



Track: Heritage, Urban Cultures, Urban Design

Heritage, neighbourhood communities and planning in the context of change

Identifying conditions to analyze the appreciation and assimilation of neighbourhoods with historical and cultural values within regions of change in Europe and China.

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1.1 Introduction

Our paper will present the first results of a 3 years research project called ‘Pumah’ on ‘Planning, Urban Management and Heritage’. The project will identify the varying roles, positions, ideas and functions of sites, surroundings and objects through which time and place are culturally connected, within regions with varying speed of urban development: Europe and China.

The paper presents the outcome of two interrelated studies at the neighbourhood level. One looks at Europe, its economic conditions to heritage and how this affects life of neighbourhood communities. The other looks at China, linking heritage to processes of urban renewal, community participation and gentrification.

These neighbourhoods qualified as heritage (in China these are called ‘hutong’) connect identities of the past with today’s cultural, physical and social manifestations. These neighbourhoods are not relics from the past, just representing a world that ‘once was’, isolated from its contemporary spatial context, functionally excluded from daily life and related social activities. These neighbourhoods can be and are almost always functional parts of contemporary live, while embedding symbols of the past. Keeping these symbols high could contribute to the appreciation of the neighbourhood by its community and its wider social and cultural environment. However, maintaining these symbols will not be without any costs. It will have constraining effects on the neighbourhood’s community, such as gentrification, social exclusion and environmental

nuisance. These neighbourhood communities and their interactions with and their adaptation to the neighbourhood's spatial and cultural qualities is what is at stake in this paper. We are seeking for conditions, causalities and perceptions which relate a neighbourhood's wellbeing with consequences of being qualified as heritage, within regions which are open to change but differ in the pace of change taking place. These conditions, causalities and perceptions are essential in answering questions about how to maintain a robust representation of an appreciated past while being able to make use of its artifacts in a flexible and reasonable way, allowing as well various trajectories in time to progress and to evolve, such as spatial and social transformation and cultural identity.

1.2 The case of the Jewish Quarter in Budapest

Decision making in urban planning in Budapest is officially in the hands of the chief architect, mandated by mayor of Budapest every 4 (or 5?) years. (The local chief architects are mandated by the mayor of the local governments.) Albeit, in the last years, every chief architect resigned from their own free will before their mandate expired. They did it mostly without providing a reason, except István Schneller, who said that "as a leader who wanted to make technical decisions... [I] was opposed with political and financial lobby interests day by day" (Index, 2006).

Mechanism: During the Communist Regime, everything was state-owned. In 1990, the local governments became the owners of buildings in their district and they sold the building, mostly for the people who were already renting them. Many building got empty, because many people moved to suburbs. Also there were a lot of gipsy families moved into the empty building, which is illegal so they could get easily get kicked out, same for those who are renters because they are not protected by law in Hungary.

From 2002 (Sipos-Zolnay, 2009), some houses became very attractive even though the area was empty and remote (in Jewish District, the location is great for offices as well as small flats for those who really want to leave in the heart of Pest). There is great pressure from financial lobby interests on the obviously very corrupt local government who sells the houses for very little price, the houses end up in foreign investors' hands and people are obligated to move out but they get some substitution. If the investor want to demolish or make changes on houses (heritage houses) than the political interests put a great pressure to the National Heritage Office, who will allow it at the end.

"State capture is the phenomenon in which outside interests (often the private sector, mafia networks, etc.) are able to bend state laws, policies and regulations to their (mainly financial) benefit through corrupt transactions with public officers and politicians. The notion of state capture deviates from traditional concepts of corruption, in which a bureaucrat might extort bribes from powerless individuals or companies or politicians themselves steal state assets. State capture is recognized as a most destructive and intractable corruption problem, above all in transition economies with incomplete or distorted processes of democratic consolidation and insecure property rights." (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, ?)

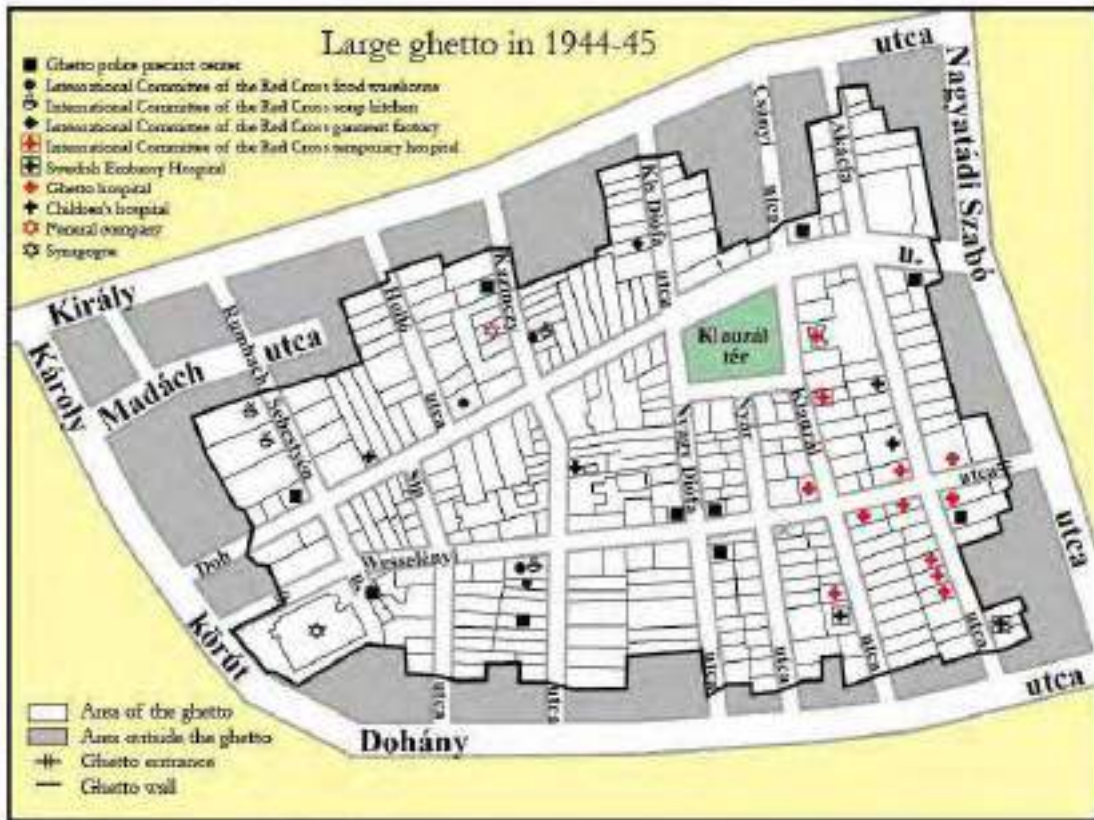
The History of the Jewish Quarter in Budapest

The Jewish, settling down in great numbers in Budapest in the 18th century, were facing a society with mixed signs of condemnation and reception in Austro-Hungarian Empire. In order to subsist and blossom, they had to define their ways of contribution to the modern and bourgeois Hungarian society.

The regulation of Enlightenment monarch Franz II (1741-1790) in 1781 made it possible for the Jewish to move to the cities, although in Budapest, they could only settle down (build a synagogue) in the areas outside the inner-city wall. They were also able to buy land and carry out farming and merchant activities. The law also required them to use German language, the official language of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that time but during religious activities the use of Hebrew language was allowed. In 1833, the Jewish community in Budapest were officially registered. In 1867, Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916) legislated equal rights to the Jewish.

This liberal milieu enhanced the process of disjunction of Hungarian Jewish between those who wanted to assimilate and those who wanted to hang on to the traditional religious-communal forms of lifestyle. During the 19th century, a great proportion of Hungarian Jewish assimilated on their own will, especially the rich living in the cities (Reiche, 2006). The religious Jewish in Budapest belonged mostly to the mild reformed Neologue movement of Judaism, who adopted Hungarian language which became official language as well in the Hungaro-Austrian Empire under Franz Joseph II. Assimilation and retraining tradition were carried out on various levels and diverse ways, of course.

Budapest evolved 1973, has a symmetrical This area has been fringed upon three synagogues in Dohány Street (by architect Ludwig Förster in 1859), in Rumbach Sebestyén Street (by architect Otto Wagner in 1872) and in Kazinczy Street (by architect Béla Löffler in 1913). All were occupied by three different Jewish religious movements, forming the “Jewish Triangle in Pest”. This part of Budapest’s 7th district (Belső-Erzsébetváros) evolved during the turn of the 19th century. The quarter has been a traditional Jewish merchant centre, the main neighbourhood of Jewish people in Budapest. The Jewish Quarter became a ghetto in 1944-1945.



Map 1. The WWII Ghetto in Budapest. Source <http://epiteszforum.hu/node/11736>, 16 March 2012

During WWII, about 70% of the Jewish population of Budapest was deceased in Holocaust. After 1948 under the communist regime, due to religious restrictions and anti-zionist actions, assimilation was the only way to sustain for the remaining Jewish in Hungary.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, Hungary became a democratic country. Since then, there has been a renaissance of Jewish religious-communal lifestyle national wide. The area lying in the East part of Budapest's inner city now has been called Jewish Quarter (Zsidónegyed) since 1990. The reconstruction of the Great Synagogue in Dohány Street (the largest synagogue in Europe) ended in 1998 and it is now available for touristic purposes, it is also a memorial (for example graveyard in the garden) and by the Neologue Community it is used for religious purposes as well. The Rabbinerseminar (the oldest existing Rabbinerseminar of the world, founded in 1877) started to function legally again, Holocaust memorials were set up and some cultural-religious associations were founded. For instance "Negyed6Negyed7 Festival" is a festival of the quarter, organized a few times in the year to keep traditions and represent Jewish culture and heritage for everybody. The synagogue in Kazinczy street is also restored and occupied by the Orthodox Jewish community but the third on in Rumbach Sebestyén street is still in a very bad condition. Close to the synagogue in Kazinczy street, the building of the Mikveh (a bath used in a purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism, it is central to an Orthodox Jewish community) was also partly restored and can be used now for religious purposes.

In the Jewish Quarter, kosher shops and restaurants were opened again. Even though the symbols of Jewish traditions and the merchant life of the quarter still remains far less remarkable as it was before 1944 and the Jewish community has been heterogeneous in religion, these initiatives resuscitate the Jewish identity, heritage and religious life.

The heritage of the Jewish Quarter

In the 18th century, the spontaneous urban development generated an organic urban landscape in this area. During the 19th century, the quarter attained its peculiar atmosphere where the majority of the population was Jewish. The quarter, which was entitled as Jewish Quarter later in the 21st century, was located between the city border and the main access road towards the Danube, which is now called Rákóczi Avenue. It became a densely populated, vibrant merchant area. The residential area buildings were influenced by mixed classicists and secessionist architecture and the religious centres were influenced by oriental-style Jewish art. The quarter mostly consisted of narrow, scraggly lined streets with hick town-like houses which had spacious yards for storage and workshops. Businesses were run in the shops on the ground level and in cafes and bazaars of the arcades and passages.

Heritage issues related to Jewish Quarter

The decline of the quarter started before WWII and it is still continuing. After the collapse of Soviet Union in 1989, there has been an emerged demand of saving the heritage of this area. The Jewish Quarter of Budapest was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2002. In 2004 it was entitled as protected area because its role as a puffer zone of Andrassy Avenue, which was recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002. As being a protected area of heritage, the buildings and public spaces should be legally saved of destructing and building actions which do not add or decrease the value of the quarter. At the same time, the general regulation plan (which were first established in 1990) are often accused to be biased for holding the quarter for property development purposes rather than for the purpose of preserve its traditional character (Sipos-Zolnay, 2009). The Jewish Quarter has been facing contention of civilians, businesses and local governmental stakes.

Town planning and architecture

Between 2002 and 2006, the local government of the 7th district was trading 47 buildings to private investors, mainly with demolishing admission and with the condition of vacate the habitants of protected residences. According to the urban regulation plan, Madách Avenue was planned to built, during which a great amount of houses would have been demolished, but at the end only the smaller Madách Square was constructed. The local government changed the structure of several streets which destroyed the traditional passages and gave permissions to build new buildings and extensions which did not meet a warm response from the public.

Some architects support demolition but demand a deliberate conception of rehabilitation of the area. Whereas most of the houses are in a danger of complete

demolition, some of houses are changed to hotel- and housing complexes in a way that they keep the original frontage and a passage with its surrounding residential buildings called Godzsdu Garden (Gozsdu Udvar) was partly restored and extended to the inherited original state in 2008, after it as empty for more than 10 years due the process of settling out the inhabitants. The building originally consisted of big 39 apartments, which were split into 120 small flats. On the ground floor, there were several small shops, which were gone through just the opposite because they were merged into a few bigger shops. Somehow, many of them go out of business (MTV, 2008)

Keeping the façade is not a good solution:

1. Because they were block buildings, with a big yard in the middle, which gets build-in.
2. Because the new building are higher, than the original was
3. Heritage still gets removed, because it was also represented inside (like handrails with David star motives).
4. Atmosphere is still gone because of the new (glass and steal for example in Gozsdu Garden and cheap material they are using.

Local NGOs

The civil society association 'ÓVÁS!' (PROTECTION!), founded is 2004, actively tries influence the decision making process about the Jewish Quarter and wants to conserve many of the remaining buildings of the quarter. They want the original houses to be restored in the original form.

Entrepreneurship

This system of corrupt businesses dates back from 2004. The mechanism of the system is explained by Sipos and Zolnay (2009). First, a very young limited company with minimal capital stock gets the call option of the chosen real estate. This financial instrument conveys the buyer the right to buy something at a specific, fixed price (strike price), but not the obligation to engage in that transaction, while the seller incurs the corresponding obligation to fulfill the transaction. This company is now appreciated with the option call. In the second phase the majority of the company business share will be owned by a foreign offshore company and it will be sold to the real investor. The original price of the real estate at best just covers the buyout of the owners and the costs of the moving out of the renters, but the limited company with the right of the option call usually do not even pay for that when entering into the contract. Their capital stock is less what would be required for that. The strike price is of course a depressed price and this could be realized because the local governments own trustee itself is estimating the value of the real estate. In the third phase, the difference of the values of the business shares are enormous, usually around twenty times. The company usually pays the amount of the strike price, which is a small change at this point.

Preservation of Jewish culture

It is very true that the Jewish associations make efforts to get conserved the cultural and religious heritage of the place for those who want to identify themselves by these. Some of them attract tourists as well (Great Synagogue). There is synagogue for the Orthodox and Neologue community and a community house for the Reformed (Moishe House of Budapest). There are festivals, cafes, restaurants, shops and other communities (Bálint House, Marom etc.)... But still, the majority of Jewish people live elsewhere and if visit this place than only for religion-related activities (Shabbat, Hanukah etc.).

Jewish people have been very heterogenous in assimilation or retraining to tradition. In an interview, a young, Jewish man who returned to his roots says: "You do not need to be religious to be Jewish... [I] believe in tradition rather than in God." (HVG, 2011). Those who have Jewish roots and aware of that, do not automatically wish to have the traditional lifestyle what is required by most associations and communities. Without a demand, there are not as much shops (only 6), restaurants etc. and there is a much less vibrant Jewish life going on in the quarter, as it used to be before 1944.

The biggest association representing the Hungarian Jewish is Mazsihisz, which is often accused by ÓVÁS! Association to express little resistance towards the demolition of houses or even got related to these issues, like Péter Torday's company, who was a president of the association (Gadó, 2009).

The problem evaluated

Aesthetical:

- Because of the efforts of ÓVÁS! Civil Association, buildings have been granted with protection because of their heritage value. Still, they have been or will be potentially demolished.
- The small passages disappear, the street structure changes, which results that it's peculiar atmosphere (oriental, merchant) disappear.
- Because of the many offices, during the day streets are crowded with cars and in the night they are empty.

Ethical:

- heritage and Jewish culture is disregarded (except the Great Synagogue in Dohány street and its surrounding, but that is at the edge of the quarter).
- Because of a new building, the very last piece of the ghetto wall was removed. According to UNESCO, the ghetto wall should have been preserved as much as possible, as a memorial.

Emotional:

- feeling treated unfair/unjust and not protected by juridical institutions,
- seeing the things getting gone forever,
- unsuccessfulness of civil associations and activist gives the feeling of defencelessness to corruption,
- even those who are not directly affected get upset. Activists continually say, that it is a matter for whole Budapest.

1.3 The case of Nanluoguxiang Hutong in Peking

With China's rapid urban development from the 1980s, the urban areas are enduring continuous regeneration. Beijing, as China's capital city and with its substantial cultural heritage in the inner city area, is rather typical in its process of redeveloping the neighborhoods. The preservation of heritage, the relocation of residents, the revitalization of houses and the expropriation of land for development for the needs of different stakeholders are in great tension.

The Hutong representing heritage

The Beijing courtyard house and Hutong is a traditional type of residential neighborhoods built hundreds of years ago which symbolize old Beijing. Since the old courtyard houses are too decayed, from 1990s on, the People's Municipal Government made a plan called Beijing's Old and Dilapidated Housing Renewal program to renew the city center. The housing renewal program quickly became a large-scale speculative form of development involving massive demolition and ruthless displacement, resulting in an enormous loss in social and cultural values of this ancient city (Zhang and Fang, 2003). From 1990s till 2002, as many as 700, 000 residents were relocated (Goldman, 1999) and in the year 2003 to 2006 third of the central old city has been destroyed (Opendemocracy, 2006). Those incredible figures remind us the urgent need for a good mechanism for conservation.

Hutong, as a cultural heritage, symbols the meaning of the past glorious Beijing but remains a living style for the present people residing there. Why we shall preserve the hutong and who are we preserving for are very key questions here. There are many stakeholders in this heritage planning process, such as the affected community, the government, the developers, the academics, and even the tourists. Nevertheless, by analyzing the case of Ju'er hutong's renewal, Zhang et al. think that economic growth became the real motivation for emerging political coalitions between local government and local enterprises and the interests of the residents, the intended beneficiaries who have had little voice in the redevelopment process, were largely sacrificed (Zhang and Fang, 2002).

Heritage is created and produced in, and as a resource for the present thus it is more about meanings and values than material artifacts (signed by Waterton). In the worldwide, the authorized heritage discourse (AHD) is challenged and more attention now is paid on community inclusion, participation and consultation. Amenity and government bodies can engage with heritage conservation and preservation to promote the greater inclusion of a range of often-marginalised stakeholder groups into the management process (Waterton et al., 2006). The conservation is not only for the heritage's physical structure but also for the people and with the people in the affected community. How in this process different stakeholders prioritize their interpreted image of heritage and use their discursive power to practice it, decides the outcome of the heritage conservation, whether it be renovation, gentrification or redevelopment.

Besides, the residents in hutongs have their individual different needs, and they have the right to improve their living standard. The living condition of these Hutong residents is

rather below the average standard living in Beijing. The lack of modern facilities and sanitary equipment and lack of space are major problems facing them. The historical residential houses are their property and the co-management is necessary. It is very important to create discursive space for community participation in the process with the aid of expert knowledge and in the framework of government policy.

The conceptual model can be understood as follows:

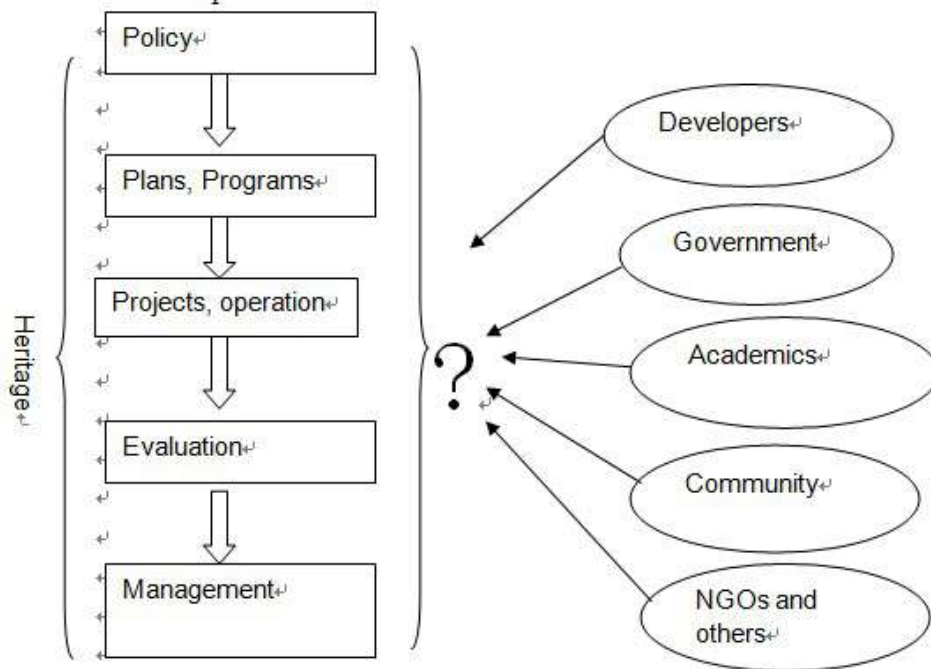


Figure 1 Conceptual model of heritage process (made by author)

Discursive space for community participation

With this case we will investigate the heritage discourse by the case of Beijing hutongs and identify how the different stakeholders interpret, manage and preserve the heritage. By analyzing the dynamic interaction and participation of various actors in the face of heritage changing process, the discursive capability and power relations lying behind would appear up. Finally the mechanism for an inclusive and participative mode of dealing with heritage could be advised generally.

Nanluoguxiang, also named South Luogu Lane, is one of the oldest alleyways (hutongs) in the Beijing city center. It has a history of 800 years and a must-see attraction in Beijing. It is 800 meters long vertically and located on the northeast of the Forbidden City and has a population of more than 50,000. It is one of 25 “Traditional Courtyard Housing Preservation Districts” designated by the 1982 Master Plan of Beijing (Zhang et al., 2003). In the neighborhood, there are more than sixteen hutongs stretching horizontally and a main street called South Luogu Lane vertically right across the middle (see figure 2). However, in the recent 10 years, the houses in the hutongs of the area have been going through many times’ demolitions by various renewal projects. Lots of old-style courtyard houses were redeveloped into high-rise buildings in the historical streets and thousands of people are affected.

Among this, Ju'er Hutong is a typical example of converting decrepit into new hi-rise courtyard houses and won the World Habitat Award in the 1990s. But it also gets some criticism, for example, Zhang and Fang (2002) claim that the case of the Ju'er Hutong project illustrates that neighborhood revitalization is inherently a profoundly value-laden process in which a society redistributes power and resources. And that local governments and local State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs) built growth coalitions to accumulate wealth (exchange value) at the expense of providing local residents with adequate places to live and work (use value)(Zhang and Fang, 2002).

There are many other interesting stories happened or happening in this neighborhood, which arose my interest to target it as my case study area. For example, by the report of The Telegraph, there was an opposition to the conversion of Drum and Bell Tower and the surrounding hutongs into an underground shopping complex and a themed “Time City” in 2010.

Since 2005, the research team led by Prof. Lü Bin of Peking University has been working on the comprehensive hutong planning programme aided by the local government to foster preservation and cultural creative industry in the hutong complex.



Figure 2 Location and layout of Nanluoguxiang

Source: <http://www.courtyard7.com/contact.php>

<http://www.beijinghotelchina.com/beijing-hotels/nanluogu-xiang.html>



Figure 3 The 16 Hutongs crossing the Nanluoguxiang district
 Source: Beijing Cultural Heritage Protect Center, http://en.bjchp.org/?page_id=4336



Figure 4 the exterior appearance of the Hutongs
 Source: <http://www.travelaroundbeijing.com/nanluoguxiang-hutong/>

Through in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions members of affected community will be approached. But the sample size is not fixed in case of inadequate information collected and resources limitation. In this way, a simultaneous data review

and analysis can be done in conjunction with data collection. Additional interviews will be done to get more insights to the research question. Snowball sampling is also a useful tool to discover potential respondents. By making use of participants or informants' social networks, the researcher can refer to other participants who could contribute to the study.

Focusing on people having local experience, know about, or have insights into the Hutong heritage revival, the goal will be to discover process of planning and decision-making behind the stories told.

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