

Policy, Space and Governance: Lessons from Beijing

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Abstract

Beijing is China's capital city with a population of over 22 million. It is known to be well on its way to be a "World City," – one that has something to do with or concerns people from all over the world. At the same time, Beijing is known as a city that tops the world in traffic congestion and bad PM 2.5. Many plans and efforts have been over the years by the city of Beijing to improve its urban life. Nonetheless, the problems do not seem to disappear. This paper, by tracing the planning efforts made in Beijing and changing policy orientations at the national level, reveals the intricate relationship between policy, planning, and urban governance. The authors argue, in our modern time, planning needs to be more integrated with public policy, public policy needs to be more relevant to that with Number 1. Many authors tried to describe Beijing. Few, however, tempted to explain how it has become the way it is from a planner's perspective. This paper is an effort filling this gap. It traces the trajectory of urban planning and urban evolution in Beijing since 1949, the founding year of the new China. This period of time, although relatively short, has greatly affected the way the city is and offers a great deal for city planners and city governors to ponder. Through a discussion of the background, planning process, and characteristics of different versions of the city's Master plans and the relationships between the Plans and their implementation, the authors reveal an incompatibility between urban planning and China's policy implementation protocol, which is movement based. In order China's urban planning can have more meaningful significance, new ideas, new strategies, new implementation protocols, and even new institutional arrangements are necessary.

1. Introduction

Beijing is China's capital city, new and modern, boasting a population of 19,619 thousand by the end of 2010 with a population density of 1,195 person per square kilometers (Beijing Statistics, 2011). It is also an ancient capital city, going back to a number of ancient Chinese Dynasties starting from the Yuan Dynasty (1276, a.d.) and inherited all kinds of cultural and aesthetic legacies of China's ancient civilization, Beijing once epitomized the highest ideality of ancient China's urban planning (Sen-Dou Chang, 1998). And it is today considered well on its way to become a world city (Yang et al., 2011).

Since new China's founding in 1949, Bei-

jing's urban planning and construction has always enjoyed a privileged position and is considered a model for the rest of the cities in China (Zhao, 2001). Nonetheless, today's Beijing does not seem to have escaped from the common problems many other ill-planned cities suffer. *Shou3 Du1 (In Chinese, the Capital City) is Shou3 Du3 (In Chinese, the Number One Congested City)* is a commonly carried joke among the people about the traffic jam situation in Beijing. Surging housing prices, difficulties in accessing medical service, hard to control urban population, urban pollution, social stability challenge, one issue after another, are still the biggest headaches of the city's governors and planners.

This paper, through a review of Beijing's Master Plans and development history, demonstrates the dynamics between urban planning and overall governmental policy, and shows that Beijing's Master Urban Plans were often obsolete before they started to implement. In order Beijing overcomes its urban illness, new planning mentality, new implementation strategy, and even new institutional arrangements have to be in place.

2. The Stages of Urban Planning and Development in Beijing since 1949

Beijing's urban planning can be roughly divided into four distinctive stages: 1) the Initiation Stage, 1949-1957; 2) the Growing to Consensus Stage, 1958-1982; 3) the Transitional Stage, 1982-2004; and 4) the Explorative Stage, 2004-to date. These four stages are characterized by and articulated in the eight editions of Beijing's Master City Plans. They are:

(1) The Rebuilding and Expansion Plan of Beijing (draft edition), 1953

(2) The Rebuilding and Expansion Plan of Beijing (revised draft edition), 1954

(3) The Primary City Construction Master Plan of Beijing, 1957

(4) The Primary City Construction Master Plan of Beijing (revised edition), 1958

(5) The City Master Plan of Beijing, 1973

(6) The City Construction Master Plan of Beijing, 1982

(7) The City Master Plan of Beijing (1991-2010), 1991

(8) The City Master Plan of Beijing (2004-2020), 2004

These plans reflect different guiding principles, policy actions, and policy consequences during the different periods of time in China. The following is a description of the characteristics of these plans.

The Initiation Stage, 1949-1957

New China's urban planning started as soon as the New Regime moved from the rural areas

into the cities in 1949. Implementation of the Plan was carried out in China's First Five Year Plan period between 1953 and 1957. The Economic and Finance Council of the Central government called for a national forum in April of 1952 to discuss urban development issues in China in an effort to promote economic development. The Forum proposed the initiation of urban planning throughout the country and discussed "The Draft Act for Urban Planning Procedure Guidelines" and "Urban Reconstruction Guidelines of the People's Republic of China." In September 1954, the State Planning Commission issued "Temporary Regulations for Reviewing Plans for New Industrial Cities". In July, 1956, the State Construction Commission issued "Temporary Methods for Urban Planning." During the First Five-Year Plan Years, China established its industrialization bases and a planning system, with the power highly centralized in the hands of the central government (Zou, 2001). Planning efforts, however, were made on trial and test bases. They were explorative. This period of time can be characterized as the initiation stage.

The city of Beijing responded to the national policy and initiated its first set of master plans. The Central Party Committee, the State Council, and Beijing City's Party and Governmental leaders all paid serious attention to Beijing's planning. In fact, Beijing's planning started before Beijing's takeover in 1949. Afterwards, another four years between May 1949 and November 1953 were used to compile the first Master Plan for Beijing. After many revisions, the Plan was titled "The Initial Master Plan for Beijing's City Construction." The Central Party Secretariat had a hearing for the report and approved it in principle.

The main features of the initial Plan include: 1) It answered the question of what a socialist city is: egalitarian spatial use, and how the size of the city should be controlled, how urban-rural difference can be eliminated, and how integrated urban construction should be pursued (Leaf, 2011). 2) It proposed Dis-

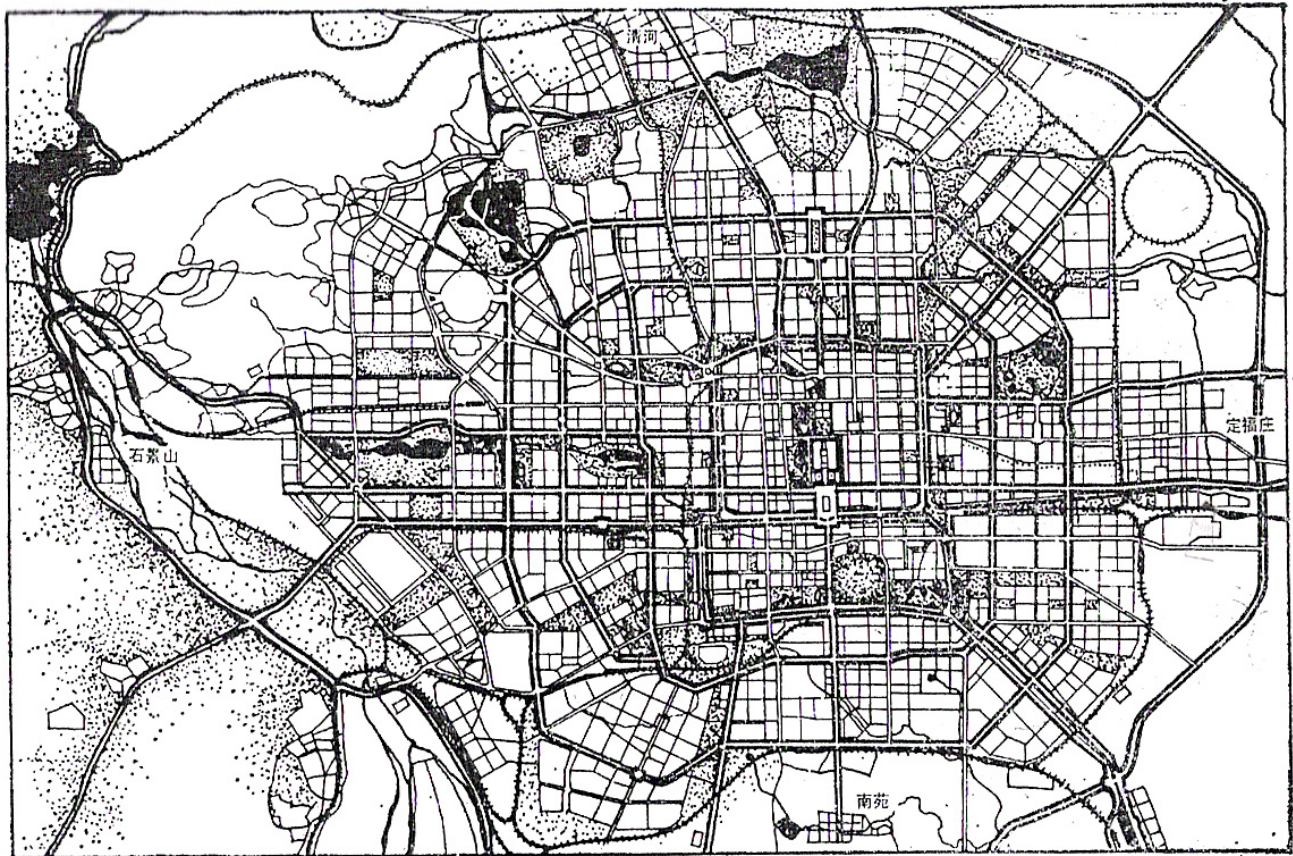


Fig. 1. Master Plan of 1957

Source: Beijing Urban Construction Archives, Urban Planning, Vol. 1, 1987.

crete Group-Centers strategy for urban spatial distribution. 3) It decided on the construction of a transportation system that includes both belt-ways and straight-ray roads in downtown Beijing.

While this period of time is short, it has left a strong legacy for China's urban planning and urban development. As a consequence, China's cities are considered a fascination for planners concerned with Third World urbanization that is characterized by sharp socioeconomic cleavages-spatial segregation by income class. The discrete group centers strategy lingered on and made a comeback after years of negligence. The beltway construction continues on, causing speculation that it may well expand to the 8th rings that would board Tianjin – the next large city.

After a decade of economic reforms and the consequent relaxation of social controls, Chinese cities started its extraordinary transfor-

mation. An essential question is whether the major cities of coastal China are now beginning to adopt spatial and social characteristics typically associated with other Third World cities. Will China's transition to a market economy - particularly a market system for the allocation of urban space - result in spatial polarization of social groups within cities (Leaf, 1995).

The Growing to Consensus Stage, 1958-1982

The good time for urban planners at the earlier years of the Republic did not last long. In 1958, China started its Big Leap Forward Movement. Noteworthy during this movement, among other things, is the construction of a few of Beijing's monumental landmark buildings such as The Great Hall of People's Congress, the Museum of the Chinese Revolutionary History, Beijing Railway Station, the Beijing Palace of Ethnic Cultures Museum, the

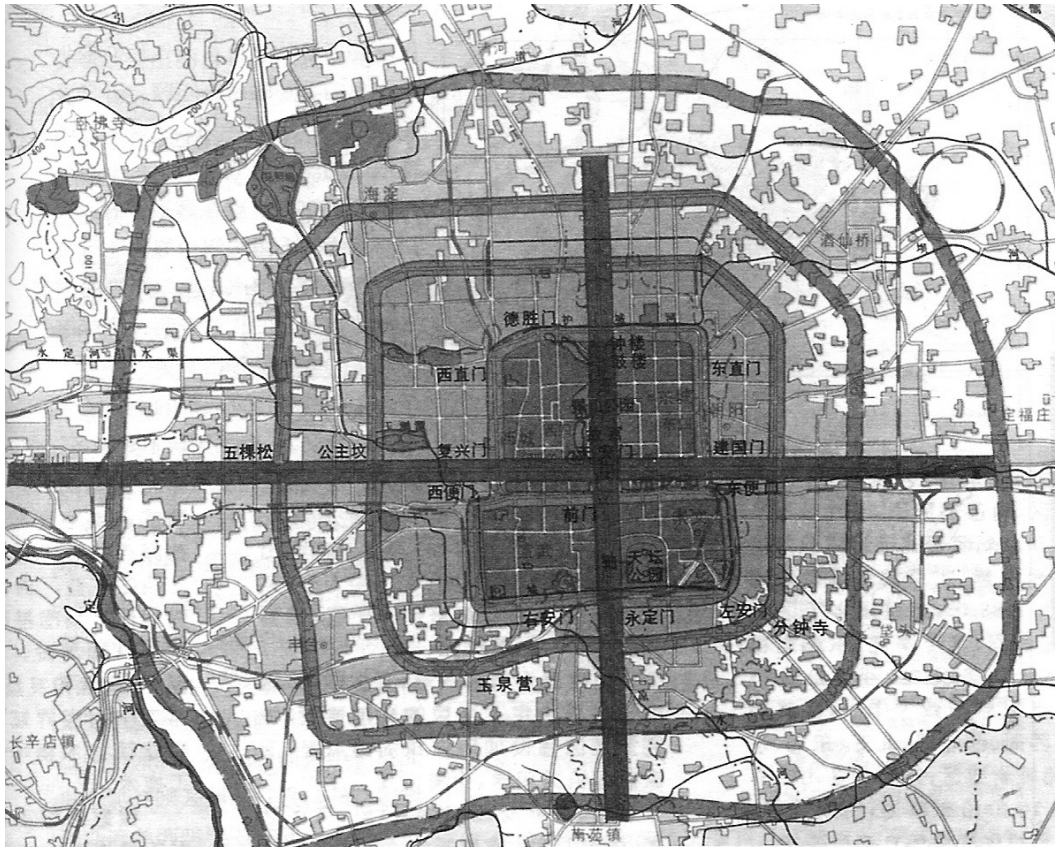


Fig. 2. The consistently implemented Beltways in the 1957

(Master Plan. Two axes were added at the beginning of the 21st century)

Source: J. Wang, *Urban Notes, Life, Reading. Readers.* New Knowledge Sanlian Bookstore, 2004.

Minzu Hotel. From planning design to construction completion, the time period was extremely short, from one to a few years (For example, the Great Hall of the People's Congress was planned in 1958 and completed in 1959).

In the one year time of 1959, China experienced 15.4% growth in urban population, urbanization level reached 19.8% in 1960.

However, the Great Leap Forward was followed by three years of economic depression (1959-1961) and thereafter, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Urban planning and urban development stagnated. Urban construction was chaotic for the most part of the next twenty years. In between, a new part was added to the old Beijing Hotel, and the Long Distance Call Telegraph Building was built along the Changan Street in the 1970s.

It was not until 1978 when China started its open door reform. China's political environ-

ment stabilized, social and economic development became normal, and urban planning efforts were restored. In March 1978, the State Council called for the Third National Conference for Urban Work. The Conference resolved that "urban planning" is a serious undertaking and deserves serious attention. The resolution required all the cities and towns throughout the country to conscientiously compile, revise, and make master and detailed plan for urban development. And such plans, once approved, should be faithfully implemented without alteration.

The Transitional Stage, 1983-2004

The minute Beijing has passed its full-fledged urban plan (completed in 1982 and approved in 1983) under the Socialist Planning Economy ideology, it was dated. As the reform took off in the 1980s, China's social

and economic situation greatly changed. Not a planned economy, but a market economy with socialist characteristics became the catchwords of the time. The reform brought forth fast economic growth and a wave of change which can be in no way accommodated by the Master Plan of 1982. The market system also started to be recognized (Chow, 2007; Wei, 2001; Zhu, 2000; Zhao, 2007; 2011).

Here is the reform background during this particular period of time. At the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Conference of the Communist Party in 1978, reform was called for and China started to relax its ideological control. At the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party in September of 1982, the discussion became “building a Socialism with Chinese characteristics.” In 1987, at the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, a consensus that China was at an elementary stage of socialism was reached. In 1992, after a brief interruption by the 1989 student movement, Deng Xiaoping made a speech on his South China tour, urging the interrupted reform to continue forward. These national political trends gave rise to two waves of urban policies that dictated two waves of urban development.

The first wave started after the Third Plenary Session of the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party in 1982 when it specifically reiterated the idea that “Cities are the centers of economic, politics, science and technology, culture and education in our country, and play critical roles in socialist modernization.”

In October 1980, the Capital Project Construction Commission called for an urban planning conference. In December, the State Council approved the “Minutes for National Urban Planning Work” which confirmed the leading role of urban planning in urban development and construction. This conference is known as having started the second spring of China’s urban planning. It greatly promoted urban planning efforts in China. In fact, in the ending years of the Cultural Revolution, Beijing already started to restore its work on Master Plan Compilation. However, due to

the lack of clarity in the political direction, the efforts could not make meaningful headways. In November of 1981, Beijing Municipal Government decided to establish the Beijing Urban Planning Commission and started its second round of Master Urban Plan. In March 1982, Beijing municipal government formally proposed its Master Plan for Beijing Urban Construction (draft). It was sent to the State Council for approval. On July 14th of 1983, the Central Government Committee and the State Council gave approval to this Plan in principle.

In this master plan, the Political and Cultural Center Position of the Beijing Municipality was recognized. It emphasized that industrial growth and development should take into consideration of the Capital city status of the city of Beijing. The plan continued to emphasize the importance of population growth control; strengthened protection for Beijing’s cultural and historical relics; for the first time included environmental protection as an important theme in urban development; and clarified its objectives in improving urban environment. Other considerations for residential quarters, service facilities, and various capital projects have also been made. Besides, concrete discussions on how to handle leadership, governing structure, and investment issues were made and lines for action were laid out.

The Beijing Urban Construction Master Plan of 1982 is a plan for restoring the previous good efforts. It was the result of references to the initial plan made in the 1950s, and many years of empirical experiences and lessons. This plan symbolizes that after thirty years of ups and downs, China’s Master Urban Plan finally came to maturation. This master plan positively affirmed the important role of urban planning, namely: only when urban planning is conscientiously made and implemented can socialist planning economy demonstrate its superiority. It is the only way that socialist cities distinguishing themselves from plan-less capitalist cities.” (China Cities Yearbook 1986-1987, 1989). In a way, this Plan is regarded as the most representative Master Plan for Mod-

ern Chinese Cities under the socialist planning economy. The core assumption for the plan, however, is that industrialized cities are the engines for economic growth.

The second wave came after China's late leader Deng Xiaoping's South China tour speech in 1992. For Deng, there is no future for China if it stops reforming. At the 14th Congress of the Communist Party in 1992, a resolution was made to promote economic transition from a planned economy to a market economy. After the conference, urban planning efforts quickly recovered. A new cycle of efforts in making and approving master urban plans were initiated.

The recognition of China's market orientation led to changes in the perception of cities. The Sixth Plenary session of the 14th People's Congress advocated for the building of China's spiritual civilization. It helped promoting the construction of urban public facilities as well as strengthened the perception of the importance of non material functions such as culture. Such a change in the perception led to an understanding that cities are not only the basis for the production of industrial product, it should emphasize tertiary industry, high tech development, environmental and historical legacy protection as well. It is the integrated benefits of economic, social and environmental efficiency that count.

In this particular context, Beijing advanced its 1991 version of the Master Plan. It started in 1991, went through a few revisions, and was finally approved on October 6th, 1993 by the State Council on October 6th. The 1991 Plan maintained a lot of old visions in the 1981 Plan such as continuing to adhering to discrete-group urban spatial arrangement, and planned for the building of satellite cities to release central city's population and production pressure. However, it also included some new features in response to the emerging new problems: (1) It emphasized the building of a Socialism with Chinese characteristics; (2) It analyzed dialectal relationship between the nature of the city and economic development which discussed

the necessity to develop a capital city-conducive economy and the importance of the tertiary industry in economic development; (3) It introduced the concept of urbanization and its relationship to modernization, and (4) It recognized that urban population growth always surpasses the planned urban growth. This new recognition helped relaxing China's control on urban population growth.

The 1991 Master Plan tried to accommodate the concept of socialist market economy. However, since the planners had not yet seen the full fledged problems associated with a market economy and not sure of what to expect, their plan was somewhat a continuation of the past effort. As was in the past, this Plan was dated before it was completed. It is more of a political statement rather than a guide for future urban growth and development.

The 1990s' is China's second wave of reform. Its economy has grown significantly, so is that of Beijing. The reform unleashed people's drive for work. Compared to that in 1980, Beijing's GDP increased 130% in 1990; per capita gdp doubled; and industrial product increased by 1.6 times. Its tertiary product increased from 1980's 26.8% to 37.5%. Retail sales of commodities were five times more. Urban dwellers' disposable income increased by 67.5%, farmers' average disposal income became twice as much. The improved standard of living called for improved living environment. Improved urban space arrangement, environmental quality, protection of cultural heritage, strengthen spiritual civilization, etc. all became the calls of the time.

Particularly after Feb. 27th of 1995 when the State Council approved that Beijing could enjoy a favorable policy status as did the coastal cities in the earlier years, Beijing enjoyed phenomenal growth. During this period of time, GDP per capita doubled again. Vast amount of real estate development and old town renovation year after year led to great changes in Beijing on all fronts.

As the city grew, many new issues and new problems emerged. Rapid population growth

and concentration of urban functions led to congested traffic situation, high ecological pressure, and lack of water resources and energy supply.

Other extant problems include the rural-urban dual structure and the difficulties in coordination of the development of Beijing and Tianjing. All these problems need solutions built on the basis of strategic integrated vision. At the same time, Beijing was given excellent development opportunity. It was designated to be a leading city for modernization and the host for Olympics in 2008. Many new projects were initiated. In order the efforts for developed are coordinated, it was high time that city set a long-term developmental objective. To incorporate new projects, new space and extra support systems are needed. In response to this new reality, the Beijing Urban Construction Master Plan approved in 1983 had to be modified again. The 1983 Plan set the population goal in year of 2000 to be less than 4 million. However, by the end of 1992, the resident population was already 5.52 million, plus 1.27 million transient population. Among them, 800 thousands were actually long term urban dwellers. Beijing was in need of a plan again.

The New Explorative Stage, 2004 to date

In 2002, Beijing initiated a new round of effort in compiling its Master Plan. It was completed in 2004. On Jan. 1 of 2005, the State Council in principle approved the 2004-2020 Master Plan of Beijing.

The guiding principles of the 2004 Master Plan is: With Deng Xiaoping's Cat Theory¹ and the Theory of Three Representations by Jiang Zeming as guidance, with building a moderately well-off society and realization of modernization as the objective, grounding on the outlook of all rounded, coordinated, sustainable, and human needs based development,

¹ A utilitarian theory for which the late leader Deng Xiaoping said, no matter that cat is black or white as long it catch mice."

the city of Beijing should strategically seize the opportunity for development, expedite the process, establish and perfect socialist market economy system, promote all rounded economic and social development, and continuously raise the ability of the capital city for harmonious development. The keywords are: expedite modernization development, build a market economic system, and maintain the city's harmony (Master Plan, 2004).

The highlights are: 1) Continue with economic development. 2) Build a market system. The New Master Plan clarified that the role of the government under the new market economy should be plan management only rather than playing all the roles ranging from plan, investment, construction, management, and operation. 3) Maintain harmony. For this purpose, the New Master Plan contributed separate chapters to resource management, ecological and environmental management, and public security management. 4) Urban spatial arrangement has changed to "two axes, two areas, and with multiple centers" from the past "discrete group-centered pattern" (See Figure 1), which had been persistently adhered to until this point. The number of satellite cities was reduced to 11. And 3 new urban centers would be added. 5) The political undertones were weakened in the new Master Plan. Regulation focus shifted from control of the growth of urban population to the control over land and resources use.

Having experienced failures in urban planning and people's suspicion of the function of urban planning, China's urban planning finally moved into a stage of active exploration. Although it shall take time for us to be able to fully evaluate the impact of this version of the Master Plan, the new Master Plan did reflect the effort to adopt new methods, new technology, new contents, and new institutional arrangement.

7 years after the implementation of this plan, many questions still remain. For example, the predicted population for the year of 2010 by the plan is 16 million, while in 2010,

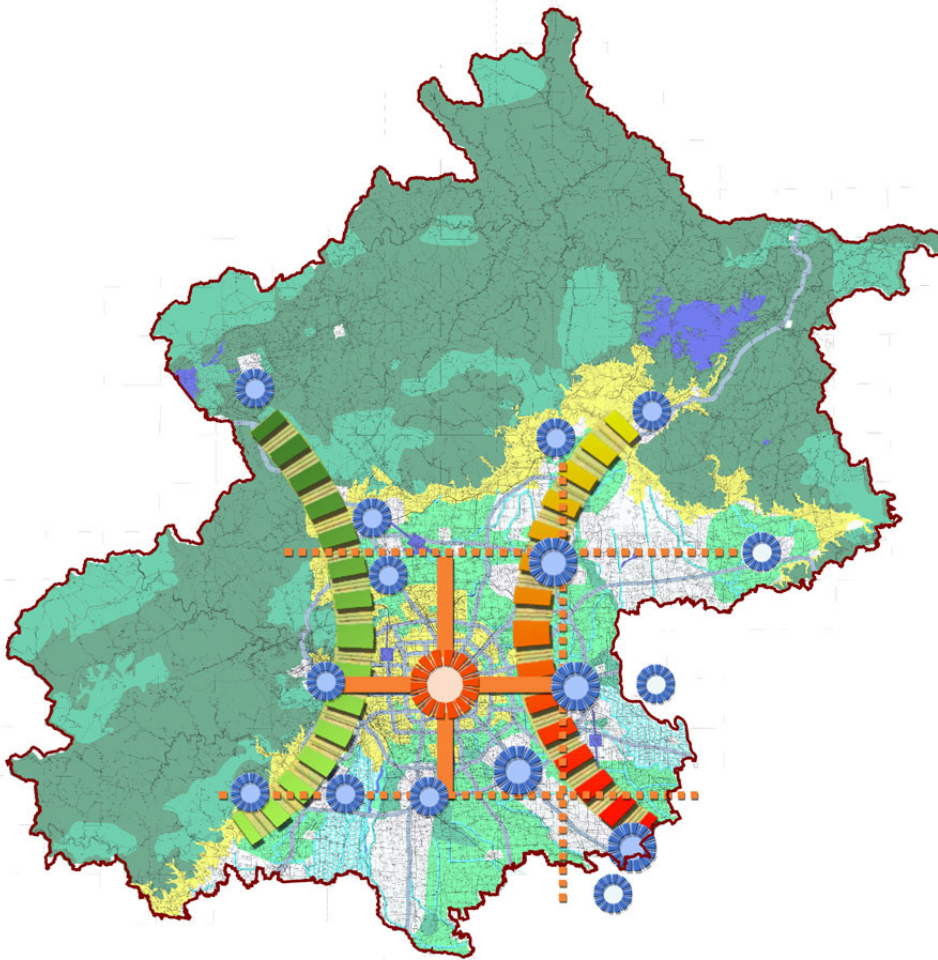


Fig. 3. Beijing's Spatial Plan: Two Axes, Two Belts, and Multiple Centers

Source: Strategic Research Institute of Beijing Spatial Development, China Institute of Urban Planning and Design, 2003.

the actual population in Beijing is already 20 million. What is it that is driving all the plans invalid or what is it that makes it so difficult to have a reasonably sound plan?

3. The Relationship between Beijing's Urban Planning and Development and China's National Policy Orientation

While the evolution of Beijing's urban planning and urban development is reflective of urban planning and urban development in the entire China, China's urban planning and development as a whole was intertwined with China's national policy orientations. As we

could see from the above chronological description, many versions of the urban plans were made at the same time or even before the formal announcement of the new round of national policy directives. In a way, they are the barometers of China's policy orientations.

Before 1949, China was mostly an agricultural society. Its urban centers were more or less a market for craftsmen, traders, and residences of the Kings and Lords. Traditional large cities such as Kaifeng, Nanjing, Xian, and Beijing are the homes of the imperial courts. A few modern cities such as Shanghai and Tsingdao were built under foreign influences. Perhaps one of earlier examples of urban planning in China is the case of Tsingdao, which was

first built by the German, then, the Japanese, and later the Chinese themselves (Li and Lan, 2012).

1949 was a turning point when the Communist Party took over the rule of China. Efforts were made to plan for China's urban future. However, this has proven to be tortuous road. The emphasis between 1949 and 1957 was urban center recovery and restoration after years' of war destruction. The government strove for key industry development. Urban centers grew from 136 to 178.

1958-1965 saw the rise and fall of many of China's urban centers. Within one year since the Big Leap Forward Movement from 1958 to 1959, urban population grew by 15.4%, with an

urbanization level of 19.8% (1960 statistics).

However, this explosive growth was not sustainable. The Big Leap Forward Movement was followed by three years of consecutive natural disasters and economic recession. Between 1961 and 1964, urban centers retrenched from 208 to 171, and urban population fell back to 14.6%. The government issued a call to encourage the young people from the urban centers to go to settle in rural areas, as a strategy to relieve the employment pressure for the urban areas.

The 1966-1977 was China's stagnation period for urban growth. The urbanization level was about 17.92% at the end of 1977, an approximate 13.8% percent urban population growth in ten years time. There were some new cities in Northwest, Southwest, Henan West, Hunan West, Hubei West, and Shanghai West.

The general perception before 1978 was that the city is a consumer. It is where clusters of capital-intensive heavy industry concentrate. At the time, economic and urban efficiency was low, employment was limited, and urban centers needed to be heavily subsidized.

The 1978 reform changed the perception as well as the reality. It expanded the understanding that urban centers were engines of economic growth and the sites of industrial production, urban centers grew phenomenally, the city functions become more and more comprehensive. By 2004, China has 700 cities. Among them, 166 cities were with population over 1 million.

Due to the institutional setup for planning and the limitation in urban planning rationalities, China's urban plans generally lack foresight for China's growth. Urbanization often lags behind economic development needs. Uneven development of urban centers, low level development of urban infrastructure, poorly predicted urban population and transportation needs, and insensitivity to environmental protection pressure are all issues related to today's urban problems in China.

Beijing's urban development reflects China's uneven economic development as well.

In 1957, Beijing's industrial product was only 32.3% of that of Tianjin (China's old industrial base). In 1980, the total of Beijing's industrial product surpassed Tianjin. Beijing's heavy industry product was 156.8% times over that of Tianjin's. Because of Beijing's resources constraint and the environmental pollution and transportation problems, the 1982's Master Plan stated that the scale of industries in Beijing should be tightly controlled. The Beijing at that time was already a large scale heavy industry town. The industry contributed significantly to Beijing's local government revenue.

The 1991 and 2004 Plans were made in response to the changed emphasis on Beijing's role as the Capital city. Heavy industries started to move out of the city. Patterns for more livable space, better sustainability for growth, and higher quality of urban life are sought for. And in turn, this idealization of urban life style is becoming a model for other large cities in China.

4. Future Roads

For a long time after the industrial revolution in the west, people resisted the growth of large cities. Nonetheless, cities kept expanding. Today, many have accepted the inevitable reality. Scholars have also come to realization that profound economic and social reasons underlined the impetus and incentives for continuous urban growth. However, the debate goes on. Some think the large city is more efficient since it has more advanced specialization and division of work, and thus more organized behavior. Specialization reduces production cost and organization reduces transaction cost (Cheng, 2003). Others argue that when a city gets too large, it exerts pressure on resources, environment, traffic, and governance. The cost of running large cities may offset its gains. China's urbanization is now at this critical crossroads. And the city of Beijing is at the very forefront of this debate.

After the recognition that cities were China's economic, political, science and technology, culture and educational centers, cities have

quickly become the mainstay bearing the load of China's national economy development. At the same time, population growth pressure, resource scarcity, and increased disparity between urban and rural areas forced urbanization to be China's strategic choice in its Tenth Five Year Plan. Due to this recognition, the population forecast model in Beijing's 2004 Master Plan weakened the conflict between simple growth and controlled growth, and instead, it used environmental capacity to foretell possible maximal population accommodation. Although it recognizes that population size is the basis for land use and urban infrastructure construction, it also recognizes that as the market economy system develops, there will be more uncertainties in population forecast. Therefore, the plan used ecological capacity and water resources capacity to justify the population ceiling. It projected that the population size should be controlled at 18 million by the year of 2020. However, urban infrastructure construction plan should be made to accommodate 20 million given multiple factors of uncertainty. Knowing that Beijing's population is already at 20 million, today's Beijing is already at its 2020 capacity.

As for the pattern of development, instead of sacrificing on the concentric zone pattern of Beijing's growth, the new proposal is that Beijing develops on the basis of the "Two Axes, Two Areas, and Multiple Centers." The horizontal and vertical Axes are Beijing's existing reality. Alongside the vertical axis are Beijing's ancient and old town buildings. Along the vertical axis are Beijing's new constructions after 1949. The industrial parks and manufacturers are to be moved to the north east and south-east part of the suburban areas. After Beijing's 2004 Master Plan, the momentum for growth in north west and east west of Beijing is strong. Unless with a considerable effort, south Beijing may stay relatively underdeveloped with the exception of the stretching of southeast in the Tianjing Direction. When the two gigantic cities join with one another, the regional challenge as well as the regional capacity will

be phenomenal. The already highly congested Beijing may not be able to handle these challenges well, without proper foresight.

To make an urban region of such size work, decentralization is a must. In the past, Beijing's plan for building multiple urban centers did not work well, due mostly to its tradition of concentrated functional areas. For example, northwest as the education and research center and northeast as the business center. To break this path dependent development, community development and integral urbanism offer some excellent guideposts.

Community development helps to enhance sense of place. Citizens are empowered, are able to build coalitions, express their views on a wide range of issues such as zoning, water and land protection, transportation, historic preservation, economic diversity, affordable housing, and refuse of brownfield (Harmin, et al. 2007). In Beijing, many of the local issues such as transportation, public safety, education, access to medi-care, air pollution, community management have been long standing issues. Strategies to activate citizen engagement could be of significant assistance.

Integral urbanism stresses to heal the worlds inflicted upon the landscape and human living environment by paying close attention to ecological capacity, sense of place and community, and appealing public space. It allows for hybridity, ensures connectivity, preserves porosity, respects authenticity, and makes good use of vulnerability² (Ellin, 2006). "Integral urbanism veers away from master planning, which, its focus on controlling everything, ironically tend to generate fragmented cities without soul or character."³ As a huge

² Hybridity and connectivity bring activities and people together; porosity preserves integrity through permeable membranes; authenticity engages and draws inspiration from actual social and physical conditions with an ethic of care, respect, and honesty; and vulnerability calls for relinquishing control, listen deeply, value process as well as product, and reintegrate space with time. Ellin, Nan, *Integral Urbanism*, N.Y.: Routledge, 2006.

³ Ibid, p.X.

city of strong traditional legacy suffering from the wounds of some pre-industrial efforts, the ideals of integral urbanism seem to strike a cord. Beijing's old Si He Yuan (Residents surrounded central yards) are now at the brink of yielding to more callous skyscraper buildings. Sense of community is disappearing. While the 2004 Master Plan is considering planning for a city with humanistic touch, the community development and integral urbanism can be handy assistance.

As a matter of fact, the design of the Olympic garden, the appearance of some idiosyncratic landmark buildings in recent years well attest to the intention of Beijing's planners to move in these directions.

Another dimension of change may need to be along how planning interact with public policy. As many have noticed, up to today, all the master plans made lag behind Beijing's real development (Song & Ding & Knaap, 2006; Huang, 2004; Zhao, 2011). Some criticized China's urban planning as being too static, too focused on physical and land use planning, and too single-dimensional without considering other social goals (Huang, 2004). In reality, other than the limitation in planning rationality, China's public policy making and implementation has its own unique feature that expert pressure on China's urban planning and implementation. During the revolutionary years, due to budget limitations and low level economic development Chinese government developed a strategy of focusing their resources for accomplishing major tasks, leaving many details to be fill out afterwards. When reflected on urban development, it tends to focus on land-marking projects such the Great Hall of the People, the major beltways, the Olympic Park etc., but leaving many detailed unfulfilled. Urban planners need to take this mentality into consideration and plan for the big, as well as for details. Also, due to its revolutionary heritage, crisis situation and political movements are often used to leverage change and development. This management style is not entirely compatible with

urban planning rationality. In order China's urban planning can maintain its integrity, its relationship with public policy strategies need to be properly worked out.

5. Concluding Remarks

Beijing's urban planning and development has told us a vivid story of China's urban planning history since 1949. It is highly associated with the changes of the political, social, and economic momentum at the national scene. Due to its unique political status, Beijing has been highly sensitive to the changing political and economic environment, as well as the changing ideals of urban planning in the international community. Through our effort to study the social, economic, and political environment surrounding urban planning issues, we gain a glimpse of the nature, the evolution, and functions of urban planning and urban development in China. A few observations could be made:

1) Starting from the very beginning, the Chinese Government has been exploring a road towards a socialist system compatible with the Chinese reality. In the process of this exploration, urban planning has been constantly adjusted and revised. Therefore, the problems confronting urban planning in Beijing are generally the problems confronting the developing China as a whole. It reflects China's effort in search for the Marxist vision of urban future in which the distinction between the city and the countryside is eliminated while coping with a reality in which urban centers have to serve as the engine for economic growth.

In the west, urban planning is mostly a product of industrialization, population growth, and urbanization (Greed, 2000). Whereas in China, urban planning is more a product of the dynamic interactions among state politics, social environment, and the economic reality. The changes in the politics, economy, and social environment inevitable dictate the changes in the content of urban planning, and accordingly, the role of urban planning in actual urban development (Vigar, et al. 2000).

2) Unlike in western countries where urban planning has been sporadically developed and evolved from the design of individual architecture to the design of communities and urban centers (LeGates, 2003), urban planning in contemporary China has been heavily central policy oriented. And the government is the fundamental cause for the success or failure of urban planning.

Looking at Beijing's urban planning and developing since 1949, it should be recognized that due to the association of urban planning with China's command economy system, the impact of planning was obvious. Many physical designs were implemented such as spatial layout, developmental scale, road network, and infrastructure layout. The National Economic Plan determined how cities grew, at what scale and speed. Urban capital project investment was entirely determined by state investment intentions. However, under the new circumstances of a market economy, the engine for urban growth has changed. Government investments have been reduced, and the un-plannable components grew. The planning system built under the command economy era no longer fit with urban development reality. Many problems surfaced.

3) In recent years, there have been more and more awareness of the "failure" of urban planning. Some even suggested that planning is totally useless. This on the one hand reflects the increased depth and extensiveness of critical thinking on urban planning, and on the other, it should be recognized that the "failure" of the plan does not equal to "useless" of the plans. Plans that failed to be used properly often have to do with either the occurrence of political movements, the failure in understanding the plans, or that the plans have not been appropriately made. In a way, the command economy system has created a sluggishness in China's urban planning. This is the birth defect of China's urban planning. After the reform started, political reform lagged behind economic reform. This again exasperated the disparity between planning and develop-

mental needs. At the moment, many plans have failed, partly due to the limitation of the planners and mostly due to the inadequacy of the institutional design. The bestway pattern could be considered a success because the pattern stayed on and has been faithfully implemented. It could be considered a failure because the network of roads linked to these beltways does not have enough capacity to absorb its traffic. Our review of the history shows that China's shifting policy goals have constantly influenced its urban planning and development, and lack of citizen input in planning prevented quick assessment of the plan outcome and adjustment to the plan to improve its details. During the process, many lessons can be learned.

First and foremost is perhaps that planning into the future is a difficult undertaking. The world changes fast, policy changes fast, and technology changes fast as well. Older industrial nations set the example that urban centers are places of production and commercial centers, so followed China. Before long, it suffered the consequences of pollution, environmental destruction, traffic congestion, and deterioration of quality of life including housing, education, and healthcare access difficulties. Also, emerging new technologies, new business organizations, and new methods in transportation quickly obsolete older means of production, and make new urban life possible. Without foresight and knowledge as such, urban planning are bound to fail.

Second, urban planning and planning implementation is as much political as it is technical. Especially under the Chinese political system, public policies are often made on the basis of social pressure and impulses of political leaders. The regular methods of governing include political mobilization, mass movements, concentration of resources for mission based tasks. In the years of revolution, these methods have proven to be effective and successful. It takes time to educate the people. Relatively easier is to create an atmosphere and momentum so that all feel obliged to fol-

low. While effective, these methods make it difficult to pay attention to the details, leaving many loopholes in whatever that has been achieved. For example, Beijing's initial Master Plan chose to build beltways for the city to enhance traffic flow. While as major and priority projects, belts are built and kept expanding, far from enough efforts are used to build rayroads, local roadways or public transportation to absorb the traffic from the belt ways. China's policy agenda has been pushed from one movement to another, leaving many details to be filled in in-between. Urban planning within such a policy context facing a unique challenge. For those who would like to emphasize unique Chinese characteristics, this is perhaps an important one. In this sense, how to introduce consistent urban planning rationality to policy makers and enhance its staying power is a unique challenge China's urban planner face.

Third, citizen participation and citizen choice may need to be an important consideration in China's urban planning. The few Master Planning made follow closely, or sometimes preceding policy momentums. However, the planning rationale had little to do with public input and public support, and were hardly appreciated by the general public as well as the urban leaders themselves. The minute there is a shift in policy emphasis, planning is quickly ignored. For example, marketization of the economy does not necessarily mean ur-

ban planning be compromised. But the lack of understanding and support for the plans can quickly lead to derailed implementation of the plans. One well-known sociologist once commented on urban planning in Beijing in 2008. He said, I thought China is well planned socialist country with tight controls, but looking at Beijing's chaotic urban skyline, I have realized how free this county can be. Anything seems possible."

Indeed, after China's opening up, conventional thinking on urban planning has become obsolete, new ideas, new methods for making and implementing the plans, and even new institutional arrangements have not yet been found. To what extent China should follow the normative visions for alternative urban futures as envisioned by urban futurists, or continue muddling through on its existing route of trial and test is a necessary question China's urban planners have to quickly answer. The city of Beijing stands right on the forefront of this uncertainty and is under heavy pressure to provide a quick answer, which the current planners may not have, to this critical and urgent question.

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