Picture 1: layering structure of MRD, Picture 2: plan of Harlow New Town, Picture 3: Neighborhood Unit. From Zou Ying and Bian Hongbin, "Comments on Urban Residential District Pattern in China," *World Architecture* May (2000): 21.

46. Arch+, "Genealogie der Kritik — Frühsozialistische Utopien," *Archplus* 200 (2010): 30.

47. The fundamental principles of Perry's Neighbourhood Unit were: 1) centering the School, 2) arterial streets along the perimeter, 3) internal streets, 4) local shopping areas at the perimeter, 5) at least 10% area for parks and open space. See "Neighborhood Unit," last modified April 23, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighbourhood_unit; or Jerrold R. Allaire, "*Neighborhood Boundaries*," *Information Report* 141 (1960): 2-3, accessed June 07, 2013, http://www.planning.org/pas/at60/pdf/report141.pdf.

48. The fundamental principles governing the NUS were: 1) equal mobility for all, 2) distances are planned on a pedestrian scale, 3) elimination of danger from vehicular traffic, 4) green belts. Every sector is surrounded on at least two sides by open land. Alexei Gutnov et al., *The Ideal Communist City*, trans. Renee Neu Watkins (Boston: i press incorporated, 1968), 117.

49. In contrast to *danwei*, Soviet NUS intended to evacuate major population from city to fill the huge gap between city and countryside. See Gutnov, *The Ideal Communist City*.

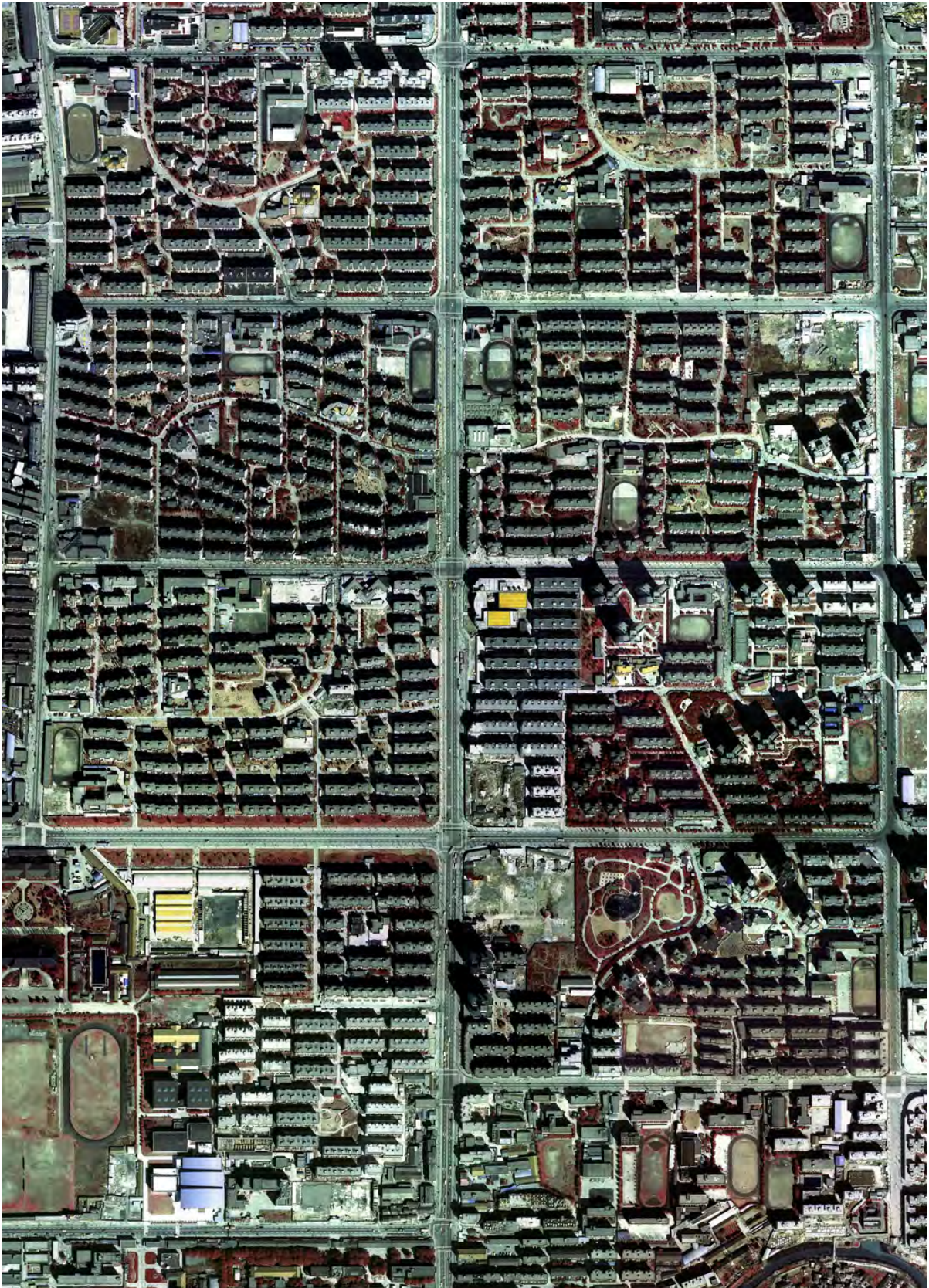50. Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China*, 110-7.

Figure 4.8: **Zhongyuan Residential District, Yangpu, Shanghai, 2000.** The residential district is one of the biggest and latest workers' villages in Shanghai. From SMI, *Atlas of Aerial Views*.

Figure 4.9: **An Aerial View of Caoyang New Village (1951-1988).** Located in the middle of Putuo District, Caoyang New Village is the first worker village in Shanghai. Started in 1951, the whole housing scheme consists of 9 living quarters and accommodates a population of 107,000 in 32,000 households. The site area is about 180 ha., with a total floor area of 1,697,800 m². From SCC (Shanghai Construction Commission), *The Album of Shanghai Housing* (Shanghai: Shanghai Scientific and Technological Literature Publishing House, 1998), 81.

tion of Chinese industrial workers. The grand scale and concentration of industries compelled policymakers to organize the worker's settlements adjacent to factories according to a practicable guideline — "production in locality, living in locality". [51]

During constructing the worker's villages, the strict layering structure was carried out to manage the crowded and large population economically, spatially and socially. Imitating the Soviet Union's micro-district (*mikrorayon*), the structure was divided into several tiers: 1, micro-district; 2, residential district (*zhiloy rayon*); 3, urban district (*gorodskoy rayon*); 4, urban zone (*gorodskaya zona*). [52] This scale principle of the spatial production was soon established as a planning norm to guide the later practices of urban residential districts. [53] The spatial hierarchy also corresponds with the incremental levels of administrative rank, right down to the household. Several street offices took charge of daily affairs of a larger residential district (*qu*), several residential committees did that of a micro residential district (*xiaoqu*), and even there was a senior of houses (*louzhang*) or headman of a household group in charge of neighborhood clusters and residential groups.

Certainly, the socio-political institution is closely tied to the *li-fang* system once advocated by the politician Guanzi and the *baojia*-system executed by Nationalist Party. [54] The correspondence between spatial scale relations and the administrative hierarchical organization provided an institutional scaffold for performing a range of state politics and programs and for structuring social spaces of daily life.

After the urban socialist transformation, Chinese cities between 1949 and 1978 were developed more into a collection of self-contained and well-defined communities than into an integrated urban network (see Figure 4.9). [55] The *danwei* and worker's villages, as spatial technologies of socialist governance, implemented the disciplinary power whose effects were ensured through progressively finer channels and gains access to individuals, to their bodies, their gestures and to all their daily actions. [56] Departing from the broad generalization about *danwei*, it had more productive than oppressive, depressive effects. "It is a misunderstanding to hold that architecture simply represents power, or,

51. The Board of the Chronicle of Shanghai's Housing Construction, *The Chronicle of Shanghai's Housing Construction* (Shanghai: The Press of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, 1998), accessed June 07, 2013. `http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node75091/node75096/index.html`.

52. Richard Antony French and F. E. Ian Hamilton ed., *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), 60-1.

53. Lu Duanfang, *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949-2005* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 37-9.

54. See Sidenote 36 in this chapter.

55. Bray, *Social Space*, 124.

56. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), 151-2.

even more so, that architecture can have inherent political significance or function. Rather it is the techniques for practicing social relations, which are framed and modulated spatially, that allow for the efficient expansion of power, or alternatively, for resistance." [57]

What the *danwei* and the worker's village attempted to procure was a socialist social relationship and communal life-style that "combined mutual-aid and welfare functions of a closely-knit collectivity with repressive-ideological ones". [58] The programmatic, standardized and hierarchical spaces subjected urban daily life to industrial rules in order to establish an efficient and organized productive unit. However, to lessen and control communication did not bring the anticipated efficiency. The worker's villages and *danwei* were expected to cultivate a collectivist lifestyle and proletarian self-consciousness, while in fact city dwellers had to endure a humdrum, repeated and non-private-non-public "village-like" life where sophisticated social control and expropriation of individual freedom was manifested through a type of the Foucaultian panoptic apparatus.

The thorough sensible reconfiguration of work-unit-based urbanism left no room for *spatial publicness* at that time. As a thing that bespeaking chaos, randomness or degeneration, the diverse and vibrant daily life before 1949 was disposed of, with the cityscape just becoming a simple assembly of homogenous and mutually isolated spatial units. Urban spaces outside the *danwei*-system was treated as leftover space and people outside the *bianzhi* (staff quota system) were suppressed under public appearance as a hazard and fringe.

4.5   *Social Segregation, MRD (Gated Community) and Informal Urbanism*

Since the Chinese economic reform, the previous social homogeneity implied in the *danwei* and worker villages has broken up. Thanks to the introduction of a market economy system, the commercialization of labor kept urbanites away from their personal attachment to the *danwei*, and the commercialization of housing offered the new wealthy middle-class an opportunity to choose their desired residence on an open market of real estate. Together with the inertial factors from social systems, market forces drove Shanghai's spaces to evolve into a path from the worker village via the micro residential district to the gated community.

When the *danwei*-institution declined after the economic reforms since 1987, the role to satisfy Shanghai's huge residential demand has been progressively transferred from the early worker's villages to *juzhuxiaoqu* (the micro-residential-districts or MRDs) as a result of housing commodification. Nonetheless, there is no striking physical distinction between worker villages and MRDs.

Aside from this physical similarities, the apparent social segregation and housing inequality are now surfacing side by side in Shanghai in contrast to the homogeneity of the *danwei* era. The residential selectivity or mobility arising from the housing reform ineluctably leads to a "spatial and social sorting of households and neighborhoods". [59]

57. K. Michael Hays, "Introduction to 'Space, Knowledge, and Power': Interview with Paul Rabinow," in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 428.

58. Raymond Lau, "Socio-Political Control in Urban China: Changes and Crisis," *British Journal of Sociology* 52 (2001): 606.

59. Huang Youqin, "From Work-Unit Compounds to Gated Communities: Housing Inequality and Residential Segregation in Transitional Beijing," in *Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy and Space*, ed. Laurence J. C. Ma and Fulong Wu (New York: Routledge, 2005), 173. Although the object of the research refers to the city of Beijing, the evidence showed in it is quite general for the currently urban condition China.

Figure 4.10: **Villa Mandarin Palace in Shanghai.** The villa complex is situated in the core of Pudong district, adjacent to important public facilities like Pudong Central Park. Designed by some renowned Chinese and foreign architects, such as Arata Isozaki, Rocco Yim, the luxury housing trys to feature a theme of so-called "modern Chinese living style". Designed by Rocco Yim, Photo by Wei Min. From Wei Min, "Chinese Style & Modern Image: A Study on the Site Planning and Individual Buildings of Villa Mandarin Palace," *Time+Architecture* March (2006): 88.

The current cityscape has evolved into a patchwork of differentiated neighborhoods with sorted households "ranging from detached/semi-detached villa/townhouse complexes, to commodity housing and affordable housing communities with apartment buildings/towers, and to migrant enclaves with dilapidated shacks/bungalows." [60] These phenomena are no more than a natural consequence of the growing social fragmentation in line with class divisions — millionaires, the middle-class, the urban poor and immigrants with peasant-origins.

Certainly, wherever there is residential segregation, spatial closedness begins. In this exploration of the genealogy of Shanghai's social spaces, traces of spatial closedness never disappear. An excessive preference for an univocal spatial structure, function division and visual order implied in spatial principles of worker villages and MRDs has also aggravated to the closedness.

The present closedness also has its own distinctness: 1) different and diverse measures give rise to different degrees of isolation. The low-intensity isolation alongside edging commercial facilities even promote the dynamics of street life; 2) as the current MRDs are overloaded with imagination, fantasies and desires, their autonomy and closedness become part of psychological demands of the emerging middle-class (see Figure 4.10). Together with spatial thematization, the spatial autonomy does not only consolidate the self-identity of the new middle-class, but endow also urban spaces with "homogeneous-fractured" characteristics. [61] The spatial situation ends up as "an archipelago of enclaves" — a term coined by Hajer and Reijndorp. [62]

60. Ibid., 193.
61. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 355 (see chap.1, n.57).
62. Hajer and Reijndorp, *New Public Domain*, 53-61.

69

The MRDs appear to have fallen within the orbit of gated communities. Though sharing some features with global gated communities, the MRDs in the Chinese context still have something unique. As Huang Youqin's study reveals, the MRDs grow separated at micro-level (neighborhood), but mixed at macro-level. In other words, a geographic distance between rich and poor communities is negligible. [63] This situation is different from the spatial segregation between decayed downtowns and wealthy suburbs of the USA, because of several factors in China such as the continuing role of the local government in urban planning and housing provision, the dual land systems in suburbs, centralized provision of public goods and ethnic homogeneity. [64] For example, the Shanghai government intentionally develops new commercial residences in dilapidated housing areas in the name of urban renewal, or, new wealthy strata seek for high-quality educational, cultural and transportation resources in the inner city, because these resources have been accumulated and concentrated here for ages. What's more, the ethnic and racial homogeneity put Chinese cities far away from American residential segregation caused by the serious ethnic tension. This tremendous tolerance on the geographic proximity for residential neighborhoods is exactly an opportunity for *spatial publicness* in Chinese cities.

Simultaneously, a kind of informal urbanism happens in the inner suburbs and exurbias, where the worker villages have been located since the 1950s. Until recently, the area has become maturely urbanized. The fall of state-owned factories takes the past glories away from the worker villages and their owners — the former workers who are either laid off or retired as a result of economic restructuring. The conversion has chipped away at the tight management and orderly control of the *danwei*-system too. The economic restructuring (the commodification of housing) reshapes the residential membership and brings about a process similar to the *residualization* in British social housing tenure. [65] During the process of residualization, while better-off households are moving out of the worker villages, their dwellings are being filtered down to people who may bring a diversity and difference of neighborhood. As for Shanghai, its economic booming, educational opportunities and nascent industries constantly attract the young from other provinces. A massive influx of college students, graduates and so-called "white collar" workers soon fill the vacancy left by the move of affluent households. The worker villages do appeal to the newcomers for their contiguity to the downtown or universities, reasonable rent and living expenses, rich urban life and mature infrastructure.

As the residential mobility and diversity invalidates the strict social control, neither can the previous closedness be reserved, nor the increasing complexity of social strata be halted in these ageing neighborhoods. A worker village used to be a super-block, but now decomposes into several smaller molecules (in line with the owner's committees). Its penetrability or permeability is enhanced and its contact with the outside is augmented. Some apartments with a street frontage were reconstructed into shops for more commercial benefit. This process of

63. Huang, "From Work-Unit Compounds," 177.
64. Ibid., 178.
65. Ibid., 177.

reshaping spaces resemble the rebuilding and expanding Berlin's tenements (*Miethäuser*) in the 19th century caused by industrialization and flood of immigrants. [66] However, viewed in the perspective of *sptial publicness*, the final effects of both processes are precisely reverse. Different to the process observed by Bahrdt, the one in China is more positive in publicness.

Another phenomenon of informal urbanism emerged in exurbias, the former rural areas. Those "migrant enclaves" or "urban villages" argued by scholars are uneven products of high-speed urbanization. Impeded by institutional restrictions (*hukou*), economic inability and underlying discrimination by urbanites, the underclass at the bottom of society cannot afford a suitable dwelling in the central city or inner suburbans. They have to turn their attention to the urban periphery, where plenty of cheap dormitories are availble. In some cities, the former agricultural plots are enclosed by new MRDs or other urbanized facilities due to high-speed urbanization. The enclaves inundated with dilapidated bungalows and shacks were thus defined as "urban villages (*chengzhongcun*)", typically in Beijing, Guangzhou or Shenzhen (see Figure 4.11). In a dual land system, the original inhabitants (nominal peasants) have the legal right to freely dispose their own houses and small parcels of land. For instance, owners extend their buildings in all directions in order to maximize the rent profits. The buildings' administrative status (within the jurisdiction of rural areas) may release the spontaneous (re-)constructions from the authority control, like urban planning, but also render them utterly chaotic — high-density population without sufficient infrastructure, hygienic conditions and adequate living space. Their unhealthy and cramped living conditions are akin to that of typical tenements in New York or other western metropolises at the turn of the last century. [67] In fact, the migratory settlements play a positive role in promoting urbanization through housing massive numbers of rural migrants and assimilating them into cities without using government resources. [68] Nonetheless, the settlements as places characterized by social disorder, deterioration and backwardness are seldom taken seriously by urban policy-makers and the mainstream, and papered over by glitzy and magnificent skyscrapers.

66. Bahrdt, *Die Moderne Großstadt*, 116-7 (see chap.1, n.32).
67. For example, perhaps 37 m² (400 square feet) of living space for an entire family, minimal plumbing, only one or two exterior windows, or filthy communal privies serving hundreds of people, sidewalks piled a yard high with uncollected garbage, and so on. See Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 33-4. Many similar depictions of details of slum city in London, Paris, Berlin, or New York between 1880 to 1990 can be seen as evidences in"The City of Dreadful Night: Reactions to the Nineteenth-Century Slum City : London, Paris, Berlin, New York, 1880-1990". See Hall, *City of Tomorrow*, 13-47 (see chap.2, n.31).
68. Li Zhang, "Migrant Enclaves and Impacts of Redevelopment Policy in Chinese Cities," in *Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy and Space*, ed. Laurence J. C. Ma and Fulong Wu (New York: Routledge, 2005), 218.

4.6 Conclusion

By examining the genealogy of Shanghai's social spaces, some major types can be deduced: 1) traditional courtyard houses corresponding to the differential mode of associations (*chaxugeju*) in the agricultural society (some of them are still retained within urban villages or migrant enclaves); 2) *lilong*-houses nearly covering the whole city before 1949 (today the area has become the heart of the city) and matched with everyday life of the early citizenship; 3) *danwei* compounds and worker villages embodying the socialist values and collectivist life-styles, and located in former suburbans between 1949 and 1978; 4) MRDs and gated communities resulting from the commercialization of housing and dominating the current socio-spatial cityscape with abundant subtypes ranging from luxury villas, townhouse to regular apartments.

The worth of this examination lies not in the typological classification *per se*, but rather in probing into the reciprocity between the everyday practices and their *spatial publicness*. Despite the ideological, economic and social patterns behind the social spaces varing in each period, a few common features can be identified physically and socially, which German sociologist Barbara Münch state as the "hidden continuity". [69] Based on Tönnies' concept of "society-community", Münch finds a community gene is uninterruptedly, though in different forms and ways, involved in the production of the social spaces. Various communities were maintained by Confucian doctrines, collectivist ethics of socialist system, regional ties based on the native-place sentiment, or identification with same status, wealth and fame. Along with the gene, the *li-fang* system initiated from the pre-Qin period has left its socio-spatial traces on Shanghai spaces throughout different epochs, either in the form of the *baojia* system or the layering practices of the MRDs.

Dieter Hassenpflug wants to substitute the "closed-open" opposition – it is a consecutive but clandestine thing – for the "public-private" one that is frequently invalid in the Chinese context. As he wrote, "what we identify as public urban space in China may be characterized as public space (public-legal space) indeed, in a formal sense. But in fact, it is only concerned with open, in other word, undefined urban space in everyday-cultural perception of Chinese. It is the space, which fills the distance between meaningful spaces with emptiness. The open and meaningless space is firmly in opposition to the enclosed, meaningful space." [70] Based on the "closed-open" dichotomy, Hassenpflug has developed a series of binary concepts, such as "introversion-extroversion" and "inclusion-exclusion", to describe the spatial quality in China cities.

Hassenpflug's formula seems workable but neglects the potential of *spatial publicness* in Chinese cities. Each concept of "public-private", "closed-open", or "introversion-extroversion" tends to encapsulate the complexity of urban spaces in the succinct dichotomous models, which either blocks out the subtlety and impurity intrinsic to everyday life — the lived experience, or substitutes urban life with the lifelessly scientific representations. Ignored by the mechanical classification of "community-society", the "lived space" can actually break through the ossified modes of spatial accessibility in a symbolic and physical way

69. Münch, "Verborgene Kontinuitäten," 44-9.
70. Dieter Hassenpflug, *Der Urbane Code Chinas* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2009), 31. Trans. by Yang Shan

(as Hassenpflug points out, the spatial accessibility in Chinese cities is often understood as an "inclusion-exclusion" dividing line in a social and physical sense), and arouse new *spatial publicness* by creating their visual and symbol accessibility. What is more, it is the openness and meaninglessness of the so-called "open" fields that offer urbanites to produce, to infill, or to stimulate new semantic definitions. In recent years, the potential of the areas with semantic emptiness have been recognized by academic circles, with some notions of "terrain vague" and "urban voids" arsing. [71]

When the community codes or "closed-open" mode are seen as *consensus*, the *spatial publicness* as *dissensus* will happen on the border of this *consensus*. The "closed-open" cognitive mode shows the reality of spatial practices in Chinese cities, while settling an implicit verdict: it is only the civil society, rather than a community-predominant society, that can breeds the "authentic" public space and publicness. On condition that the so-called "authentic" public space is built on the public-private polarization, there barely exists such an "authentic" one in China and East Asia, where the longstanding impact of Confucianism infringes on the clear differentiation between both spheres.

However, the population density and geographical proximity characterizing those East Asian cities can benefit the production of *spatial publicness*. For example, in Tokyo the city's land has become constantly subdivided, fragmented and crowded. To deal with this condition, some architects adopted a brand-new but modest strategy to create a novel "third space" — a non-public, non-private, obscure and soft boundary within residual spaces, such as a gap, interstice, or void. [72]

Based on the concept of *spatial publicness*, a hypothesis can be derived from the discussion on Shanghai's social spaces: both community-style codes and "closed-open" conditions can be deemed as *consensus*. According to this argument, further conclusions can be reached:

1. The spatial codes of community as *consensus* have contained a significant dimension of *publicness* — common world. The spatial formations of everyday life hold "the power of place" labeled by Dolores Hayden — daily cityscapes nurture citizen's collective memory and "encompass shared time in the form of shared territory". [73] This power sustains "cultural citizenship" defined by Rina Benmayor and John Kuo Wei Tchen — "an identity that is formed not out of legal membership but out of a sense of cultural belongings". [74]

2. For Lefebvre, "the places of social space are very different from those of natural space in that they are not simply juxtaposed: they may be intercalated, combined, superimposed — they may even sometimes collide." [75] In Shanghai, the old social spaces do not disappear, but are entangled with the new ones. The borders and admission to various social spaces convey the information about the politics of the spaces. Under the encroachment of *spaces of flows* (Manuel Castells), the previous *conceived space* –- *lilong*, worker villages and *danwei* –- have survived in the form of "counter-spaces". The previous spatial *consensus* has turned into spatial *dissensus*, while the previous *representations of space* into *space of representa-*

71. Kristiaan Borret, "The 'Void' as a Productive Concept for Urban Public Space," in *The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis*, ed. GUST (The Ghent Urban Studies Team) (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999), 236-52.

72. In a text wrote by Kitayama Koh, he argues the clear-cut planning strategy has its limitation in terms of managing the public-private dichotomy, which in contemporary society, clearly leads to the further isolation of space. Kitayama Koh, Tsukamoto Yoshiharu, Nishizawa Ryue, *Tokyo Metabolizing* (Tokyo: TOTO Publishing, 2010), 25.

73. Hayden, *Power of Place*, 9.

74. Ibid., 8.

75. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 88.

Figure 4.12: The Performance of *Huai* Opera in Lingpin Road, Shanghai. 2010, September. *Huai*-Opera is a form of traditional local theatre popular in the Yanchen, Huaian, Taizhou, Yangzhou. The territories were famous for the identity of *Subei* (Northern Jiangsu). The appellation *Subei Ren* (people from northern Jiangsu) was a metaphor for underclass in Shanghai. The opera functions as an organizational means to develop the native-place community and identity. The photo illustrates a *Huai*-Opera performed in a shantytown of a *Subei* community in the inner city. Photo by Yang Shan.

tion (see Figure 4.12).

3. If the community code or interior-exterior partition acts as *consensus* or the *police*, new *dissensus* would exactly occur on the borders of them. In empire or socialist times, the *consensus* was put into force by state power from top down, and penetrated the whole society without any dead end or emptiness. In the early 20th century or contemporary market-economy times, the old *consensus* is being challenged by new dissensual *distribution of the sensible* coming from new economic and social relations, and cannot maintain its enforceability. As a result, community-style spatial codes and "inner-outer" opposition are being loosened or even broken up. Nowadays, against the background of economic globalization, where vigorous publicness happens is where the "closed-open" *consensus* decays and dissolves.

Consequently, the time seems right to sublate the cliché — no mature civil society, no authentic public space. It should be admitted that the "community-society" division has certain reasonability and the "open-closed" one is helpful indeed to observe these spatial phenomena in urban China. Yet that seems to be only part of the story. The subsequent assentation that there is no authentic public space in China, if relying solely on these abstract tenets, is too tendentious. Beyond the standard of the public space in line with western civilization, there are at least some possibilities of *spatial publicness* in Chinese cities. This is what the next chapter will discuss further.

5   Spatial Publicness in Shanghai

The connotation of *spatial publicness* has gradually taken shape after examining the publicness, *spatial publicness* (*distance* and *representation*), and genealogy of Shanghai's social space in the former chapters. The fourth chapter has revealed a spatial gene of community recessively lasting in spatial succession and potently affecting current spatial reality. For many scholars, the gene rich in pre-modern and pre-social features is detrimental to civil society and public space. Under the guise of *spatial publicness*, this kind of spatial gene, however, can play a positive role in the production of publicness, because of its own dimension of *common world*. It exactly works as matrix and uterus where new *dissensus* probably occurs in a liminal condition.

While the fourth chapter is about a historical understanding of spatial *consensus*, this chapter will examine the possible or existing conditions of spatial *dissensus* by empirically analyzing current types of urban spaces. To favor practical observation and discussion, urban spaces in Shanghai will be divided into six main categories: 1) (politically) ritual spaces, 2) consumption spaces, 3) historical (symbolic) spaces, 4) neighborhood communal spaces, 5) parks and greenery spaces, 6) metro stations. Although this mechanical classification conflicts with the spirit of *spatial publicness* in a way, this shortcoming does not hinder us from simplifying the study of urban spatial phenomena with this typological method. Of course, it is necessary to point out that the dynamic multiplicity of urban processes cannot be covered within the limited frame of the six types. Under the conception of *spatial publicness*, this dissertation looks for achieving a much more open result.

5.1   (Politically) Ritual Spaces

Traditional Chinese society was a ritual society bolstered not only by everyday conducts, but also by public *spaces of representation* analogous to Habermasian "*representative publicness*" — "this publicness (or publicity) of representation was not constituted as a social realm, that is, as a public sphere; rather, it was something like a status attribute …some sort of 'higher' power".[1] Even though contemporary China has been modernized in many fields, ritual spaces are still the expedient way, for a single-party dictatorship, to "gloss over social contradictions, boost national pride and 'save face' — in other words, gain the respect and approbation of the outside world."[2]

Without a doubt, a typical ritual space in Shanghai is People's Square. But the most radical and typical model is Tian'anmen Square in Beijing. Hence, it is worth introducing Tian'anmen Square here briefly.

The square was a narrow-strip royal plaza. Its current formation was a result of *Ten Grand Projects* for the celebration of the National Day, the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. Two of the ten buildings, the *Museum of Revolution and History* and the *Great Conference Hall of the people*, stood to the east and west of the square. The north and south ends of the grand open space was defined by the

1. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 7 (see chap. 1, n. 9).
2. Zhu Tao, "Building Big, with no Regret," *AA Files* 63 (2011): 109.

Figure 5.1: **Tian'anmen Square.** From Zhu Tao, "Building Big, with no Regret," *AA Files* 63 (2011): 104.

old rostrums — Tian'anmen and Zhengyangmen (see Figure 5.1).

A sheer bigness, an overwhelming scale transcending the normal perceptive capability, is actually the predominated architectural characteristics of the Tian'anmen Square and its buildings. The square was once claimed to be the third largest square (800 meters in north-south and 500 meters in west-east) in the world. [3] Speaking of the "sublime" exemplified by Champs de Mars or Place Royale (Brussels), the monumental buildings and gigantic open spaces, in Hassenpflug's view, look like a communist version of the western ones and are far from the bourgeois square in dimension and impression. [4] Tian'anmen Square long ago presaged China's contemporary "Building Big Syndrome".

Before its reconstruction in 1992, People's Square in Shanghai, as the successor to the racecourse in the concession after 1954, was no more than a smaller and cruder republication of Tian'anmen Square. Around 1990s, with the relocation of the municipal office from the Bund, the construction of the first subway line and the new Shanghai Museum, some changes and improvements happened in the reconstruction of the square. Relative to Tian'anmen Square's monotony and oppression, more civic attributes have been conveyed into People's Square. Its designers attempted to transform "a square mainly for political assemblies with hard pavement" into "a modern square with a greenery landscape". [5] The enlargement of the greenery area (from 20 percent to 70 percent) enhanced spatial agreeableness. But the extensively laid out greenery and vegetation were not simply conceived of as a purely ceremonial and ornamental lawn. The widespread use of small-sized parterres, curved paths and urban furniture have boosted to some degree the diversity of spatial perception and evened up the relationship between the symbolic representation of power and citizen's private activities. More importantly, the whole square is encircled by urban blocks with high density, multiple social structures and functions supported by high-grade office buildings, hotels, old-type *lilong*, large-scale shopping-complexes or convenience stores. The density and diversity of surroundings around the square foster its vigour and make it a venue of daily activities and not simply a place for representing power. For this reason, it is distinguished from Tian'anmen Square that is exactly short in such conditions (see Figure 5.2). [6]

Though the obvious power worship has been considerably moderated, its vestiges still remain in the Square. Besides the axis-symmetric layout obeyed by every municipal square in China (always with a municipal office building located on the north end and facing south), its scale also exhibits the dignity of the political power (its radius and area are 300 meters and 14 hectares approximately). The possibility of het-

3. According to Wikipedia, the largest one is Merdeka Square (approximately 1,000,000 m²) in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the second largest is Praca dos Girassois (approximately 570,000 m²) in Palmas, Brazil. From "List of City Squares," last modified March 8, 2013, `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_city_squares_by_size.`

4. Hassenpflug, *Der Urbane Code Chinas*, 31 (see chap.4, n.70).

5. Zhou Zaichun, "Reconstruction of Shanghai People Square," *Planners* 01 (1998): 48.

6. The east-west Chang'an Avenue across the Tiananmen Square connects many state-tier authority apparatus, such as governmental organs [Zhongnanhai (the State Council), Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Commerce, etc.], cultural institutions (Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing Concert Hall, National Museum (the former Museum of the Chinese Revolution and History), Cultural Palace of Nationalities, Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution, Beijing Books Building, etc.), financial institutions (Central Bank, Beijing Financial Street and Beijing Central Business District, etc.), and large-scale transport infrastructures (Beijing Train Station and Beijing West Railway Station). There is not any housing building on the avenue, and consequently citizens' everyday life is thoroughly expelled from the Tian'anmen Square and the surrounding power spaces.

Figure 5.2: **People's Square, People's Park and Their Surroundings, 04 October, 2009.** Legend: 1) Shanghai Municipal Government, 2) People's Square, 3) New Shanghai Museum, 4) Shanghai Grand Theater, 5) Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center, 6) People's Park, 7) Shanghai Art Museum. Google Earth, accessed July 10, 2013.

erogeneous meanings is inhibited owing to the lack of basic facilities (commercial services for visitors, like teahouse), prohibition of spatial appropriation and expulsion of unwelcome social groups including street vendors peddling low-priced gadgets, idle teenagers or street artists with a strong lust for their self-expression. The behaviours and persons interfering with the duly solemn atmosphere will be kicked out by patrolling police or even by self-disciplined citizens. In terms of *spatial publicness*, it is a space thoroughly structured by behavioural *consensus* leaving *dissensus* any leeway no more, wherein emerging activities and people have to acquire acquiescence and permission by the political power (see Figure 5.3).

In contrast to People's Square, two other important places – the Bund and Lujiazui – are the indirect versions of politicized ritual space. The Bund is a north-south esplanade stretching alongside the river frontage on the west bank of Huangpu, with a series of neoclassical office buildings built between 1920 and 1930 parallel to it. Its predecessor dates from the first public park (*Gongjia Huayuan*) founded by British colonists in 1886. [7] In the socialist period, the Bund was treated as an evidence of imperialist and colonialist invasion and exploitation, and was vehemently criticized in official ideologies, for it embodied a history of national humiliation (ironically, one of the most luxurious, exquisite and biggest buildings – the former HSBC headquarter – once housed Shanghai's municipal government, and the adjacent buildings were also occupied by other authority organs). Since the whole country began to terminate its reclusiveness and embrace capitalism, Shanghai, which used to be the Far East's largest financial and commercial center, aspires to restore its past brilliance and glory. The Bund, consequently, has cast off its negative evaluation and become the tie between the past pride and the future expectation and a calling card replete with a pictorial ensemble of buildings across both banks.

The spatial renaissance started with nostalgia, but was oriented towards a more ambitious goal — to built Shanghai into a world-class financial centre competing with New York, London and Hongkong. The landscape of both riverbanks underwent a violent change with breathtaking pace and scale. Those who live in a democracy would be incapable of imagining the transformation that happens by default in a

7. See chap. 4, n. 33.

Figure 5.3: **The Panorama of People's Square.** From Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Greenery and Public Sanitation, "The Twelfth Five-Year Plan of Shanghai Greenery Development," *Garden* 07 (2011): 32-3.

single-party dictatorship, where all resources and forces can be mobilized to achieve one goal.

A series of spatial strategies were implemented to accomplish this target. Firstly, the main 20 buildings once occupied by authority organs were restored to their original function – workplaces for financial institutions and transnational corporations – through the function replacement between 1994 and 1997. [8] The municipal office, above all, moved to a new administration building on 1 July 1995 (this also facilitated the reconstruction of the People's Square). In 2007, a large-scale expansion and renovation of the waterfront promenade started, lasting for 33 months and completed before the inauguration of the World Expo. [9] The reconstruction utilized an underpass to partake the main volume of through traffic in order to release more grounds for the promenade. Finally, a brand-new viewing platform emerged with 1.8 km length, 80-120 m width, and four plazas as converging nodes of visitor streams and sightseeing places towards the historical buildings (see Figure 5.4). [10]

A more significant and larger change, in addition, appeared in the peninsula directly opposite to the Bund — the rise of Lujiazui, which showcases China's economic prowess and spent almost ten years replacing the old Bund as a new icon of Shanghai (see Figure 5.5).

In 1991, Shanghai municipal government convened an international consultation for Lujiazui urban design with Massimiliano Fuksas, Toyo Ito, Dominique Perrault and Richard Rogers involved. At the same time, a team from a local design institute – SUPDI [11] – was responsible for "synthesizing" their proposals to "reach the best effect", but actually, to fulfill decision-makers' intentions. Although some key components of proposals (the large central green space), especially from Perrault and Roger, were incorporated into the final scheme, [12] the synthesis was out of place finally. The positivity in Perrault's and Rogers' proposals was castrated while coalescing with some primitive conceptions from early local planning schemes. [13] For example, the idea of extending the financial and economic corridor from Puxi (west) to Pudong (east) was stubbornly materialized into an artery as an east-west axis driving through Lujiazui's middle seriously and severing its space, or a "yin-yang" diagram was conceived by "placing a cluster of three skyscrapers in the southern half of the center core and a park in the northern half." [14]

Figure 5.4: **The Panorama of the Bund.** From "Touch Shanghai," accessed June 10, 2013, `http://touch.shio.gov.cn/index.asp`.

8. Zou Jinbao, "Functional Replacement of Buildings in the Bund," *Shanghai Economic Studies* 10 (1997): 30-1.
9. Actually, the promenade was once broadened and renovated in conjunction with the rebuilding of facilities for flood prevention in 1992.
10. Xi Wenqin and Xu Wei, "Remodeled Classic, the Contenary Shanghai Bund: Detailed Plan of the Urban Design & Site Plan of Shanghai Bund Waterfront," *Urban and Architecture* 02 (2011): 42-5.
11. SUPDI means Shanghai Urban Planning and Design Institute.
12. Seng Kuan, "Image of the Metropolis: Three Historical Views of Shanghai," in *Shanghai: Architecture & Urbanism for Modern China*, ed. Seng Kuan and Peter G. Rowe (Munich: Prestel, 2004), 90.
13. These schemes are the *Pudong New Area Planning Principles (Draft)* (1987), the *Pudong New Area Master Plan Initial Scheme* (1989), and *Pudong New Area Master Plan* (1992).
14. Kuan, "Image of the Metropolis," 90; Huang Fuxiang, "Shanghai CBD in the 21th Century and CBD Planning of Lujiazui," *Time+Architecture* 02 (1998): 24-8.

Figure 5.5: **The Bund and Lujiazui, February 13, 2010.** Google Earth, accessed June 10, 2013.

Figure 5.6: **The Urban Design of Lujiazui by Richard Rogers Partnership.** Pictures from left to right: 1) the transport and public space diagram forms the framework of the development; 2) diagrams showing the full hierarchy of transport systems of rail, tram, buses and pedestrian routes; 3) first model showing the main principles of the urban framework. The six mixed use communities spatially define a common central urban park. Buildings of varying heights are grouped so that their impact on other buildings and public spaces is reduced. From Richard Rogers and Philip Gumuchdjian, *Cities for a Small Planet* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 46-8.

An overemphasis on legibility and imagibility transposed the final scheme into an invention of city identity, or rather, an imitation of Manhattan. Exactly over the period of Lujiazui's design, Kevin Lynch's doctrine, *The Image of the City*, was broadly disseminated and held sway over the country. The five elements of mental maps (path, edge, district, node and landmark) were faithfully but mechanically implemented in the urban design as guiding principles. For instance, the Oriental Pearl Tower is erected at Lujiazui's tip as a landmark in the area.[15] From the final synthesized scheme, two conceptions of the original proposals were omitted — a compact polycentric network consisting of self-contained nodes of public spaces and transport stations (Rogers' proposal), or, a mutual complement and mixture of high- and low-rise buildings for forming a more humane and delicate open space in the center area (Perrault's proposal). What the scheme realized was no more than an enclave with piled skyscrapers (see Figure 5.6).

It seems easy to find how the Lujiazui CBD exemplifies Lefebvre's production logic of abstract space at its best. Unparalleled concentration of high-rise buildings and constantly broken height record possibly amount to *the phallic formant*, a space of representation symbolizing "the brutality of political power"; the pursuit of legibility and imagibility possibly amounts to *the optical (or visual) formant*, a "logic of visualization" substituting the whole body; and the prevailing application of axis, circle, curve and cube possibly amounts to *the geometric formant*, spatial practices of abstract space.[16] In a way of tabula rasa planning, power and capital produce what they want and destroy various obstacles — differences, by the dint of instrumentalized homogeneity. The space of CBD reflects a special nature of state capitalism in China's authoritarian political system and simultaneously annihilates the potential of *spatial publicness* in the following ways:[17]

- To facilitate its development and management, the land was divided up into enormous blocks with a size usually between 10 and 15 hectares. The district became a combination of various solitary islands — the closed super-blocks;
- Under the mechanically quantitative regulations, each building must recede from the red-line of road boundaries (10-15 meters).

15. Li Dongjun, "A Blueprint Towards Future: The CBD Planning of Lujiazui," *Time+Architecture* 01 (1997): 16-21.
16. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 285-7 (see chap.1, n.57).
17. Sun Shiwen, "City Center and City Public Space: A Planning Review on the Construction of Lujiazui Area of Pudong District, Shanghai," *City Planning Review* 8 (2008): 66-74.

However, carve-up by facilities, parking, entrances and exits, etc., renders the set-back spaces fragmentary, collateral and meaningless;

- Vehicular traffic predominates the spatial composition. The width of the central west-east artery has even reached 100 meters;
- A *danwei*-like pattern was vertically created in the skyscrapers encircled in the blocks. Each high-rise building can be a self-contained entity condensing all-inclusive functions but insulated against the exterior world by strict security measures;
- An urge to inject something upscale and exclusive into the territory has banished cheap but diverse life styles from it, with the tabula-rasa approach to urban development, whose target groups are tourists or high-ranking businessmen rather than ordinary white collars adhering to a nine-to-five timetable.

Finally, the high-density space and high-intensity use do not produce high-density and high-intensity public communication accordingly (see Figure 5.7).

People's Square, the Bund and Lujiazui all belong to the *space of representation* dominated by political power. The obsession with spatial "bigness" or dogged pursuit of architectural grandeur and splendour spreads across Chinese cities, promoted by Beijing's new state projects again, like Rem Koolhaas' CCTV Headquarters, Herzog & de Meuron's "Bird's Nest", Paul Andreu's National Centre for the Performing Arts, or the 40 skyscrapers built in Shanghai over the last two decades, or the spectacular events like the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and the 2010 Expo in Shanghai. Architect Zhu Tao in his recent article analyzed the three reasons underneath the "Building Big Syndrome", which boil down to, 1) the nationalist zealot incited through the challenge or humiliation from alien civilization, 2) the special regime where the lavish buildings have become one of the most effective ways for local cadres to demonstrate their 'good' governance to their superiors, and 3) "the influx of large numbers of foreign architects as a by-product of globalisation.[18]

"The final design of Lujiazui", in Seng Kuan's view, "is closer to the Beaux-Arts plan for the Greater Shanghai Civic Center, with its emphasis on legibility and imagibility, than to contemporary ideals of urbanity, sustainability, and diversity."[19] In fact, this phenomenon is not unique to Lujiazui and can be seen in many Chinese cities.

5.2 Consumption Spaces

Consumption, a fundamental commercial activity, bears a subtle relation to the public sphere. Arendt had delivered a forceful critique on the devastating effect that consumption activities produce on the public sphere. In her view, "labor and consumption are but two stages of the same process, imposed upon man by the necessity of life."[20] Consumption cannot give the *animal laborans* the imagined happiness or make them creative, "but would only increase the devouring character of biological life."[21] To put this in perspective, opposition between consumptional and public sphere is perhaps not so absolute. If, on the basis

18. Zhu, "Building Big," 108.
19. Kuan, "Image of the Metropolis," 91.
20. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 126 (see chap. 1, n. 1).
21. Ibid., 132.

Figure 5.7: **An Aerial View of Lujiazui.** Photo by Zhang Lei, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://act3.news.qq.com/8405/work/show-id-10112.html`.

of Weber's model of economic rationality, the prototype of a city is a long-running stable market essentially, the city could then be thought of as a consumption space in an incomplete sense, and accordingly, spaces of consumption might carry some publicness.

As early as the 1930s, Shanghai had been a well-developed consumer city. Even under the communist's guideline after 1949 – "transforming the consumer city into a productive one" – Shanghai's consumption suffered artificial oppression and its major spaces of consumption gradually shrank, the city recovered its huge energy and vigor of consumption and is ahead of the curve in all kinds of consumption demands again, soon after initiating economic reforms. It is difficult for this research on *spatial publicness* to fully address all aspects of consumption spaces. One of the efficient methods is to analyze the everyday consumption spaces influencing resident's habitus, with reference to the layering practices of MRD discussed in Chapter 4.

The geographical distribution of the everyday consumption spaces was modeled on a set of ranking criteria for public utilities and facilities in the command-economy era. As a kernel of the MRD doctrine, the systematic criteria regulated population and spatial hierarchy of residential districts, mainly through "index per thousand" and "ranking of auxiliary facilities". In the 1993 national norm — *Design and Planning of Urban Residential Districts*, the auxiliary facilities are classified into eight categories: education, healthcare, culture and sports, commerce and service, finance and post, municipal utilities, administration, and others. They are allocated in line with three tiers decreasingly, namely, residential district, micro residential district and housing cluster. Furthermore, the public facilities, which fulfill inhabitants' basic living demands, are subsidized during the planned-economy era.

Confronted with new problems like social stratification and the improvement of living standards in a market economy, neither the ranking system nor the welfare facilities, which were premised on social homogeneity and unitary distribution, are applicable. The facilities underwent changes in two aspects: firstly, purposely employed as a marketing tool, some educational, cultural, recreational and service facilities began to be run by private developers and thus became products for boasting about the upscale quality of the residential community. This commercialization of public facilities also agrees with the social segregation of urban residential districts; secondly, one of the eight branches, commerce and service, have been separated from housing constructions, developed in a more large-scale, complex and intensive way. Over the recent two decades, decision-makers and planners have utilized hypermarkets or shopping centers as economic engines of high-speed urbanization and to manage residents' communicative patterns in everyday life.

The development of everyday commercial centers in Shanghai roughly went through two stages. At first, the hypermarket took the leading position of commercial centers in the 1990s and then was displaced by more comprehensive shopping centers after 2000. In term of the spatial tier, a hypermarket is approximately equivalent to a

neighborhood-level (a residential district) center, while a shopping center amounts to a community-level (several residential districts) center or a district-level center (urban sub-center).

For example, the first Carrefour supermarket in Shanghai is situated in a busy section once as the center of the residential district — Quyang New Village (1978 - 1989). The hypermarket attracts restaurants, cinemas, karaokes and game halls as well as informal commercial activities like hawker stands run by migrants and local laid-off workers. Such unadmitted street life is one of the most common phenomena in Chinese cities, which can even congregate to form an "informal" public space in some quarters (see Figure 5.8). [22]

By contrast, a shopping mall will accommodate one or more anchorstores (generally hypermarket or department store), together with many franchised or chain shops of all sizes supplying various services such as shopping, catering and entertainment. In terms of its tier, a shopping mall can serve different populations varying from 100,000-200,000, 200,000-500,000, to over 500,000. [23] For example, Big Thumb Plaza in Pudong, opened in 2005, is a full-service commercial complex consisting of large supermarkets, themed malls, boutique shops, entertainment, an art center, a four-star hotel, etc. It covers 5.2 hectares with 110,000 square meters of floor space, and proposes to serve 200,000-250,000 inhabitants as the center of Lianyang community in Pudong (see Figure 5.9). [24]

The highest-tier shopping center, akin to the Wanda Plaza, is positioned to be an urban sub-center. The Plaza, opened since December of 2006, is a giant complex of office, apartment, entertainment and shopping, covering an area of 6 hectares with 334,000 square meters of floor space. Together with another commercial complex (Bailian Youyicheng) across the street, the Wanda Plaza wants to build a commercial and traffic hub in north-east Shanghai (see Figure 5.10). [25]

Consumption centers must possess good reachability. Due to the low ratio of Shanghai's private automobiles and high population density, hypermarkets rely heavily on nearby residents' walking, along with public buses and their own shuttle services. This limitation of traffic capability predetermines the service radius of a hypermarket at up to 1000-1500 meters at most. Distinct from a hypermarket, the catchment of a shopping center as a center of a community or district is achieved chiefly through large-capacity and long-distance subways. The plan of shopping centers consciously spend more efforts on attaching to subway so as to form a so-called "coupling" effect. [26] Besides, the private automobile is an alternative for their traffic modes. However, according to what is discussed before, [27] this sort of reachability is only physical and cannot be fully equated to the accessibility of public spatial practice. Whether one kind of accessibility – the symbolic accessibility – can succeed in consumption spaces or not is still questionable.

The upgrading of Shanghai's consumption spaces can be traced to a transition from Portman's "postmodern hyperspace with confused immersion" to Jerdeian experiential spaces of consumption by placemaking. In Fredric Jameson's eyes, the hotel Westin Bonaventure in

22. This point will be further discussed in Section 5.4.

23. Zhuang Yu and Yu Jianhui, "Layout of Business Type in Community Shopping Center: Based on 4 Case Studies in Shanghai," *Architectural Journal* (Academic Article Issue) S2 (2010): 144.

24. Accessed December 2012, http://www.zendai.com/pz/sljj.asp.

25. Accessed December 2012, http://wjc.wanda.cn/.

26. Ren Chunyang, "A Research of Interactive Coupling Between Rail Transit and Urban Activity Center in Metropolitan Region: Case Studies in Shanghai" (PhD diss., Tongji University, 2005). In the thesis, the concept of "coupling" is used to describe the interactive effect between the rail transit and urban space in Shanghai. More precisely, the concept refers to the "benign and harmonious" interaction between both. With the conceptual tool, the author seeks to provide the advice on the spatial pattern, development pattern and policy for coupling the rail transit and activity centers in Shanghai.
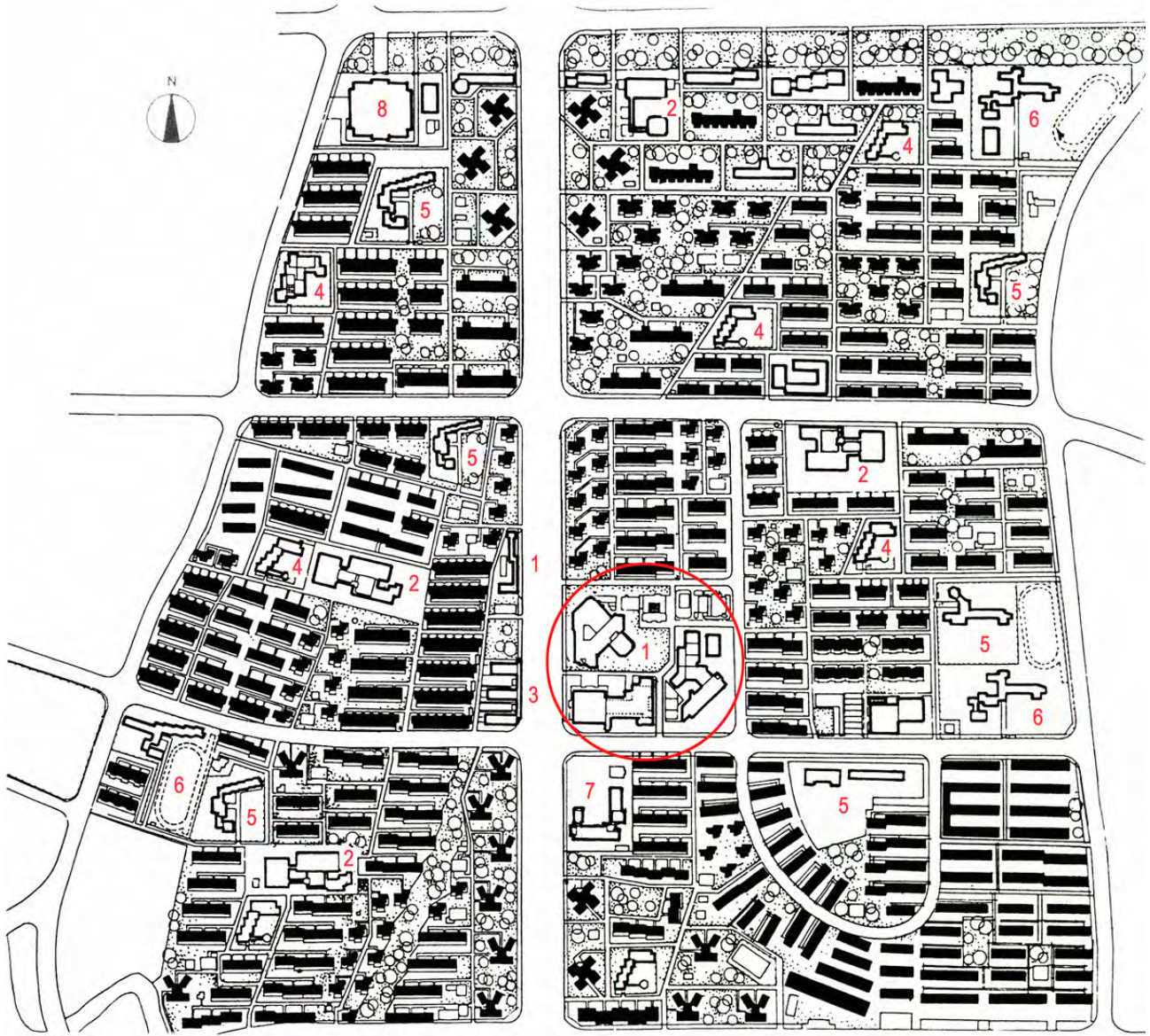
27. See the discussion in Section 2.1.

Figure 5.8: **Quyang New Village and the First Carrefour Supermarket.** Pic.1 (top): Master Plan of Quyang New Village. Legend: 1) center of residential district, 2) center of micro residential district, 3) administrative center, 4) kindergarten and nursery, 5) primary school, 6) middle school, 7) hospital, 8) gymnasium. The area within the red circle was transformed into the Carrefour supermarket. From SCC, *The Album of Shanghai Housing*, 29 (see fig. 4.9); Pic.2 (bottom left): Residential Center of Quyang New Village, ca. 1980s. Ibid. 27; Pic.3 (bottom right): Quyang Carrefour Supermarket, photo by Gan Yida, November 10, 2012. Accessed June 10, 2013, https://plus.google.com/106362161735102182644/photos/photo/57979871345 76119874?hl=de.

Figure 5.9: **Lianyang New Community and Big Thumb Plaza.** Pic.1 (top): Map of Lianyang New Community (April 03, 2008). Google Earth, accessed June 10, 2013. Pic.2, 3, 4 (bottom): Images of Thumb Plaza. Photo by Yang Shan, May 12, 2011.
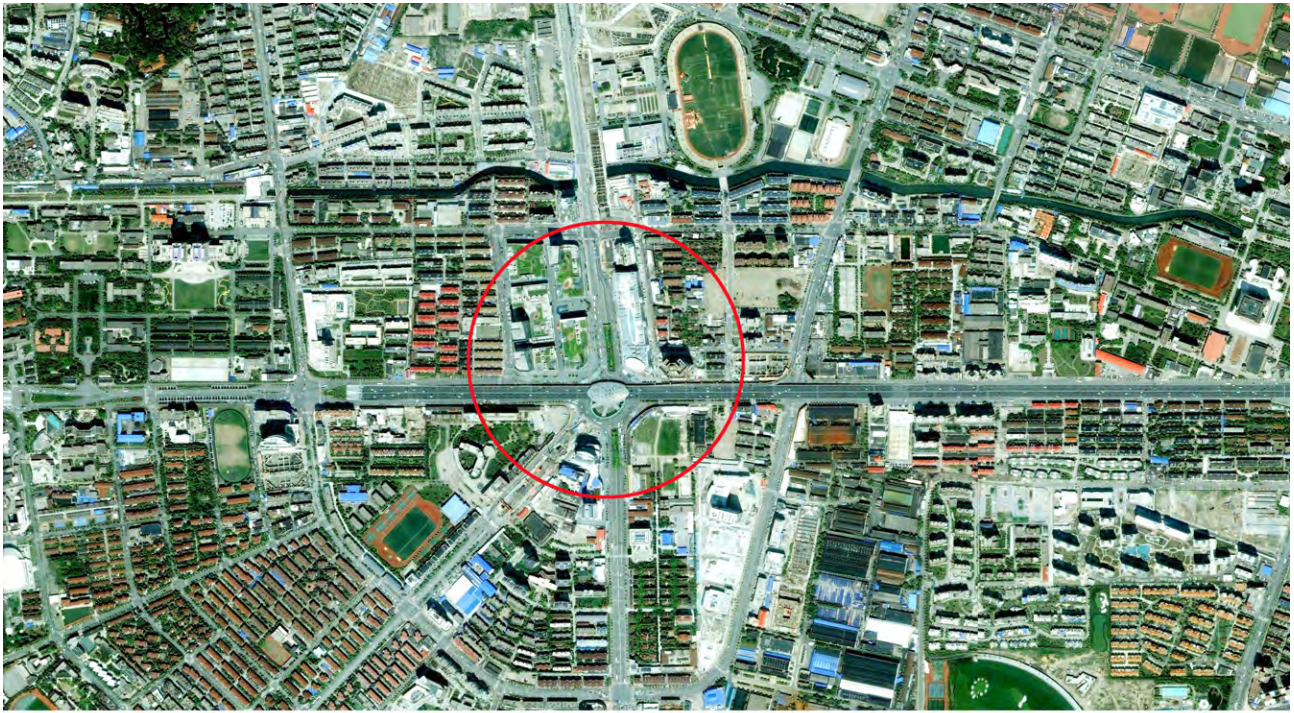
Figure 5.10: **Sub-Center Wujiaochang and Wanda Plaza.** Pic.1 (top): Map of Wujiaochang (March 26, 2009). Google Earth, accessed June 10, 2013. Pic.2 and 4 (bottom left and bottom right) by Bighandking, accessed June 10, 2013, http://www.panoramio.com/user/628968. Pic.3 (bottom middel)by shu_ijin, accessed June 10, 2013, http://www.panoramio.com/photo/23733112.

downtown Los Angeles "succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a map-pable external world." [28] The spatiality of the hyperspace is the very immersion, whose confusion reflects a disjunction between human's subjective perceptiveness and object's spatial mutation. Nearly 20 years later, another building in the same city attempted to bridge the rift between subjective perception and objective mutation in a more pos-itive manner. A shopping mall (CityWalk) with its size of 23,200 square meters, designed by Jon Jerde, caters more humbly to those stimulation-starved shoppers. In the name of "place-making", Jerde aspires to create a kind of multi-experiential and -narrative space melded with a stimula-tory bombardment of franchise stores, lights, vivid signs, music, street performers, vendors and jostling people. This "place-making" mode has been frequently applied to emerging shopping centers in Shanghai. In order to solicit customers, the commercial complexes also make ex-tensive use of spatial devices like selected merchandises, scenographic milieu, created events — fashion shows, wedding ceremonies, or artistic festivals.

Both treatments of the commercial spaces are part of patterns to create spatial atmosphere. [29] While Portman's hyperspace basks in the magic of the sublime, the Jerdeian shopping mall resorts to the ecstasy by material allurement. Both exploit the spatial atmosphere for their commercial gains. Scholars respond differently to the effect on *spatial publicness* by the consumption space. Walter Prigge recognizes that the created ambience has extended beyond pure marketing. For him, the medial architectural ambience bolstered by themes opens up for differentiated meanings and appropriation of customers. [30] Not every-one would cast the spatial model in a positive light. Kevin R. McNamara documented the conflicts over the belonging of CityWalk in the name of security. Either in their sub-consciousness or in real measures, the community residents showed a strong hostility towards the food-stand staffed by third-world immigrants, the skill games played by delinquent teenagers, or "African American and Hispanic youth in urban attire" (who are naturally treated as gang-members). For McNamara, "CityWalk represents a step backward …Controlled, tranquilized environments of the sort …bespeak the confusion of a legitimate demand for safety with the wish for a shared space in which one is never made uncomfort-able." [31]

The paradoxical reviews of shopping centers illustrate the liminal-ity of *spatial publicness* and the fragility of the concept of public space in contemporary society and real life. The neighborhood centers and shopping centers tend to possess perfect reachability (physical accessi-bility), well-organized *representations of space* (circulation of customers and spatial program), and seductive *spaces of commercial representa-tion*. Hence, they do attract great numbers of people including tourists and residents. However, they are small compared to the typical public spaces — streets, plazas and parks. That they would exclude some *lived spaces*, especially these in conflict with the *commercial representations*

28. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 83.

29. See the discussion in Section 3.6.

30. Walte Prigge, "Inszenierungen des Urba-nen: Zum Strukturwandel der Europäischen Stadt," in *Möglicher Räume*, ed. Diethild Kornhardt, Gabriele Pütz, Thies Schröder (Hamburg: Junius Verlag GmbH, 2002), 46.

31. Kevin R. McNamara, "CityWalk: Los[t] Angeles in the Shape of a Mall," in *The Urban Condition: Space, Community and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis*, ed. GUST (The Ghent Urban Studies Team) (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999), 186-201.

Figure 5.11: **A Night Dancing Party in the Forecourt of Wanda Plaza, October 1, 2013.** Photo by Yang Shan.

of space, greatly diminishes their publicness. Nevertheless, there still exists much potential for triggering *spatial publicness*, particularly on the open spaces outside the buildings. In Shanghai, the forecourts of these *newly-built* shopping centers become vivid after dark, with neighborhood residents gathering here and spontaneously holding their own dancing party (see Figure 5.11).

The scenes also draw the attention of passers-by. As for Shanghainese, the shopping centers in the time slot produce some authentic *spatial publicness* indeed that attaches itself to the consumption spaces and to the *consensus* about commercial behaviors, but is an out-and-out *dissensus*.

5.3 Historical Symbolic Space

Including adjustments of the industrial structure, [32] the economic transition to a free-market system has brought a far-reaching impact on the production of urban space, particularly the urban renewal. From the beginning, the commodification of housing was implemented in the manner of carpet-like reconstruction by demolishing dilapidated dwellings in vast quantities. Between 1990 and 2000, 27.87 million square meters of deteriorated dwellings were removed, 3.65 million square meters of shacks reconstructed, and over 100 million square meters of new apartments built. [33] Such an exceptional velocity and scale of housing construction leads to a dialectic inversion of spatial production: the continual quantitative expansion of commoditized spaces weakened a numerical advantage of old-style daily spaces, so that the adaptive reuses protecting architectural characteristics have gained an extraordinary status in real-estate speculation. Vacant and decaying for years, the outmoded industrial buildings and run-down neighbourhoods are suddenly rejuvenated and converted into more fashionable places through refurbishment. Modern consumption therein goes beyond the demand for sheer use values and "depends on remarkable sites and image displays, sparking a desire for travel and adventure, for change and novelty." [34] Such spatial renewals, in fact, offer a scenographic milieu or a theatre stage "for advertising a particular arrangement of commodities and underwriting a pleasurable and valued style of life." [35]

Before the prevalence of these adaptive reuses, the stylistic preservation – keeping object's rawness – was rigidly carried out as a fundamental principle in Shanghai's urban renewal. This was a costly way that barely brought economic benefits and was only confined to a few architectures or key sections. Undoubtedly, the performance of this conservation strategy was heavily impeded by its rigidity, and yet things get changed soon after Xintiandi's reconstruction were completed in 2001. The project has anticipated a novel current of the spatial preservation in Shanghai.

The success of Xintiandi was inextricably tied to investors' idea of operation and Shanghai's specific socio-economic conditions in that period. The project comprises a 60,000 square-meter development of obsolete *lilong* in two blocks with an area of 3 hectares, located in the heart of the inner city. There were about 2,000 families living in the

32. A slogan summarizes the structural adjustment, which is "Retreat from the Secondary Sector and Advance in the Tertiary One".

33. Wang Weiqiang and Li Jian, "Synchronic and Diachronic: The Context of Urban Renewal Evolution," *Urban and Architecture* 08 (2011): 11.

34. M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 448.

35. Ibid.

section before its rehabilitation. Through massive buying-out at a low price and holistic resettlement of the original neighborhood, the whole section has been transformed into a high-profile zone for luxury consumption, amusement and recreation with mixed uses such as hotel, gastronomy, cinema. [36] Since the site of the First Congress of Chinese Communist Party is located here too, the two blocks are classified into the historic conservation zone of "Sinan Road", where the previous congress site must remain strictly as it was, but the surrounding buildings as coordinative or exploitive conservation zone may be renovated and reutilized up to a certain point. [37]

Xintiandi is only an antecedent part of the larger redevelopment of the Taipingqiao area run by the Hong Kong developer, Shui On Group. The other parts of the Taipingqiao area were not treated acordingly, even though they were in the majority of the area (see Figure 5.12). In the aftermath of Xintiandi's completion, a set of standard procedures including the holistic resettlement of indigenous residents, total demolishment of dilapidated buildings and erecting luxury high-rise apartments were adopted in Taipingqiao's redevelopment. However, nearly one-fourth of old *lilong* and one-fifth of inhabitants in the Luwan district were concentrated in the area, and the Luwan district as a Shanghai's core section retained also a large number of *lilong* housing *per se*. [38] This reconstruction pattern might fit in with a small area but unavoidably destroy the richness of neighborhoods of a bigger area.

Xitiandi's success has been finally converted into a branding resource of Shui On Group to promote the real-estate value of Taipingqiao and

36. Wang Yingwei, "A Case Study of Hongkong's Captial in Mainland Construction: Shanghai Xintiandi," *City Planning Review* 06 (2006): 20-1.

37. Luo Xiaowei, "Xintiandi, One of the Mode of Urban Revitalization," *Time+Architecture* 04 (2001): 24.

38. Mo Tianwei and Cen Wei, "The Old-Style Lane Residence Renewal and Life Form Rebuilt in the East Middle Huaihai Road, Shanghai," *Urban Panning Forum* 04 (2001): 1.

39. Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 91-2 (see chap. 1, n. 24).

to produce abundant returns on investment. The resuscitated Xintiandi is an upscale multi-purpose hub targeting foreigners and senior businessmen as its primary customers. Ordinary people who live in the surrounding neighbourhoods or other places seem to teeter on the brink of irrelevance, just sauntering or loitering there without any expenditure. The luxury place symbolizes the social injustice allusively. Even so, the project seems extraordinary in the specific historical context of Shanghai: its success has also produced an obvious demonstration effect which makes the municipal government get away from the narrow economic suprematism and realize the relevance of cultural and historical factors to branding the city, and has afforded a useful reference for balancing protections of architectural heritage and economic benefits in practices. The authorities, as one of the beneficiaries, are embracing the production of nostalgically themed spaces: both the (historic) memory and the urban renewal are becoming their spatial instruments (see Figure 5.13).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, a series of new spaces for nostalgic consumption have mushroomed in Shanghai, closely tracking the success of Xintiandi. The space of consumption has been converted into the consumption of spaces. The upsurge of such spatial renovation in China is nothing new and dates itself from the so-called "loft spaces", the reuse of industrial heritage since 1950s in the United States. In this period, artists of Action Painting and Fluxus appropriated former factories, warehouses and parking houses as new sites for their performative experiments, exhibitions and games, instead of utilizing traditional theaters and galleries. [39] For example, Andy Warhol once built a studio named "Factory" in a New York factory's hall in 1963. The same thing also happened in Shanghai half century later. Deng Kunyan, a Taiwanese architect, converted an old warehouse along Suzhou Creek into his own studio in 1998, which was seen as a first move of the rehabilitation of Shanghai's industrial heritages. Quite a few well-known artists soon

Figure 5.13: **A Bird's-eye View of Xintiandi.** From Luo, "Xintiandi," 28. The picture reflected not only the completed Xintiandi, but also the redevelopment of the Taipingqiao area by Shui On Group. Luxurious apartments and office buildings would be soon erected on the cleaned ground (the left side).
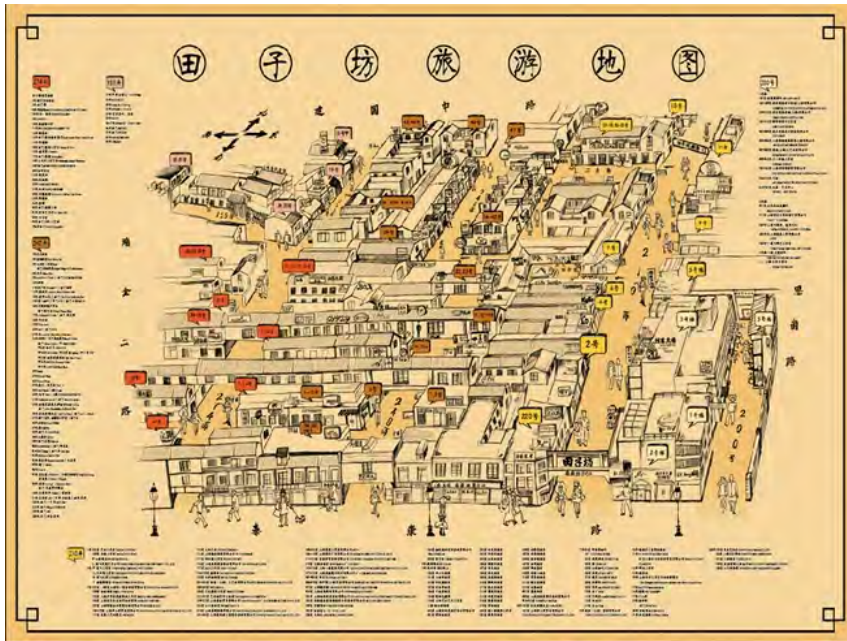
followed Deng to rent discarded warehouses along the river as their studios. The personal actions of artists conveyed a peculiar spatial currency in Shanghai.

The urban typology – the loft for an adoptive reuse – is a natural fruit of industrial upgrading and initially appeared in the United States a half century ago. It is an also inevitable phenomenon in Shanghai with a diversion of economic reform to industrial restructuring ("retreating from the secondary sector and advancing in the tertiary one"). Shanghai had been China's greatest manufacturing hub since long before 1949 and has grown into a center of finance, trade and service again since 1978. Premised upon this, Shanghai possessed the material fundamentals and subsistent dynamics for the adoptive reuse. Inspired by Xintiandi's success, the Shanghai municipal government got initiatively involved in the reproduction of "loft spaces". The revitalized areas gathering plenty of creative companies and art studios are issued with licenses labeled "creative industry park" or "creative quarter", and "Construction Standard of Urban Industry Park in Shanghai" was enacted to guide the development of these creative areas in 2004. [40] As of 2007 there were 75 approved "creative industry parks". The spatial reproduction led by government power and real-estate capital has completely replaced spontaneous spatial appropriation, and such "creative industry parks" have become a new doorway to economic stimulation.

Tianzifang, one of the first sanctioned "creative industry parks", experienced a typical conversion from artists' spontaneous occupation to administrative interventions (see Figure 5.14).

It was a mixed block with dilapidated *lilong*-houses and small-sized community-run workshops involved in a wide industrial range of chemical, food, metal and textile. [41] These cottage industries and street plants had grown idle and discarded due to the structural adjustment of industries starting in the 1990s. Afterwards, the local street office proposed to rent abandoned buildings in order to revitalize the decayed quarter as

40. Shi Song, "The Rise of Shanghai Creative Spaces and Urban Renaissance," *Shanghai Urban Planning Review* 03 (2007): 3.
41. Yao Jin, "Regeneration of an Atypical Historical District: A Study of Spatially Morphological Evolution in Taikang Road" (PhD diss., Tongji University, 2008), 62-5.

a pedestrian street to sell artisan trinkets. By 1999, some famous artists were solicited to establish their studios with peppercorn or zero rent. An art and culture street without state investment (mostly concentrated in 210 Long, Taikang road) began to take shape around 2002 and consti-tuted a spatial skeleton of the late creative quarter — Tianzifang. The re-habilitation of the obsolete factories in Taikang road 210 soon drew the further influx of other artists. In 2004, a pre-existing inhabitant leased out his apartment to an artist, which was instantly imitated by other inhabitants. A "Shikumen owners' committee" was spontaneously es-tablished by 6 or 7 homeowners to coordinate the relationship between artists and established residents, and to supervise leases and spatial re-construction. The local residents thereby get a chance to participate in the spatial reproduction of the block. At the same time, the government of Luwan district also stepped in, establishing a "Tianzifang management committe" led by a deputy district head and investing 10 million RMB in its infrastructural reconstruction (like sewerage or plumbing). While the authority's strenuous intervention sped up the amelioration of living conditions, the residents' business activities in the community were also regulated under a state supervisory system.

By contrast, the reconstruction of Redtown was operated wholly under the direction of the government. Starting from 2005, the project was built on the former site of the Shanghai Steel Company. The Shang-hai Urban Sculpture Committee and Shanghai Municipal City Planning Administration took the lead together on absorbing investment to re-model the decaying area into a sculpture-based creative industrial park with additional functions like offices, performance venues and confer-ence (see Figure 5.15).

The abrupt rise of the typology stands for one of the most notable phenomena of spatial productions in Shanghai and urban China over

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the recent years. There are other historical (symbolic) spaces which emerged around the same time such as M50, Bridge 8, and 800 Show (see Figure 5.16).

Consuming historical symbols by the same city-making device as the ritual spaces — *imagineering*, [42] the spaces attempt to impose coherent meanings and illusory representations on their spectators, both tourists and inhabitants. In a manner of scenographic arrangement, they strive for creating a perfected image of a well-ordered city. However, while the ritual spaces falls back on an aesthetic quality of boundless "absolutely great" — the sublime, the symbolic spaces resorts to their aestheticized pasts. In fact, what the (ritual or historical) spaces try to satisfy is an urgent plea catalyzed by over thirty years of economic boom. It may be a reminiscence of the city's brilliance in the 1930s often incited by mass media (films, literatures, TVs, etc.), or an aspiration for building the city's self-identity on cultural diversity and historic specificity, or the ambition to compete with the cosmopolitan cities of the world.

According to Halbwachs, what distinguishes collective memory from history (historical memory) consists in that "it [collective memory] is a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial, for it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive." [43] The aestheticized pasts created by the renovations have been truncated from the thought current and sealed in architectural specimens, rather than kept alive in the consciousness of the indigenous groups. For example, after Xintiandi's original residents moved away, a totally different life-style was transplanted into it. What remains after their restorations or renovations is more of a history (a historic memory) rather than a collective memory. In the sense, Tianzifang is perhaps the only one that succeeds partly in preserving the collective memory and becoming the memory's bearer. The reconstruction of Tianzifang from the bottom up has more or less retained the neighborhood's original social structures and morphologies of its everyday life.

Even still, for Shanghai's *spatial publicness*, the most skillful intervention that manipulates, reinvents and simulates the urban past to meet

42. The word "*imagineering*" was coined by Charles Rutheiser and combined with "image building" and "engineering". See GUST (The Ghent Urban Studies Team), *The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999), 100.

43. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1980), 80.

Figure 5.16: **800SHOW Creative Park.** From Logon, "800SHOW Creative Park," *Urbanism and Architecture* 02 (2011): 91-2.

commercial-tourist aims has its positive aspect. The resuscitated Xintiandi indeed excludes spatial diversity in its own right, but it came as a shock to the old spatial *consensus* characterized by an acquaintance-communicating mode in the neighborhoods. Xintiandi has introduced an unprecedented life-style that attracts a flood of curious strangers from the city, the nation, even the world, and contributed unintentionally to the diversity and heterogeneity within a wider scope. The subsequent analogous places, such as Tianzifang, Red Town, M50, have made the same impact to varying degrees. At least, these renovated spaces gave rise to *spatial publicness* in the way of symbolism at the outset of their births.

All the same, with the spaces growing up and government management and commercial investments pouring in, the marginal effect of publicness caused by them is shrinking increasingly. The subsequent gentrification and exclusiveness of management make the problem worse. In Lefebvre's view, "for a (capitalist) mode of production which is threatened with extinction yet struggling to win a new lease on life (through the reproduction of the means of production), it (diversion or *détournement*) may even be that such techniques of diversion have greater importance than attempts at creation (production)…Diversion is in itself merely appropriation, not creation — a reappropriation which can call but a temporary halt to domination." [44]

5.4 Neighborhood Communal Space

In the fourth chapter, the issue of neighbourhood communal space was discussed. A community gene based on an acquaintance society has been reserved in social spaces of various periods. It achieves social exclusion and inclusion through spatial closedness and openness, and attain the cohesive and hierarchical spatial competence and performance by layering spatial practices.

The neighbourhood is an essential urban unit, which serves not only as a tool for urban management or market operation, but also as a framework for social integration or a vehicle for social differentiation. It is also a basic consensual space — a matrix that moulds codes of daily conduct in a subtle way. Therefore, the neighbourhood tends to be a preferable means and form of spatial governance for policy makers. However, neighbourhoods as a growth medium of a metropolis's diversity, complexity, and differences also nutritionally facilitate dissensual activities.

The neighbourhood is an intersection of publicness and privacy, or a consensus implying a *dissensus* in embryo. In this ambiguous realm, both publicness and privacy are disputed. This ambiguousness is much in evidence at Shanghai's numerous neighborhood units with varying degrees of publicness. Certain neighborhoods have presented tremendous potential of *spatial publicness*, while some new micro residential districts (MRDs) are reproached for being a "cancer of urban life". [45] If "distance" is one of the two decisive factors in *spatial publicness*, then neighborhoods' capacities to constitute a spatial distance determine degrees of *spatial publicness*. The *spatial publicness* could be throttled

44. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 167-8.
45. Miao Pu, "Cancer of Urban Life: Problems of Gated Communities in China and Their Solutions," *Time+Architecture* 05 (2004): 46-9.

by those that form an absolute (physical, mental and social) *distance* regime.

Such capacities for distance productions go hand in hand with urban residential segregation. Demarcated with three ring-expressways in Shanghai, the urbanized area can be split into three zones (see Figure 5.17): central area (inside the inner ring), peripheral area (between the inner ring and middle ring), and marginal area (between the middle ring and the outer ring and outside the outer ring). [46]

The residential segregation roughly corresponds to the above spatial structure. After ceaseless obsolescence, division and reorganization, the different social spaces have gone through the following differentiation and mutation in geographical location and social stratum:

- Courtyard house (*heyuanzhuzhai*). Corresponding to agricultural civilization, the spatial model has to withdraw from the urban center totally to urban-rural fringe areas. In the course of speedy urbanization, it chiefly houses rural migrants, especially migrant workers, partly due to its reasonable rents and lax administration.

- *Lilong* housing. The *lilong*-based communities were primarily distributed in the former concessions that are the present core quarters. Owing to poor maintenance and limited renovation, the *lilong* communities hardly meet the necessary requirements of modern life. Over long vicissitudes, the majority still living here are aging, low-income and native residents at the bottom of society. But a higher frequency of communication happens there than in other communities. So far, the reconstruction of *lilong*-based communities is prioritized in all tasks of environmental renewal, chiefly through the resettlement in which most of old buildings are demolished and a whole community is relocated.

- Workers' village. Around the 1950s, Shanghai's government started to plan and build the worker-village-based communities in the previous peripheral area, in order to alleviate the housing shortage and subordinate urban development to industrial distribution. Where such communities were originally located had evolved into the sections with convenient transportation and well-equipped public facilities over the ten years' development. With a long-term change of housing tenures, they have become an ageing, low- or middle-income hybrid of natives and immigrants.

- Micro Residential District (MRD). The new MRDs are split into

two sub-types according to the estate value. The first type is high-end commercialized residential districts. Lofty costs of land development in inner city, small-sized blocks, and strong social impediments allowed new housing development merely to be undertaken at a small scale. This leads the urban quarters to be a jumble of new, leafy MRDs and old, cramped *lilong*. The second is medium- and low-end commercialized MRD. Subject to land costs, this kind of MRDs, which is clearly targeted at the middle class, mostly constellates around the peripheral and even expands to marginal areas. The inhabitants, apart from the well-educated young middle class, are the natives moving from central quarters because of urban reconstruction.

Among all of the neighborhood patterns, the MRD-communities after the commercialization of housing have exercised the most passive effect on current *spatial publicness*. But there are some nuances of the capacities to inhibit spatial publicness in these MRD-communities. Some of them can render the distance regime in its three dimensions (physical, psychological and social) absolutized and institutionalized. For that matter, the new and closed MRDs in peripheral and marginal areas seem to restrain the production of *spatial publicness* more readily than those in urban centers. The nuances are embodied through the following:

- Physically: The physical distance is the greatest impediment to activating *spatial publicness*. Many scholars have pointed out this defect of China's newly-built settlements. [47] A new MRD's size, if it is intact, usually exceeds 10 hectares, which means it has to be circumscribed by a road grid larger than 320 meters × 320 meters at least. In fact, the length of streets defining a block often reaches 400 meters and even 500 meters, and the width of two-way, four-lane streets often exceeds 30 meters (see Figure 5.18). Hence, the urban fabric generated by newly-built residential blocks is characterized by broad street width, sparse road networks and gigantic blocks. The spatial texture lessens inhabitants' intention of outdoor activities and brings down the commercial value of the land, while extra-wide carriageways plus the extra-long span of street intersections aggravate the self-isolated and self-contained status of the residential districts. In the form of regulations, codes and other technological rules, the ideas and practice of MRD are accepted as *representations of spaces* by the whole society. According to the current Planning and Design Codes of Urban Residential Districts, a standard MRD can accommodate around 10 thousand people and occupy 10-35 hectares, and the span of crossings that dissect land into several MRDs can reach 300-500 meters without any minor roads interpenetrating it, and thus the urban texture has been woven by superblocks with a perimeter of around 400 meters × 500 meters. [48] The street grids formed by MRDs are rather sparse, when compared with, for example, those of Barcelona (113.3 meters × 113.3 meters), of Manhattan in New York City (80 meters × 270 meters), and even of the former

47. The researches in this respect include: Xu Miao and Yang Zhen, "Super Block+Gated Community: Death of Urban Public Space," *Architectural Journal* 03 (2010): 12-5; Dou Yide, "Return to City: Thinking on Spatial Form of Residential Area," *Architectural Journal* 04 (2004): 8-10; Zou Ying and Bian Hongbin, "Comments on Urban Residential District Pattern in China," *World Architecture* 05 (2000): 21-3; Deng Wei, "Breaking up the Unitary Planning Mode for Residential Areas," *City Planning Review* 02 (2001): 30-2; etc.
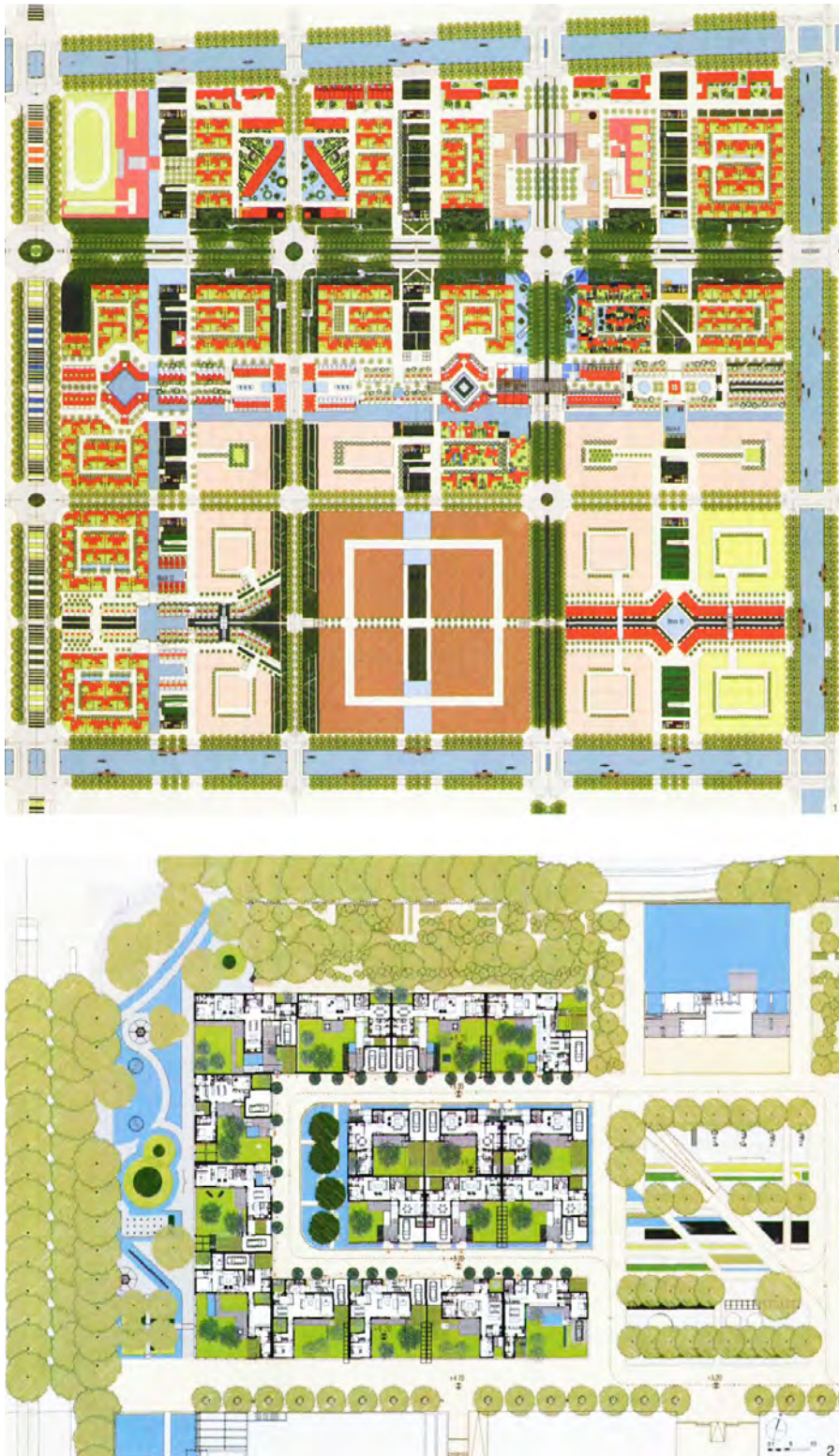48. Deng, "Breaking up the Unitary Planning Mode," 30-2.

Figure 5.18: **The Planning of Pujiang New Town.** Phase I, The Master Plan (top) and site plan of "Road Villa" Area (bottom). From Huang Xiangming, "Building an Ideal City: Interpretation on the Planning and Architectural Practice of the New Pujiang City Project," *Time+Architecture* 02 (2009): 44-9.

Since 2001, the Shanghai government started a number of pilot projects that commissioned foreign designers such as Dongtan Eco City, Lingang Harbor City and the "One City, Nine Towns Development Plan". As one of the nine towns, Pujiang new town is assigned with an Italian style featuring Italian houses mixed with Chinese motifs. However, the design team, Gregotti Associati International (GAI), didn't want to make a carbon copy of Italy. The office designed an urban plan based on orthogonal axes, in line with the plans of old Italian towns as well as ancient Chinese cities. With Empoly-ing the ideas of Tendenza, a neo-rationalist Italian architecture movement from the 1960s, the master plan is divided into 300x300 m large blocks that forms "villages". Each such areas forms "an organic unit of about 1000 people", each with its own identity. Every block would be a *xiaoqu*. GAI prepared four dwelling types: courtyard houses based on Domus Pompeiana, waterfront townhouses, riverside houses, and garden condominiums. See Harry den Hartog ed., *Shanghai New Towns: Searching for Community and Identity in a Sprawling Metropolis* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010), 152-4.

Figure 5.19: **Thames Town (Songjiang District), May 29, 2011.** Photo by Yang Shan. The themed residential district, within the framework of Shanghai's "One city, Nine Towns Development Plan", was designed by British firm Atkins Group. The new town is intended as a tourist resource and modeled after a typical rural British village in Berkshire or Surrey. The design team tried to make a carbon copy with an imagined history. It is targeted for the so-called "upper class" — professors associated with the seven newly-built universities of Songjiang University Town. However, most new properties seem to be used for speculation. Only half the villas are permanently occupied. In the quasi-historical core the proportion of inhabited houses is lower. Today the new town has become a popular setting for wedding photographs. On a sunny day tens of brides and grooms can be found here. Quoted in Den Hartog, *Shanghai New Towns*, 118-26.

49. See the discussion of collective distance in Section 2.8.

concessions in urban centers (150 meters × 150 meters). The dense road networks and moderate-scale blocks can reduce the collective distance among neighborhoods [49] and stimulate *spatial publicness* effectively. As a matter of fact, the *representation of space* established in the planned-economic era does not change a lot in the market-economic era, because real estate corporations prefer to develop large-area and high-density residential districts for maximizing their profit.

- Psychologically (Mentally): The traditional community based on acquaintance relationships is a significant factor of reinforcing the psychological distance between neighborhoods. Urbanites are afraid and suspicious of unaccustomed environments around them, with a sea change overtaking the urban society, a large number of strangers swarming, and an effective role-playing mechanism being absent. This mental anxiety is converted into the absolute closedness, when projected on space. A complete MRD could be thoroughly isolated from the urban spaces by means of closed-circuit television, private security and other material methods (walls, railings, obstacles, etc.). Besides, another psychical mechanism also enlarges the psychological distance: the emerging middle class is eager to set up its own identity. Their imagination, fantasy and desire for a prosperous, luxurious and upscale lifestyle are spatially realized in the manner of thematization of housing (see Figure 5.19). The keen competition in real estate markets also forces commodified housing to symbolize and visualize fanciful life styles, to augment exchange value, and to deviate from its original use value. Closedness is also a way to make housing themed. The more closed a MRD is, the nobler it appears. Closedness and themedness, as fictitious and imaginary *spaces of representation*, broaden the psychological distance among urban-

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ites, and accordingly natural communication are excluded from the communities.

Alongside this symbolist impact, the architectural arrangement of these settlements also reinforces their inclination towards introversion. Since the late 1950s, the "*Reihenhaus*", which was planned in neat rows and oriented towards north/south for the sake of dwelling egalitarianism, has dominated the composition mode of residential districts. [50] *Spatial publicness* seldom takes place on the streets dividing neighbourhoods, because the *Reihenhaus* without a direct street-facing entrance is less connected with the street than the perimeter housing.

- Socially: The sociality of MRDs in peripheral and marginal areas is a result of natural selection of the market. The free flow of housing merchandise enables people to freely select where to live and avoid whom they dislike. Meanwhile, hasty construction and large-scale resettlement of inhabitants from the inner city also exacerbate the homogeneity of MRDs — enclaves with highly filtered demographic profile (age, stratum and income).

Most analyses on public space merely think of closedness merely as an unfavourable factor for publicness. But in Shanghai's reality, that is not so simple. There are obviously many other factors contributing to the differences of MRDs' publicness. That the potential of publicness in the new, closed MRDs built in central quarters is higher indeed than the ones in peripheral and marginal areas is not a deliberate outcome. The difficulty in developing central plots weakens the risk of "superblocks" that happens ubiquitously in peripheral and marginal areas and thus decreases the physical distance objectively. [51] Although MRDs are not different from each other in form, *spatial publicness* is more likely to occur at those in urban centers.

On the other hand, not every neighbourhood evolved into the closed super-block eventually. The gradual breakdown of the old-style social spaces once as *consensus* is bringing forth the potential of new *dissensus*, for instance, the residualization of the workers' new villages. [52] The Zhongyuan night market in Yangpu district is a case in point.

Zhongyuan residential district (1983-1996) is a later constructed series of workers' new villages, located in the northeast of Shanghai with a distance of about 11 kilometers from People's Square. It consists of five sub-villages, namely, Gongnong, Shiguang, Minxing, Guohe, and Kailu, with 345.2 hectares of area, 3.847 million square meters of buildings, and 0.28 millions of population. In fact, it is equivalent to a medium-sized city. Stringently following the spatial pattern laid out by the master plan, [53] each sub-village (residential district) is divided into several blocks (micro residential districts) by major arterials, and each block is again subdivided into 4 or 5 housing clusters by cul-de-sacs or curved roads. [54] The blocks' scale predominates the size of their perimeters — 500-600 meters wide and 350-400 meters long approximately. Dictated by this planning idea and administrative means (residential committee or street office), the so-called public activities in which only neighborhood's own members will take part are calculable and happen

50. There is a more detailed description about the evolution history of residential district's spatial forms in Duanfang Lu's doctoral thesis. See Lu, *Remaking Chinese Urban Form*, 19-46 (see chap. 4, n. 53).

51. See the discussion of "geographic proximity of residential neighborhoods" in Section 4.5.

52. See the discussion of "residualization" in Section 4.5.

53. see Figure 4.8 and the discussion in Section 4.4.

54. Therein, the Gongnong new village is composed of 4 blocks whose area amounts to 86.45 hectares in total, the Minxing new village: 5 blocks, 109.7 hectares, the Shiguang new village: 4 blocks, 87.53 hectares, the Kailu new viallge: 2 blocks, 45.31 hectares, the Guohe new village: 2 blocks, 44.2 hectares. See The Board of the Chronicle of Shanghai's Planning, "Part 10: The Planning of New Residential Districts and the Reconstruction of Shanty towns, Chapter 1: The Planning of New Residential District, Section 6: Zhongyuan Residential District," in *The Chronicle of Shanghai's Planning* (Shanghai: The Press of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, 1999), accessed June 10, 2013, `http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node64620/node64634/node64734/node64738/userobject1ai58572.html` .

exclusively in the designated fields — open greenery and public facilities in the center of blocks or at the intersections of streets.

Over the two decades since its construction, the residents' profiles of Zhongyuan residential district have changed a lot despite the constancy of its physical form: firstly, a long-term and slow transfer of housing tenure in the urban section brings about mixed-income neighborhoods comprised of aging natives and migrant employees/workers; secondly, the industrial restructuring gave rise to a vast amount of layoffs and then brought a rapid growth of local informal economy. These factors restrain the absolutization and institutionalization of social (homogenous population) and psychological (loose management and austere architectural form) distances, which have created a fissure for spatial publicness in the MRDs.

Zhongyuan Road, a vehicle road across the residential district from north to south, serves also as a border between the sub-villages (Kailu vs. Gongnong, Guohe vs. Shiguang). Since large amounts of informal economic activities appropriate the cycle ways and sidewalks of the road regularly, a renowned night market grows out of this night occupation. Though without any official permission, it has functioned exuberantly and quickly become an essential source on which the local laid-off workers and migrants can maintain their livelihoods. The market produces spatial *dissensus* breaking through the former spatial *consensus*. The *spatial publicness* was not born in the designated communal greenery or other "public spaces", but in a totally unexpected and seemingly unlikely place (see Figure 5.20).

There is, retroactively, a tight link between Zhongyuan night market and a prototype of public space in Chinese urban history — "street market", which resulted in the breakdown of *lifang* institution in urban life since the Song Dynasty. [55] Unlike what European free citizens did in the late Middle Age, the member of the "street market", however, did not seek autonomy and subjectivity from the central government. Meanwhile, the "street market" frequently falls into spatial confusion without a sharp line dividing public interests from private ones. On the street of Shanghai or other Chinese cities, the private appropriation is ubiquitous, especially, in those decayed and crowed quarters. When an issue of public space in this context being discussed, an obsession with the radical contrast between publicness and privacy and with the independence of urbanites from the political regime is likely to mislead its focus to a dead end and make us overlook positive significance brought by the new spatial *dissensus* (sometimes the *dissensus* is simply a kind of private appropriation). In this sense, Zhongyuan night market exactly exposes the paradox of *spatial publicness*, which is realized by private appropriation sometimes.

5.5   Parks and Greenery Space

In the last two decades, the emerging fields of landscape urbanism or ecological urbanism have transcended the rigid discipline boundaries among architecture, urban design, landscape, civil engineering, etc. By integrating the conventional disciplines with process-oriented design

55. See the discussion in Section 4.2 — "Rurality, Chaxugeju and Heyuanzhuzhai".

Figure 5.20: **The Night Market in Zhongyuan Residential District, October, 2010.** Photo by Chen Zhongliang.

principles, the new ones seek to respond to the polysemy and chaos of contemporary urban phenomena. However, as yet little has changed in Shanghai's landscape practices. It still remains at a crude level, whether in concept or in practice. The primitiveness proceeds from the fact that the landscape practices are backed by the notions of "garden" or "green space", which are still at the early stage of the conceptual evolution.

Normally, the notion of "garden" as a historic category sprang from the imitation of natural scenery and represented human visions of nature. The visions turned increasingly into an aesthetic quality that gardens were supposed to be an Arcadian, ideal universe outside (or opposed to) the artificial world. This idea was projected and reified by garden practices, and also bonded them profoundly with painting (especially, the genre named landscape painting). Striving to create idyllically picturesque scenery, garden practices also nourished the growth of painting. [56] The American landscape researcher John Brinckerhoff Jackson defined the scenic approach as *Landscape Two*: "A landscape identified with a very static, very conservative social order …" [57]

The Chinese notion of "green space" was derived from the Soviet experience and utilized as a normative landscape term in education, research and practice broadly. [58] By comparison with the notion of "garden", the one of "green space" places more emphasis on connotations of science and ecology. On the one hand, it facilitates the quantitative management of urban greenery and ecological conditions; and it simultaneously reinforces, on the other, the antagonism between landscape spaces and architectural environments. In practice, the landscape spaces are abstracted into a series of numbers to fulfil ecological indices. The instrumentalized spaces have been desiccated with detaching themselves from cultural, social, and political meanings. There is no doubt that the landscape practice guided by the notion does not care about the issue of "*spatial publicness*".

The evolution of Shanghai's landscape morphology is reflective of the conceptual shift from "garden (park)" to "green space". Local scholars divide Shanghai's green space development into several stages: initial stage (before 1912), rudimentary stage (1912-1949), slow-development stage (1949-1978), steady-development stage (1986-1998), leap-expansion stage (1998-2005) and quality-advancement stage (from 2005 up to now). [59] This cumbersome periodization focuses only on quantity change of green space but neglects what substantially promotes landscape space — the variation of mind-set. Taking 1990 as the dividing line, the transformation of Shanghai's landscapes is: 1) before 1990, the systematic constructions of landscape projects were concentrated on several gardens (parks) and short of systematized planning, 2) after 1990, the construction of green space, especially of infrastructural green space for the ecological purpose, has played a leading role.

As discussed before, park, a subtype of public space in western sense, did not grow out of Chinese traditions naturally, but was transplanted from the colonist civilization. [60] Huangpu Park, the first modern park of Shanghai, was built by British colonists in the Bund and located on the north tip of the Bund esplanade. Afterwards, Zhangyuan (Zhang

56. Both in Western and Orient the landscape art has evolved into an autonomous genre, which the French painter Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) or the Chinese painter Shen Zhou (1427-1509) can exemplify.

57. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "Concluding with Landscape," in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 155.

58. Xu Bo, Zhao Feng and Liu Jinlu, "The Discussion of 'Public Green Space' and 'Park'," *Chinese Landscape Architecture* 02 (2001): 6-10.

59. Zhang Lang, Li Jing and Fu Li, "The Layout of Urban Green System: Characteristics and Trend," *City Planning Review* 03 (2009): 32-46.

60. See the previous discussion in Section 4.3.

garden) took effect as the first modern park in the local Chinese community through imitating *Huangpu* Park. Before that moment, traditional Chinese gardens owned by gentries or royalties had none of sociality and publicness, though distinctive in garden art. Since *Huangpu* Park was open in 1867, park, a new landscape pattern, began rapidly spreading in Shanghai and gradually became the protagonist of urban landscape in place of private gardens. By 1949, there were successively five new parks — Huangpu Park, Hongkou Park, Fuxing Park, Zhongshan Park, Xiangyang Park — constructed in Shanghai. [61] Between 1949 and the 1980s, another four parks were added on the list — People's Park, Yangpu Park, Changfeng Park, Xijiao Park. The green area and parks rose from 89 hectares and 0.13 square meters per person in 1949 to 761 hectares and 0.47 square meters per person in 1978. [62] In spite of a large increase in quantity, the parks, like other spatial types at that time, were encircled by walls and their relations with cities were cut off. Their due publicness was consequently weakened. The closed parks were just a variant of the *danwei*-style space.

After the 1980s, the constantly growing size and density of population, and the rapidly expanding built-up urban areas rendered garden-type practices increasingly incongruous. Under growing pressures of the heat island effect and air pollution in extremely crowed and dense urban centres, urban constructions, especially landscape construction since the 1990s, started to absorb the prevalent ecological ideas to tackle with the issues. Since then, landscape constructions have been switched from the park (garden) simply emphasizing visual and aesthetic quality to the infrastructural green space more focusing on ecological effect and systematization. That is evident even in the name alternation of relative technology documents. The 1983 version of the *Systematic Planning of Shanghai Garden and Green space* still kept the concept of "garden", but the 1994 version has removed the word "garden" and named the *Systematic Planning of Shanghai's Urban Green space*.

The greenery construction entered a speedy-development stage after 1999. More attention has been turned to systematization and structuralization in landscape planning. The 2002 enacted *Systematic Planning of Shanghai Green Space Between 2002-2020* aims to promote the layout of green spaces more comprehensively — to distribute them evenly by virtue of formalist elements like ring, wedge, porch and net. [63] Under the new spatial strategy, vast stretches of green area, rather than those tiny, waste scraps, are being developed together with the urban renewal, relocation of polluting factories and municipal constructions. The concrete measures include: inhabitants of each block have access to a public green space not less than 3000 square meters within a 500-meter "service radius"; there is at least one large-scale public green space more than 4 hectares in each central administrative district, [64] such as the Square Green Area (28 hectares), Taipingqiao Green Area (4 hectares), Xujiahui Park (8.4 hectares), Gucheng Park (6 hectares), Kaiqiao Green Area (4.3 hectares), and Pudong Century Park (140 hectares).

For instance, the Square Green Area (Yanzhong Green Area), built in

61. Shen Fuxu, "The Appreciation of Shanghai's Gardens: No. 6, The Appreciation of Shanghai's Parks," *Garden* 06 (1998): 9-10.

62. Ma Yun'an, "A Green Leap: Sixty Years of Shanghai Landscape Architecture," *Chinese Landscape Architecture* 10 (2009): 26-9.

63. Zhang Lang, "The Mechanism of the Organic Evolution of the Urban Green Space System of Shanghai," *Chinese Landscape Architecture* 11 (2012): 74-7.

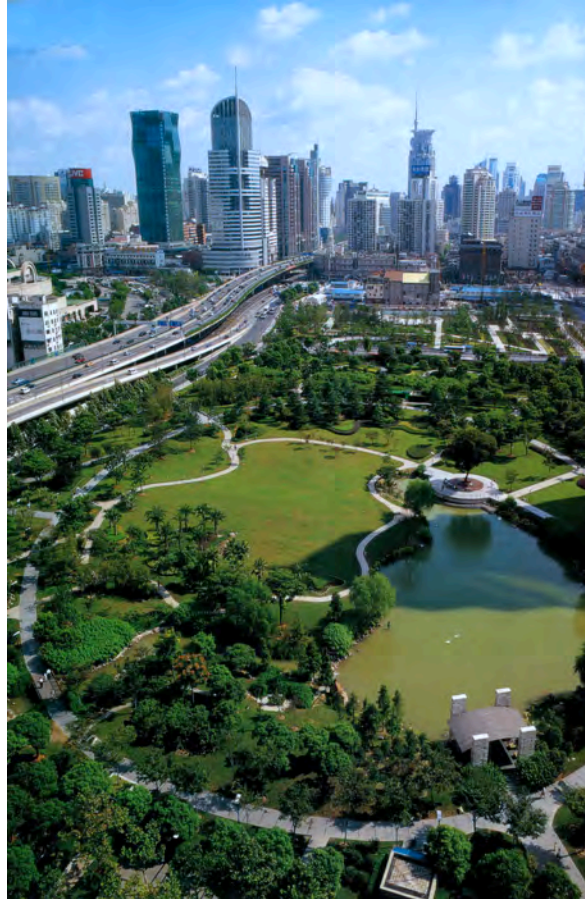64. Zhang Shiyu, "Green Space System Planning in Shanghai," *Urban Planning Forum* 6 (2002): 14-6.

Figure 5.21: **A Bird's-eye View of Yanzhong Green Land.** Photo by Chen Yi. From Qin Qixian, "The Shanghai Yanzhong Green Land in Yesterday and Today: Its Eight-year Development," *Garden* 12 (2008): 44.

65. Shanghai Landscape Architecture Design Institute and WAA (Williams, Asselin, Ackaoui & Associates), "Shanghai Square Park (Yanzhong Green Area): The World of Blue and Green," *Chinese Landscape Architecture* 09 (2006): 43-4.

2001, is one of the biggest parks in the heart of Shanghai. To ease the serious heat island effect in the centre drove the construction of the park that is labelled as a "green lung" (see Figure 5.21). It was divided by Yan'an viaduct, North-South viaduct, and other streets into seven parts scattered in the three core districts of Shanghai: Huangpu District, Luwan District, and Jingan District. Using "Green" and "Blue" as the motif — an intersection between blue, west-east waterbody and green vegetation, designers attempted to provide a quiet and secluded place enveloped in noisy, crowded urban environments (see Figure 5.22). [65]

To a certain degree, these hastily built and colossal green areas alleviate the worrisome environmental problems of central quarters and satisfy inhabitants' thirst for the open space. The dense urban fabric of buildings in the core areas buttresses the visit frequency in these green areas *a priori*. Nevertheless, the newly-built green areas do not go further than the traditional garden. In a centralized and commanded way under the Chinese administrative regime, the decision-making processes of the large-scale parks are barely accountable to their local constituency (in China even the concept of "constituency" does not really exist). They basically work as a static, aesthetic representation of the political power and readily became a Chinese version of the City Beautiful. Their ideal template is the Central Park in New York City, an urban oasis surrounded by numerous skyscrapers. However, subject to the specific social, cultural and spatial morphology, the greenery spaces cannot achieve the same capacity as Central Park for fostering social

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Figure 5.22: **A Contrast Between the Lilong Area in 2000 and the Reconstructed Yanzhong Green Land in May 2004.** Pic.1 (top): SMI, *The Atlas of Aerial Views of Shanghai* (see fig. 4.5). Pic.2 (bottom): Google Earth, accessed in June 10, 2013.

Figure 5.23: A Piece of Landscaped Sound-walls in Pujiang New Town, May 2011. Photo by Yang Shan.

66. One of the cases comparable with Shanghai's large-scale constructions of green space in this period is the development of urban public space projects of Barcelona, which are completed between 1981 and 1987 and "represent a large and impressive body of public works at widely different scales, spread throughout a city of some 1.7 million people." They were undertaken in all ten districts within Barcelona and "be operated in a decentralized manner, fitting the needs of particular geographic locales and groups regardless of their socioeconomic and physical circumstances." See the detailed descriptions in Peter G. Rowe, *Civic Realism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), 46-58.

67. Jackson, "Concluding with Landscape," 156.

68. Charles Waldheim, "Landscape as Urbanism", in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 39; or, Mohsen Mostafavi, "Landscape of Urbanism", in *Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape*, ed. Mohsen Mostafavi and Ciro Najle (London: Architectural Association, 2003), 7.

interaction and communication, but aggravate real-estate speculation in their neighborhoods. After their completion, the property prices always sharply rose. This gentrification lessened their publicness in turn. [66]

The construction of Shanghai's green spaces mirrors obtuse reaction of the traditional notions of "garden" and "green space" to the fluid, process-driven characteristics of the city. Such factors as the strict discipline demarcation between architecture and landscape, or the rigorous opposition between built environment and "natural environment", isolate the practices of the open green areas in a field of which the professional gardeners or landscape architects chiefly take charge. Correspondingly, they are not interested in landscaping urban infrastructures like logistical zone, water-treatment facilities, industrial waterfront and railways. Instead, their stress is laid greatly on beautifying the scenery of parks (gardens). Similarly, even the introduction of ecological ideas makes little progress in *spatial publicness*. The logic of green spaces subordinates the constructed spaces only available for fulfilling the quantified "scientific" indices, such as green coverage rate or per capita green area, and has little to do with the goal — to be a framework for various dynamic activities of human beings. Finally, they descend into packaging, fillings, or decorative material of technical *dominant spaces* (viaducts, waterfronts, high-voltage lines) and thus there is hardly publicness left after their aesthetics and ecological features are stripped. The static, picturesque aesthetics and the sheer scientific view of ecology confines the public capacity of the parks and greenery spaces. The former stays laser-focused on a construction of an idyllic spatial perception so as to remedy the pressure of modern life, while the latter lays stress on such ecological discourses as energy saving, environmental protection, and greening. Both aggravate the opposition between man-made and natural circumstances, but respond insufficiently to current metropolitan life (see Figure 5.23).

After World War II, more plentiful meanings far beyond the traditional category of "garden (*Landscape Two*)" were injected into the notion of landscape. In a series of Jackson's researches and observations on American vernacular landscapes after the War, the notion was no longer regarded only as a natural space or a compensation for human life, rather "it is really no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the surfaces of the earth …it is always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden or unpredictable change. We create them and need them because every landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time." [67] In the theoretical explorations of landscape urbanism, "landscape" has come down to a medium capable of responding to open-endedness, indeterminacy and fluidness of the rapidly urbanizing metropolis owing to its temporal change, transformation, adaptability and succession. [68] In landscape urbanism, the relationships between landscape and architecture, nature and city are not so antagonistic anymore, and landscape is not only a producer of static, object-based picturesque scenery, but also in pursuit of process-oriented reorganization of new urban life. These ideas are just what the current practices of Shanghai's parks and greenery spaces

appear to lack.

5.6   Metro Stations

Since the first metro line (Line 1) opened in 1995, Shanghai metro has become one of the most rapidly growing transit systems in the world. There are 13 metro lines (excluding Line 22 and the Maglev line), 292 stations (292 is the number of stations if interchanges on different lines are counted separately, with the exception of the 9 stations shared by lines 3 and 4 on the same tracks. If all interchanges are counted as single stations, the number of stations will be 254).[69] In the long-range planning (2020), the amount of lines will reach 18 and their total length will be expanded to 970 kilometers.[70]

Over the recent 15 years, municipal administrators have intentionally used the metro lines and stations to regulate and optimize the city's spatial distribution. A sharp increase of rapid transit system helps disperse overcrowded population by exploiting mega residential districts and new towns, developing focus areas, or achieving the objective established in the master planning — "multi-kernels (satellites), multi-centers (center, sub-center, and community center), multi-axes (along the traffic arteries like express ways or metro lines)".[71] Not only at the state level is the rapid transit system instrumentalized as spatial policy, but its influences also reach urbanites' everyday life. The Shanghai metro has become the preferred way of massive personal mobility (it set a daily ridership record of 7.548 million on October 22, 2010).[72] Nevertheless, the effect that the rapid transit system (especially its stations) produces on *spatial publicness* is not optimistic. In fact, only a few cases have indeed contributed to the development of *spatial publicness*.

First of all, the hasty growth led to the inexperience of authorities and designers to handle the complex relationship between subway stations and their surroundings. The construction of subway stations was apparently limited to the internal matters of the Subway Construction Office. Under the guise of planned-economy-like investment and regulation, the office's only mission is to meet plan indices and takes no responsibility for comprehensive coordination between stations and their surroundings. Moreover, the Chinese urban regulation establishment is short of mutual communication among various departments or disciplines. Thus the built subway stations play the mere role of transportation machines without a intention to integrate themselves into their settings or to make a contribution to them, although such stations were already complexes entangled in a series fields such as transportation, construction, landscape.

But the predicament has been slightly improved after the completion of the first subway line. It is at the same time that the process of disciplinary autonomy of urban design in Chinese architectural education accorded with the methodological amelioration of metro stations' design. The new design discipline was swiftly applied in the spatial practice of subway stations. Around the 1990s, rapid economic development in Shanghai made the concept of "megastructure" one of the hottest issues in design and research, which withdrew themselves from the past

69. "Shanghai Metro," last modified April 19, 2013, `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Metro`.

70. Accessed June 10, 2013, `http://whb.eastday.com/w/20070721/u1a332272.html`.

71. Ren, "A Research of Interactive Coupling," 57-62.

72. "Shanghai Metro."

interest in trivial, isolated and aesthetic problems. In researches of subway stations guided by urban design, scholars and designers gradually formulated a set of principles, including 1) three dimensions: a three-dimensional and station-central spatial system is highly correlated with land development; 2) complexity: various urban functions, especially the commercial function, are merged into subway stations and docked also on the pedestrian traffic system; 3) compactness: by deliberately magnifying the scale and agglomeration effect of subway stations, a hyper-intensive urban environment is brought out in some key areas. Ultimately, what urban design expects to achieve is a station-based multifarious spatial system with high efficiency and integrity. [73]

Along with rethinking the problems raised by subway stations, Chinese architects have been concerned with plenty of large-scale spatial complexes ushered in by high-density and high-strength urban construction. One of the earliest academic researches was from Han Dongqing. He described these phenomena as "*unified city-building fabric*". He argued, "the mutual interaction between socialization and mega-structuring of architecture, tridemensionality and interiorization of urban planning" break down the threshold between city and architecture and finally create an "open, in-between environmental system connecting all spatial levels". [74] "In term of the competence of the system, the urban function and architectural function take in and relate to each other; in terms of its morphology, the urban public space and interior architectural space intersect, superimpose and concatenate each other tridimensionally and organically" [75] According to Han, the ancestors of "*unified city-building fabric*" are the structuralist practices of Team 10 and Kenzo Tange.

Han's keenness made him seize the nascent but typical spatial phenomenon in the rapid urbanization of Chinese cities. After 2000, this spatial type of "*unified city-building fabric*" quickly dominated metropolitan core areas. The Chinese real estate industry even coined a new word "*HOPSCA*" for the spatial type — a multifunctional complex with hotel, office, park, commerce, and apartment. [76] Propelled by the twofold pressure of power and capital, the so-called "*unified city-building fabric*" plays the same role as the early constructivist "urban condenser" and agrees with Rem Koolhaas's admiration of "the culture of congestion" seemingly. But when one examines such strategies carefully, it can be affirmed that they are no more than an extension of the modernist principles. Although the metro stations are the crucial way to ensure the spatial accessibility, their stubborn exclusion of the appearance of heterogeneous meanings degrades their accessibility into reachability (merely the physical accessibility). [77] Both the stations *per se* and the urban spaces associated with them are deliberately handled as "zero-friction environments" by designers. [78] This over-programming process, claimed by Hajer and Reijndorp as the functionalization of behaviour, is similar to Marc Augé's concept of "non place". Hostility and dread of chaos, disorder, and uncontrollability raise systematization and integration as the primary strategies in the urban design of China's metro stations, in order to gain an "efficient, secure, orderly, conve-

73. The researches on this respect include: Lu Jiwei and Han Jing, "Systemization of Mass Transit Station Area and Urban Design," *City Planning Review* 02 (2007): 32-6; Zhang Yan, "Development Planning of Shanghai Urban Rail Transit and Integrative Development of Stations," *Time+Architecture* 05 (2009): 30-6; Lu Jiwei, Wang Teng, and Zhuang Yu, "Synergic Development in Urban Rail Transit Station Areas," *Time+Architecture* 05 (2000): 12-8; Lu Jiwei and Chen Yong, "Improving the Systemization of Mass Transit Station Area: The Urban Design for Sichuan North Road," *Architectural Journal* 01 (2008): 29-33; etc.

74. Han Dongqin and Feng Jinlong, "On Functional Combination and Spatial Composition in City-Building Unification," *Architect* 90 (1999): 15.

75. Han Donqqin, "Declination of Threshold: Research on Unified City-Building Fabric," *Architect* 71 (1996): 89.

76. Chen Yang, Jin Guangjun, and Xu Zhong, "Study on the Catalyst Effect of Urban Complex Against the Background of Rapid Urbanization," *Urban Planning International* 03 (2011): 98.

77. See the discussion in Section 2 of this chapter.

78. Hajer and Reijndorp, *New Public Domain*, 95 (see chap. 4, n. 17).

nient, and pleasant urban environment."[79]

Despite the fact that the spatial imbalances and radical laissez-faire prevalent in the early constructions of metro stations are overcome by the emerging urban design principles, the potential publicness of metro stations and their surrounding spaces is simultaneously suffocated by the stubbornly strategic repulsion of spatial contamination from *dissensus*, unpredictability and complicatedness. In comparison with the social condenser's intention to intensify human communication, the strategies of systematization and unification are more compliant with the urban administrators' aspirations and at the service of developers' and investors' interests by virtue of effacing the unnecessary, trouble-triggering communicative activities. The final result might be matched with Sarah Whiting's remark in a short essay: "radical programmatic juxtaposition has become a mere sign, an accepted stand-in for a radicalized public realm …Such strategies …have become familiar in the hands of the less imaginative, and have only produced the repetitive inconclusiveness of hybridity as a technique rather than a proposition."[80]

In the building boom of subway stations, Jing'an Temple Square is one of the very few highlights (see Figure 5.24).

Before its reconstruction as a station of Line 2 in the middle 1990s, the section already possessed abundant innate resources: firstly, the high-grade garden residential districts of the earliest colonists had already taken shape alongside Nanjing West Road at the beginning of the 20th century. This high-end quality, which features the highest consumption, recreation and leisure facility up until today, has continued in the evolution of the environmental structure; secondly, Jing'an Temple, a thousand years old temple, is located on the north side of Nanjing West Road where pilgrims have been legion. Since the Qing Dynasty, its temple fair had been one of the most attractive spectacles in old Shanghai; What is more, a small-scale park, on the south side of Nanjing West Road, was transformed from the colonist cemetery after 1949. Such a green land is rather scarce for the city centre.

It is rare in Shanghai that a 36-hectare land can pool so many religious, cultural, commercial and ecological resources. For designers, only a little organization and guidance will bring about a sufficently charming public space. As a matter of fact, the urban designers also expected to make good use of these existing conditions. They conceived of a joint development of Station Jing'an Temple and the park. The open green land would expand into the north side of the road, encircle the temple, and make it one part of the green land. The mode tries to broaden the open space and create its integrity by linking all previously independent elements. In addition, the designers put forward some advice to optimize the relationship between the park, the temple, and their settings, such as: 1) to sink the traffic artery (Huashan Road) on the west side of Jing'an Temple and to convert the surface into additional green land after covering a deck; 2) to insert a sunken square on the park's side and to open the hall of the subway station (the underground floor) towards the square.[81]

Although the idea visualized an expanded public environment, the
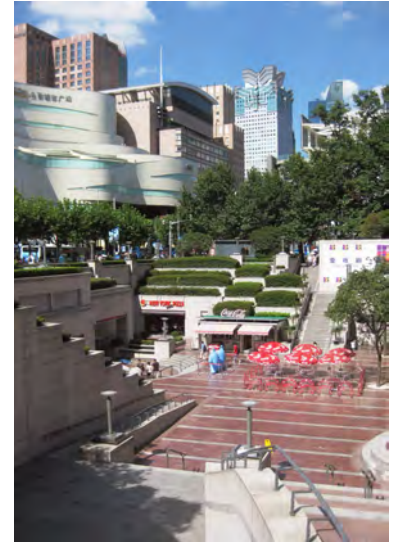
Figure 5.24: **The Sunken Square and Metro Entrance of Jing'an Temple Station, May 2012.** Photo by Yang Shan.

79. Lu Jiwei and Zhen Zheng, "Urban Design and its Development," *Architectural Journal* 04 (1997): 4-8.

80. Sarah Whiting, "Going Public," *Hunch* 6/7 summer (2003): 497-502, or, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://www.holcimfoundat ion.org/Portals/1/docs/F07/WK-No rm/F07-WK-Norm-whiting02.pdf`.

81. Lu Jiwei, Chen Yin, and Zhang Li, "Ecology, Culture, Commerce: The Urban Design of Jin'an Temple," *Architectural Journal* 10 (1996): 20-5.
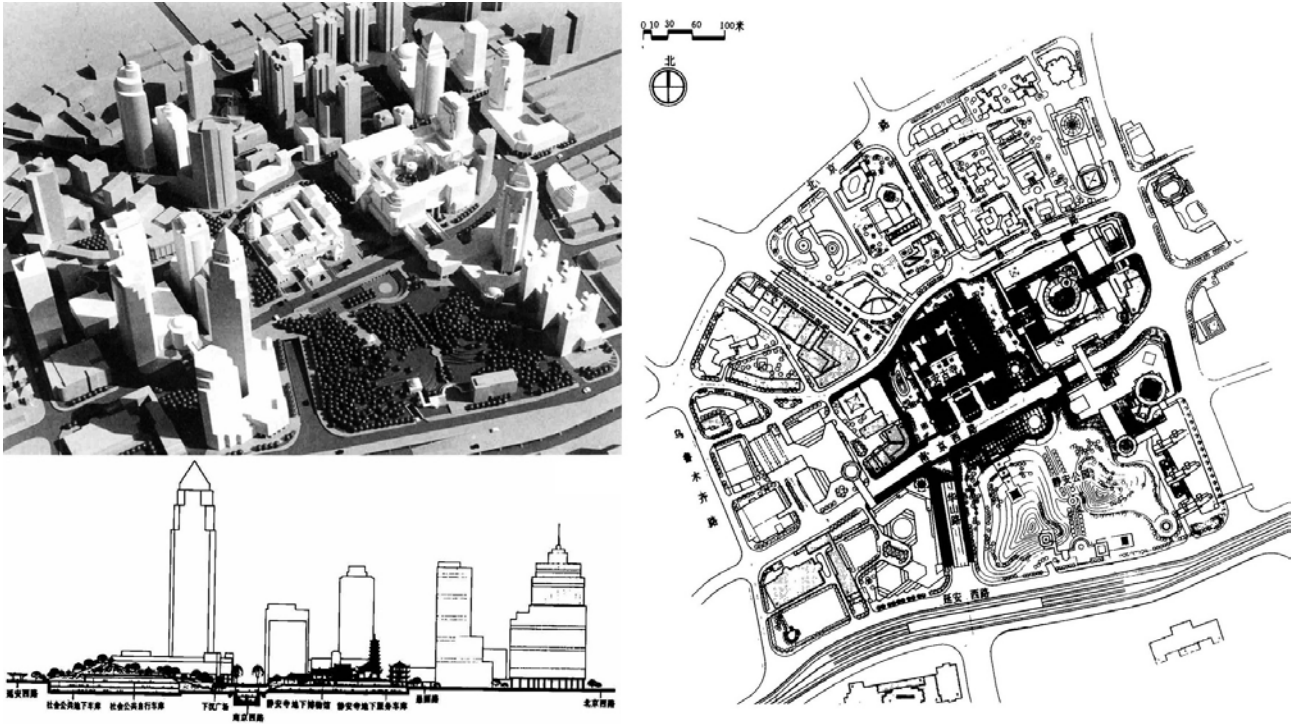
Figure 5.25: **The Urban Design of Jing'an Temple Square.** From Lu Jiwei, Lin Ying, and Zhang Li, "Ecology, Culture, and Commerce: Urban Design for Jing'an Temple Area in Shanghai," *Architectural Journal* 10 (1996): 20-5.

final outcome was not constructed as such. Pressed by the high cost of municipal works and over-intensified commercial development, some significant points were not carried out: the green land on the west side of the temple was not enlarged because the road on that side was not sunk, the commercial spaces on the east side nibbled quite a few areas that are supposed to be green land, and accordingly the state of "garden encircling temple" could not take shape because the green land was not extended to the north side of Nanjing West Road. Urban spaces on the north and south of Nanjing West Road developed independently, which lost the opportunity of expanding and perfecting the city's open spaces (see Figure 5.25).

Even so, the newly-built station, especially the open area on the south side, has become one of the most popular open spaces in Shanghai, because of its age-old history, diversified surrounding elements and central location.

Not every station has such unique and innate conditions. For some early-built stations in new and unimportant areas, the most basic co-ordination and integration had not been taken into account in their designs, not to mention their *spatial publicness*. The most extreme situation is that constructed stations are developed to simply fulfill a transport need without other considerations — Longyang Road station is one of these examples (see Figure 5.26).

Opened in June 2000, the station on the Pudong-section of Line 2 is shared by Line 7 and the Maglev Train. The public transport interchange was also a regional busstation to the south suburbs like Huamu and Beicai. Both the high-grade Lianyang community and the biggest park of Pudong District — Pudong Century Park are on its north side

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Figure 5.26: **An Aerial View of Longyang Station, Ocotober, 2012.** Photo by Ji Yuzhong.

less than 1 kilometre away, while the Shanghai Exhibition Center on its west-north side is around 1 kilometre away. Although the surrounding resources have laid a good foundation for the station's urbanity, the unilateral technology-oriented construction mechanism (transportation planning) apparently overlooked these preconditions. The plan and design of Longyang station also take little into account, as to the huge stream of people commuting and transferring here everyday. For instance, it was unaware that the agglomeration effect can be utilized to improve the urbanity of the section. Several supermarkets – British B&Q, German Metro and French Decathlon – were mechanically laid out along the viaduct and Maglev line on the north side of the station. While the viaduct and Maglev line divide the area and block its internal mutual communication, each unit (the supermarkets, the subway station, office buildings and the surrounding residential micro districts) is only concerned about spatial organization within its own site. As a result, urbanity and publicness are far from the area where functions are merely piled but necessary integration and organization are left out. In some senses, it is just a large-scale transportation hub with streams of people and products never leaving any mark.

5.7 Conclusion

The six spatial types can be generally subsumed under the category of public space and get involved in one or two facets of *spatial publicness*. (Politically) ritual space, historical symbolic space and parks & green spaces are related to *meaning presentation* in line with *representation*, while consumption space, neighborhood communal space and metro stations directly take part in the production and reproduction of social relations in line with a *distance* regime. Of course, the mutual corroborations are not so absolute.

Though being public space nominally, the spaces do not cultivate

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much *spatial publicness*. Whether related to the concept of *representation* or to the one of *distance*, their spatial characteristics might coagulate into *consensus* more and less and hamper the emergence of *dissensus*. The differences only lie in their blocking abilities, as evidenced by the following ways:

The political ritual space squeezes the individual *dissensus* out of *public appearance* through the repressive display of power symbols. Likewise, administrative means (police patrolling) and urbanites' self-discipline contribute to achieving the symbolic uniqueness. Representations of space, like the urban design of Lujiazui, also suffocate the possibility of public space. As a result, the spaces are conceptualized as urban icons and are always swarming with tourists.

Like the ritual space, historical symbolic spaces are on the same path towards city-making — *imagineering*. Relative to the ritual one that prefers aesthetic quality of the sublime, the historical one resorts more to nostalgia atmosphere. The historical preservation in a new way – the so-called cultural creative quarters – is at the cost of the life of the original residents carrying living collective memory. In a sense, the evicted are perfectly representative of the social spaces that once existing as *consensus* but now have deteriorate into the incongruous "*counter-space*".

Parks and greenery land have gone through a transformation from the aesthetic imitation of natural space to ecologically quantitative space. The connotation change of the two concepts results from the shifting disciplinary foci. Notwithstanding this, the spatial practices guided by them are still obtuse to *spatial publicness*, especially when contrasted with the upgraded concept of landscape. The parks and greenery land are unlikely to gain more *spatial publicness*, unless the opposition between landscape and urban space becomes unclear, and the discipline of landscape takes the initiative in responding to everyday dynamics. Finally, the spaces cannot escape the fate of being package material for other dominant spaces.

Both the everyday consumption space and the communal space are founded on a set of layering space criteria. As the defined *distribution of the sensible*, they both determine the spatial hierarchy of everyday life, or else, public life, and their matching spatial facilities. While the everyday life is dictated by the spatial echelon of "housing cluster, micro residential district, residential district", the so-called public life is confined within massive consumption spaces (hypermarkets and shopping centers). In Lefebvre's terminology, this layering spatial system is responsible for the production and reproduction of the social space.[82] Meanwhile, the traditional spatial gene has stamped its mark on the layering system. But the existing codes of housing result directly from the imitation and synthesis of the concept of Neighborhood Unit (American) and *mikrorayon* (Soviet Union). It also highly accords with the advocacy of Charte d'Athènes — the explicit urban structure, fictional zoning, etc. The so-called "public life" only attaches itself to the layering practices and reinforces the spatial code simultaneously, as the complex requirements are reduced into the simple, basic residential functions and de-

82. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 32.

creased in a layering way. In the eyes of decision-makers, the public life is simply the life happening in the communal and consumption space. In fact, this life is no more than a consequence of the *police* or *consensual distribution of the sensible*.

For the decision-makers, the metro stations are the key instrument to implement the whole spatial layout. For the stations themselves, their accessibility is the raison d'être. Paradoxically, this accessibility is only psychical (reachability) not symbolic. More than that, the former accessibility is often hostile to the latter one and even tries to eliminate it. Recognizing the importance of metro stations, Chinese urban designers put forward a series of principles (three-dimensionality, complexity and compactness) to make good use of this reachability. However, subject to their epistemological level, what they finally focus on is only a zero-friction gathering place — "an efficient, secure, orderly, convenient and pleasant urban environment." [83]

Although all of the public spaces have congealed into spatial *consensus* more or less, the spatial *dissensus* can still happen in them. The most possible places where *dissensus* could take place are closely associated with the everyday life — the neighborhood communal space and the space of consumption. Normally, those once as *consensus* but degenerating now have the grant chance to spatial *dissensus*, because they are not the place strictly mandated by the current spatial *consensus*. For example, the workers village constructed in the last 70-80s can breed an unintentional and informal public space like Zhongyuan night market. By comparison, the publicness of consumption spaces comes from their aggregation effect and the scarcity of public spaces in Shanghai. They always become the gathering point of the nearby residents, who often hold a dancing party there.

Same with human actions, the physical entities like architecture can be the source of spatial *dissensus*, especially in the historical symbolic spaces. Some successful commercial reconstruction like Xintiandi did contribute to the spatial *dissensus* at its outset for a broader area. Nonetheless, with the increase of late-comers and the rare support of lived space, the spatial *dissensus* cannot be kept too long. The marginal effect of *dissensus* is decreasing gradually and assimilated into the spatial *consensus* finally.

Parks and greenery land are the public space in a general sense. In Chinese landscape practices, heavy emphases on the ecological function of the spaces and the antithesis between nature and city make their *spatial publicness* hardly reach the awaited level.

As for metro stations and political ritual space, they are the public space in name only. Administrated by strict social *consensus* or *representations of space*, their reachabilty is only at the service of public presentation of power and commercial interests. Although they are the crowded places where people gather and meet, there is little publicness in them.

Through the lens of *spatial publicness*, the status quo of publicness in Shanghai and the state of *consensus* and *dissensus* have been roughly examined in this chapter. The complexity and particularity of Shang-

83. See the discussion in Section 5.6 and Sidenote 79.

hai's urban spaces cannot be simply detected with the binary opposition between publicness and privacy. Moreover, in light of the concept of *spatial publicness*, we might find out the solutions to promoting Shanghai's spatial quality against the disciplinary background of architecture and urban design. In Ranciére's views, the *dissensus* possesses the two forms of expression: aesthetics and politics. Within the framework of the production of space, the two forms of *dissensus* are all counted as spatiality. The politics is mainly about the transformation of the *distance* regime, while aesthetics refers to representation. From the perspectives of aesthetics and politics, what architecture and urban design can do for publicness will be discussed in subsequent Chapter 6 and 7.

6 Aesthetics Dissensus

On the basis of Lefebvre's space theory and Ranciére's analysis of the linkage between *aesthetics* and *politics*, the new concept "*spatial publicness*" has been defined in previous chapters and substituted for the customary notion of "public space". Assuming particular quality of *dissensus*, the *spatial publicness* emerges from the border of spatial *consensus*. Its contingency, indeterminacy and instability are distinct from duration, fixedness and stability inherent in the traditional concept of "public space". In this and the next chapter, the role of architecture and urban design in *spatial publicness* will be explored further in terms of its two aspects — *aesthetics* and *politics*. Resting on the current tendencies and up-to-date cases of architecture and urban design, the two chapters try to answer the last question — "what can architecture (or urban design) do for *spatial publicness*?"

6.1 Three Pairs of Paradoxes

As said in the introduction, the publicness initiated by architecture (the terminology will be used in its wide sense – also including urban design and planning – in the following paragraphs.) is not synonymous with *spatial publicness* in reality. A discussion on *spatial publicness* within the architectural frame will inevitably encounter these paradoxes:

• Paradox between architecture and space:
In most Instances, architecture, urban design and urban planning are a kind of physical embodiment of spatial codes, spatial language, or representations of space. The disciplines are a "conceptual space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers ...".[1] Architectural environments, as built form, constitute the physical framework and texture of the urban environment, but they do not equate to the space, especially the space yielded by social practices of "inhabitants" and "users". The space, also named *space of representation* by Lefebvre, results from the living bodies' "deployment of energy" in everyday life.[2] In reality, this *lived* space tends to be substituted by the spatial codes that seem to become the absolute "truth", the living bodies are reduced to abstract bodies, and the *lived* experiences are crushed and vanish into the domination of language and visualization.

The traditional architectural principles cannot tackle, or even, attempt to smother the *spatial publicness* brought by creative and experimental activities. For Lefebvre, the human being (or the urbanites) has "the need for creative activity, for the oeuvre (not only for products and consumable material goods), of the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play."[3] What architectural practices can do to facilitate the expansion of "the right to city" is the very subject of these chapters.

• Paradox between architecture as *consensus* and as *dissensus*:
Undoubtedly, architectural space is a form of the *distribution of the sensible*. Architectures have a lot to do with "frontal, public, overt" re-

1. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 38 (see chap. 1, n. 57).

2. Ibid., 171.

3. Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 147.

lations generally. [4] Meanwhile they can be counted as a "self-evident", "spontaneous" sensory order — *consensus*. In a topological way, architectures participate in constituting the sensory system or regime of the common world, which imposes spatiotemporal places on individuals and assigns certain social functions, ways to speak, and forms of action to the places. A wide range of architectural practices separate, reinforce, control and limit the sensory reality, and they, even including the most "progressive" practices, more or less make our lives bio-politicized.

If merely confining themselves to this premise, the following chapters are unnecessary. Architects are well aware of the limitations of architecture as *consensus*. They always exert themselves to increase the chance of new spatial *dissensus* in architecture. In a sense, the contradiction between architecture as *consensus* and as *dissensus* is co-substantial with that between architecture and space. Both *dissensus* and *spaces of representation* (or the *lived* space) relate to the issue how to reassess the anti-systemical indeterminacy, either in a spatial system or in the *distribution of the sensible*. Whether it is aesthetics *dissensus* realized by architecture *per se* or politics *dissensus* triggered by spatial practices on a architectural platform, both can tear a fissure in the existing sensory order and bring about new *spatial publicness*.

It does not mean that spatial *consensus* is not significant. After all, it is consensus that sustains the *common world* that forms the bedrock of our life. Arendt appraises how artifacts (architecture) weigh heavily with the mortal:

> "In this permanence, the very stability of the human artifice, which, being inhabited and used by mortals can never be absolute, achieves a representation of its own. Nowhere else does the sheer durability of the world of things appear in such purity and clarity, nowhere else therefore does this thing-world reveal itself so spectacularly as the non-mortal home for mortal beings. It is as though worldly stability has become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read." [5]

• Paradox between architecture as art and as politics:
Spatial publicness is bound up with the two aspects of *dissensus*, *aesthetics* and *politics*. Since the advent of modernism, architects have explored the potential of realizing the *dissensus* in these two fields. "More specifically, politics proper is defined as the dissensual act of subjectivisation that intervenes in the police order" or in the spatial *consensus*, [6] and aesthetics proper consists in the blurring boundary between art and life: "it simultaneously establishes the autonomy of art and the identity of its forms with the forms that uses to shape itself". [7]

Although art and politics, *qua* singular domains of human activity, are consubstantial, they do not truly coincide with each other and their consubstantiality is only maintained at the extreme abstract level — as "two forms of distribution of the sensible". [8] Ranciére does not provide any feasible criteria for judging the politics proper or aesthetics proper at a concrete level. What is more, he always denies the direct

4. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33.
5. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 167-168 (see chap.1, n.1).
6. Gabriel Rockhill, "Ranciére's Productive Contradictions: From the Politics of Aesthetics to the Social Politicity of Artistic Practice," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 02 (2011): 30.
7. Jacques Ranciére, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 23.
8. Jacques Ranciére, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 25-6.

connection between aesthetics and politics. "At this level, art and politics not only part ways, but actually tend to be mutually exclusive: politics proper extricates itself from the desubjectivisation of aesthetics, and art tends to act as a metapolitical bulwark against politics proper (thereby implicitly maintaining the police order)". [9]

Ranciére's thesis precipitates some architectural practices into a dilemma — there always exists a tendency for political *dissensus* that seeks to influence or stimulate subjectivsation by creating heteronomy in architectural activities (or spatial practices in a broad sense). The tendency is exactly what Ranciére vehemently opposes. In his view, the causal relationship latent in the practices ineluctably spoil both aesthetics and politics proper.

It is not necessary to pocket all of Ranciére's opinions dogmatically. Some of them remain very much in doubt. On the one hand, his views on the incongruity between aesthetics and politics indeed prompt us to rethink the heteronomous practices prevailing in recent years. The past material determinism of modernism is replaced by another determinism from the underlying teleology and causality. That collides with equality and liberty in politics *dissensus* in essence; on the other, his over-valorisation of the difference between art and politics might hamper his doctrines' validity insofar as he substitutes the absolutization of mono-causal relationship with the one of indetermination relationship. This radical polarization between causality and indetermination overlooks the fact that "socio-historical practices such as 'art' and 'politics' do not abide by the black-and-white logic of conceptual delimitation", [10] and they are "*neither* rigorously determined *nor* totally undetermined." [11]

Koolhaas' opinion that "it (architecture) is a paradoxical mixture of power and powerlessness" [12] describes the same predicament, when architecture undertakes the task of *spatial publicness* in both aspects. It is partly because of the traits (power and powerlessness, capability or incapability) that architecture features in the production of *spatial publicness* while struggling in its delusional spiral.

6.2   Critical Architecture vs. Projective Practices

There are still plenty of architectural practices focusing on aesthetic creation and supplying a special sensorium distinct from everyday sensory experience. These kinds of practices do not refer narrowly to beauty, taste, or stylistic formalism, rather than a special tempo-spatial sensory form suspending the everyday experience and providing spectators with a sensory equality.

In Ranciére's discourse system, the aesthetic practices possess their own politics. "Art is not, in the first instance, political because of the messages and sentiments it conveys concerning the state of the world. Neither is it political because the manner in which it might choose to represent society's structures, or social groups, their conflicts or identities. It is political because of the very distance it takes with respect to these functions, because of the type of space and time that it institutes, and the manner in which it frames this time and peoples this space." [13]

This particular politics comes from a founding paradox: "art is art

9. Rockhill, "Ranciére's Productive Contra-dictions," 30; or, Jacques Ranciére, "The Paradoxes of Political Art," in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, edit. and trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), 134-51.
10. Rockhill, "Ranciére's Productive Contra-dictions," 45.
11. Ibid.
12. Alejandro Zaera and Rem Koolhaas, "Finding Freedoms: Conversations with Rem Koolhaas," *El Croquis* 53+79 (1998): 14.
13. Ranciére, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 23.

Figure 6.1: **Friedrichstrasse Project.** Mies van der Rohe, Friedrichstrasse Project, charcoal drawing 1919. From K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* Vol. 21 (1984): 19.
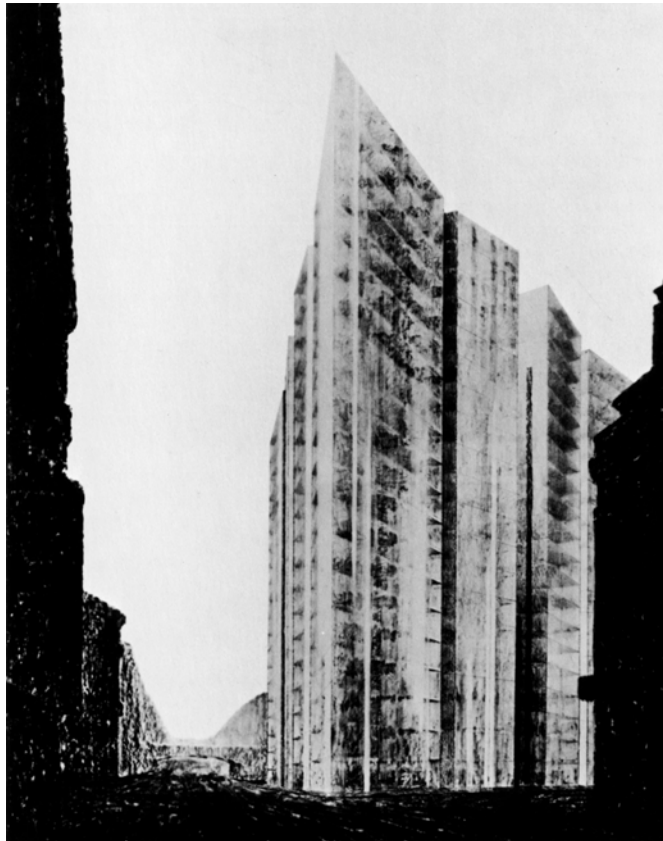
insofar as it is also non-art, or is something other than art." [14] The aesthetic *dissensus* incessantly oscillates between "art for art's sake" and "art become life", or between autonomous art and heteronomous art. The same pattern can be true for architecture. In recent years, the debate circling around the specific relationship between criticality and architecture has mirrored the academic cogitation about this swinging aesthetics between autonomy and heteronomy. More or less, even the leadership succession from modernism to post-modernism or from postmodernism to deconstructionism might appertain to the aesthetic fluctuation.

In 1984, K. Michael Hays published a canonic essay in *Perspecta* 21, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form". Through the lens of Mies van der Rohe's works, he tried to define a kind of critical architecture as "one resistance to the self-confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time," [15] Herein, the basic precondition to completing these tasks is "architecture [is treated] as autonomous form", whose absoluteness and "superiority over historical and material contingencies" remain "the extreme depth of silence …in the chaos of the nervous metropolis." [16] A case mentioned by the essay is the 1928 Alexanderplatz competition. Apart from this project, the architectural autonomy was implemented also in the 1922 project of skyscraper at Friedrichstrasse through "the formal inscrutability of the volumetric configuration" and its surface distortion (see Figure 6.1). [17] These devices solicit the special experience "open to the chance and uncertainty of life in the metropolis." [18] The superiority out of the works'

14. Ibid., 36.
15. K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* Vol. 21 (1984): 15.
16. Ibid., 22.
17. Ibid., 20.
18. Ibid., 20.

autonomous form might guarantee their capability of "*resistant* and *oppositional*", in other words, "*critical*". [19] However, Hays' standpoint seems unpersuasive gradually, since the resistant gesture of Mies' works has lost their original dynamic and become *consensus* or something that it once opposed all along.

In parallel with Hays' theoretical exploration, Peter Eisenman has sought to flesh out this criticality in practices. Eisenman's critical position came from his early life as a "paper architect". Some of his early works emerged from a conceptual process, and remain clinging to the conceptual status after their completion. For example, in the project of Frank House the function was intentionally ignored and the architecture is meant to be a "record of design process". [20]

Other distinctive figures pursuing the criticality are Elizabeth Diller & Richardo Scofidio in North American, and world-wide, Tadao Ando with his frigidly minimalist practices.

A note-worthy fact is that most critical practices are concentrated on museum and gallery projects. They limit themselves in an insular domain where designers' critical or resistant attitude is workable, and none of the building projects has met "the more difficult test of being critical 'in the street'". [21] The truth indicates how heavily the architectural criticality and the efficacy of its formal autonomy rely on the building's circumstance and nature. Eventually, the selective environment will bog down autonomous practices in a formalistic and rhetoric game.

In reference to Ranciére's elaboration, this aesthetics experience amounts to "framing the life of art": "the life of art as the development of a series of forms in which life becomes art." [22]

This autonomous attitude has confronted challenges of new generations. Almost 20 years later, in their essay "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism" in the same magazine, Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting enunciated a new aesthetics position: "it may be necessary (or, at least, useful) to provide an alternative to the now dominant paradigm of criticality, an alternative that will be characterized here as projective." [23]

Instrumentality is characteristic of these kinds of "projective" practices. Together with "projection, performativity and pragmatics", the instrumentality is directed against the old "critical architectures" which can be "understood as autonomy (enabling criticality, representation, and signification)." [24] Nowhere have the characteristics of heteronomy been more apparent than in these proposals from "projective practices". These terms – hot, ambiance, multiplicity, etc. – Somol and Whiting used to describe the "projective" starkly contrast with those of Hays when he accessed the resistant quality of Mies' works — resistance, opposition, silence, etc.

There are certainly not only the two protagonists launching the polemic attack on "criticality". For example, Michael Speaks has committed himself to challenge the authority of "criticality", even before the Somol and Whiting's publication. In a series of articles published in 2002, he advocated a more radically "pragmatist" position to cater for the "proliferating swarms of 'little' truths appearing and disappearing

19. Ibid., 17.
20. "House VI," last modified March 18, 2013, `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_VI`.
21. George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," *Harvard Design Magazine* 21 (2004/2005): 2.
22. Ranciére Jacques, "The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes: Emplotments of Autonomy and Heteronomy," *New Left Review* 14 (Mar/Apr 2002): 140.
23. Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," *Perspecta* Vol. 33 (2002): 73.
24. Ibid., 74.

Figure 6.2: **Constant, Gezicht op Sectoren, Photomontage, 1971.** From Martin van Schaik and Otakar Máčel, ed. *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provovations 1956-76* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2005), 66.

fast".[25] His "calculatedly particular usage of the term of *intelligence*"[26] distinguishes his stance from the 20th century "vanguard practices reliant on ideas, theories and concepts given in advance".[27]

The anti-theoretical stand of "projective" and pragmatist practices leads more architectural practices to participate in actual problems. This antagonism between "critical architecture" and "projective practices" exhibits the aesthetic polarization between autonomy and heteronomy in the architectural domain.

In the article *The Doppler Effect*, Hays' reinterpretation of Mies' Barcelona Pavilion or Eisenman's reading of Corbusier's Domino is deemed to be linked with "the technique of index", which "emerges as the most opportune mediator (or critical instigator of the between) in part because it automatically combines materialism with signification …or exists as a physically driven sign …"[28] By comparison, Somol and Whiting envisaged the a projective effect to be "cool", "low-definition", "relaxed", and "easy". When art critic Dave Hickey's comment is being borrowed, the projective practices, if analogous to theatric performance, is "not expressed (or represented), but delivered."[29] The crux of the matter is less architectural meanings (as the "critical" architecture do) than the delivered performance are conveyed by the projective practices. In other words, the mission that the projective practices assign to architecture is "*to enable*" or "*to perform*".[30]

6.3   New Babylon and The Fun Palace

Concerning delivering performance or "how to support the performative activity better"[31], the advocates of projective practices, seemingly, do not offer any credible solutions yet. But if looking back,

25. Michael Speaks, "Design Intelligence, Part I: Introduction," *A+U* December (2002): 12.
26. Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," 3.
27. Speaks, "Design Intelligence," 16.
28. Somol and Whiting, "Doppler Effect," 74.
29. Ibid., 76.
30. See the discussion in Section 3.7.
31. Ibid.

the proposition of so-called "projective practice" had been approached in some cases. Constant Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon and Cedric Price's "The Fun Palace" stand for the early explorations of "projective practice".

Undoubtedly, Constant Nieuwenhuys was one of the major figures of Situationist International. His positions and works – crystallized by New Babylon (see Figure 6.2) – were an integral part of situationism. Yet there was a tension between Constant and other situationist members, particularly, Guy Debord. One of the rifts between them consisted in the ways through which situations could be constructed — to *build* or to *act*? [32]

Although the situationists treated architectural and urban spaces as their principal battlefields, most of them, limited to their backgrounds of poet, writer, painter, artist, etc., did not express their ideas in the architectural form. The sole one who made the attempt was Constant Nieuwenhuys. His famous works were New Babylon. [33]

From 1958 to the early 1970s, Constant dedicated himself to perfecting his idea of "New Babylon". Using drawings, models, plans, collage, photographs and films, he incarnated the major ideas of Situationist International, particularly, *unitary urbanism*. However, the works "were not primarily an urban planning project, nor a traditional work of art, nor an example of architectonic structure. Instead, they were meant to give material shape to a revolutionary understanding of urban space and to encourage, as well as to provide a medium for, a new approach to urban living." [34]

New Babylon was connected by various *sectors* with their areas ranging from 10 to 30 hectares. Each sector was suspended by means of pilotis or self-bearing structures, floating about 15 to 30 meters above the ground. Through horizontal connection and extension, the sectors could cover a district, a city, and even a region (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: **Sectors Spreading Horizontally over the Hague Region.** Collage by Constant. Accessed in June 10, 2013, `http://31.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lmbcfxCmZr1qas3eno1_1280.jpg`.

32. As Constant developed his New Babylon, other situationists became increasingly at odds with him. Constant's architectural and urban interests were vehemently reproached by another situationist protagonist — Guy Debord. Constant felt isolated within the group and finally resigned in June 1960. After his leaving, a new version of "Basic Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism", which embodied Debord's attitude to unitary urbanism, was released in August 1961. The article said, "URBANISM DOESN'T EXIST; it is only an 'ideology' in Marx's sense of the word," and unitary urbanism is "a living critique of this manipulation of cities and their inhabitants, a critique fueled by all the tensions of everyday life." From Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism," *International Situationniste* 6 (1961), or from `http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/bureau.html`, accessed June 10, 2013. The article revealed that efforts in material terms were completely given up in Debord's unitary urbanism. For this reason, this dissertation will discuss situationist accomplishments in light of two domains — aesthetics and politics. The separation is based on their attitudes towards creating architecture from substantial materials.

33. Even the title of the projects is a sign showing Constant's insistence. While old Babylon as metaphor was often used in the conventional context to describe extravagance and corruption of modern cities, Constant revived the term Babylon to indicate a playful and enjoyable territory with lots of possibilities.

34. David Pinder, *Visions of the City: Utopianism, Power and Politics in Twentieth-Century Urbanism* (New York: Routleage, 2005), 162.

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Figure 6.4: **A View of Constant's Maquette for New Babylon's Yellow Sector, 1958-1961.** Photo by Victor Nieuwenhuys. From Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 141 (see chap.3, fig.6).
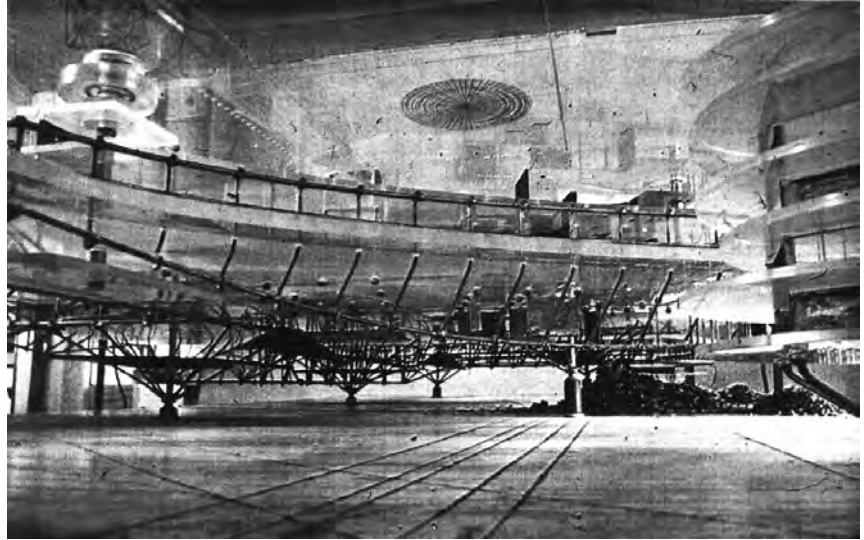
Internally, its spaces were partitioned and connected by mobile walls, bridges, lifts and stairs. These architectural elements are unfixed so as to assure spatial flexibility and adaptability in sectors.

There are two essential themes overstated in the project of New Babylon: "that social life and space in it would be *ludic* and *nomadic*". [35]

After World War II, the urban space in Europe became boring and cheerless. Urban critics and scholars such as Lefebvre, Constant, Debord and other Situationists tried to retrieve the spatial vitality through introducing the conception of play and festival. They even regarded play and festival as the crucial elements of radical art and politics. As a matter of materializing these ideas, New Babylon was a city constructed for *homo ludens* (players). Here the players could, anywhere and anytime, transform the built environments and their own life. In this huge playground, such normal functional elements as dwelling, hospital, school, factory, etc. were out of the question (see Figure 6.4).

New Babylon was also a nomadic space, which would push *home ludens* into a ceaseless *dérive*. The cityscapes and situations would change as long as the *homo ludens* (nomads) transformed the spatial configuration according their own demands. What New Babylon provided was no more than a spatial frame for the mobile activities of inhabitants. While construing their own situations and units of ambiance, the New Babylonian could wander into other situations and units of ambiance. Similar to the cyberspace, it was possible for a New Babylonian to open a new link at any nodes. New Babylon was simply a huge labyrinth.

New Babylon was a utopia without any restrictions. By dismantling all norms and conventions, New Babylon attempted supply a platform for individuals' complete emancipation and total liberty. As Marx's belief of communism as the "complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities" seemed to reach its peak in New Babylon, the utopia went into the opposite extreme unwittingly. In New Babylon, the efforts to remove all ties were nearly equated with destroying all communities. Those "oppressive ties" in Constant's eyes were often the very ones maintaining the common world. Without the necessary ties, there were

35. Ibid., 203.

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LEA RIVER SITE
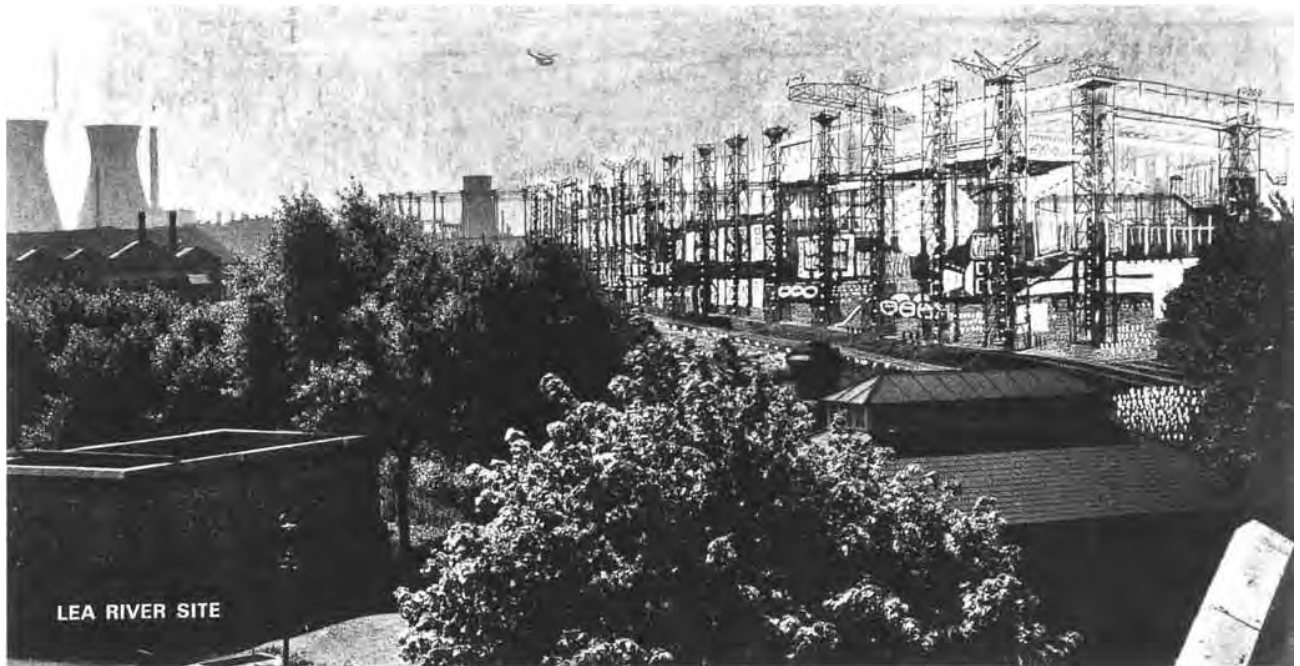
no longer any loyalties and identities to family or collective in New Baby-
lonians; within the endless *dérive*, the urbanites were only interested
in transitional and momentary situations, instead of forming common
senses like collective memory that can anchor the human being in the
world. With respect to *spatial publicness*, there was in New Babylon no
consensus but *dissensus*, no common world but public appearance. By
robbing the *homo ludens* of their common roots, the *dissensus* actually
imperiled its own existence.

Nearly in the same period of Constant's New Babylon, another sim-
ilar project was proposed by British architect Cedric Price (see Figure
6.8).

As "a real", "carefully designed and very nearly built" project, [36] the
Fun Palace had already materialized what is assumed in "projective prac-
tices". In a sense, it is even far more radical and revolutionary than the
latecomers. The building was envisioned as "a theater of pure performa-
tivity, a space of cultural *bricolage* where people could experience the
transcendence and transformation of the theaters not as audience but
as players." [37]

In response to variegated programs of education, performance,
game and entertainment advanced by Littlewood, Price applied a special
form — amorphous, fluid, flexible, and more like a huge shipyard. The
building provided "an unenclosed steel-frame structure, fully serviced by
a travelling gantry crane and containing hanging auditoria; moving walls,
floors, ceilings and walkways; multi-level ramps; and a sophisticated en-
vironmental system which included vapour barriers, warm air curtains,
fog dispersal plants and horizontal and vertical lightweight blinds." [38]

Unlike those who elude or control uncertainty in design, Price admit-
ted not only unpredictable demands and unstable behaviors of users,
but also claimed that "his own creativity was 'generated and sustained
through a delight in the unknown'." [39] A way to tolerate and embrace

Figure 6.5: **The Fun Palace, Drawing of the
Lea River Valley Scheme.** @Cedric Price
Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture,
Montreal. From Stanley Mathews, "The Fun
Palace as Virtual Architecture: Cedric Price
and the Practices of Indeterminacy," *Journal
of Architectural Education* 03 (2006): 41.

36. Stanley Mathews, "The Fun Palace as
Virtual Architecture: Cedric Price and the
Practices of Indeterminacy," *Journal of Ar-
chitectural Education* 03 (2006): 40. As the
essay records, Price and Joan Littlewood
(avant-garde theater producer, co-founder
of the Fun Palace) found a site for the Fun
Palace in East London, at Mill Meads, on
the banks of the Lea River. However, after
years of planning, just as construction
was set to begin, mid-level bureaucrats in
the local Newham planning office halted
the project, and the project was never
completed.

37. Ibid., 40.

38. Royston Landau, "A Philosophy of En-
abling: The Work of Cedric Price", *AA Files* 8
(1985): 4.

39. Mathews, "Fun Palace," 40.

40. Dell, "Die Performanz," 138 (see chap.3, n.26).

the indeterminacy is to render the Fun Palace as continuously adaptable as fluid program or self-regulating-process machine (see Figure 6.6). With this end in view, Price fell more back than his peers on the "high" techniques such as cybernetics, information technology and game theory, which in his view could expand the architectural capacity for interactivity and improvisation.

However, things might play out in the other direction involuntarily. Strongly influenced by cybernetician Gordon Pask, the Fun Palace was increasingly developed into a virtual architecture, or precisely, a computer program that could extrapolate the data of human behaviors algorithmically (see Figure 6.7). The introduction of cybernetics, information technology, and game theory altered the project's essence furtively. Chance and indeterminacy were systemized and modularized in the project whose focus gradually shifted from the emancipation of human being to a virtual device for behavioral organization and management. As Christopher Dell said, its improvisation became a kind of "enforced improvisation (*erzwungenen Improvisation*)." [40]

What is exposed in the project "the Fun Palace" pulls the aesthetic *dissensus* of architecture back into the middle of the teeter-totter between autonomy and heteronomy: "The work's solitude carries a promise of emancipation. But the fulfillment of that promise amounts to

Figure 6.6: **Cedric Price's Drawing of the Fun Palace.** (From top to bottom) The Interior of the Fun Palace and the preliminary sketch of the Fun Palace floor plan, circa 1965. It would be constantly under construction: Users would rearrange wall panels to create new spaces from old spaces as the program changed and evolved. @Cedric Price Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal. From Mathews, "Fun Palace," 40 and 43.

Organisational Plan as Programme

$T_1 \begin{bmatrix} Z_j(n) \end{bmatrix}$
from Lower Level
Individual Preference
Valuations

Next activity
Choice from
Lower Level

V_1

V_2

R

$T(Z_\Lambda)$

M

P

$\Omega (\Lambda)$

Compute
Property
Ω^*

Λ

To the middle
Procedure

$\emptyset_{Z_1 Z_2 \Lambda}(n)$ from the middle
procedure

Upper Level Procedure

Compute
Measure
$\emptyset_{Z_1 Z_2 \Lambda}(n)$

Adjust
Parameter
η

Input of
Unmodified
People

Actual
Network
$\lambda(n)$

Output of
Modified
People

Middle Procedure — given Selection of $\lambda(n)$ by Λ

To upper
level

$J(n)$

To upper
level

Obtain
Measure J(n)

Adjust
Parameter μ

Z_j in set Z_Λ

The F_m
Preference
Valuation
Assertion

The F_m
next
activity
selection

F_{im}

The F_m
Preference
Valuation
Assertion

The F_m
next
Activity
selection

F_{im}

Z_j in set Z_B

Type 1.

μ

Type 2.

Lower Level Procedure — given individual F_m choosing r_i
and $\lambda(n) = r_i(n)Z_j(n)$

DIAGRAM 1.

the elimination of art as a separate reality, its transformation into a form of life." [41]

6.4   Building vs. Edification or the Third Way?

Kenneth Frampton also noticed the paradox between architecture as an autonomous representation and that as heteronomous presentation. In his early essay "The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects", he put forward the architectural corollaries of labour and work founded on Arendt's arguments in *The Human Condition*: Architecture is viewed as multifariously paradoxical complex between the "useless things" fabricated by *homo faber* and "useful objects" produced by *animal laborans*, between "its status as 'edification' and as 'building'", between an art object and an instrument, between its "vernacular" role and "representative" role. [42] Following Arendt's pessimism over the emergence of *the social*, his opinion on the architectural reality in the industrialized modernity has been fairly negative. Although modern techniques have augmented the rhythm of life, they have never altered the destructive, devouring aspect of life. Instead, "the fundamental worldlessness of the *animal laborans* …manifested itself in the 18th century with the 'blind' mechanical production …" and also in the 20th century with "the equally blind process of mass consumption". [43] Under the circum-

41. Ranciére, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 36.
42. Kenneth Frampton, "The Status of Man and the Status of His Objects," in *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2002), 25-43.
43. Ibid., 35.

stances, the modern architecture has already been relegated into the role of "building", "the useful object", or "instrument". Hence, in his view:

> Twentieth-century avant-garde art has frequently resorted to collective play or at least aleatory forms of art as the necessary expression of an essentially 'social' and dynamic future, although in many instances innate 'labouring' values have assured that nothing could achieved save the tautology of production itself. While this strategy may capitalize on the indisputable authority of instrumentality, the parallel tendency of art to survive through the reductive assertion of its own autonomy is yet a further illustration of the general tendency of a laboring society to move towards privatization. [44]

Frampton's intensive melancholy of modernism came directly from Arendt, whose doctrines contain the innate *distribution of the sensible*, in other words, a kind of elitism. [45] As Ranciére points out, "her [Arendt's] opposition between the political and the social returns us to the old oppositions in Greek philosophy between men of leisure and men of necessity, the latter being men whose needs exclude them from the domain of appearance and, hence, from politics." [46] In this regard, Frampton's frustration is no more than the sorrow over the disappearing high rank of architecture that is designated by the division between work and labour within the Arendtian *distribution of the sensible*.

Is there the third way, a way that lies between heteronomy and autonomy, between representation and presentation?

A philosopher, Boris Groys, proposed a profound and bold opinion. Usually, the fundamental matter between representation and presentation, or between representation and reality, is how representation genuinely, authentically, and identically re-presents reality. To achieve this end, a seemingly effective method is to replace representation with the real presentation (presence). Therein either reality or its presentation (or its presence) is more primary than its representation. [47] However, for Groys, neither reality nor its presentation (or its presence), but the original separation between both, is the genuinely essential. Presenting reality does not take priority over representing reality. Rather, both of them functionally depend on the separation between them. That is to say, only after a line between them being set, are both entitled to be talked. The separation, or the line, between representation and reality creates an order, a stipulation, a ritual in tempo-spatial configuration. In essence, it is a topological order placing certain people, certain things under certain conditions, and not under others. [48]

Apparently, Groys' thinking is remarkably close to Ranciére's idea. The separation between representation and reality, in a way, corresponds with the sensible consensus. To create aesthetic *dissensus* can be likened to "erasure of the border" or "introduction of a break into differentiation". For the same token, the "erasure" and "introduction of a break" belong to the "exceptional situation (*Ausnahmezustand*)" where the differentiation (the separation, the line) is unrecognizable. In contrast to the obsession with conjuring up reality, Groys believes that the kernel of artistic practices is to suspend, transfer, abolish, and destabilize the border between representation and reality. Accordingly,

44. Ibid., 40.
45. See the discussion in Section 1.6.
46. Peter Hallward and Jacques Ranciére, "Politics and Aesthetics: An Interview," trans. Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 8 (2003): 202.
47. See the discussion in Chapter 3.
48. Boris Groys, "Strategien der Repräsentation 4: Repräsentation und Ausnahmezustand", accessed July 01, 2013, http://groys.hfg-karlsruhe.de/txt/stdrep_151101.pdf.

it can be claimed that the politics of art does not amount to the choice between the two poles, "art for art's sake" and "art becoming life" but the incessant polemics against the separation between art and life and the border between autonomy and heteronomy. [49]

The job cannot be done once and for all. For Groys, every "exceptional situation" has a limited validity and blurring the border is provisional and partial. The blurring means the attenuation on the one hand and reinforcement on the other. [50] Actually, it is the provisional and partial that guarantees openness and liminality of aesthetic *dissensus*.

An early case of architecture achieving the "exceptional situation" is Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou (see Figure 6.8). The building is a paradox. Obviously, Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano were inspired by the contrivance of the Fun Palace, but they converted the model into a kind of visual language of high-tech formalism. Centre Pompidou did not go as far as Price expected in stimulating improvisation and interactivity through undetermined program and form. Nevertheless, something unexpected happens: for now, the area where the Centre is located has been one of the most charming and vigorous section in Paris. Certainly, this success can be partly attributed to its central location. But it is also undeniable that nothing else but the "spectacle", high-tech appearance does reinject some aesthetic dissensus into the aged quarter Beaubourg, and the very combination of autonomous architectural formal language and heteronomous urban open space (including the slanting plaza of the building) animates the spaces to be a favorite place of artists, performers, inhabitants, youngsters, and tourists.

6.5   The Combination of Law and Freedom

In the current architectural universe, Rem Koolhaas and his OMA may be an exemplary figure who persistently produce the "exceptional

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.

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situation" and challenge the predetermined border of representation and presentation, autonomy and heteronomy, and even publicness and privacy, interior and exterior in a broad sense.

The Dutch critic Roemer van Toorn considers the architectural practices of Rem Koolhaas and Wiel Arets as a third aesthetic position in between "critical architecture" and "projective practices". In his view, some works of both architects create "possible encounters" leading to "a conflict between heterogeneous elements": "This conflict can cause ruptures in our perception and reveal secret connections and new possibilities pertaining to everyday reality." [51] This is possible not by "breaking the spell of reality" (contrast to critical architecture), nor by indulging in embracing the heterogeneity (different from projective and pragmatist practices), nor by interpreting or absolutizing the difference "as a fetish". [52] In both Koolhaas's Casa-da-Música and Aret's library, as Toorn argues, "the complex route through the space is held together by a strong urban form and an internal collective spaces …while the buildings manifest themselves autonomously in architectural terms, they invest in the everyday space-time sensorium." [53]

However, Roemer van Toorn's account is not so much close to home as that of Fredric Jameson, who remarked accurately upon the liminality of Koolhaas' works in a conversation with his student Speaks. Jameson believes that the projects spatially indicate a "post-civil" society. The primary feature of "post-civil" society is disappearance of the public/private distinction, which has been projected by "the combination of a law and freedom" in Koolhaas' work correspondingly. Koolhaas' projects "insists on the relationship between [the] randomness and freedom, and the presence of some rigid, inhuman, non-differential form that enables the differentiation of what goes around it." [54] This design strategy distinguishes his works not only "from the authoritarianism of an older corporate or planned society" (like the International Style), but also "from the fantasies of an anarchism that wants to dissolve all structures and create spaces for a free play that would reinvent its structures at every occasion or at every moment." (like Situationist International). [55] For Jameson, this striking solution is almost "a political paradigm" and "a paradigm for other levels of social life", such as "the ethical, the psychoanalytical, and so forth." [56]

Jameson also paid attention to another feature embodied in Koolhaas' projects — envelope. As he observes, Koolhaas always "builds an enormous envelope for all kinds of unprogrammed but differentiated activities." The huge envelope does not suggest a sharp demarcation between an inside and an outside, and conversely, "it is an inside that has no outside, even though a word like *envelope* seems to suggest this." [57] Koolhaas' preference for *Bigness* brings about a microcosm covered under a huge shell. "In a way, the very bigness turns into an antidote against fragmentation. Each of those entities acquires the pretension and sometimes the reality of a completely *enveloping* reality and an absolute autonomy." [58] In this regard, though Koolhaas embraces the necessary heteronomy of everyday life through his works, architectural autonomy never drops away from his view.

51. Roemer van Toorn, "Aesthetics as Form of Politics," *Open* 10 (2006): 49-54.

52. Ibid., 43.

53. Ibid., 54.

54. Fredric Jameson and Michael Speaks, "Envelopes and Enclaves: The Space of Post-Civil Society," *Assemblage* 17 (1992): 33.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 35.

58. Zaere and Koolhaas, "Finding Freedoms," 28.
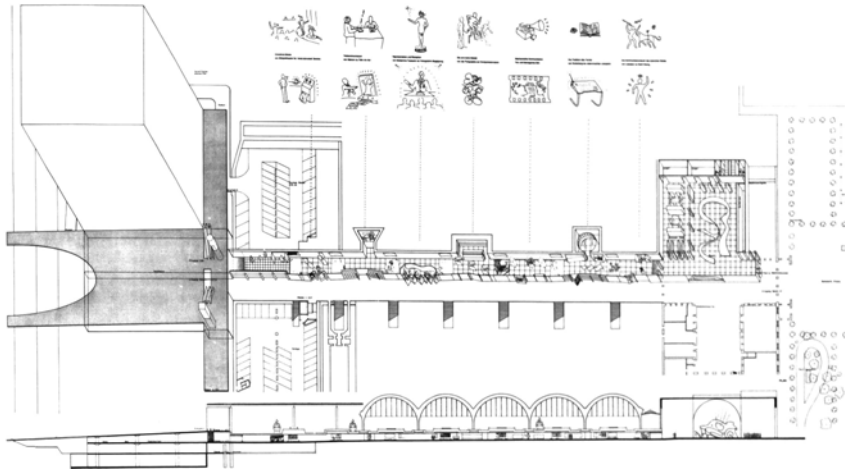
Two pieces of Koolhaas' works can illuminate his disposition towards a blend and in-between liminality (rigid, meaningless structural form and unprogrammed, free activities in the interstices). One is the ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie) in Karlsruhe and another is Seattle Central Library completed in 2004.

Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie: ZKM was a media museum, an "Electronic Bauhaus", designed in 1989-92. "Its program amalgamates a museum of media art; a museum of contemporary art; research and production facilities for music, video, and virtual reality; a theater for media; lecture hall; media library (a future Hochshule für Media), etc." [59] It was "a huge apparatus to investigate …the elusive connection between *Kunst* and technology," [60] located at the edge of Karlsruhe's historical town and partitioned by railways, platforms, station of DB (see Figure 6.9).

"To generate density, exploit proximity, provoke tension, maximize friction, organize in-betweens, promote filtering, sponsor identity and stimulate blurring, the entire program is incorporated in a single container, 43x43x58 meters …Inside the container, all programs are superimposed in a single stack: studios for music and film, then laboratories for video and computers, media theater, media museum, library and lecture hall, museum of contemporary art, restaurant, open-air terrace." [61]

The superimposition relied on an amorphous and free interior defined by huge walls in the east and west sides and seven vierendeels spanning between them. The large-span structures gave "an alternation between floors completely free of structure." The vierendeels and the huge walls constitute the core of the building. [62]

There are four thinner zones adhered to the core. Amid them, the void space facing the historical city and the train station was handled as public atrium. "A system of elevators, escalators, ramps, balconies climbs upward in a continuous movement from event to event." [63] Mantled by etched glass, the real-time activities behind the translucent membrane became a part of facade in their own right, which can be seen by passengers and travelers in the train station. In the east side, the facade was a metal wall used as electronic billboard: "activities of

59. Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *S, M, L, XL* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1995), 691.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 692-5.
62. Ibid., 695.
63. Ibid., 696.

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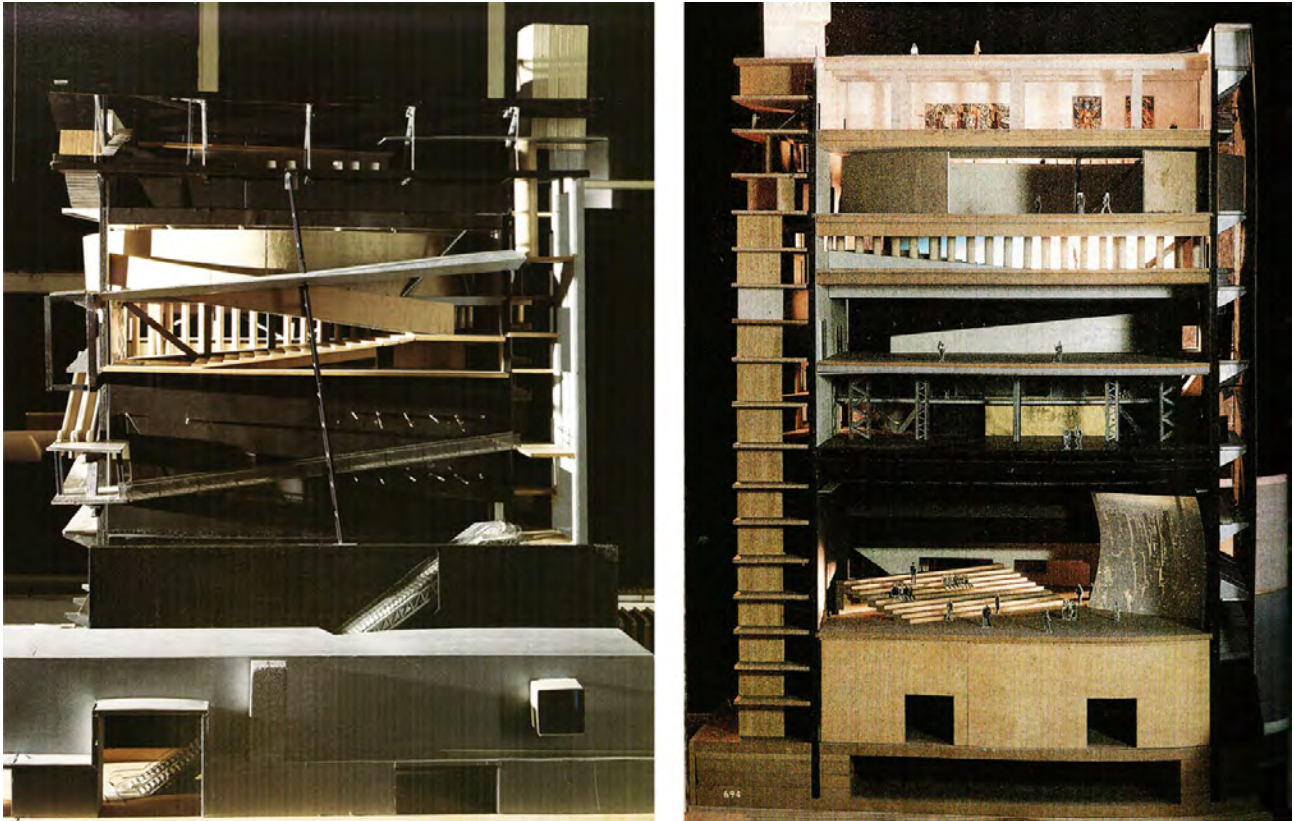
Figure 6.10: **Sectioned Models of ZKM.**
(From left to right) Sectioned models by axis east-west, view from the south, and that by axis east-west, view from the north. Photo by Hisao Suzuki, December 1991. From El Croquis, "1987–1998 OMA/Rem Koolhaas," 99, 101.

the center leak out and are projected in real time alternation with commercial messages, railway network bulletins, CNN, etc." [64]

In the project of ZKM, the free plan generated by the vierendeels and huge wall reminds us about the pattern of the Centre Pompidou, and earlier, that of the Fun Palace. In spite of this, Koolhaas' exploration might cease here. At least, the freedom occurring in the interstices does not evolve into an "enforced freedom (improvisation)." On the other hand, he has not abstained from the architectural autonomy thoroughly, as witnessed by the building's intact and sturdy appearance (see Figure 6.10).

Seattle Central Library: In this project, the architects of OMA advanced two essential ideas which form the backbone of the library: [65]

1. Like the traditional media — book, magazine and newspaper, the various emerging media are starting to demand additional priority in the library as a information fortress. Even so, these new media still cannot replace the papery media completely. Hence, a crucial issue is how to get spatial balance between the papery media and new media;

2. The library was transformed from the sheer reading room to a social center loaded many nontraditional responsibilities. In a report to the library board, OMA pointed that "32 percent of it (the library program) responded to books; 68 percent to other functions, such as classroom instruction, Internet access, and public meetings." [66] The proliferation of the additional functions dictated the need for more

64. Ibid.
65. Jacob Ward, "Research: The Seattle Public Library," *Metropolis* 10 (2004): 101, 141; or El Croquis, "The Seattle Public Library," 134+135 (2007): 64-117.
66. Ward, "Seattle Public Library," 141.
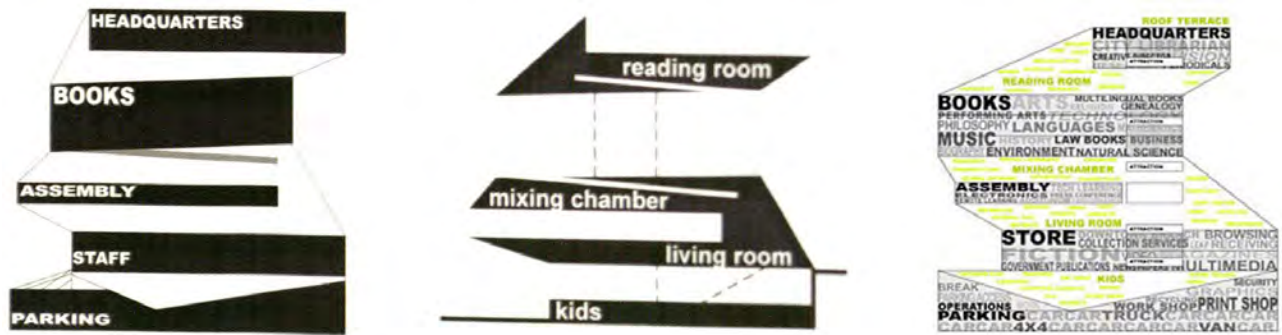
spatial flexibility and capacity (see Figure 6.11).

The two ideas did not change significantly as the project evolved even in the final phase. According to the principles, Koolhaas and designers of OMA combed and consolidated "the library's apparently ungovernable proliferation of programs and media" and identified them as two programmatic clusters: five of stability and four of instability. [67]

The stable platforms hold a range of predictable activities, including (from top to bottom): the headquarters, a spiral-shaped book-storage system, the meeting areas, the staff areas, and the parking garage. These programmatic areas are squeezed into five "boxes", which were designed as independent buildings with their own mechanical and structural systems. The maximum and dedicated performance of each box prevents their mutual interference and encroachment, when they expand in future.

The spaces in between the platforms function as trading floors to accommodate the unpredictable uses, such as the reading room, the mixing chamber (a central area for reference books, online catalogs), an unprogrammed living Room, and reading areas for children and multilingual patrons. The four flexible areas exactly play the expanded civil role of the library. No more just supplying information, the library becomes a place for public education in a broad sense, a place for public interaction, play, and loitering (see Figure 6.12).

Different sizes, shapes, and positions of the boxes make the architectural profile very complex. OMA's solution is fairly simple: enveloping the building along the boxes' outer wall with diamond-shaped glass panes. Although its shell bulges and retreats, rises and drops, the mantle out of mesh glass unifies the building into a colossal, autonomous icon in Seattle downtown (see Figure 6.13).

Within the two OMA's projects, an endeavor to transgress borders and to create an "exceptional situation" is readily detectable. The borders might exist between the meaningless structural form and freedom within its interstices, between autonomous manifestation and heteronomous everyday details, and between the inside and outside, etc. In ZKM, the meaningless framework was made up by the huge walls and seven vierendeels, supporting the indeterminate activities in the thin voids; In Seattle Central Library, the framework was constituted by the five stable platforms, with contingency, indeterminacy and freedom occurring in the amorphous in-between areas. In both cases, all

Figure 6.11: **The Platform Diagram of the Seattle Public Library.** (From left to right) Five platforms of stability, four trading floors of instability, and word section. From El Croquis, "1996–2007 OMA/Rem Koolhaas," 72.

67. Ibid., 72.

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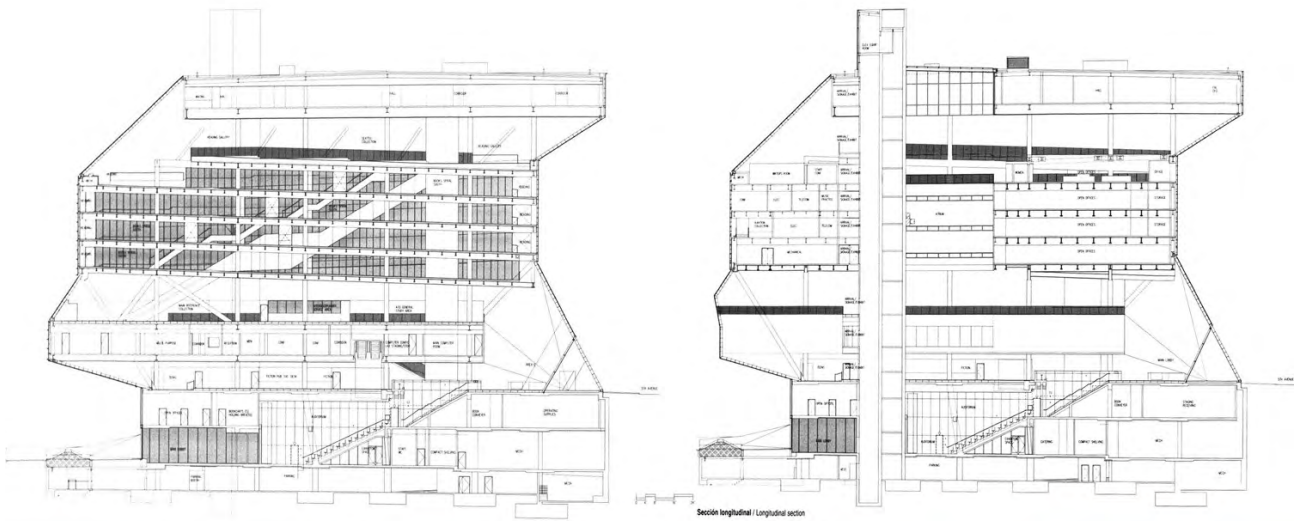
Figure 6.12: **The Sections and Interior Image of the Seattle Public Library.** From El Croquis, "1996–2007 OMA/Rem Koolhaas," 72, 84, 90-1.

Figure 6.13: **An Aerial View of the Seattle Public Library.** Photo by Ramon Prat, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://ad009 cdnb.archdaily.net/wp-content/upl oads/2009/01/1739357218_spl-aeri al-exterior-day-prat-489x450.jpg`.

of the variegated programs are eventually enveloped by an intact and autonomous geometrical shell. Whether the etched glass and electronic bulletin of ZKM or the diamond-shaped curtain wall of the library, all of the membranes enables some interchange between the autonomous building and the everyday environment. Moreover, the other OMA's projects also carry these traits, such as the early ones, National Library of France in 1989, Zeebruge Sea Terminal in 1989, or the later one, Casa-da-Música in 2005.

It is obvious that the architectural operation in both cases did not slip into an out-of-control production of indeterminacy and contingency, as Jameson said, "an older anarchist libertarianism that wants to dissolve all structure." [68] Historically, certain defiant endeavors against autonomous representation have been entrapped into the immoderate revelry of indeterminacy, contingency and difference. Koolhaas' works do not reject the autonomy and its effect on aesthetic dissensus. But it is not the autonomy *per se*, but tensions and conflicts generated between autonomous forms and everyday life, law and freedom, which are featured as the aesthetic meaning of the spaces. This is one kind of spatial publicness achievable by architecture, namely the publicness in a sense of aesthetic dissensus.

6.6   Mega-Structure or Mega-Form

The discussion on the architectural role in aesthetic *dissensus* is helpful to explore the *spatial publicness* of Shanghai's urban spaces, especially the commercial spaces and metro stations. As the Chinese scholars (e.g., Han Dongqin) suggest, these production of the spatial

68. Jameson and Speaks, "Envelopes and Enclaves," 33.

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types in China's high-speed urbanization have escaped from the strict disciplinary division between architecture and urban design. With complicated functions, colossal scale and central location, the commercial and metro spaces become spatial nodes carrying the major weight in their quarters.

Nevertheless, the high level of *spatial publicness* is not an inevitable result of the colossal scale, complex functions and subsequent influx of people. In the end, some sophisticated shopping and transportation machines might come into being under the strict spatial program and administrative measures. The so-called public spaces fall into hollowness only filled by commercial signs. Much of their spatial soul, the publicness, has been lost. For example, the principles proposed by Chinese scholars — "three dimensions, complexity and compactness" focus only on achieving a "multifarious spatial system with high efficiency and integrity", but fail to address the diversity of meanings. Since the primary task of these spaces if efficiency, to use a non-position programmatic juxtaposition works as "an accepted stand-in for a radicalized public realm" is a logic step. This device is ubiquitous but less imaginative. The concept of "HOPSCA" coined by Chinese real estate developers is no more than an upgrade version of such symptoms. [69]

Therefore, in Shanghai's high-density environments, the large-scale spatial nodes like shopping centres or metro stations, on the one hand, ceaselessly incorporate various spatial elements and functions, on the other, meticulously elude the appearance of unpredictability and spatial *dissensus*, although the endeavours is mostly in vain.

It is not only justifiable but necessary for these large-scale purpose-built spaces to manage their spatial activities through certain programs, for instance, restricting the activities in metro stations to a reasonable category for the sake of safety and efficiency. Notwithstanding this, the mushrooming of unpredictable differences and their requirements of public appearance have put the strict adherence to spatial controllability and efficiency in a rather awkward position. Apart from generating the "non-place" defined by Marc Augé, the high-handed programs cannot make the spaces play a major role in propping up *spatial publicness*. As a kind of spatial consensus, they attempt to configure the space totally, without any room left for spatial dissensus.

It is not to say that this kind of mega-structural spaces rejects the spatial presentation of meaning compeletely. On the contrary, the presentation of (architectural) meaning is often adopted intentionally to serve commercial and political interests behind architecture. Of course, the old-styled symbolic way will be superceded by new expressive technologies. Atmosphere, a third spatial state between object and subject, is widely utilized as a resistance to obsolete iconographical representations. In fact, it is not a new thing and has long been enlisted in architectural practices as a device to subject the spectator's perception to religious and political authority. Although it is neither the enemy nor the alliance of *spatial publicness* in its own right, atmosphere has been used to veil and dissimulate the spatial meaning presented by (users') subjectivity in Chinese spatial practices.

69. See the discussion in Section 5.6.

The debate between critical architecture and projective practices seems to echo the anxiety about the abduction of architectural meanings by mighty capitalist reality. Therein, the critical architecture seeks to attain its autonomy whose power "ensues from its distance with respect to ordinary experience", and "carries a promise of emancipation", [70] while the projective practices actively participate in social reality by proclaiming the modesty, or even, the triviality of their works, and do not mind the subsequent disappearance of architectural autonomy. But the critical architecture is always caged again by capital and power, and the projective practices overestimate the architectural capacity to transform society and hence only leave some anodyne endeavors. For the mega-structures, their colossal scales made them unavoidably involved in social reality and hardly remain their intended autonomy. When deeply sliding down the slippery reality, they are instrumentalized increasingly and have less affect on the production of *spatial publicness*.

Rem Koolhaas' early works might point the mega-structures in a new direction. As he wrote, "in the Downtown Athletic Club each 'plan' is an abstract composition of activities that describes, on each of the synthetic platform, a different 'performance' that is only a fragment of the larger spectacle of the Metropolis …Such an architecture is an aleatory form of 'planning' life itself: in the fantastic juxtaposition of its activities, each of the Club's floor is a separate instalment of an infinitely unpredictable intrigue that extols the complete surrender to the definitive instability of life in the Metropolis." [71] Drawing on the inspiration from the Culture of Congestion in Manhattan, Koolhaas developed a set of his own practical strategy, that is, interrogating "program" as a critical modernist strategy by cross-programming. The device gives rise to the liminality between "interior and exterior", "private and public" in his architectural spaces, which is regarded by Jameson as representations of "post-civil" society and is realized through the combination of "randomness and freedom" and through the "some rigid, inhuman, non-differential form". Recognizing the necessity and legitimacy of structure, order, and consensus to a point, Koolhaas still retains enough outlets in his works for difference, freedom and *dissensus*. He strives for a delicate balance and keeps the totality from encroaching on the individual and spatial freedom. In this sense, his works allow of the "exceptional situation (*Ausnahmezustand*)".

Koolhaas's spatial strategies can help reshaping the understanding of the Shanghai mega-structures like shopping center and metro stations that suffer from dominant impacts of the modern functionalist principles. Lying between law and freedom, autonomy and heteronomy, efficiency and difference, the aesthetic dissensus appertaining to presenting meanings of architectural and urban spaces themselves becomes the main sources of *spatial publicness*.

The *liminality* of Koolhaas' early works might offer the mega-structures a way out of the dilemma. Through combination of "randomness and freedom" and the "some rigid, inhuman, non-differential form", Koolhaas's works not only recognize the necessity and legitimacy of order, *consensus* and autonomy, but still preserve enough outlets for differ-

70. Ranciére, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 36.
71. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994), 157.
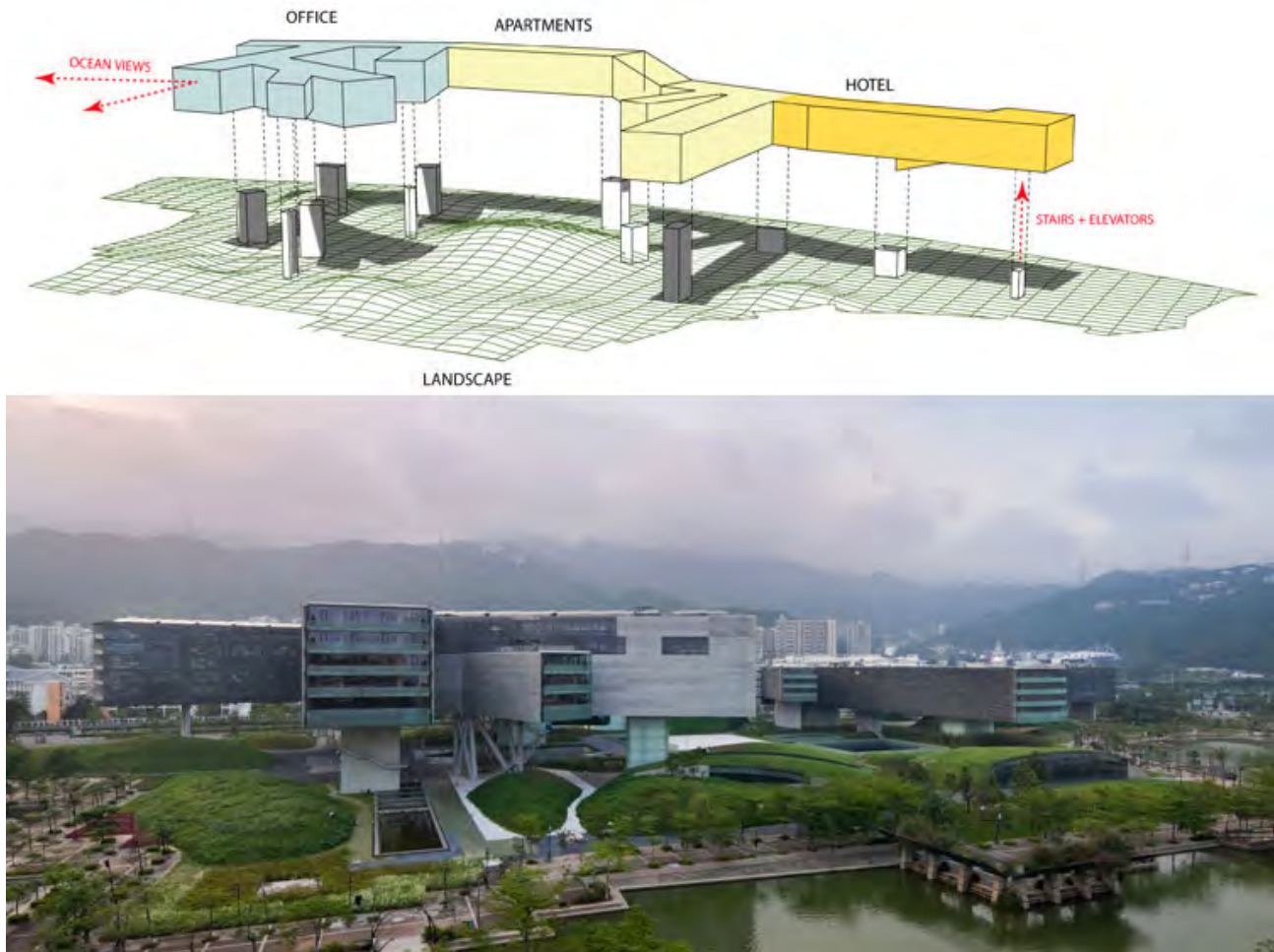
Figure 6.14: **The Layout Scheme and Aerial View of the Vanke Center.** Photo by Iwan Baan, accessed June 10, 2013, http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?type=mixeduse&id=58&page=0.

72. Kenneth Frampton, "The Work and Influence of El Lissitzky," in *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2002), 132-3.

ence, *dissensus* and heteronomy. In this sense, his works allow of the "exceptional situation (*Ausnahmezustand*)".

The concrete pathways to *liminality* are manifold. While Koolhaas was inspired by the vertical congestion culture in Manhattan, Steven Holl explored the thesis of the "horizontal skyscrapers" in his design for the Vanke Headquarters (see Figure 6.14). The conception of "horizontal skyscrapers" can be traced back to El Lissitzky's 1920s proposal for a series of aerial office structures. Each office building, named as Wolkenbügel, or "cloud prop", was a flat three-story, 180-meter-wide, L-shaped slab. The buildings rested on three pylons and were cantilevered high above the street. According to Frampton, Lissitzky, in this project, "anticipated not only Louis Kahn's thesis of separating servant from served spaces but also propositions by architects such as Yona Friedman and Kenzo Tange to construct additional accommodation, for both the maintenance of density and the alleviation of congestion in urban centers, by means of either space frames or wide-span bridge structures erected on pylons over the existing street system." [72]

This horizontal conception is continued in the Vanke Center by Holl. Suspended on eight cores as far as 50 meters apart, the hybrid building hovers over a tropical garden. The decision to float the immense struc-

ture right under the 35-meter height limit frees up the private lot and generates the largest possible green and water grounds open to the public. Seemingly, there is no difference in the program between a common mixed-used building and the Vanke Center with hybrid functions including apartments, a hotel and offices for the Real Estate Corporation, spa and parking lot under the vast green landscape. But the Vanke Center does so in a horizontal manner. People in the surrounding communities have already begun inhabiting this new public space for leisure. Admittedly, the Horizontal Skyscraper achieves not only the aesthetic meaning of the architecture, but also leaves room for presenting heteronomous meanings (see Figure 6.15). [73]

Another project of Holl, the Linked Hybrid complex, also embodies this "horizontal" *liminality* (see Figure 6.16).

The project aims to counter the current privatized urban developments in China by creating a porous urban space, inviting and opening to the public from every side. In the city, the eagerness of a growing middle class to renew its Mao-era housing is only satisfied by new apartment towers in gated clusters. The architects pushed the client to develop a mix-used program, including 650 apartments, a multiplex cinema, a hotel, shopping and dining facilities, a kindergarten and preschool. The whole program was divided into eight medium-rise towers and connected near their tops by one- and two-story bridges. The architects made an effort to open its grassy perimeter and landscaped central plaza to the surrounding community, welcoming nonresidents to use the facilities. The "sky loop" and a series of artificial green earthworks on the ground can constantly generate random relationships and function as social condensers resulting in a special experience of city life to both residents and visitors. The collective image and the public substance of the Linked Hybrid become the resistance to isolated objects or private island in an increasingly privatized city (see Figure 6.17). [74]

73. "Horizontal Skyscraper — Vanke Center," Steven Holl Architects, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.stevenhol l.com/project-detail.php?type= mixeduse&id=60&page=0`.
74. "Linked Hybrid," Steven Holl Architects, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.stevenholl.com/project -detail.php?id=58&worldmap=true`.

Figure 6.17: **An Aerial View and Close-up of Linked Hybrid.** Photo by Iwan Baan, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?type=mixeduse&id=58&page=0`.

The two Holl's projects are categorized by Frampton as "*megaform*", an urban design strategy to respond to the space-endless and placeless "megalopolis" (French geographer Jean Gottmann's concept). The term seems to resemble the familiar term of *megastructure*. But for Frampton, the *megaform* "refers to the form-giving potential of certain kinds of topographic transformation in the megalopolitan landscape," [75] unlike megastructural focuing on "the large scale manifestation and expression of its intrinsic structure." [76] As Frampton concludes, "architecture can only intervene urbanistically in an increasingly remedial manner and that one effective instrument for this is the large building program that may be rendered as a megaform — as an element which due to its size, content and direction has the capacity to inflect the surrounding landscape and give it a particular orientation and identity." [77] The megaform is set by him against those "free-standing high-rise structures", which, "for all their rival potential as landmarks, do not attain the same anthrogeographic status." [78] The megaform, for him, can retrieve the capacity of architecture to mark the ground and to establish a cosmic order by gathering up the contingent landscape around it.

In his brief manifesto for *megaform*, some points are strongly bound to spatial *publicness* (In the following account their original sequence will be adjusted slightly):

- A seminal attribute of the *megaform* is it's quintessential horizontality, which is integrated as much as possible with the site on which it sits. At times this topographic character may be so dominant as to become a virtual landscape in itself.
- As with the nineteenth century arcade, the *megaform* has the capacity of providing a public domain in what is otherwise a totally privatized, processal, and largely placeless environment.
- It should be clear …that a *megaform* may come into being at quite different scales and thereby assume a distinctly different place-creating potential depending, not only on the scale but also on the programmatic complexity of the form in each case. Thus, a *megaform* may vary from being an organic residential continuity …to the relatively extensive, self-continued, civic complex …
- Within the space-endlessness of the megalopolis, a *megaform* may also serve as a kind of landmark feature, like a geological outcrop.
- It would seem that certain contemporary building programs readily lead themselves to being accommodated as *megaforms* …, (such) as universities, air terminal, railway stations, shopping centers, cemeteries, hospitals, sport facilities and convention centers, etc.
- A *megaform* may thus be realized by the society, in a limited time period, as a one-off urban intervention capable of affording a programmatically different experience within the seemingly infinite, space-endlessness of the contemporary megalopolis.
- While *megaforms* would appear to be most readily applicable to the megalopolitan domains, they may also be integrated into traditional urban fabric as in the case of, say, Rockerfeller Center in

75. Kenneth Frampton, *Megaform as Urban Landscape* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1999), 16.

76. Kenneth Frampton, *Megaform as Urban Landscape* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2010), 44-7.

77. Frampton, *Megaform* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1999), 40.

78. Ibid., 41.

79. Frampton, *Megaform* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2010), 44-7.

80. Waldheim, "Landscape as Urbanism," 42 (see chap. 5, n. 68).

New York. [79]

Frampton credits *megaform* with great capacity to mediate the "non-place, urban realm" of contemporary urbanization. Its viability still need be proved by more practices. The conventional differentiation between architecture, landscape and civic design tends to be blurred in the megaform, and the role of landscape has quietly replaced the architectural "resistance" on which he insisted in the doctrine of "critical regionalism". As Waldheim pointed out, the sheer formalist "resistance" (or the edification he early praised) has given way to the medium (landscape) for constructing meaningful relations (albeit still slim). [80] The concept of "megaform" alludes to a way towards landscape urbanism that embarks on a staging strategy for the *dissensus* of politics.

In an era when art is subject to capital and power, aesthetics has a bad reputation. Invariably in the field of architectural and urban design, aesthetics is always seen as a synonymy of hegemony, inequality and deception. Despite the rationality of the opinions, this paper still wants to explore or restore the force of aesthetics in producing *publicness*. The force is neither related to the architecture as a self-containment sign, nor fully equal to the presentation of everyday meaning alien to architectural objects. It lies subtly between law and freedom, autonomy and heteronomy, efficiency and difference. This elusiveness makes the aesthetic *dissensus* hardly comprehensible, but this is also the very appeal of architectural and urban design. For the Shanghai mega-structures suffering from dominant impacts of the modern functionalist principles, the aesthetic *dissensus* appertaining to architecture and urban spaces themselves can become the main sources of *spatial publicness*.

7   Politics Dissensus

In the aesthetic practices, architects' efforts to pursue the sophisticated form increasingly yield to rules of economic circulation within global capitalism. The star-architect system makes such efforts rapidly spectaclized. In addition, a purely formal language looks ineffectual in the context of social inequality, environmental degradation and other urgent problems. Therefore, more and more architects turn their attention to the current state of the urban world and intervene more aggressively in social issues. For *spatial publicness*, these spatial practices have enough involvement in politics *dissensus*.

These kinds of practices devotes themselves to reconfiguring social relations. They attempt to alter the disciplining public space by removing the social distance. The erosion of distance seems slimly different from the ideas of projective practices that stand on a pragmatist ground to cater for the "proliferating swarms of 'little' truths appearing and disappearing fast".[1] Yet there is one point to be made here, namely that the emphasis of the former on creating subjectivity is completely distinct from the focus of the projective practices still on the objective perception. Actually, the former appears hugely divergent from the traditional architectural disciplines and has ultimately jointed the tide of political activism.

7.1   Situationist International

The architectural practices have a profound affinity with some early artistic tendencies. Borrowing Malevich's slogan, Rancière generalizes the tendencies into "art becoming life", which also comprises "engaged art", "relational art" prevalent in current years. As their names allude to, they can be traced back to "a juncture between the Marxist vanguard and the artistic avant-garde in the 1920s, as each side was attached to the same program: the construction of new forms of life, in which the self-suppression of politics would match the self-suppression of art."[2] For the current architectural and urban practices, their direct forerunner was "Situationist International" dating from the Aftermath of World War II on the European continent. Despite its disappearance for a long time, quite a few principles once advocated by it have returned to urban practices and become the main tenets of current urban activists and designers, when they fight against the social and spatial hegemony of capitalism. Especially, in recent years, the pressure from the financial crisis precipitates its recurrence. A specter is haunting the urban world — the specter of "Situationist International".

Starting from 1951, "Situationist International" was a loose alliance of intellectuals, artists and architects. Its rise stood for the critical reflection on the dominance of modernistic practices after the War. By launching innumerable tiny and trivial spatial uprisings to release and stimulate individuals' creativity and freedom, it fought against the overwhelming logic of efficiency and instrumentality in modernistic practices and their oppressive technological urban spaces. In the situationists'

1. See the discussion in Section 6.2.
2. Ranciére, "Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes," 138 (see chap.6, n.22).

eyes, urban spaces equate to sets of social relationships in essence and physical environments amount to a giant battlefield or a colossal ready-made for games and perpetual revolution of everyday life. Only by disrupting given relationships and creating new situations can the "real life" be reclaimed. [3] This constant revolution even catalysed the 1960s student movement through spatial games and festivals. The major critical tools include:

- *dérive* ("drift"): an unplanned journey through urban spaces with the ultimate goal of encountering an entirely new and authentic experience (see Figure 3.7);
- *détournement* ("diversion"): an appropriation of original spatial objects and repurposing them in the way of satirical parody or political prank.

The devices were simply some action strategies, rather than an operable planning principle like "form follows function". [4] Given that architectures, even those so-called progressive architectures, may bring about a spatial dictatorship in the way of disciplining the human body, the most radical situationists ducked out of the construction issue of physical spaces. This thorough exclusion of built entity partly resulted in the divergence of two situationist protagonists, Guy Debord and Constant Nieuwenhuys. [5] Those radically non-physical and anarchist attitudes may help explain why "Situationist International" suddenly fell into decay by 1972, just a few years after its rise.

7.2   Tactics for Urbanism

The 2007 financial crisis brought "Situationist International" back into the view of spatial practices. The critical practices on current urban issues are receiving increasing attention from publications, magazines, exhibitions, academic institutions, NGOs and architects. The multifarious practices can be prank and satire on regular routine, critical intervention to advance the livability of a local environment, as well as the creation of more participant and interactive opportunities for a new (aesthetic and political) community. No matter what the form is, they are entwined with real life, in order to realize a substantial effect. They repel grand narratives, have no unitary platform, and hence are diversely labeled: "Tactical Urbanism", "Situative Urbanism", "Guerilla Urbanism", "Interventionist Urbanism", etc. Such names mirror some features of these practices more or less. The features include:

- time: provisional, short-term, fluid;
- range: local, communal, neighborhood;
- technology: tactical, opportunistic, interventionist;
- effect: defiant, provocative, instigative, mobilizing;
- approach: reused, mixed, built.

Those traits are almost blanketed in a summary of opposition between strategy and tactic in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. His opinions of tactics have served nearly as a guide for various urban activisms:

"By contrast with a strategy…, a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority,

3. Kuhnert et al., "Situativer Urbanismus,"
    18-9 (see chap.3, n.25).
4. Ibid., 18.
5. See chap.6, n.32.

then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power …It (tactic) takes advantage of 'opportunities' and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment." [6]

Confronting such a changeable and populous city not as it once was, people require spatial practices to be flexible and elastic, adaptable and multitasking accordingly. Traditional architectural and planning strategies fail to meet this requirement. The protagonists are being shifted from professional designers, planners and architects to community activists, grass-root associations and civilians, when the spatial practices, driven by the requirements, resort to cheaper, quicker and more portable means.

The spatial activism breaks away from the autonomous discourses of architecture and urban design and plunges into heteronomous fields of life. The extreme outcome is that architecture disappear and spatial practices fuse with daily life so as to become one part of it. Ranging from converting parking space into a park-like public space to shortly activating vacant outdoor spaces for informally businesses, from gardening private and public land without permission to reducing the visual pollution by altering outdoor advertising, the heteronomous practices challenge the architectural authority in two aspects: the authority of architects and of their architecture. [7] "The former occurs when the work of an 'illegal' architect is recognized as architecture. The latter occurs when the use occupies architecture." [8] The two aspects refer to the two central rights enabled by Lefebvre's "right to the city" — "the right to *participation* and to *appropriation*." [9] This is obviously not the place for a full-scale investigation, but it is nonetheless important to chart, if only briefly, the key types of these practices for the further research. These practices can be enumerated as follows:

1) Spatial Reclamation, Appropriation and Occupation

In succession to *situationist détournement*, the spatial reclamation, appropriation, and occupation are one of the most populous heteronomous tactics. By temporarily altering the original purposes and functions, more opportunities for encounter, meeting and interaction are created and offered. People are invited to experience and perceive urban space in a different way. Reappropriating spaces can be ephemeral and one-off, or periodic and long-term, and the initiators can be a grass-root association in a community or municipal authority. Growing popular in North American and Europe, this kind of practices are numerous — "open streets", "parking day", "pavement to plazas" and "play street". All of them are tasked with temporarily supplying a safe space for walking, bicycling, skating and other social activities (see Figure 7.1). [10]

• Paris Plages (Paris Beaches): Since 2001 the annual event has been
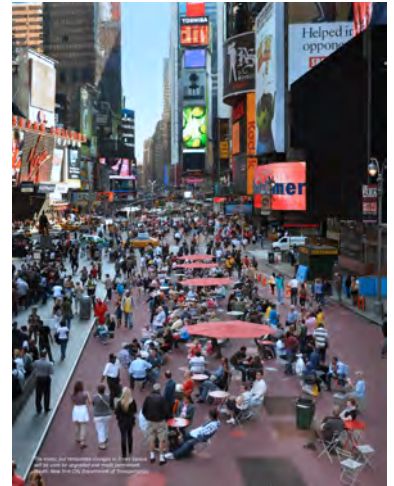
Figure 7.1: **A Temporary Change in Times Square, New York City.** Credit: New York City Department of Transportation. From Mike Lydon et al., *Tactical Urbanism 2*, 18, accessed July 01, 2013, http://www.cnu.org/sites/www.cnu.org/files/tacticalurbanismvol2final.pdf.

6. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Every-day Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 36-7.

7. See the discussion of the hierarchy of representation in Section 3.1.

8. Jonathan Hill, introduction to *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*, ed. Jonathan Hill (New York: Routledge, 1998), 5.

9. Lee Stickells, "Editorial: The Right to the City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance," *Architectural Theory Review* Vol. 16, Issue 3 (2011): 215.

10. See the introduction in *Tactical Urbanism 1*, *Tactical Urbanism 2*, or *The Open Street Guide*. The pamphlets are available on internet. Accessed July 01, 2013, http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol.1, http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final, http://openstreetsproject.org/blog/2012/02/21/open-streets-project-releases-best-practices-guide.

Figure 7.2: **Paris Plages 2012**. Photos by Sophie Robichon (left and right top), by JB Gurliat (left bottom), and by Clémentine Roche (right bottom), accessed July 01, 2013, `https://picasaweb.google.com/107658898550370129555/ParisPlages2012`.

the earliest and most famous instance of spatial appropriation in Europe. The 4/5-weeks-long leisure assembly has evolved into a routine festival of the city. A 3.5-kilometer-long embankment of the Seine between Pont Neuf and Pont de Sully has been transformed into temporary artificial beach equipped with lounges, hammocks, shower and game facilities for strolling, sightseeing, playing and resting. The creative idea engrosses almost 4 million visitors every summer and has been widely disseminated into other European metropolises — Roma, Amsterdam, Berlin, Frankfurt, etc. [11] Only coordinated by the municipal fund and administration can the idea come into effect, owing to its vast costs and central location. In a way, this kind of practices has detached themselves from de Certeau's concept of tactics and been conflated with urban policy (see Figure 7.2).

A variant is the occupation of waste land, void and infrastructure in cities. A common case is the occupation of the leftover spaces severed and divided by viaduct, tunnel and river. In current urban China, the poverty of public places or repulsion by the orthodox public space have prompted urbanites spontaneously to long since occupy these spaces.

2) Mobility

On the one hand, there is a prevalent resistance to the hegemony of radical personal mobility; on the other, the mobility can be utilized to charge at the mono-logical spatial narrative or to bring about the nomad

11. Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, ed., *Temporäre Räume: Konzepte zur Stadtnutzung* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 206-20.

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publicness.

- *Homeless Vehicle*: An early instance was the installation *Homeless Vehicle* designed by artist Krzysztof Wodiczko. Constructed of aluminum, steel mesh, sheet metal and plexiglas, the trolley-shape object was a modern Mongolian yurt for homeless people. More than dictated by the practical needs and direct requests of men who live and work on the streets, the more important purpose of *Homeless Vehicle* was to endow them with public appearance, those who were evicted from the public space. After all, according to Arendt's argument, to "be" in public is to move out of the private realm. Wodiczko questioned this thought by increasing the visibility of the evicted. The mobile symbol not only challenges the economic and political systems that expel the homeless but subverts also the modes of perception that exile them (see Figure 7.3). [12]

- *Spacebuster*: The *Spacebuster* is made of a step van and a big inflatable space coming out of the back of the van fitting up to 80 persons in it. It is a mobile forum designed by Berlin-based architectural collective Raumlabor for Storefront for Art and Architecture. The mobility of the van and the amorphousness of the soft bubble enable the various events to be held in any spot such as in a courtyard of an old factory, under an archway, or under the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The membrane acts as a semi permeable border between the public and private, between the outside and inside. In this way, the surroundings become the backdrop of the scene as viewed from the inside, and projections onto the membrane can be also viewed from the outside (see Figure 7.4). [13]

- Public Mobility in Urban China: Mobility is always a weapon of the weak. Whether in vendor's stalls carried manually by shoulder poles, or in mobile stores drove by bicycle, rickshaw, or pickup currently, mobility incessantly plays an irreplaceable role in improving living conditions of the poor and diversifying urban life,

Figure 7.3: **Krzysztof Wodiczko's Homeless Vehicle in Action, 1988.** From Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Public Address: Krzysztof Wodiczko* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1992).

Figure 7.4: "Spacebuster." Raumlaborberlin, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=1799`.

12. Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," in *Evictions,* 49-108 (see chap.1, n.21).
13. "Spacebuster," Raumlaborberlin, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=1799`.

Figure 7.5: **Public Mobility in Urban China.**
Photo by Bai Xiaoci, accessed July 01, 2013,
`http://shoots.it/index.php?go=`
`category_5`.

though unconsciously and unsophisticatedly. As the Wodiczo's homeless vehicle, mobility indeed renders the weak concealed under front spatial codes so visible that the spatial consensus has to face a terrible shock (see Figure 7.5).

3) Event Creation

Creating Events is not something new in spatial exploration. Things like improvisation of buskers for soliciting passers-by on the street or a commercial show for displaying merchandises in shopping mall can be counted as a form of event creation. However, what here will be discussed is a kind of agonistic one. By embedding an abrupt event, the power relations and distance regime underlying in the urban environment are tested, questioned, exposed and provoked.

- Radio Ballet: It is a radio play in public spaces launched by group LIGNA that consists of the media and performance artists. By virtue of collective radio reception and then performing some deviant behavior, the dispersed radio listeners have the opportunity to subvert the regulations of the space at that moment (see Figure 7.6). The places where LIGNA perform their "Exercise in Lingering not according to the rules (*Übung in nichtbestimmungsgemäßem Verweilen*)" are those nominal "public spaces", but actually put under the surveillance of great institutions or corporations. A typical event, the first RadioBallet, took place in Hamburg central station in May 2002. Controlled by a panoptic regime of surveillance cameras and security guards, the train station forbade any abnormal situation. The Radio Ballet brought back the excluded gestures into the central station, with around 500 participants acting choreographically. Eventually, the collective performance was transformed into a political intervention. For this reason, LIGNA was confronted with the litigation of DB Company, but they won the suit. [14]
- "How to Create Territory": It is a spatial experiment designed by
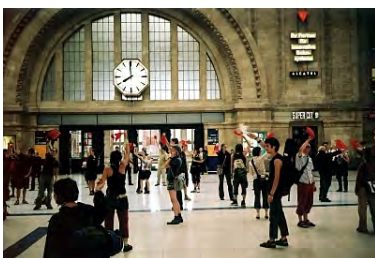
Figure 7.6: **RadioBallet.** Accessed June 10, 2013, `http://ligna.blogspot.de/200 9/12/radio-ballet.htm`.

14. "Radio Ballet," LIGNA, accessed June 10, 2013, `http://ligna.blogspot.de/2 009/12/radio-ballet.html`; or Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, ed., *Temporäre Räume: Konzepte zur Stadtnutzung* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 130-3.

Australian architect Rochus Urban Hinkel to probe the publicness of public space by means of "private encounter" and "public occupation". Hinkel arranged four students to occupy one set of steps leading into the U-Bahn underground station Rosa-Luxemburg Platz in Berlin. Trapping people in the confined space of subway steps by incessantly-changed gestures of students, the project created tension and interfered directly with the usual pathways of people through the city, as the students confronted passers-by with the territorial claims. Many took the interaction as a challenge and often responded playfully. Students claimed a space and created situations for others, but only used their bodies, not other materials (see Figure 7.7). [15]

4) Images and Symbols

The most immediate and simple way to alter spatial status quo is symbolic. Regardless of political appeals, "making symbolic use of its objects" always swiftly shaking the sensible configuration of the physical space.

- Homeless Projection: Krzysztof Wodiczko is more renowned for his large-scale slide and video projections on architectural facades and monuments. In his work of *The Homelss Projection* for Union Square Park, Wodiczko proposed to modify the 4 monuments of the park (*Washington, Lafayette, Lincoln, Mother and Children*) into figures of the homeless, the disabled and beggar, by juxtaposing motifs about the latter on the monuments' surface (see Figure 7.8). This is an aggressive statement that suggests a reconsideration of the so-called public spaces. As Deutsche said, a fundamental social harmony that official planning claims to maintain has been disrupted by Wodiczko's project, which illuminates the prevailing social relations of domination and conflict that such planning both facilitates and disavows. [16]
- "Let us Make Cake": Nuit Blanche New York (NBNY) designs, curates and produces installations of light, sound and projection

15. Mick Douglas and Rochus Urban Hinkel, "Atmospheres and Occasions of Informal Urban Practice," *Architectural Theory Review* Vol. 16, Issue 3 (2011): 259-77; or Rochus Urban Hinkel, "Private encounters and Public Occupations: A Methodology for the Exploration of Public Space," in *Urban Interior: Informal Explorations, Interventions and Occupations*, ed. Rochus Urban Hinkel (Baunach: Spurbuch Verlag, 2011), 79-98.

16. Deutsche, "Krzysztof Wodiczko's Homelss Projection and the Site of Urban 'Revitalization'," in *Evictions*, 3-48.

Figure 7.9: **Let Us Make Cake.** NBNY. Accessed July 01, 2013, `http://nbnyprojects.com/let-us-make-cake/`

art. One of their works is a light installation projected onto the stacked-box facade of the SANAA-designed museum in the Bowery. The projection allowed artists from a variety of traditional media (painting, sculpture, performance) to engage their talents on an epic scale. The result was a fantastical dematerializing of the aluminum-mesh skin, with light and color transforming the edifice and the street into an impromptu public theater (see Figure 7.9). [17]

- Graffiti and Scrawl: In juvenile subcultures, graffiti and scrawl becomes a tool of emotional catharsis and political expression. For example, Banksy's satirical street art.

5) Ecological Activism

As ecological ideas prevail in general public, urban agricultural interventions like farming and gardening become one of the most common tropes in the trend of spatial activism, at the service of promoting the environmental livability, strengthening protection awareness, and improving overall social and emotional well-being.

- Guerilla Gardening: It is the unauthorized act to introduce more greenery and gardening into the urban environment. Typically, the chosen sites are vacant or underutilized properties in urban areas. Because of its illegality, the action is often taken under the cover of night, but still runs the risk of being caught. [18]
- Urban Farming: Farming in the sky is a fairly recent development in the green roof movement, in which owners have been encouraged to replace blacktop with plants to cut down on storm runoff and to insulate buildings. [19] Aside from this, the urban farming often facilitates positive social interaction.

6) Reuse, Recycle and Remodel

The sustainability idea becomes another source and target of *spatial practices*. Contrasting with the superstition on high-tech and high-budget operation, these tactics focus on recycling the ordinary and cheap material to make amenities.

- Chairbombing: By collecting discarded shipping pallets and converting them into quality public seating, the urban waste stream

17. NBNY, "Let Us Make Cake," accessed July 01, 2013, `http://nbnyprojects.com/let-us-make-cake/`; or, Mimi Zeiger, "The Interventionist's Toolkit: Project, Map, Occupy, Part 4," accessed July 01, 2013, `http://places.designobserver.com/feature/the-interventionists-toolkit-part-4/32918/`.

18. See the introduction about Guerilla Gardening in *Tactical Urbanism 1*, 11; or, *Tactical Urbanism 2*, 16.

19. Marian Burros, "Urban Farming, a Bit Closer to the Sun," *New York Times*, June 16, 2009, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/dining/17roof.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0`.

can be reduced. The chairs are placed strategically in areas that are either void of social activities, or conversely, those that are rich with life, but lack comfortable places to sit. [20]

- Dumpster Pool: The swimming pool is made of dumpsters and equipped with chairs and cabanas. A pool party can be hold at an unlikely location, where people swim in a trash vessel repurposed in an unexpected way. [21]

7) Construction

Construction never retreats from the heteronomous practices, but architects start to evacuate themselves from the elitist position and the professional quality is not an impediment to actively partaking in spatial and political practices. Engaging themselves in the participative and cross-cutting constructing activities, architects are more like a strategist than a designer of buildings. They provide their expertise for those long-overlooked multitudes, and even often turn the physical construction per se into a process of community construction.

- Passage 56: The Atelier d'architecture autogérée (AAA: studio of self-managed architecture) is a collective platform cofounded in 2001 (see Figure 7.10). The Passage 56 conducted by them explores the possibilities of transforming an urban interstice into a collectively self-managed space. This project has engaged an unusual partnership between local government structures, local organizations, inhabitants of the area and a professional association training eco-construction programs. The construction itself became a social and cultural act. Together with the construction

Figure 7.10: "**Passage 56.**" Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://gatsiouvasiliki.wordpress.com/2013/05/16/aaa-passage-56-espace-culturel-ecologique/`.

20. See the introduction about Chairbombing in *Tactical Urbanism 1*, 10; or, *Tactical Urbanism 2*, 25.
21. "Dumpster Pools," MACRO/SEA, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.macro-sea.com/projects/interim-projects/`.

Figure 7.11: **"Folly for a Flyover."** Assemble, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://assembl estudio.co.uk/?page_id=5`.

22. AAA (Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée), "Passage 56," in *Urban/Act: A Handbook for Alternative Practice*, ed. AAA (Paris: aaa-PEPRAV, 2007), 150-1.

23. Assemble, "Folly for a Flyover," in *Re-Architecture, Re-Cycle, Re-Use, Re-Invest, Re-Build: New Ways of Building European Cities* (Exhibition created by the Pavillion de l'Arsenal, 12,04,2012-20,08,2012); or, `http://assemblestudio.co.uk/?page_id=5`, accessed July 01, 2013.

of the physical space, different social and cultural networks and relationships between the users and the actors are emerging. The Neighborhood walls as the boundaries of the site were transform into interactive devices, which multiply exchanges and connections rather than separation. [22]

• Folly for a Flyover: Founded in April 2010, Assemble is a collective of artists, designers and architects with a specific focus on disused and overlooked city spaces. They were committed to uncovering the extraordinary opportunities that exist on the fringes of everyday life and the built environment. For 9 weeks, Folly for a Flyover transformed a neglected and unwelcoming motorway undercroft in Hackney Wick (London) into a host space for local residents and visitors alike. Built by over 100 volunteers and with sustained involvement by local businesses and residents, it attracted over 20,000 people in the course of one summer (see Figure 7.11). [23]

• Eichbaumoper: Located in Mülheim, it was the temporary transformation of the metro station Eichbaum into an opera house. "Eichbaum" is a crosspoint and station located between the cities of Essen and Mülheim. The "Eichbaum" was once shaped by vandalism, fear and foreboding. The project has led to a positive identification process, which has transformed an urban "Unort" (Non-place) into a place of possibilities. The bleak and dilapidated station has become a place to incubate modern and diverse aspi-

rations for a contemporary urban society (see Figure 7.12). [24]

- BMW Guggenheim Lab: The lab in New York is designed by the Tokyo-based architecture firm "Atelier Bow-Wow", who used carbon fiber structure good for disassembling, shipping and re-assembling in the other nine cities. It is a "traveling toolbox". Its objective is to provide a space that brings people of many disciplines together in a discussion on the future of their cities. The Lab's public programming ranged from lectures by prestigious academics such as sociologist Saskia Sassen and evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson to presentations that appealed to broader audiences. However, given its high-value sponsorship, central location and high-tech equipment with quasi-militaristic precision, the think-tank might go beyond the tactics defined by de Certeau. In its next venue, Kreuzberg in Berlin, the Lab had to change its place, because local inhabitants saw the Lab as the further evidence of ongoing gentrification (see Figure 7.12). [25]

It is unnecessary and impossible to sum up all prevailing heteronomous spatial practices in this text. The enumerated types are a testament to the shared quality, that is, close connections with everyday life. One outcome is the blurring borders between various genres and disciplines. Unbound from exclusivity and opacity out of their own enclaves, the new architectural and urban practices have been conflated with installation, theater, choreography, etc. Architects are even in charge of building specific social relations, no more constructing and designing physical entity, as the experiment conducted in "how to create territory". This stands starkly at odds with the traditional responsibilities of the disciplines.

7.3   The Return of Distance Dimension

The prized competency of Situationism is in changing *distance* regime by reducing or even erasing the aesthetic as well as social and physical distance. As the situationists put forward their "unitary urbanism", the gene of erasing distance and blurring borders had been deeply

Figure 7.12: "**Eichbaumoper (left).**" Raumlaborberlin, photo by Rainer Schlautmann, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=590`; "**BMW Guggenheim Lab (right).**" Atelier Bow-Wow, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.bow-wow.jp/profile/works_e.html`.

24. Raumlaborberlin, "Eichbaumoper, Mülheim," in *Re-Architecture, Re-Cycle, Re-Use, Re-Invest, Re-Build: New Ways of Building European Cities* (Exhibition created by the Pavillion de l'Arsenal, 12,04,2012-20,08,2012); or, `http://www.raumlabor.net/?cat=4`, accessed July 01, 2013.

25. See the introduction about BMW Guggenheim Lab in *Tactical Urbanism 2*, 28-29; or, Mimi Zeiger, "The Interventionist's Toolkit: Project, Map, Occupy, Part 4," accessed July 01, 2013, `http://places.designobserver.com/feature/the-interventionists-toolkit-part-4/32918/1`.

embedded. The "unity" shows itself on several fronts: "it would primarily be unitary as a social project" [26] overcoming the division between architecture and urbanism, between social body and individual body; it was "also an artistic project, the making of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*." [27] The unity of "art+life+society" envisioned by situationists seemed to rest on the individual inexhaustible creativity and initiative. This overstated precondition, with addition of situationist's romantic imagination of the working class — "a group of repressed individuals, all waiting for the opportunity to manifest their creativity", [28] overlooked the fact that the urban individual has freedom to be passive, or, a spectator not an actor. But actually, people reluctant to be changed and engaged, or with an anti-situationist tendency, are either precipitated into an enforced positivity, or precluded by the underlying mechanisms. Only a situationisit can be the leader and final arbiter of the revolutions of everyday life.

When urban activists constantly urge passers-by, inhabitants, strangers, and spectators to act in the public space for the sake of subjectivisation, they seem to forget that "there is also a more benign sense of the public space as a place where people [we] can just idle." [29] To enable citizens to gather and present themselves, or transmit messages, is not at the expense of other people's right to idleness. A successful public space is a very hybrid of both — to act and to idle. Therefore, *distance* is revalued and returns to *spatial publicness*.

In chapter 2, the paradoxical role played by *distance* in *spatial publicness* has been discussed in detail: The *spatial publicness* happens, where distance finds itself in a subtle balance between its institutionalization and disappearance. [30] But when facing up to the rise of heteronomous spatial practices, it is still necessary to complement and deepen the understanding of *distance*. Ranciére's reflection on relation between theatre, performance and spectator might afford the chance.

In a series of debate on theatre, performance and spatial politics, an *a priori* distribution of capacities and incapacities attached to these positions are settled and serves as an essential prerequisite for theater reformation and public practices. [31] It is a set of equivalences and oppositions: relative to performance's activities, gaze is equivalent to passivity; relative to actor's capability in stage, spectator is equivalent to inability in auditorium. [32] Hence, the first thing that theater reformers and public practitioners need to do is to change the passivity of gaze and spectator, including abolishing distance and mediation "between artist and spectator", or "between the idea of the artist and the sensation or comprehension of the spectator." [33] In this regard, to emancipate the spectator means either propelling him into action or sustaining an ethnical correspondence between his mind in theatre and his behavior out of theatre. This is just what the heteronomous works and situationist-like activities try to practice, and also what is realized by the aesthetics of performance.

However, for Ranciére, these are not a genuine way to emancipate spectators. In *The Emancipated Spectator*, he proposed a different account analogous to Groys's idea of representation. Like he said, "emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and

26. Sadler, *Situationist City*, 117 (see chap. 3, fig. 6).

27. Ibid., 118.

28. Lara Schrijver, "Utopia and/or Spectacle? Rethinking Urban Interventions Through the Legacy of Modernism and the Situationist City," *Architectural Theory Review* Vol. 16, Issue 3 (2011): 252.

29. Elihu Rubin and Julia Novitch, "Public Space and the Skills of Citizenship: An Interview with Elihu Rubin", accessed July 01, 2013, http://observatory.designobs erver.com/entry.html?entry=33348.

30. See the discussion in Chapter 2

31. Jacques Ranciére, "The Emancipated Spectator," in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2009), 12.

32. Ibid., 7.

33. Ibid., 14.

acting; when we understand that self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions." [34] Same as Groys, he shifts his attention to the liminal field of the problem. It is not the opposition between passivity and positivity, nor their equivalence to the positions between spectators and artists, but the original criteria distributing and stipulating them (including defining capacities and incapacities) that needs to be questioned. Emancipation starts from questioning the distribution of positions, in his terminology, from challenging the *consensual distribution of the sensible*.

The greatest service *distance* performs is to block, in his words, the "stultification" deriving from the keen mentality of artists and activists who try to play a role of leader in liberating movement, use the stage to dictate a lesson or convey a message, and allocate bodies to their "rightful" place, their public place. But the impulse of erasing distance and blurring borders, from the outset, pushes the situationist and other current heteronomous practices into a dilemma: although they react radically against the capitalist hegemony and modernist utopian urbanism, their solutions are also oriented towards a utopia, or worse, towards totalitarianism. Accepting teleology and causality that modernism insisted on, they substitute the previous physical determinism merely with another determinism.

7.4   Urban Staging

The roller-coaster-like analysis of *distance* epitomizes the liminality of the concept "*spatial publicness*". It also affords us the chance to revisit the traditional responsibility of architectural discipline. If stage is a *distance* ingredient that could prevent the "stultification", the new duty of architectural and urban design might consist in furnishing urban everyday life with an appropriate stage, which is distinct from the enforced spatial revolutions initiated by situationists in the form of abolishing distance completely, or from the conventional open spaces regulated by consensus without vigour. While citizens in the urban stage are assured of basic freedom to gaze, idle, linger and rest, the stage also seeks to motivate them to act more positively and to evade preconceived social outcomes at the same time. The new mode of architectural practices is tasked with supplying a platform to the appearance of *spatial publicness*.

A series of features like *indeterminacy*, *contingency* and *temporariness* should be admitted and respected in the new stage distinct from the conventional urban spaces, if one acknowledges that freedom partly amounts to negating the mono-causality and the nature of world is complexity, chaos and unpredictability. The features in question might foster subjective freedom and possibility more than Koolhaas's architectural projects particularly stressing perceptive polysemy out of objects.

Recently, the emphasis on *indeterminacy*, *contingency* and *temporariness* is becoming a latent current in architectural and urban prac-

34. Ibid., 13.

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Figure 7.13: **Place Léon Aucoc, Bordeaux.**
Photo by Lacaton & Vassal. Accessed July
01, 2013, `http://www.lacatonvassal`
`.com/index.php?idp=37`.

tices. The trend can be illuminated through works of Lacaton & Vassal, and some key projects of landscape urbanism, such as Schouwburgplein designed by West 8, New York High Line by James Corner.

1) Lacaton & Vassal：

Lacaton & Vassal, a French team (Anne Lacaton & Jean-Philippe Vassal) active recently, found their response to indeterminacy, contingency and temporariness upon the economic factor. The keywords of their design ideas can be generalized as *economy*, *building-double* and *freedom*. Simply speaking, spacious spaces can be built (building-double), for fulfilling the generosity, pleasure and adaptability of uses (freedom), by virtue of stringently controlling budget (economy).

Most projects that Lacaton & Vassal dealt with have to face up to the issue of tight budget. While many architects complain that the cost issue restrains their endeavor to realize a unique and creative result, "Lacaton & Vassal contend that economic constrains are a liberating factor, as long as they are carefully associated with project intentions." [35] Starting from this central premise, they extensively apply optimized, high-performance constructive systems (as big and light as possible) and generic materials (prefabricated frameworks, cladding, sliding glass doors) for building twice the space with the same budget. This is exactly the physical foundation that Lacaton & Vassal want to offer the designed spaces — potential for new lifestyle and creativity. They have carried out this device in many cases including, for example, social housing in Mulhouse (2001-2005), housing reconstruction in Petit Maroc (2004), etc.

Along with reducing costs by carefully controlling structures and materials, another way to expand spatial capacity is properly reusing the existing things. This cogitation came from their early carrier experience in Africa, where they learned "salvaging and making things last". [36] This attitude "involves a crucial accounting of a site's living elements, which provides the basic starting point for the project and which they then rely on, superpose their concepts and play with — using as delicate and light a touch as possible." [37] A radical instance was the consultant proposal they submitted for Bordeaux in 1996 (see Figure 7.13). The project was part of an "embellishment" plan for many town square instigated by

35. Karine Dana, "Fragility, a Moment in an Open World," *A+U 498, Feature: Lacaton & Vassal* (2012): 92.

36. Lacaton & Vassal, "Architecture Must Be Direct, Useful, Precise, Economical, Free, Joyful, Poetic and Cosmopolitan," *A+U 498, Feature: Lacaton & Vassal* (2012): 12.

37. Dana, "Fragility," 92.

Bordeaux City Council. After conversation with a few of local inhabitants and observation of the square on the spot, the architects thought "this square is already beautiful because of it is authentic, lacking in sophistication." Therefore, they have proposed "doing nothing apart from some simple and rapid maintenance works". [38]

The modest treatment of Lacaton & Vassal frees their works from the symbolism and monumentality. The economy factor they emphasized, nonetheless, is distinct from the one chased by early modernists. While the modernists sought to abstract requirements and desires of human beings to pure necessities in favor of economic efficiency, like Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen in 1926, Lacaton & Vassal deploy the factor to achieve an objective in reverse: "occupants should not be imprisoned in a finite, completely thought out world, Rather they are offered particular opportunities, unforeseen occurrences generated by the extraordinary conjunction of a place and a moment." [39] In short, the unifying theme of their work is "maximizing effect through minimal costs." [40] Sometimes their works are also regarded as typical case of "space production of secondary order (*Raumproduktion zweiter Ordnung*)". [41]

- Palais de Tokyo, Contemporary Creation Site (phase 1: 1999-2002; phase 2: 2010-2012): The predecessor of Paris de Tokyo was the Museum National d'Art Moderne built for International Exhibition in 1937 and working till 1974. After this period, the building was repurposed or abandoned for a while until 1999 when a new rehabilitating plan was executed by Lacaton & Vassal with a substantially reduced budget (see Figure 7.14). They came up with a simple light response to the extremely limited budget: "To utilize what exists, not to transform it, to make the most of the building's physical and aesthetic qualities. To preserve the enormous

38. "Place Léon Aucoc, Bordeaux," Lacaton & Vassal, accessed July 01, 2013, http://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=37.
39. Dana, "Fragility," 94.
40. A+U, "Editorial," *A+U 498, Feature: Lacaton & Vassal* (2012): 5.
41. Kuhnert, "Situativer Urbanismus," 19.

Figure 7.14: **Palais de Tokyo, Paris.** Photo by Philipper Ruault, accessed July 01, 2013, http://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=20.
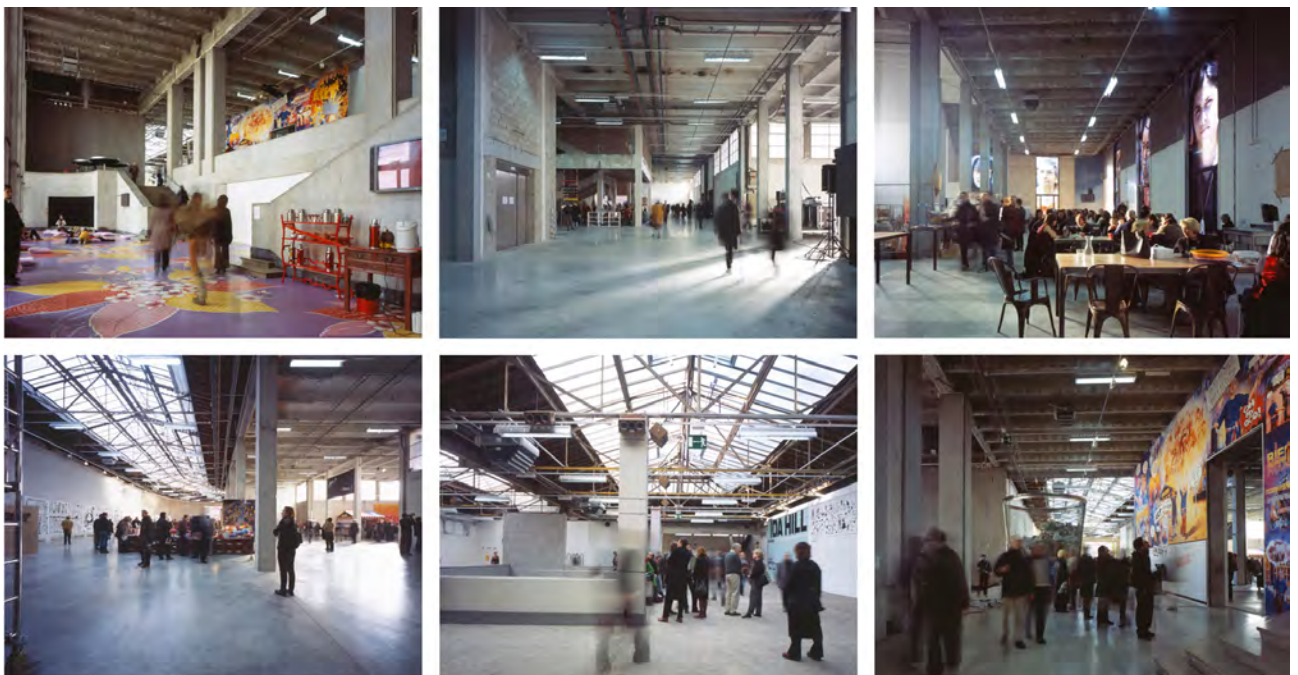
42. Lacaton & Vassal, "Palais de Tokyo," *A+U 498, Feature: Lacaton & Vassal* (2012): 130-7.
43. James Corner, "Terra Fluxus," in *Landscape Urbanism Reader*, 28 (see chap.5, n.68).
44. Ibid., 30.
45. Koolhaas and Mau, *S, M, L, XL*, 921 (see chap.6, n.59).

freedom of the spaces without partitioning them off, so as to permit the maximum spatial freedom and fluidity." Setting the Place Djemaael-Fnaa in Marrakech as a model, the building was conceived of as an open urban square, "a ground surface without demarcations, without street furniture, without constraints, an open space, empty at night, teeming by day, which indefinitely renews itself and metamorphoses according to people´s movements." The modest design and flexible program "attenuate the monumentality of the place, in the spirit of the provisional quality of the installation of a site for contemporary art in the Palais de Tokyo." [42]

2) Landscape Urbanism

In recent decades, the landscape has been developed into a model of urbanism. The evolutionary quality inherent in the landscape made the discipline more capable of responding to indeterminacy, open-endness and process-driven characteristics brought about by rapid urbanization. Landscape and urbanism are increasingly merged into one category — *landscape urbanism* as a mode of thinking by theorists and practitioners. The new methodlogy, wherein temporal fluidness and processes play a central role, supersedes the old-fashioned and static formal language, and the rigid disciplinary borders between landscape, urban design and planning are broken by integrating large-scale infrastructures with environmental systems, and by a mutual fusion of urban and ecological spaces; the concrete aesthetic qualities of objects gives way to the systems that "condition the distribution and density of urban form". [43] In conceptualizing a more organic, fluid urbanism, the new pattern can be a useful tool to analyze and project *spatial publicness*. As James Corner said, "the designation *terra firma* (firm, not changing; fixed and definite) gives way in favor of the shifting processes coursing through and across the urban field: *terra fluxus*." [44]

The revolution of design thinking began from some cardinal projects and competitions in Europe. Therein, OMA's project for Paris Parc de la Villette in 1982 was generally treated as a departure point of landscape urbanism.

- Parc de la Villette (Paris, 1982, competition, OMA) (see Figure 7.15):
  At the outset, OMA intended to avoid handling the discarded slaughterhouse in a conventional way of park design. "It is not definitive: it is safe to predict that during the life of the park, the program will undergo constant change and adjustment. The more the park works, the more it will be in a perpetual state of revision. Its 'design' should therefore be the proposal of a method that combines architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy." [45] OMA afforded an overlay of four layers to assure the programmatic indeterminacy: "strips", "confetti", "access and circulation", and "major elements". Except for "major elements" consisting of existing and proposed large-scale buildings, the other three layers, like the formerly discussed Koolhaas's works,

Figure 7.15: **Parc de la Villete, Competition, Paris, France, 1982.** Drawing by Alex Wall. From El Croquis, "1987-1998 OMA/Rem Koolhaas," 26 (see chap.6, fig.9).
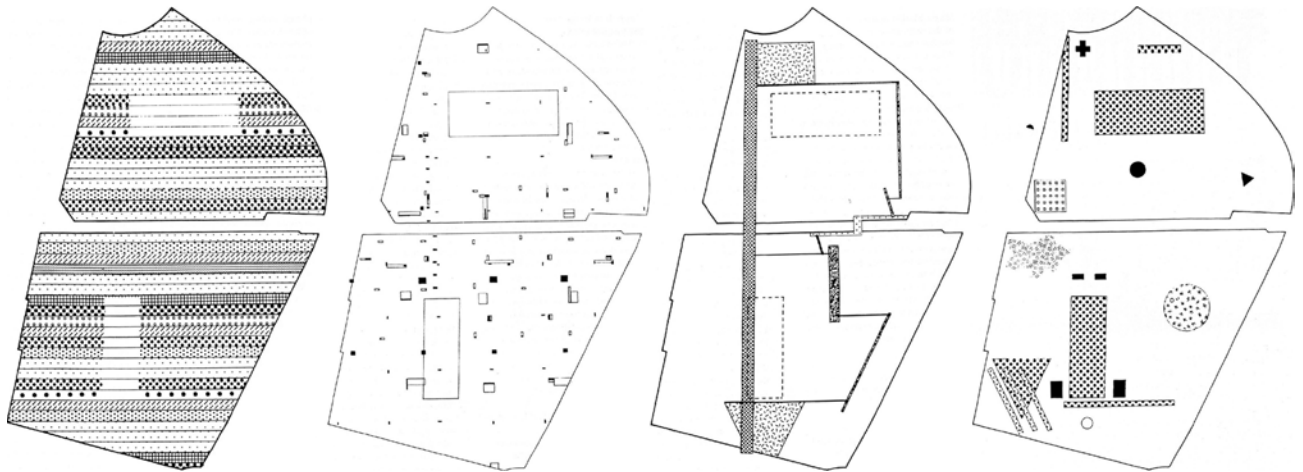
followed the formula "law + freedom" to create a framework or background hybridizing elasticity and regulation (see Figure 7.16). Firstly, the strips with a basic width of 50 meters subdivided the whole site into a series of parallel bands that can accommodate zones of the major programmatic categories. The strip-like framework reminds us of the superposed floors of the Manhattan skyscrapers described by Koolhaas in his *Delirious New York*. At the same time, "this tactic of layering creates the maximum length of 'borders' between the maximum number of programmatic components and will thereby guarantee the maximum permeability of each programmatic band and – through this interference – the maximum number of programmatic mutations." [46]

The "confetti" is composed of small-scale elements like kiosks, toilets, which are distributed according to a mathematical formula on the basis of their desirable frequency. On the other hand, "the occasional proximity of the various elements distributed according to the different grids leads to random and accidental clusterings that give every constellation of points its unique configuration and character." [47]

Subsequently, two major elements, Boulevard and Promenade, constitute the layer of "access and circulation". While the former systematically and structurally "intersects all the bands at right angles and connects the major architectural components of the park directly", the latter as a supplement "offers an opportunity to capitalize on nodes of heightened programmatic interest as they are created fortuitously through the intersection of the bands". [48]

- Schouwburgplein (West 8, Rotterdam, 1990-1997): Schouwburgplein is located in the heart of Rotterdam, which was a product of modernist principles of town planning after World War II. Surrounded by a bunch of multicocloured glazed slabs, the area was a dilapidated, cheerless void.
  The new reconstruction of the square designed by West 8 (Adriaan Geuze) was launched in 1990 and completed in 1997. Since then, it is considered as an icon of modern urban square design.

Figure 7.16: **The Diagram of Parc de la Villete.** From Koolhaas and Mau, *S, M, L, XL*, 923-9.

46. Ibid., 923.
47. Ibid., 925.
48. Ibid., 927.

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Figure 7.17: **A General View Southwards of Schouwburgplein by Night.** Photo by Christian Richters, from *Domus* 791 (1997): 57.

49. Stefano Boeri and Bart Lootsma, "Redesign of the Schouwburgplein and Pathé Multicinema Rotterdam," *Domus* 791 (1997): 56.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 56-7.

52. Ibid., 57.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.
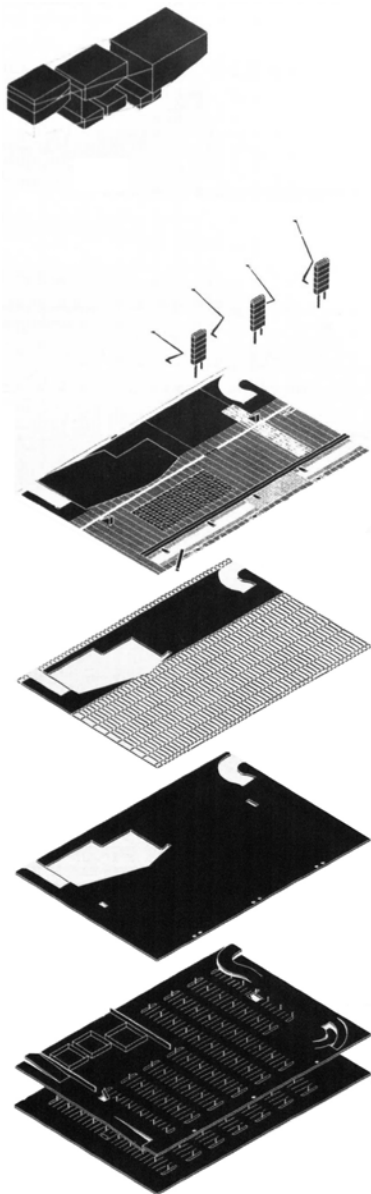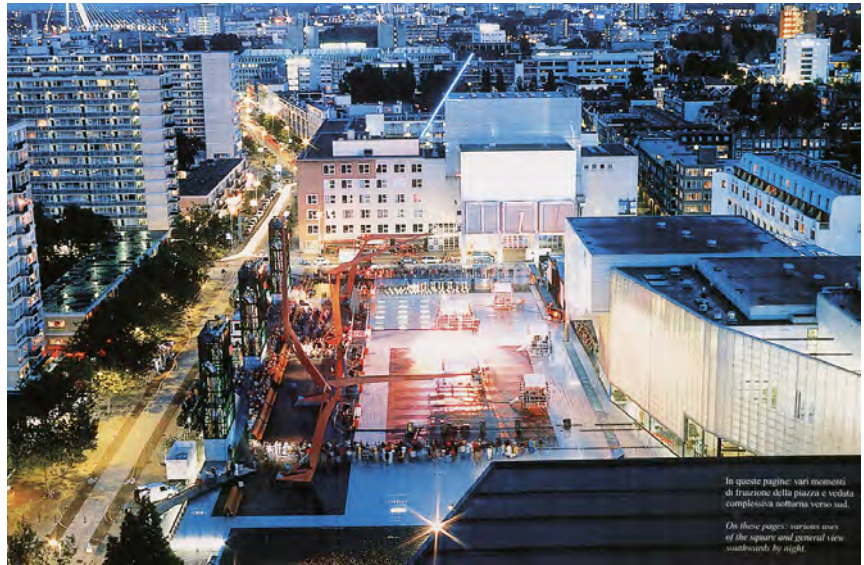
Figure 7.18: **The Breakdown of the Square into Its Constitutive Elements at the Various Levels.** From top: the cinema, lamp-posts and ventilation towers, paving, structural grid, underground parking roof slab, two parking levels. From *Domus* 791 (1997): 47.

West 8 is ambitious for creating "a time device" (see Figure 7.17): "Without claiming to change them (the former urban spaces) once and for all, it seeks instead to put in features likely to spark a chain of successive effects." [49] To achieve this, Geuze "introduce(d) a few elementary 'movements' reminiscent of cultivation techniques used in agricultural landscapes." [50] These "movements" were:

a) By lifting the underground parking structure 35 centimeters above street level, it reestablished a definite stage visually and physically, with a border and decoration made of the surrounding slabs and newly-built megacinemas;

b) The second movement was to arrange different zones with the mosaic of materials on the floor. The arrangement makes "the mineral surface of the square react to the unpredictable swell and swirl of public life on it and to the cyclic ebb and flow of time". [51] For example, long benches were placed on the east side being sunlit the longest. The central area of the square was handled as a deck "ruffled by a texture of mixed materials — steel, wood, rubber, threads of water, stone, resin" to accommodate the unforeseeable diverse activities: "a concert of temporary, cyclical presences, random and unfocused interactions, but also single events: a festival, a procession, an entertainment." [52]

c) The third movement included all kinds of objects rising from the surface, such as the 6-meter bench, the ventilation towers, the large moving lamps. "They are not serial units of 'furniture', but 'places' in their own right; unique works ...these objects, too, have their uncertain, ever-changing functional identity." [53] For example, the 35-meter-tall hydraulic lighting masts can change their configuration every hour.

At last, the spatial system has been expected to "react to the quirks of the weather and to the sudden turns and unexpected patterns of living behavior (see Figure 7.18)." [54]

- The High Line (James Corner Field Operation, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York, 2004-2009): The High Line was remolded from the former elevated freight rail running down for years. Since the end of the 1990s, a non-profit out of local inhabitants dedicated itself to preventing the 1.6-kilometer abandoned railway from being demolished. In 2004, the design team comprised by landscape architect James Corner, interdisciplinary architecture studio Scofidio + Renfro, and culturalsit Piet Oudolf won the competition conducted for envisaging the future of the track (see Figure 7.19). Their schema focused on preserving the existing "wilderness" of grasses and wildflowers and respecting its linearity. They applied a strategy of "agri-tecture" which can be divided into three levels: "first the paving system, built from linear concrete planks with open joints, specially tapered edges and seams that permit intermingling of plant life with harder materials ...The second strategy is to slow things down, to promote a sense of duration and of being in another place, where time seems less pressing ...The third approach involved a careful sense of dimension of scale,

Figure 7.19: **An Aerial View of the High Line, New York.** Photo by Iwan Baan, accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.architizer.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/DSR-Highline-11-05-3015.jpeg`.

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minimizing the current tendency to make things bigger and obvious and seeking instead a more subtle gauge of the High Line's measure." [55]

At last, the High Line has evolved into a narrative promenade punctuated with "episodes" rather than a scenic landscape. Especially through manipulating duration and emphasizing slowness, the elevated promenade provides the contemporary *flâneur* with a choreographed route with multilayered experiences of strolling and loitering. For example, the "sunken square" at 10th Avenue that comprises a stepped space and a cut-out "window" is a particular place where the urban traffic under it and the spectators framed by it become their mutual scenes, seeing and being seeing by each other (see Figure 7.20).

7.5 Hospitable Practices and Urban Infill

To a point, the various practices of *dissensus* in politics are more relevant to Shanghai *spatial publicness* than those of *dissensus* in aesthetics. Although, in Ranciére's eyes, the urban activism is so suspicious in determinism as to violate, the precondition of equality, the action-based social engagements and spatial interventions are compelling, when pushing subjectivsation and criticizing hegemonic consensus in a totalitarian social environment where neither the autonomous citizen nor genuine democracy and civil society appear.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the community factor perpetuated itself throughout several stages of social spaces. Paradoxically, the spatial practices promoting politics also takes the form of "community". In the main, they can be treated as an "aesthetic" (or precisely, "sensible") community, diverging deeply from the traditional community that is physically localized and where its members share a similar cultural, social and historical background. The traditional one tends to be consolidated anew by the gated community (the micro residential district

55. James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio+Renfron, "The High Line," *A+U* 476 (2010): 44.

in China). In Shanghai where the divisions of class and spatial segregation are escalating, the sensible community defined by fleeting and fragmented connections may have a large role in challenging the sway of traditional communities and fostering new forms of sociality in those rapidly decaying areas.

Shanghai's prosperity over the recent three decades has smashed the *danwei*-like homogeneity, with bringing forth diverse social strata and exacerbating social tensions. The continuously expanding middle class lays the social groundwork for a burst of grass-root groups and social engagement of urbanites. Quite a few civic art groups attempt to reconstruct social spaces through reasserting art's 'communitarian' function. The spatial and artistic methods by which the groups devote themselves to maintain a collective environment are "sometimes not far from the community politics advocated by our government."[56] These art groups are tolerated by the goverment and even supported by it financially. "Twelve neighbors (12 *Lin*)", a grass-root troupe, is one of examples. Training and organizing theatrical performances for senior urbanites, rural migrant workers and other marginalized groups, the Shanghai-based non-government organization wants to provide these vulnerable groups with more chances to strengthen social bonds and communications (see Figure 7.21).

The communitarian function is also exemplified in construction practices of Taiwanese Architect Hsieh Ying-Chun and his Atelier-3. The reconstruction of the aboriginal community after the 921 earthquake in 1999 germinated his idea of "collaborative construction". Limited funds and deficiency in experienced workers forced Hsieh and his team to simplify the construction technology. As the consequent collective participation enabled the aboriginals to build their housing independently, the social structure of the community was also strengthened and ameliorated. The approach resembled what the French "AAA" and British "Assembles" adopted in their practices. Over the next decade, Hsieh continues with his promotional work in Mainland China and Taiwan. His architecture along with its ideas is hailed as "people's architecture". But the architect seems discontent with these achievements. Recently, he tries to develop a new concept of "people's city" on the basis of the idea

56. Ranciére, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 22 (see chap. 6, n. 8).

Figure 7.21: **The Performance of 12 Neighbors.** Blog of 12 *Lin*. Accessed July 01, 2013, `http://photo.blog.sina.com.cn/photo/62e0d9e6g916723eff223`.

Figure 7.22: **People's City by Hsieh Ying-Chun.** Proposal for the 2011 competition of Shenzhen affordable housing, accessed 01 July, 2013, `http://photo.blog.sina.com.cn/photo/62e0d9e6g916723eff223`.

of "people's architecture". Rather than the vertical settlement of Yona Friedman and MVRDV that has specific representations but is short of inhabitants' dynamics and operational mechanism, his concept of "people's city" attempts to "protect inhabitants' initiative and creativeness by strategically combining the public mega-structure and private micro-system for autonomous construction." [57] This idea was embodied by his proposal for the 2011 competition of Shenzhen affordable housing. The project was awarded the first prize (see Figure 7.22).

Compared with the spatial practices emphasizing "hospitality", those stressing "agonistics" have fewer opportunities to survive in Shanghai and other Chinese cities. [58] In totalized spaces of power representation like People's Square, the Bund and Lujiazui, these kinds of spatial uprisings, provocative, sarcastic and antagonistic, might be the best antidote to the hypocritical sublimeness of the political power. It is still hard to imagine what would it be like, if Banksy-type humor was doodled in a corner of People's Square, if spatial provocation like Radio Ballet was performed on the Bund crowded with sightseers, or if fancy and naughty Kiosks were wandering in Lujiazui packed with skyscrapers (see Figure 7.23).

Moreover, the spontaneous reconstruction of social relationships by urbanites mentioned in Chapter 5 (the night market, the dance party, etc.) can be also regarded as the significant *dissensus* of politics. Although the spontaneous spatial occupation has been neither admitted by conservative administrational apparatus nor professionally responded by architects, it is indeed the most typical phenomenon of publicness in Chinese cities. Therefore, how to confront this kind of de facto *spatial publicness* and how to support it through architectural and urban design have become one of the most urgent and challenging subjects in China's architectural practices.

57. Hsieh Ying-Chun, "From People's Architecture to People's City," accessed July 01, 2013, `http://www.atelier-3.com/mediawiki/index.php/Text_People%27s_Architecture_to_People%27s_City`.

58. Douglas and Hinkel, "Atmospheres and Occasions," 259-77.

Figure 7.23: **Faces of Original Inhabitants Carved onto the Walls of Demolished Housing in Shanghai, by VHILS.** VHILS is the tag name of Portugyese graffiti/street artist Alexandro Farto. Accessed July 01, 2013, `http://news.163.com/photoview/00AP0001/20803.html`.

Figure 7.24: **The Location and Spatial Diagram of Shenzhen Public Art Plaza.** From Urbanus, "Intervening the City: Strategy and Construction of Shenzhen Public Art Plaza," *Time+Architecture* 04 (2007): 111.
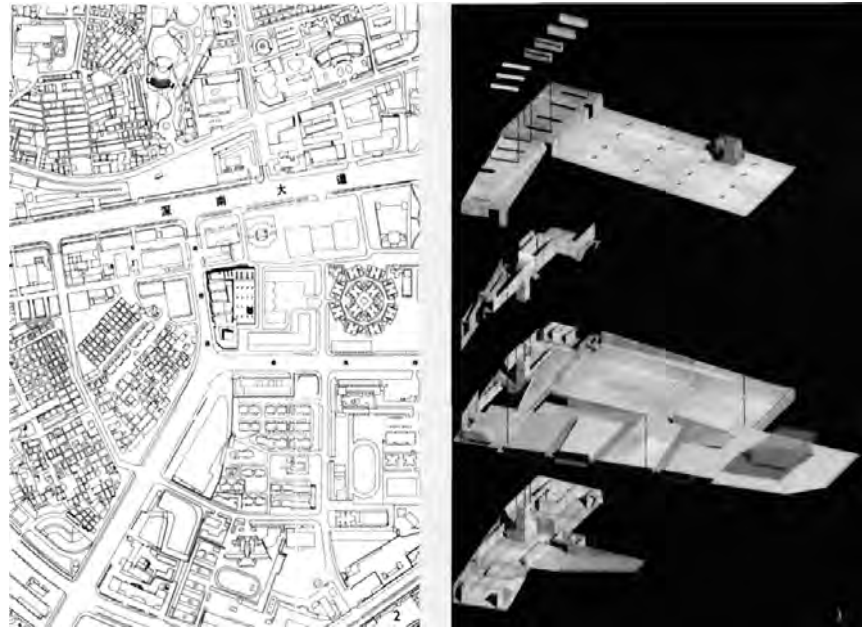
One of the solutions is staging. Divergent from narrowly formalistic games servile to political and commercial interests, the methodology of spatial staging has entered into the (re)construction of social relationships, though not directly and enthusiastically as the activists do. The methodology responds to the issue of inferior open spaces against the background of Chinese rapid urbanization and objectively contributes to birth and growth of the *dissensus* of politics. The practices of Urbanus from Shenzhen are representative of this.

From its first project of public space, "Diwang Urban Plaza" by 1999, the Shenzhen-based firm "Urbanus" is executing its bold plan of "urban gardenscape", that is, an endeavor to reorganize, reconnect, refill, and transform the "city of objects" formed by rapid urbanization and to set up a system of open public spaces with the aid of environmental renovation and landscape design. In essence, its theoretical foundation is the concept of "urban voids". As Urbanus observed, "in the process of globalization, China built its cities with an astonishing number at a fantastic speed. Meanwhile, it gave birth to 'urban voids' of the same amount." [59] Under the circumstances, the architects of Urbanus put forward a more targeted strategy — "urban infill", and tried to redefine the abandoned and neglected land and to transform them into public spaces for urbanites' intensive inter-communication. In Shenzhen where Urbanus was established, rapid expansion of urban areas and consequent disordered landscape offer the firm many opportunities to practice its "urban infill" — to renovate the interruptive urban sequence and implant new substance into the blank land alien to collective life.

- The Shenzhen's Public Art Plaza: Located in the highly dense Luohu district, it was a perennially abandoned industrial land with a floor area of approximately 6000 square meters nominally (see Figure 7.24). But the site is surrounded by a typically chaotic, noisy but vibrant central area in urban China — the nearby section of the train station. Involved in the planning decision of the

59. Liu Xiaodu, Meng Yan and Wang Hui, "Urban Infill as a Strategy to Rejuvenate Urban Voids," *World Architecture* 08 (2007): 22.

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section, the architects thought that it could be conceived as a multifunctional public space and make up the insufficiency of public facilities in this dense section, instead of a green land only for watching. They also hoped the newly-built plaza could introduce a new life-style and distinct spatial morphology in the existing urban space, and arouse an interaction with originally spatial ecology. By means of cultural collage and artificial implantation, art as the contrast was integrated with other functions such as parking lots, pubs, café and bookshops. In addition, production, performance, exhibition and communication of the public art were inserted into the commercial and traffic downtown (see Figure 7.25). In terms of staging, architects deliberately obscured the conceptual and formal divisions between architecture, open space and landscape. Furthermore, by leaning, folding, stretching, cutting, fracturing and warping the flat surface, a new, dynamic and self-complete place was created. The mighty intervention by remolding the surface made the open space not succumb to the surrounding chaos and instability, but work as the origin of ever-changing urban envi-

Figure 7.25: **An Aerial View of Shenzhen Public Art Plaza.** From Urbanus, "Intervening the City: Strategy and Construction of Shenzhen Public Art Plaza," *Time+Architecture* 04 (2007): 112.

Figure 7.26: **An Aerial View of Sungang Central Plaza.** From Urbanus, "Sungang Central Plaza," *Landscape Architecture* 05 (2010): 80.

ronments. [60]

- Sugang Central Plaza: The original planning and design of Sungang Central Plaza by another office include a two-story underground parking of 10 000 square meters, a sunken plaza, and a green belt along the south side of the plaza. Soon after construction, the client decided to relinquish the original design and made URBANUS redesign the above-ground space while keeping the underground construction moving forward. URBANUS found that sunken in the original design was too isolated to connect to the urban activities in its vicinity, and thus intended to activate the plaza and transformed it into a living place full of urban energy (see Figure 7.26). Inspired by the natural texture of the earth, the whole surface of the site is covered with one coherent skin of undulating strips, which resembles the water tides flowing up and down. While shedding the existing underground parking lot, this skin of free form also helps to connect two adjacent lots interrupted by traffic. The linear paving pattern also suggests a strong sense of dynamic urban activities. Along with the flow of the strips, oases of flower islands are randomly arranged to create pleasant and intimate urban enclaves against the chaotic surrounding urban environment (see Figure 7.27). [61]

Both activist spatial practices and architectural staging strategies cannot transform the spatial nature once and for all. The issues of Chinese urban spaces, including those in Shanghai, cannot sidestep the formidable political reality which often holds back the development of (spatial) publicness. In this sense, architecture and urban design is not the tool with which social revolution can be effectuated, as Le Corbusier suggested in his *Vers une Architecture*. The limits of the actual capabilities of architectural and urban design should be recognized. Never-

60. Urbanus, "Public Art Plaza, Shenzhen, China, 2007," *World Architecture* 08 (2007): 28-37.
61. Urbanus, "Sungang Central Plaza, Shenzhen, China, 2007," *World Architecture* 08 (2007): 48-57.

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theless, it is impossible and unwise to omit the social responsibility of architecture, given the architectural practices has been profoundly and overall entangled with our life and the discipline also needs to expand its theoretical and practical resources to avoid sinking into a formalist whirl. That is why we still need to care about the architectural duty in *spatial publicness*.

Figure 7.27: **People on the Plaza.** From Urbanus, "Sungang Central Plaza, Shenzhen, China, 2007," *World Architecture* 08 (2007): 57.

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