

**A Critical Analysis of Local and Global Cultural Factors in
Graphic Wayfinding Design
- A Case Study of Beijing**

By Lingqi Kong

Supervisor: Dr Robert Harland

Supervisor: Dr Malcolm Barnard

ABSTRACT

The main intentions of this thesis are to analyse and explain changes in the function and graphic components of Beijing's wayfinding systems and to explain how the systems construct multiple cultural and political identities at different historical periods and in changing local/global contexts. In the thesis, the oversimplified one-way theory of the global-local dichotomy, in which the global power of the West is overwhelming and constantly dominant, and the local system of non-Western countries is passive and fragile, is challenged. Instead, this thesis seeks to examine the interactivity and correlation of the local and the global from two perspectives: mobility and reversibility. Looking at mobility is to consider the local and global and their nexus as different interconnections and networks that are constantly and unevenly changing. Reversibility, with which this thesis is most concerned, deals primarily with the reversible relationship of the local and global, namely, that either the local or the global can be dominant. This point is well illustrated by the evolution of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems' function and appearance.

Beijing, as the capital of China, has undergone a radical transformation from the fall of the last Empire – Qing (1912) to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949). The meaning of Beijing varies in accordance with the changes in its political and social structures. There have been five phases in Beijing's development: a well-planned imperial city; a capital city with a republican spirit; a totally industrialised but relatively isolated capital of a socialist country; an open and modernised Chinese-style socialist city; and a cosmopolitan city. In the course of this metamorphosis, what took place was a series of collisions, exchanges, fusions, and re-collisions between local power and global power. Along with the immense changes in Beijing, the role and appearance of the graphic wayfinding systems have also changed, especially those of road signs and doorplates, whose roles have been transformed from that of initial household register to orientation reference, to

effective propaganda tool, and then on to the regeneration of a city. Finally, Beijing's graphic wayfinding design within its urban development has been reconfirmed as a useful instrument to support the new forms of visual narratives and consolidate the city brand of Beijing in the 21st century. This study probes into the political and cultural significances behind the changes of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing, as well as the interaction between the local and the global as reflected in the formation of these findings. The mutable and reversible relationship between the local and the global is illustrated and clarified through analysis and comparison of various functions and visual elements between Beijing's present graphic wayfinding systems and its early wayfinding signs, as well as decoding the different mainstream political or cultural ideologies that have deeply affected the function and design of Beijing graphic wayfinding systems at different periods.

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PREFACE

I started learning drawing and painting when I was about fifteen years old and went on to take an undergraduate programme in Film & Television Design and Graphic Design. Throughout these years, the drawing and designing courses have not only helped me develop my skills as a qualified designer, but have also shaped the way I see and think about the world. More importantly, many years of design practice and experience have made me perceptive and sensitive to colours, shapes, symbols and typefaces. Living and studying in the UK has given me an excellent opportunity to enjoy the unique British visual culture and a definite insight into the differences between British and Chinese culture, especially with respect to the construction of urban identity. In particular, the black-and-white street signs, sometime decorated with crests and symbols, and the Underground signs of London provide tourists with a rich and memorable visual experience. The typeface, typography and colour of these signs have been adjusted to provide a uniform appearance. According to the book, *London Underground By Design*, for example, and to exhibitions in the London Transport Museum, the design of Underground and street signs has not changed radically over the years; and various experiments were conducted with font design and selection to investigate the legibility and readability of these public signs. The most striking effect these signs and books had on me was the recognition of the close connection between public signs, urban history and identity. A well-designed urban graphic wayfinding design can make significant contributions to people's daily life and give them a sense of place. In contrast, Beijing's doorplates, road and alley signs have been diverse in the past and continue to be in the present. Thus, the question of the graphic wayfinding design's role in Beijing is raised by a comparison between Beijing's graphic wayfinding signs and London's. When did the Chinese people begin to use doorplates and roads signs? What are the reasons for the dramatic changes in Beijing's sign systems? Is there any cultural and political significance and are there implications for these Beijing's signs and their names in the local and global contexts

since nearly everything is given symbolic meaning in China? Finally, I put all these thoughts together into my research questions for this PhD and embarked on a memorable journey to discover Beijing's authentic culture and its connection with the rest of the world through its graphic wayfinding systems.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Context

Globalisation has often been presented as a historic process in which different political systems and economies join and blend with each other, as well as a cultural process of assimilation and differentiation. The developing trend of economic and cultural globalisation, with increased financial integration and expansion of technology, is a distinctive feature of the modern world. For this reason, globalisation affects every aspect of our life and has tremendous influence on us. In this thesis, global refers to global capitalist institutions, forces ideas and values driven by the West (the first world); local relates to values, ideas, beliefs and traditions of non-Western countries and cities. Some have argued that these overwhelming global values and standards are based on Western-style values, and that they have diminished local uniqueness. Many discussions on the cultural dimensions of globalisation involve one critical question: Is globalisation diminishing or reinvigorating cultural diversity? This thesis aims to study one specific area in which this critical question arises, the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing.

Scholars such as Edward Said, Jeff Lewis, Stuart Hall, and George Ritzer regard globalisation as a process that is related to cultural ‘imperialism’ and ‘Westernisation’ or ‘Americanisation’, where cultural diversity is obliterated by a dominant culture (Western or American). They argue that numerous distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups have succumbed to dominant Western-American cultural values. Postcolonial theorists argue that the new world system is built up around the globalised interests of the first world and maintains control over the discourses, economies, and cultures of previously colonised peoples (e.g., UK and India, Portugal and Brazil). Lewis (2002) states that a system of cultural and political hegemony implemented and maintained by advanced Western societies, and dominated by ‘Euramerican’ culture, has homogenised local differences. This system eradicates any protective policies of local

governments, upsets local cultural ecology, changes the direction of local consumption and transforms significant local differences into subordinate differences as a selling point. Stuart Hall calls this 'the international cuisine' (1991a, cited in Lewis 2008: 301). The term 'McDonaldization' was created by sociologist George Ritzer to illustrate the fact that American fast-food culture has spread all around the world as well as the power of this culture, which encourages uniform standards, obscures human creativity and weakens diversified forms of cultures (cited in Steger 2009: 73). As a result, a binary positioning of strong and irresistible global forces and fragile and subordinate local communities is formed.

While Edward Said and other postcolonial theorists consider globalisation or global powers as unavoidable hegemonism and imperialism, other critics have attempted to evaluate globalisation from a less 'monolithic' and arguably more optimistic perspective. Les Back (1998: 64) explains that globalisation cannot make the world monotonous and similar, and that the facts prove the opposite; it provides a space that enables various cultures to exist and interact (cited in Barnard 2005: 152). He adds that because 'global interconnection cannot completely integrate human societies that remain spatially dispersed', even in the 'global circuits of capital and culture' (ibid). In a similar vein, Wills (2005: 575) argues that 'Globalization does not mean everywhere in the world becomes the same. Nor is it an entirely even process; different places are differently connected into the world and view that world from different perspectives'. John Tomlinson (1997) is opposed to the notion of Westernisation/ homogenisation/ cultural imperialism. He suggests that the homogenisation argument is not in accord with cultural nature and interaction, because "Movement between cultural/ geographical areas always involves translation, mutation, and adaptation as the 'receiving culture' brings its own cultural resources to bear in dialectical fashion upon cultural imports" (Tomlinson 1997: 169, cited in Lewis 2002: 350). Therefore this culture interaction between the non-West and the West should be regarded as a two-way process rather than a homogenised one-way process (ibid). Homi Bhabha (1987, 1994, and 1999) argues that when an interplay

and exchange occur between two or more peoples or countries of different cultures, they will inevitably and simultaneously be altered and influenced during this process (cited in Lewis, 2002: 349). According to Bhabha (1987, 1994, and 1999), as a result of conflict, struggle, negotiation and cooperation between colonists and the ex-colonised, a blend of elements of the invading and aboriginal cultures has been produced, and, to a certain extent, this cultural mixing brings about a revival of traditional values and ideology, and differences are produced in a new, more harmonious, and interdependent world (cited in Lewis, 2002: 349). Wallis and Malm (1987: 128) have used the term 'transculturation' to explain the process of worldwide cultural interaction, that is, a 'two-way process that both dilutes and streamlines culture, but also provides new opportunities for cultural enrichment' (cited in Winchester, Kong and Dunn 2003: 39). In summary, the above-mentioned arguments highlight the fact that, although cultural products, images, texts and ideas of the first world have a great effect on the rest of the world, the cultural interaction between the West and non-West entails a dynamic two-way process of change. Moreover, the long-term and frequent interaction between the local and the global might foster a new cultural form and destabilise a clear-cut dominant relationship between the two. So, in contrast to the global/local binary, the local and the global mutually and continuously interact with and permeate each other.

Many scholars agree that since the late 18th century, global forces of dominant Western value systems have played a significant role in facilitating the cross-border flow of people, funds, technology, ideas, and ideologies (Tomlinson 1997; Lewis 2002; Marx and Engels 1967, for example). With the rapid expansion of Western culture and capitalist economy around the globe, local values, traditions and economic systems have been increasingly threatened and eroded to some degree. However, in some cases, the local culture is able to successfully resist global cultural erosion and political hegemony because of its differences, and global culture adapts to local culture, values and preferences for a variety of reasons. Thus, it is obvious that the simple one-sided dominant relationship, in which the powerful feed upon the

powerless, cannot be used to describe the interaction between the local and the global. This thesis takes the position that, despite the fact local culture cannot completely preserve itself from these homogenising effects posed by the global, need not be utterly eliminated by global values. Instead, local culture might prove to be a latent power against the assimilative impact of globalisation and it might even appropriate global resources to meet its own cultural, political and economic needs. Hence, the potentials and values of the local should be taken into account when we explore the relationship between the local and the global.

Graphic design is one of the most powerful ways in which beliefs, values, identities and ideologies are constructed and communicated. Therefore the interlacing, cooperation or conflict between global values and local values will also be communicated and reflected through graphic design. In turn, the intersection of these diverse values and beliefs determines the different functions and exterior forms of graphic products and their meanings. Therefore, how the local and global mediate and interrelate with each other can be investigated by decoding graphic visual elements. As a subset of environmental graphic design, graphic urban wayfinding design is not only restricted to the function of orientation and navigation, it also has cultural, social and political functions and implications. In addition, it is one of the ways in which political, social and cultural relations are produced and through which a city's identity is constructed as a product of interaction between the local and the global. As Cross (2007) stresses, a good environmental graphic system consisting of wayfinding and signage design can create a sense of place, convey information, and expand a place's brand (identity). Conversely, an indistinctive and inappropriate graphic wayfinding system, such as featureless modern buildings, might create a relatively undistinguished and unimaginative urban space. Whether the graphic wayfinding system is good or bad, it is regarded as a powerful means of communication in which the relationship between the local and the global are revealed. As a modern city in a developing country with a rich cultural heritage, Beijing is an ideal city for investigating the interaction between the processes of globalisation and localisation,

and the collision between global and local values, in Western culture and Beijing's indigenous culture. The research into the relationship between the local and the global will be performed here by analysing the function and visual factors of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing from different historical periods and acknowledging, to some extent, their representative natures. More specifically, the aims of this thesis are to investigate and explain the cultural and political meanings behind the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing of different eras, and the correlation between the local and the global as reflected in the creation of these meanings. The connection between the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing (graphic design), the urban spatial construction of Beijing (urban design), and the creation of Beijing's identity will also be considered. The thesis will achieve these aims by analysing and comparing function and various visual elements and design principles between the current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and earlier wayfinding signs of Beijing.

1.2 Research Questions

The research was designed to answer the following questions:

- Why and how are the local and global connected in urban graphic wayfinding systems?
- How have the meaning, function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems changed since 1840?
- What role did Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems play in shaping Beijing's identities at different periods?
- What is the complex and manifold relationship between the local and the global as reflected in the changes in the functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems?

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into nine main chapters in order to answer the above questions:

Chapter 2 explains the three major research methods: (1) collection and analysis of secondary data including government reports, policy documents, newspapers, books, archived photos and documentaries; (2) collection, generation and use of visual data; and (3) in-depth semi-structured interviews. The most suitable research methods for answering research questions and how the research methods are used to supplement one another will be explained in this chapter.

Chapter 3 explores existing theories and key concepts relating to globalisation and the relationship between the local and the global. And the relationship between the local and the global are articulated from two new perspectives: mobility and reversibility. It also explains how the issue of the local and the global links to graphic design, wayfinding design, urban design and Beijing's identity. Why and how graphic design and urban design can be employed to construct, reproduce and spread cultural, political and social values in the context of the local and the global and why the interaction between the local and the global can be manifested in urban graphic wayfinding design will also be articulated.

Chapter 4 provides a historical background and description of the process, in which the transformation of Beijing's identity (meaning) and urban space took place, to analyse the function and graphic visual elements of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems of different periods. The interaction between Beijing's identities or meanings and its urban design will be untangled in the chapter. How China's leaders, under the influence of internal and external forces, have attempted to express their political ideologies and cultural identity in and through urban space will also be demonstrated in the chapter.

In periods of considerable change in Beijing's identity since 1840, the main function of doorplates and road signs has been transformed from: a local household registration and population management tool to a Western-style urban orientation and direction signage system; to a political propaganda tool; and then to the identification, and eventually the branding, of a thoroughly cosmopolitan city. Along with the transformations in function, their forms, including shape, size, material, colour, typeface and content, have been dramatically altered. The traditional local paper doorplates were gradually replaced with durable Western-style metal doorplates and road signs. In this case, it might seem reasonable to believe that the local was affected and dominated by the global (Western) powers, but it will be argued here that the relationship between local and global reflected in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems are far more complicated. Chapters 5 to 10 will argue that the remarkable changes in functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems do not only show that the local was most deeply affected and dominated by the global in some areas, but also demonstrate that the local has the capability of challenging and overcoming the global and of turning inferiority into superiority in other areas. It helps to pin down and illustrate exactly what is meant by the changeable and reversible relations between the local and the global that were discussed in section 3.2 *Local and Global*.

Chapters 5 to 10 are organised chronologically, focusing on six different phases of China's history. As argued in Chapter 3, graphic design and urban design are political and cultural phenomena, that they have political and cultural elements and consequences. They are closely linked and associated with political and cultural movements and events. We can therefore comprehend, allocate to a time period and analyse Beijing's graphic wayfinding signs by a study of a number of pivotal phases in the development of modern China. There have been six key years of major social, economic, cultural and political change since 1840. (1) In 1840, the First Opium War broke out. Most Western historians and political scientists, Marxist scholars and many

Western-trained Chinese scholars consider the First Opium War as the beginning of modern China (Hsu 2000: 3-4). Some Chinese historians emphasise that the war signified the advent of foreign imperialism in China (ibid.); while for Marxist historians, the war driven by capitalism and imperialism turned the semi-feudal China into a semi-colonial society (ibid.). (2) The Republic of China was established and China's last imperial empire was overthrown in 1912. (3) The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. (4) The celebration of the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic took place on October 1st 1964, and subsequently the Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966. (5) The Chinese economic reform (Reform & Opening Up) was initiated in 1978. (6) In 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization and in the same year Beijing won its bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. Thus, the development phase of Beijing's wayfinding signs might contain the following six stages: First Phase 1840-1912, Second Phase 1912-1949, Third Phase 1949-1964, Fourth Phase 1964-1978, Fifth Phase 1978-2001 and Sixth Phase 2001 to the present. Each of the six chapters (from 5 to 10) deals with a particular phase.

Indeed, the six significant political and cultural changes and economic reforms have had a very substantial impact on the way Beijing's graphic wayfinding signs are used, and on their forms. However, the changes in signage do not always align neatly with the changes in politics because the graphics are prone to lag behind the politics and take a while to catch up. That is, the signs of Beijing have seldom changed in a simple historical linear pattern; practically, the signage takes time to change after political, cultural and economic events. Beijing's doorplates and road signs, for example, were redesigned into blue and white around 1915 and remained until 1964. Although the politics changed after 1949, the local government had not paid much attention to the redesign of signage until 1964. Accordingly, during the Second Phase (1912-1949) and the Third Phase (1949-1964), there is no noticeable change to the signage. Consequently, Chapter 7 *Third Phase 1949 to 1964 – Public Orientation and Direction Signage System* is relatively shorter than the other five chapters dealing

with these historic periods. See Figure 1.1 for an indication of how the phases and wayfinding devices will be explained. Against the backdrop of an ever-changing political, cultural and economic landscape, the change in the function and form of Beijing’s wayfinding signage drives the analysis and the structure of the thesis from this point onwards.

PHASES	REPRESENTATIVE SIGNAGE	CHAPTER
First Phase 1840 to 1912	Paper doorplates, Oval metal doorplates (population management implement)	Chapter 5
Second Phase 1912 to 1949	Enamel or wooden blue-white doorplates and road signs (urban orientation and direction signage system)	Chapter 6
Third Phase 1949 to 1964		Chapter 7
Fourth Phase 1964 to 1978	Enamel red-white doorplates and road and alley signs (political propaganda tool)	Chapter 8
Fifth Phase 1978 to 2001	Enamel red-white doorplates and alley signs, international traffic signs and symbols (city regeneration)	Chapter 9
Sixth Phase 2001 to the present	Enamel red-white doorplates and alley signs, international and bilingual/multilingual road signs and symbols(city branding)	Chapter 10

Figure 1.1 A brief summary of the changes in the functions and appearances of Beijing’s wayfinding signage at different times and an outline of chapters 5 to 10.

Particularly, Chapters 5 to 10 will begin to investigate the transformation in the role and appearance of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing as well as the intricate interaction between the local and global behind the transformation, in terms of the theoretical base discussed in Chapter 3 and the economic, political and cultural contexts described in Chapter 4. As stated in Chapter 3, urban design and graphic design (graphic wayfinding design) are effective tools in identifying a city and are the ways in which social attitudes, cultural beliefs, economic values and political strategies are generated, reproduced and spread or confronted and resisted. Chapter 4 has taken the example of Beijing and shown how China's rulers have attempted to implement and accomplish their political ambitions, cultural transitions and economic policies through the transformation of urban space. Chapter 5 to 10 will show how these attempts have been made to fulfil these same purposes by changing the major role, function and graphic visual elements of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. The collision, compromise and collaboration between local values and global values will be revealed by analysing these considerable changes in Beijing's graphic wayfinding signage. Given that the function changes of Beijing's wayfinding gave rise to a direct effect on their external design, the findings about the main role and function played by the graphic wayfinding systems in a particular time period, will be presented first in each chapter, and then the interaction between the local and the global will be addressed. In the following section, a thorough analysis of the visual elements and evidences of Beijing's wayfinding signs will be conducted. The arguments about the interaction between the local and global proposed in the previous section will be further intensified and expanded. With respect to the major discussions about the relationship between the local and the global, the focus of Chapter 5 is on the immense and penetrative influences of the global on the local, whereas Chapters 6 to 10 will focus on the initiative and resilience of the local and its resistance to, and even dominance over, the global. This shift in focus allows us to understand that the relationship between the local and the global is changeable and reversible and the simple one-way, local-global binary is biased and deficient. Therefore, it gives strong

support for the two approaches or views – mobility and reversibility proposed in Chapter 3 that can be used to reveal a complexity and richness of the interaction between the local and the global.

1.4 Originality and Contribution

This research makes three key original and interrelated contributions to knowledge: (1) the theoretical contribution principally lies in its critique of the one-way, local-global binary and the identification, development and application of two concepts – reversibility and mobility – to facilitate the understanding of the interaction between the local and global. It will be covered throughout the thesis, especially in Chapter 3; (2) the identification and analysis of the main features of the function and graphic visual elements of Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems of six significant historical periods since 1840. This is presented through Chapters 5-10; and (3) the exploration and analysis of how Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems have been used to construct Beijing’s changing identities within the six periods and how local values and global values have been culturally and politically linked to the systems, thus making a contribution to the understanding of the mutable and reversible local-global interaction. This will also be presented through Chapters 5-10.

None of this research has been done before in connection with the graphic wayfinding systems and global identities of Beijing, and these contributions and findings have broader consequences for urban design, graphic design and town/city planning. They provide an understanding of how a city’s identity is constructed and negotiated in the local/global graphic economy and culture; they will help designers, planners and theorists explain what is happening with their graphic wayfinding systems and how to construct and communicate an appropriate identity; and they will enable theorists to explain the local and the global in all cities through graphic wayfinding design.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods

2.1 Introduction and Research Design

The method used in this research is comprised of three approaches, in order of importance: (1) collection and analysis of secondary data including government reports, policy documents, newspapers, books, archived photos and documentaries; (2) collection, generation and use of visual data; and (3) in-depth semi-structured interviews. These three methods combine to address the research questions detailed in Chapter 1. More specifically, the first research question – Why and how are the local and the global connected in urban graphic wayfinding systems? – is answered drawing on the existing literature (Chapter 3 Literature Review – Theory). The other three research questions can be addressed by the three research methods. The relationship between the three research questions and the research methods is shown in Figure 2.1.

Research questions	Research methods
1. How have the meaning, function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems changed since 1840?	Method (1) , (2) and (3)
2. What role did Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems play in shaping Beijing's identities at different periods?	Method (1) , (2) and (3)
3. What is the complex and manifold relationship between the local and the global as reflected in the changes in the functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems?	Method (1) and (2)

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Figure 2.1 The relationship between the research questions and research methods

These methods are qualitative and interpretative. By combining the secondary data with the visual data and the interviews, the main aim is to illuminate what the interaction is between the local and the global on the function and design of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems, and how the interaction has influenced the changing identities of Beijing. However, the exploration of the interaction between local factors and global factors in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems draws more heavily on the first and second approaches – the collection and analysis of secondary data and the use of visual data. The secondary data are mainly used to give an idea of the historical, political, cultural and social contexts within which Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems are formed and developed. The visual data collected by means of the second method are interpreted by using the theories and concepts of cultural studies (including globalisation and localisation, homogenisation and heterogenisation) and are employed to illustrate the arguments and the concepts concerning the relation between the local and the global. Meanwhile, the collection and use of visual data are supported and supplemented by the use of the first and third methods. Except for principally serving a complementary role in collecting and interpreting visual data, the third method also contributes to a preliminary exploration of the influences of Beijing's current wayfinding signage on the creation of Beijing's city brand. Hence, the focus of the research techniques was upon the interpretation of functional change and communication between local graphic visual components and global graphic visual components of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems of different periods.

From 28th September to 19th December 2011, fieldwork was undertaken in Beijing. This resulted in approximately 5000 photographs and interviews with twenty-five people from different backgrounds, as well as official reports, news items, books, historical photos, documentaries and maps of Beijing from different periods. All types

of material – visible, intangible, spoken, and contextual – were interwoven with, and made meaningful in relation to, social relationships, individual experiences, collective memory of the city and individual living space. It is worth pointing out that this photo archive is not intended to be an examinable part of the thesis, but is a source of illustrations and images for the thesis. Within two and a half months, all three types of data including secondary data, visual data and interviews were examined simultaneously and interacted with each other. The photographic images stimulated discussion in subsequent interviews or a search for relevant documents in the national library or museums. Conversely, the photographic-documentation process was guided by each interview. For instance, when interviewing a local resident, an amateur photographer who is an enthusiastic collector of old Beijing's maps and doorplates, he discussed with me his experiences of and feelings about the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and his memories of old Beijing compared to new Beijing. In addition, I obtained some precious old pictures and official records concerning the use of doorplates as well as some good suggestions for later photography. Another example is that I took photos of the graphic wayfinding system of the Olympic Park and stadium, which is situated on the north-south central axis of Beijing, and summarised as well as analysed its preliminary characteristics. Subsequently, I interviewed one of the main designers of this system and specific interview questions were designed based on my early observation and analysis of the major graphic visual elements of this wayfinding signage system. Therefore, the three methods can be seen as complementary but sometimes inconsistent with each other. Such inconsistency means that in some cases, the three types of data are inconsistent. Sometimes interview responses are slightly or significantly different from the information in official records and documents. As a result, the search, use and analysis of data need to be adjusted individually in terms of the research topic and questions. By doing so, the methods adopted in this thesis become more directed and relevant.

I returned to the United Kingdom after two and a half months' fieldwork in Beijing. I brought with me photographs and images I had taken, printed and discussed with

informants, books, reports, historical photos and other bits and pieces of local materials I had collected. They all have their own specific relationship to the fieldwork context. A variety of qualitative data had been produced through the kinds of methods I used and comes in different formats: interview transcripts, texts, images etc. Each piece of ‘raw data’ material had been identified with a unique code or name for reference purposes, the late Qing signs, the Republic of China signs, for example. At present, coding and categorising the data, reflections on the early coding and categories and then identification of themes and relationships are one of the analysis methods of these qualitative data. First, the raw data (secondary data, photos and interview transcripts) can be divided into many small meaningful parts or units for further analysis. And second, to discover, develop and categorise these units in terms of their attributes, characteristics, dimensions and contents. As the analysis progresses, rethinking these qualitative data as well as reflecting on early analysis and classification resulted in an attempt to identify the key categories and inspire, conduct and produce new insights along with new interpretations. Meanwhile, a vital part of reflection is to rethink the research theme, research questions and methodology and to clarify the interconnection among different units and categories (texts, images and documents) and their relationships with the research theme. Under these guidelines, all these materials – documents, photos, and interview transcripts – were broken down into units and afterwards these were categorised, matched and compared. To sum up, this fieldwork was undertaken to establish a comprehensive understanding of the past and the current situation of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and offered sufficient qualitative data for the study of the relationship between the local and global in Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems. Each of the following sections in this chapter will explain and describe in detail these qualitative methods used in the study.

2.2 Collection and analysis of secondary data

Secondary data derive from a variety of sources. The sources in my research include personal collection (old photos, maps and historical materials), government reports, museum collections, newspapers, academic papers and theses, all of which are

wonderfully rich sources of historical information about the graphic wayfinding systems, cartography, urban planning and design of Beijing. Based on the analyses of the secondary data, the transformation of the role of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing, urban planning and construction of Beijing, alteration of typeface and typesetting in Beijing's maps of different periods and the creation of Beijing's official city brand will be investigated. The aims of the analysis of the secondary sources should be to provide evidence and complementary information for the analysis of the function and visual elements of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and provide a rich research context in the absence of specialised books or articles. More specifically, the contributions of this research method to the research process are as follows:

First, a series of relevant secondary data was collected and analysed to develop a better understanding of the functional and formal change in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems over time. For example, historical materials (books, historical photographs and maps) primarily related to descriptions and designs of road signs and doorplates were explored. The easiest way was to get help from the librarian at the National Library of China, local historians and private museums, such as Beijing Postcards. Because the graphic wayfinding systems (road signs, doorplates and so on) have not aroused enough attention from Chinese researchers throughout history, few specialised books or articles have been written that discuss cultural meanings and social significances of graphic wayfinding systems. Exploring historical photographs, maps, and ancient books is an important means to learn about the history and early form and function of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and find valuable evidence to underpin my research subject. Similarly, some contemporary books, newspapers, photo galleries, documentaries, governmental reports, and domestic and international conventions on road signs and symbols were used to identify the new characters and role of the graphic wayfinding systems. In addition, the *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals* (1968), which at 30th June 2004 had fifty-two signatory countries, the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD),

which has come into wide use in the USA and Canada, and the *Traffic Signs Manual 2003* and *The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002/UK* were reviewed in order to provide reference for identifying global standards and visual elements as well as their connection with the local (Beijing's) visual elements.

Second, the search and analysis of governmental reports, websites and news provided a general understanding of the official city brand of Beijing and also provided insight into how the urban image is created through graphic wayfinding systems. As will be noted in Section 2.4, parts of the semi-structured interview questions were designed to initially elicit an individual's experiences, memories and ideas about visiting or living in Beijing, Beijing's identity and meanings, and the wayfinding sign systems of Beijing. Nevertheless, this research principally focuses on the city brand of Beijing that the local government has been trying to project and the interaction between Beijing's wayfinding sign systems and the city brand. The major reason is that the official brand or identity of Beijing can be accessed by means of investigating local governmental reports, the official city planning and brand strategy, and the official news, which can provide more direct and reliable evidence. Individual experiences, expectations and attitudes toward Beijing and its wayfinding sign systems are by contrast, diverse, complex and elusive. To discover relatively comprehensive individual perceptions of Beijing and its signage systems and avoid misleading research outcomes, the researcher needs to engage with a representative sample of targeted audiences and set this against all the aspects of the wayfinding signage in Beijing. A string of strict qualitative or quantitative research methods, such as questionnaire, focus group and structured-interview, should be applied to produce quantifiable, reliable and comparable data. A sound evaluation of Beijing's city image and the impact of its wayfinding sign systems are drawn from the analysis of these data.

Yet, the present research has not engaged with users or consumers extensively. In Section – 10.4 *The Image of Beijing and Its Graphic Wayfinding Systems*, some

semi-structured interview segments were translated and transcribed to contribute to the preliminary discussion of the effects of Beijing's current graphic wayfinding systems on its city brand. These interviews, however, were used mainly for collection and interpretation of visual data rather than to explain how Beijing is envisaged by different audiences. For this reason, the more accessible and applicable official city brand of Beijing was further explained and analysed to provide the basis or context for the exploration of the relationship between the local and the global, as well as of the effects of Beijing's present graphic wayfinding systems. Accordingly, to develop a better understanding of what the official city brand or identity of Beijing is, relevant Beijing government reports, official news sources (e.g. *Beijing Evening News*, *Beijing Daily*) and annual reports on Beijing's urban development, economic development, cultural industry, society, etc. (such as the almanac of Beijing's official statistics and reports – *the Blue Book of Beijing*) were selectively analysed, compared and summarised, especially those that were published around the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The review of these reports and news items is distinct from the literature review that was carried out to set up a theoretical framework and historical context. Its aim is to answer the following questions:

- What are the functional zones of Beijing?

- What is the city brand of Beijing that the Beijing government has tried to establish after 2001?

- How is Chinese philosophy and traditional culture applied in the urban planning and reconstruction of the Beijing's old city nowadays?

- How is modern culture expressed in the design and planning of Beijing's new urban areas?

- How did the government use the historical and cultural resources of

Beijing to build a distinctive urban character of Beijing?

- How has the size of the population of Beijing changed over the twenty-one years between 1990 and 2011?
- How has the size of the population of foreigners in Beijing changed over the twenty-one years between 1990 and 2011?
- What are the relationships between the design of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems and the rapid growth in international tourism, the number of cars and the increasingly complex traffic network in Beijing?

These questions were used primarily to organise and integrate the secondary resources. Meanwhile, the ideas behind the question are to explore the official city brand and the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing from different angles (political, economic, and cultural perspectives) and to locate it in a wider context. Therefore, the analysis of secondary sources was used in combination with other research methods in order to collect more valuable data and provide a basis for thoroughly analysing and interpreting the function and graphic elements of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems of different historical phases.

2.3 Collection, generation and use of visual data

Silverman (2005: 153-154) introduces five different types of qualitative data: interviews, field notes, texts, visual data, and transcripts. Among them, visual data are essential to this inquiry. As a broad category, visual data may include anything from videos to photographs to 'naturally occurring observational data' and to 'such aspects of our environment as street signs and advertisements' (Silverman 2013: 256). In this research, visual data are primarily concerned with photographs and images of wayfinding signs, that is, the photos and the wayfinding signs are both data and I am using the former to record and illustrate the latter.

Rose summarises features of photographs as part of the urban research project:

Nonetheless, images such as photographs are seen as especially valuable in urban research because they can convey something of the feel of urban places, space and landscapes, specifically of course those qualities that are in some way visible: they can suggest the layout, colour, texture, form, volume, size and pattern of the built environment, for example, and can picture people too (2012: 298).

Photography is clearly a valuable research tool for exploring urban-related topics because it provides visual evidence and documentation of the different faces, styles, colours and other aspects of the research object and illustrates or gives an idea of the place. And this is precisely the function of the images in this thesis – as illustrations of the concepts and arguments. The primary consideration in this thesis is to study the urban graphic wayfinding system as a component of a city's identity. Therefore, the typical visual research method of gathering and use of photographs has been employed in this study to provide illustrative evidence of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems and illustrate and explain their relationship with Beijing's identity.

A way to further categorise visual materials is by the ethnographic method of collecting and using visual data. Generally, visual data adopted in visual ethnography is categorised in two ways. The first is what Bryman calls 'extant' visual materials. These already exist and are known mostly in the form of collections of photographs and images that have appeared in newspapers and magazines (Bryman, 2008: 424). The second form is 'research-driven' visual materials, meaning that images are created specifically for the purposes of research. As independent data sources or supplemental data, they are utilised to complement written or dictated notes, support argument and explain multifaceted research results (ibid.). In this inquiry, parts of

photographs, pictographs and diagrams that have been scanned from books, magazines and newspapers, and stills from a documentary are classified as ‘extant’ visual materials. Nevertheless, most photographs, diagrams and images as primary data were taken and drawn by the author for purposes of analysis to produce original research findings and support the arguments. In this sense they are ‘research-driven’ images. Rose sums up the strengths and weaknesses of image used in qualitative social research:

Images can present things that words cannot and can therefore be used as evidence to develop and support, or to supplement, written research findings. Nonetheless, images still need to be contextualised by words, and many remain excessively obscure if they are not (2012: 326).

Thus, although visual data contain a wealth of information which writing or other data forms such as the interview cannot provide, they risk merely using photographs to develop discussion or illustrate issues. It is also worth pointing out that these photos and images are not the research subject or focus of this research, the photographic archive or documentation and existing images only provide evidences or illustrations for the points I am making about graphic wayfinding systems and city identity, both local and global. Hence, the role played by the photographs and images is entirely illustrative; as Rose mentioned, they are most often used to support written research findings. The main aim of the collection and use of visual data is to provide vital visual evidence for illustrating the issues of the local, the global and urban identity transformation, eventually answering the key research questions. In this research, these visual data were collected, classified with a reflexive approach and were directly related to the research process and key research questions. Meanwhile, the collection and use of visual data was promoted and assisted by other types of data collection (methods 1 and 3). Put differently, these ‘extant’ and ‘research driven’ visual data together with other forms of data have been employed throughout the entire thesis to present, explain or describe issues and research context discussed in the text.

The existing visual materials have been mainly taken from books, theses, newspapers, maps, film stills, websites, museum collections, online photo galleries and personal collections of photographs. At the same time, a number of photos with respect to Beijing’s present wayfinding sign systems or other European city’s signage were taken by the author during the fieldwork specifically for this study. Approximately 6000 photos were taken over last five years, most of them (around 5000) were taken in Beijing in 2011 and the remainder were taken in other European cities during the years 2011-2014. The following tables show the shooting times and places, as well as a set of photo-documentation samples (See Figures 2.2 and 2.3). These images were not randomly taken at the time of data collection, but were taken in relation to each other in terms of different classifications of urban graphic wayfinding systems, in order to create a photographic database. Arthur and Passini’s categorisation in relation to graphic wayfinding system was utilised to guide the author in the collection and selection of relevant visual data in Beijing.

Budapest. Hungary	2010
Prague. Czech Republic	2010
Vienna. Austria	2010
Berlin. Germany	2010
Beijing. China	28th September – 19th December 2011
Istanbul, Efes and Cappadocia. Turkey	2013
London, Bath. UK	2011-2014

Figure 2.2 The shooting times and places of photo-documentation

BEIJING. CHINA 28th SEPTEMBER – 19th DECEMBER 2011
 PHOTODOCUMENTATION SAMPLE

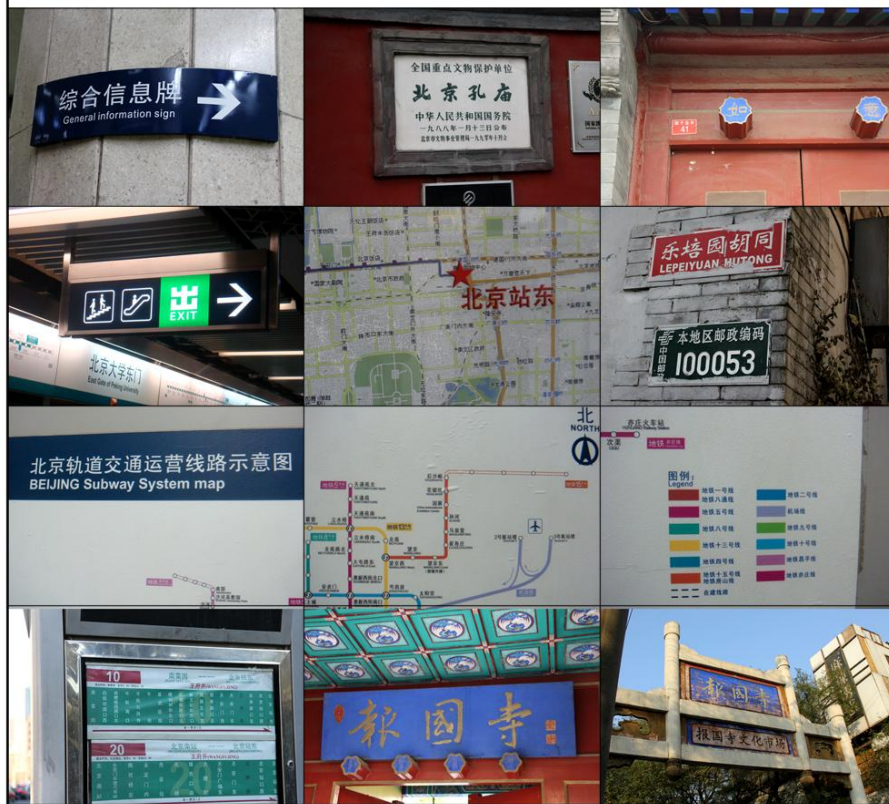


Figure 2.3 A set of photo-documentation samples.

Source: Photographed by author, 2011.

This thesis refers to Arthur and Passini's (2002: 142-147) detailed classification of graphic information of wayfinding systems in terms of functional information types. The functional information types are divided into orientation information about the setting (information that provides users with an outline of the surrounding environment, where they are and where the destination is located, and other correlative information about setting, such as maps, floor plans, building directories, and safety information); directional information to destinations (information that helps users follow a correct route to their destination, such as signs with arrows, intelligible descriptions about landmarks or characteristics of building); and identification of destinations (information that identifies the destination, such as signs with names and safety signs identifying local hazards). In order to collect and manage

visual data effectively and efficiently, photos were taken in terms of the classification of graphic information of wayfinding systems in different city zones in Beijing. For example, Chaoyang district in which Beijing's CBD (Central Business District) and the Olympic Green are located; Dongcheng district and Xicheng district, where the ancient royal palace – the Forbidden City and traditional dwellings – *Siheyuan* are sited (Figure 2.4). The graphic wayfinding systems may be different or identical in different city zones of Beijing.



Figure 2.4 Beijing's urban area is composed of six districts. 1 and 2 are the central urban districts; 3, 4, 5 and 6 are the suburban districts. 1 – 5, marked in green, are the regions I have photographed.

Another way in which visual data were collected in Beijing was linking visual data to specific research sub-questions. The visual data gathering was set up in this way in order to address the research questions. In order to present well-founded answers to

these central research questions listed above, a few specific sub-questions were derived. These sub-questions effectively guided the photo-documentation process, which are what Suchar calls ‘shooting scripts’ (1997 cited in Rose 2012: 302). The list of sub-questions regarding to Beijing’s graphic wayfinding system were:

- What variety of graphic wayfinding systems are found in the central Beijing? (e.g. underground signs, pedestrian signs, primary road signs).
- What are the most noticeable characteristics of each system? (e.g. Shape, colour, texture, typeface).
- Are there any special connections between these signs and their location? (e.g. the Olympic Park, the Central Business District, etc.).
- Are signs set up in the traditional residential areas different from those installed in the newly developed areas? If yes, what are the differences and what account for them?
- What are the most apparent local elements on these signs?
- What are the most obvious global elements on these public wayfinding signs?

Consequently, these sub-questions and classification of graphic wayfinding sign systems made by Arthur and Passini guided what photographs I should take and suggested how these images could be linked to the research questions. By categorising and analysing these both extant and research-driven images, features of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing of different time periods will be summarised, and how the interaction between the local and the global is represented in Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems and whether the current wayfinding sign systems of Beijing have a positive effect on the formation of a consistent city brand of Beijing will be explored. Thus, my research questions will be answered. The following paragraphs will explain the ways in which the visual data are categorised and interpreted.

At the beginning of this fieldwork, all photos were taken according to the

classification of graphic information of wayfinding sign systems (orientation information about the setting, directional information to destination, identification of destinations). In order to better understand the present situation of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and extract pivotal graphic visual components, all photos were reclassified in terms of the different types of standards below:

- Road, Bus, Metro, Airport
- Residential district, CBD, Olympic district, *Hutong* (alley) district
- Motorway, Primary route, Non-primary route
- Signs for car, Signs for pedestrians
- Signs of international standards, Signs with local characteristics

Photographs were also sorted and categorised according to different backgrounds:

Signs against a background of a modern environment (high-rise buildings, cars, and broad city streets), Signs against a background of a traditional environment (extant traditional buildings, typical one-storey dwellings, alleys, and rickshaws).

Within this research, the classification is subject to a continual process of refinement; these visual data were understood, refined, explained and eventually used to illustrate my arguments. The interpretation and use process of visual data is divided into two phases: (1) extraction of graphic elements; (2) interpretation of graphic elements by using the theories and concepts of cultural studies. In the first phase, as shown in Figure 2.5, the graphic components of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems were extracted and defined in terms of colour, shape, layout, typeface, language, symbols, etc. In the second phase, each individual graphic element was associated with a property (local, global or local/global) and was further interpreted and illustrated based on the concepts of cultural studies including globalisation, localisation, homogenisation or heterogenisation. As an example, these concepts of cultural studies are used to explain what is going on in the current signage of Beijing, namely, to explain the negotiation of the local and the global in the city that is negotiating the

needs of the local and the global in a capitalist and tourist economy. In turn, these visual elements as effective visual evidences are there to illustrate and support my arguments about the interaction of the local and the global. Consequently, how the local and the global are connected in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and what the complex and manifold relationship is between the local and the global as reflected in the changes in the functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were explored and answered.

Name of this alley in Chinese: 帽儿胡同

Layout: from left to right

Typeface: Weibei (魏碑体)

Shape: rectangle



Colour: red (vermillion)

Name of this alley in Pinyin (Latin upper-case letter):

MAO'ER HUTONG

Layout: from left to right

Figure 2.5 The extraction of the graphic elements of a Beijing alley sign.

Source: photographed by author, 2011.

2.4 In-depth semi-structured interview

To facilitate inquiry, collection and interpretation of visual data and help answer the research questions, a semi-structured interview was designed. There are three specific

functions of the semi-structured interview:

1. In terms of Section 2.3, this study began with taking photographs in Beijing. Yet, because I am not a native of Beijing and the urban graphic wayfinding systems contain a large amount of information and meanings in and of themselves, I had difficulty collecting and managing these kinds of visual data. For example, where are the oldest alley signs in Beijing? Why are there several different signs indicating the same road or alley? I sought to solve these issues through the semi-structured interviews with local people and historians. In this way photos reflect the content of interviews. In other words, photos might be taken as evidence or supplementation of interviews; meanwhile, the photo documentation was also guided by the interviews. The questions generated by the process of collection of visual data would be answered through later interviews with targeted interviewees. So, the two research methods, photography and interview, were carried out simultaneously.

2. As there are so few existing books or papers that directly introduce the history and development of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems, it is necessary to talk with or interview local residents, historians and organisations to learn more about the research subject. To some extent, the semi-structured interview with local people can provide a relatively accurate context for further understanding and analysis of these secondary and primary data.

3. The semi-structured interview was employed to make an initial exploration of the influence of Beijing's present graphic wayfinding systems on the holistic image or city brand of Beijing. However, the main objective of these interviews (which were selectively transcribed and then analysed) was to intensify and promote the interpretation of the graphic elements of Beijing's signage. It is, therefore, important to note that the use of semi-structured interviews aims to promote and contextualise the collection and discussion of the visual data, rather than provide a comprehensive assessment of the influence of the graphic wayfinding system on the city brand of

Beijing.

In keeping with its earlier identification as the least important of three research methods, the semi-structured interview is only occasionally referred to in this thesis. However, as explained earlier, it is an important research tool in the study because it directed, guided and stimulated me to create new interconnections among these secondary and primary data gathered in the fieldwork. Specifically, it helped me categorise, order and understand the visual data.

Based on the research objectives and questions, semi-structured in-depth interviews were developed to elicit the ideas from:

1. local and unofficial historians, local residents, who have witnessed the changes in Beijing or local organisation leaders, such as Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre (CHP) <http://en.bjchp.org/>
2. Government (directions and principles of official policy about the urban design and city brand of Beijing, national standards of graphic wayfinding systems). Due to the fact that it is very difficult to interview official spokespersons, official reports, announcements, standards or news releases will therefore be considered as the main source of information.
3. Professionals and experts from universities in Beijing, such as professors or tutors from urban planning or design departments; or authors of professional publications concerning environmental graphic design, urban planning, public art, history etc.
4. Tourists who love the culture of Beijing or foreigners who have settled in Beijing.

Because of the characteristics of the semi-structured interview, it was selected as a suitable research technique for providing ancillary information needed for gathering and interpreting the visual data, as well as preliminarily evaluating the branding

function of Beijing's graphic wayfinding system. Unlike the questionnaire or structured interviews, a conventional semi-structured interview starts with a pre-determined interview guide in a more flexible structure, which includes topics and open-ended questions and it allows for two-way interaction between interviewer and participants.

There are three principal considerations in choosing the semi-structured interview as one of the research methods used in this study. First, in consideration of the variety of the interviewees, the flexible semi-structured interview would allow the interviewer to slightly change interview questions or add new questions according to the different respondents. Therefore, it provided an opportunity for me to get acquainted with these participants and gain a wealth of information necessary for solving difficulties and questions I encountered during the course of the collection of relevant visual data. Second, because some questions in the semi-structured interview are pre-prepared and standardised, it also allows the information to be collected, organised, compared, classified and analysed in an efficient way. In this study, a fixed set of interview questions includes, for example: Is local culture in Beijing being homogenised by dominant Euramerican culture? What do you think are the strengths and weakness of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing? Can they represent the local characteristics? These questions helped me develop the idea of the reversibility of the local-global relationship that I discussed in Chapter 3. They were also designed to produce comparable qualitative data, in order to elicit from respondents a holistic image of Beijing and its relations with urban wayfinding sign systems. Thus, this means of data collection enabled me to obtain relevant information from the targeted population, clarify what is already known and develop a better understanding of the research topic. These are the primary reasons why the semi-structured interview was chosen as one of the chief forms of research tools to get a better understanding of the research topic and the visual data, obtain qualitative data, and help to answer these research questions.

The semi-structured interview was used alongside other methods as a way of supplementing other data, adding depth, breadth and detail. With semi-structured interviews, I had a clear list of questions to be answered. Nevertheless, interview questions could be changed, added or deleted in terms of different interviewees and the answers were open-ended. Before every interview, I asked participants to sign an informed consent form; only a few of them refused to sign this form but were still willing to be interviewed. I used an audio recorder to record each interview, because audio-recording is easy to manipulate, provides a permanent record and does not cause too much interruption in most interview situations. Afterwards, these audio-recordings of interviews were listened to over and over again and were partly transcribed where applicable. After transcribing, interview transcripts (text-based data) were separated and encoded according to content and identity of informants. Interesting sections were identified. What meanings the words represent and what connotations the words have related to the research topic were considered. The aim of extracts from transcripts was to interact with image-based data and support the arguments I was trying to establish as a piece of evidence.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has explained why the three research methods were selected and how they were conducted in the fieldwork over two and half months. The sources, methods and processes of data collection, classification and analysis of the present study have been clearly presented. Basically, my data collection and analysis focused on the three types of data – secondary data, visual data and interview transcripts. The first research method and third research method contributed to the collection and understanding of the visual data (the third research method). The findings of the first research method and third research method assisted the researcher in preparing and conducting the in-depth semi-structured interviews (the second research method). Hence, they were carried out almost simultaneously and were complementary to each other. Based on the three types of data collected from the fieldwork, I will explore and explain the transformations in the function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding

systems since 1984 and the local-global interaction as reflected in these transformations, and finally address my research questions. The findings of these data analyses will be discussed and used to support and illustrate my key arguments in Chapters 5 to 10.

Chapter 3 Literature Review – Theory

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the key concepts and theories needed to answer the research questions; it also presents and develops my own arguments and explains the contribution to knowledge made by the present study. In doing this, it will establish a theoretical framework, further define my research questions, and provide the theories, definitions and relationships that can be tested, revised and justified as data are gathered, interpreted and used. Following this, Chapter 4 reviews the literature relevant to the historical context and process in which the transformation of Beijing's urban space and identity (meaning) took place. Hence, the literature reviews of this thesis are divided into Chapter 3: Theory and Chapter 4: Historical Context and Process. Each chapter is composed of two sections as well as an introduction. Chapter 3 includes 3.2 Local and Global and 3.3 Graphic Design and Urban Design. Chapter 4 contains 4.2 Traditional Urban Design and Planning of Beijing and 4.3 The Influences of Western Ideologies and Technologies on the Spatial Change of Beijing.

More specifically, Chapter 3 aims to provide an overview and critique of these contemporary theories and accounts pertaining to the interaction of the local and the global and provides a new perspective or a revised and expanded theory of the local and the global – namely, mobility and reversibility. It then presents an understanding of how the issue of the local and the global relates to graphic wayfinding signage, urban design and Beijing's visual and cultural identity. Also explained in this chapter will be why and how the identity and meaning of Beijing as a city, which is constructed via its signage, can reflect compromise and negotiation between local and global factors. Meanwhile, the prime purpose of Chapter 4 is to provide a special historical context and process, within which the case study of Beijing is considered and discussed. So, Chapter 4 sets the stage for the analysis of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems of the following chapters. Besides, it also helps to familiarise the reader

with the shift or transition of Beijing's identity through urban space and how urban design performed its cultural, political and social functions in the process of gradual transformation in both Beijing's cultural and political identities. Consequently, the reader is able to understand the historical, cultural, and social contexts within which Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems are embedded. The structure of the literature reviews can be clearly identified in the following figure (Figure 3.1).

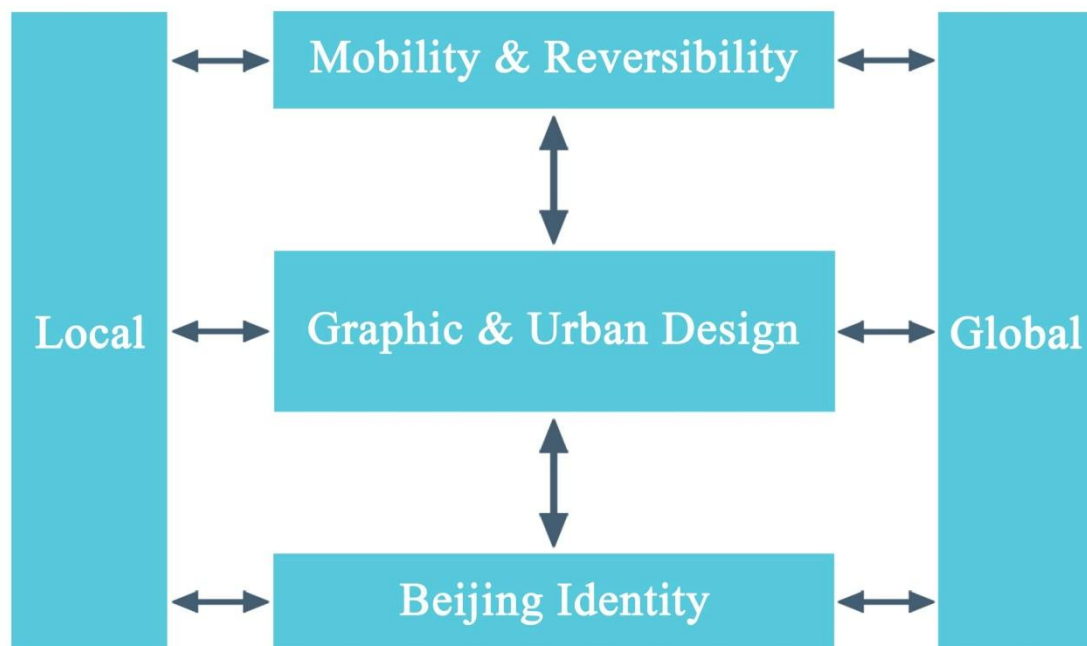


Figure 3.1 The structure of Chapters 3 and 4, and a theoretical framework for analysing the issue of the local and the global found in the examples of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems.

In the chapter, Section 3.2 reviews the main definitions of globalisation and the contemporary arguments concerning the relationship between the local and the global. More importantly, drawing on these already existing related theories and debates, a new hypothesis – that the interaction between the local and the global is changeable and reversible (in some cases the global could be dominated by the local) – is created.

The relationship between the local and the global is reconsidered and reinterpreted relating to two aspects – mobility and reversibility. This key argument about the local and the global is shown to be exemplified and concretised in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing in subsequent chapters. Section 3.3 reviews the definitions and functions of graphic design, with particular attention to how graphic design is used to convey local/global values and to construct cultural and social identities. It also explores the affiliation between graphic design (graphic wayfinding design) and urban design, as well as how their interactions have immense bearing on the creation of a meaning or identity of a city.

3.2 Local and Global

This section will present a brief account of the definition of globalisation, in order to structure my account of the interaction between the local and the global. Although it is not my intention to provide a critical overview of the definition of globalisation, I would like to recognise it as the starting point of this discussion. Then, this section will review the literature of the relationship between the local and the global and reconsider the complexity and variability of their interaction from two new perspectives: mobility and reversibility. The former is to understand them as different interconnections and networks that are changing continuously and irregularly. The latter argues for the reversibility of roles of the local and global and especially highlights that both the local and the global ought to be envisioned as having double-sided natures, in other words, the coexistence of both dominating and being dominated. The theory of the one-way, global-local binary opposition will be challenged. The focus of this section is on the argument that the global could be dominated by the local, which is central to understanding the social, political and cultural phenomena from a new angle. This point of view will be further supported and illustrated by the evolution of wayfinding systems of Beijing in following chapters.

3.2.1 Globalisation

The English term 'globalisation' was first used in the 1960s to describe and analyse a new phenomenon in worldwide production and consumption (Waters 1995: 2, cited in Guillen 2001: 238). Some theorists argue that the development of European capitalism in the 16th century represents the beginning of globalisation (Wallerstein 1974 and Waters 1995: 2–4, cited in Guillen 2001: 237). For example, Marx and Engels (1985: 83-4) note in the *Communist Manifesto* that in order to develop new markets and prospects for possible customers, capitalists have been searching in every corner of the world. This appears to suggest that globalisation has been prompted by capitalism and is as old as capitalism (Barnard 2005: 151). Robertson (1992: 179) argues that during the period from 1870 to 1925, modern globalisation took place as 'the time-zoning of the world and the establishment of the international dateline; the near-global adoption of the Gregorian calendar and the adjustable seven-day week; and the establishment of the international telegraphic and signalling codes'. Wills (2005) stresses that globalisation is not new, it has been developing for hundreds of years, but the scope and degree of economic, political and cultural interaction and interdependence seems to be more intense and frequent now than in the past.

Globalisation is defined in many ways. For some critics, it involves multiple complex networks or systems of culture, society, economy and politics; for others it focuses on a series of processes in which the intensity and velocity of global interaction and interconnection are growing increasingly. O'Sullivan et al (1994: 130) describe globalisation as 'the growth and acceleration of economic and cultural networks which operate on a world-wide scale and basis'. The economic networks point to the financial system. Generally speaking, this financial system includes currency and stock exchange, international banking and global trade, and a market operated by multinational corporations (Barnard 2005: 151). The cultural networks point to development in communication technologies, such as traffic systems, advanced electrical and digital devices and multimedia and Web technology, which contribute to the circulation of money, service, goods and people (ibid.). Guillen (2001: 236) identifies globalisation as 'a process leading to greater interdependence and mutual

awareness (reflexivity) among economic, political, and social units in the world, and among actors in general'. Wills (2005: 573) also defines globalisation as a 'the economic, political, social and cultural processes whereby: (a) places across the globe are increasingly interconnected; (b) social relations and economic transactions increasingly occur at the intercontinental scale; and (c) the globe itself comes to be a recognizable geographical entity'.

Giddens (1990: 64) states that globalisation refers to 'the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (cited in Pieterse 2009: 69). Robertson (1992: 8) defined globalisation as '...the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole'. On the basis of Robertson's concept of globalisation, Barker (2012: 156-157) states 'This 'compression of the world' can be understood in terms of the institutions of modernity. The reflexive 'intensification of consciousness of the world' can be perceived beneficially in cultural terms'. According to Giddens (1990, 1991), the institutions of modernity are composed of capitalism, industrialism, surveillance, the nation-state and military power. Hence, Globalisation is interpreted in light of:

- The world capitalist economy;
- The global information system;
- The nation-state system;
- The world military order (Barker 2012: 157).

Baker (2004: 77) also emphasises that globalisation is not simply an even process of Western expansion caused by economic needs, but it is better grasped in terms of 'the disjunctive relationships between flows of money, technology, media, ideas and people'. Appadurai (1990: 297-9) identifies that globalisation embodies five modes of 'flows' in terms of money, technology, people, images, texts, goods and ideas:, meaning the flow of people, such as tourists, displaced persons, migrants and so on;

‘technoscapes’ is used to describe the flow of machine and information technology between different states and areas; ‘finanscapes’, which describes the flow of finances between transnational corporations, international monetary markets and financial organisations; ‘mediascapes’, which refers to circulation and diffusion of text and imagery in the forms of global and local media; and finally, ‘ideoscapes’ referring to images and texts that reflect dominant values (cited in Barnard 2005: 151-152).

The above is a brief survey of definitions of globalisation. They may vary in detail or focus on different aspects of globalisation, but they all share certain common characteristics. These accounts of globalisation, especially O’Sullivan’s networks, Giddens’ social relations and Appadurai’s flows, will enable me to understand and talk about these cultural, political and economic phenomena that took place in Beijing. They also enable me to explain why the relationship between the local and the global is not monolithic and one-directional, but is mutable and bi-directional. Whether globalisation is conceived of as intricate networks of culture, society, economy and politics or as a set of processes leading to mutual interconnection and interdependence of the countries, as the time-space compression or a variety of flows across the world, the most striking feature of the world in the time of globalisation is that an assortment of powers and flows converge and collide across national borders in various forms. The worldwide convergence of diverse cultural, economic, ideological and technological flows and the considerable intensification of global interdependence create a new narrative of how people distinguish themselves from others, as well as how they perceive and experience the world. The courses of migration and convergence of various flows are not constant, smooth and one-way, but rather mutable, uneven and bi-directional. The dominant global power led by the West has increasingly penetrated into all corners of the world. Facing the challenges and opportunities posed by global power, local actors and authorities react to them differently. In many cases, the local redefines itself by underlining a series of qualities shared with other representative global cities and some unique peculiarities differentiating it from others. Moreover, some new cultural forms are nurtured in

response to the frequent communication between the local and the global. There is no denying that the relationship between the local and the global is not only confined to the passive receiver / active sender relation, but is far more complex, as is discussed in following paragraphs. The next section will provide a theoretical framework for the discussion of the relationship between the local and global. A more sophisticated and complex relation between the local and the global will be presented to challenge the conventional one-way binary opposition between the two concepts.

3.2.2 The Relationship between the Local and the Global

Considering the different concepts and ideas concerning the local, the global and the effects of globalisation, it is clear to see that these concepts are different and follow various different theoretical presuppositions, approaches and perspectives. However, Cvetkovich and Kellner (1997: 1-2) summarise three major contemporary arguments pertaining to the tensions and conflicts between global and local powers. The first argument is that our times have been characterised by the dominance of global power. For example, both modern and postmodern theorists argue that the forces of globalisation are increasingly changing and organising the world fundamentally; these globalised powers are circling the globe, reinforcing the dominance of a worldwide capitalist economic system, replacing the ascendancy of the nation-state with multinational firms and organisations, and corroding local cultures and values through a global culture (Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997: 1). Against this, the second argument focuses on the importance and differences of local power. A wide and diverse range of scholars have argued that the propagation of local differences and the transfer to more local discourses and practices are the prominent feature in the modern world and that the focal point of theory and politics should move from the macro theories of globalisation to ‘the local, the specific, the particular, the heterogeneous, and the microlevel of everyday experience’ (ibid.).

The third argument proposed by Cvetkovich and Kellner challenges the very dichotomy between the local and the global. They believe that dichotomy between the

local and the global articulates two conflicting and hostile powers of the present time; as a result, ‘it is a mistake to overlook focus on one side in favour of exclusive concern with the other (rejecting the local and particularity, for instance, in favour of exclusive concern with the global, or rejecting the global and all macrostructures for exclusive concern with the local)’ (ibid.). Regarding the complex relation between the local and the global, Cvetkovich and Kellner suggest that one should think about the relationship between the local and the global by studying how each of them react to, or interact with, the other. That is, ‘how global forces influence and even structure ever more local situations and ever more strikingly’ and ‘how local forces and situations mediate the global, inflecting global forces to diverse ends and conditions and producing unique configurations for thought and action in the contemporary world’ (ibid.: 1-2). In the third argument, Cvetkovich and Kellner have attempted to dialectically conceive the interplay of the local and the global. Neither exaggerating the influences of global forces, nor underrating the value and initiative of local powers, they explain the new social and cultural hybridisation generated by interactions of the local and the global. Intersection and hybridisation are the keys to understanding the relationship between the local and the global in the third argument. The dialectical view related to the local and the global avoids the partial and one-sided understanding of globalisation and is an important theoretical reference in interpreting my own arguments. The following paragraphs will attempt to further think through the local, the global and their relationship by analysing a specific case.

On September 4th 2012, a BBC news report, titled ‘McDonald’s opens vegetarian-only restaurant’, reported that:

The standard-bearer of the hamburger McDonald’s, is bowing to local demand and is opening a meat-free restaurant in India...McDonald’s, the world’s second biggest food outlet after Subway, increasingly adapts its range to local demand...A spokesman for McDonald’s in northern India, Rajesh Kumar Maini, told the new agency: “There is a big opportunity for

vegetarian restaurants as many Indians are vegetarian.” “At the moment, India is still a very small market- we just have 271 restaurants in India, and across the world, we have nearly 33,000.”... In India, its menu is typically 50% vegetarian...Its signature dish in the country is the McAloo Tikki burger, which uses a spiced potato-based filling. It accounts for 25% of total sales.

(BBC, 2012)

On the same day, The Telegraph ran an article titled ‘McDonald’s facing Hindu protests over restaurants near holy sites’. The article points out that:

McDonald’s, home of the Big Mac, has been threatened with protests over plans to open restaurants in two of India’s most revered religious centres and pilgrimage sites...In a nod to religious and dietary sensitivities, the restaurants will be vegetarian. The opening of vegetarian-only outlets is the latest attempt by the global giant to win over an initially resistant people wedded to their own distinct spicy cuisine.

But the Hindu nationalist group Swadeshi Jagran Manch, a branch of the influential Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) said it would oppose McDonald’s plans and described them as an attempt to “humiliate Hindus”. “It’s an attempt not only to make money but also to deliberately humiliate Hindus. It is an organization associated with cow slaughter. If we make an announcement that they’re slaughtering cows, people won’t eat there. We are definitely going to fight it,” its national co-convener S. Gurumurthy told The Daily Telegraph.

(The Telegraph, 2012)

In this event, what is the relationship between the local and global? And how is it

manifested? Some scholars might conclude that the American fast-food global giant was not being respectful of local cultures but simply adjusted its business strategy in order to increase its profits and capability of expanding overseas markets. Others would say they were respecting local beliefs, values and practices by changing their behaviour, policies etc. Some theorists including Andrew Herod, David Ley, Carla Freeman and Michael Peter Smith, argue that the global is considered as a powerful, abstract, dynamic and homogenising force, while the local is regarded as being weak, static and defensive and is changed, transformed, and confined by the global.

Therefore, for them, the example probably emphasises the point that the global power is so strong, invincible, and all-pervasive that the local can hardly resist or actively respond to it. At the same time, other theorists such as J.K. Gibson-Graham and Les Back do not think that the global is inevitably dominant or that the local has to pander to the trend or opportunities created by the global. They might argue that this case highlights the possibility of local successful resistance to malign and homogenising effects of globalisation. Instead of being rapidly incorporated into a single and uniform global way of life, the local has the power to screen out those things that are favourable to them and cut off those that put them at a disadvantage. As a result, the assertion that the local is too weak and deficient to resist the global is not tenable in this instance.

However, the two perspectives – one that the global is constantly dominant and the confrontation of the local is impossible; another that under an expansion of global forces the resistance of the local is possible – only present a fixed and one-way relationship between the local and global. Namely, the global symbolises greater size, unlimited expansion and movement, and it is powerful, ambitious and aggressive. Conversely, the local signifies smaller size, internal self-sufficiency, and defensiveness. Despite the fact that in many cases the local is able to create particularly effective resistance to the global, the local still appears relatively fragile and weak in contrast with global power. The fixed and immutable analysis structure with regard to the local and the global is insufficient to explain the above case. Since

the local is fully capable of fighting back against the global invasion as well as having the strength to create a beneficial condition to stimulate and enhance local development. If we can understand that in some cases the local does not simply resist the global, but always tends to reshape the global to cater to its own need. Or if we can deem that in certain circumstances, the local is more powerful than the global.

Nonetheless, Roland Robertson's definition of the 'glocal' and Homi Bhabha's idea of 'hybridity', suggest that the boundary between the local and the global is distinct and clear but that it is not simple, one-directional or monolithic. The relationship between the local and the global is complicated, dynamic and always being negotiated in different situations. Sociologist Robertson (1995: 30) places emphasis on the 'simultaneity' and the 'interpenetration' of the global and the local, globalisation and localisation, homogenisation and heterogenisation, the universal and the particular. Bhabha says that when an interplay and exchange occur between two or more peoples or countries of different cultures, they will inevitably be altered and influenced during this process. He argues that as a result of conflicting, struggling, negotiating and cooperating between colonists and the ex-colonised, a blend of elements of the invading and aboriginal cultures has been produced, and to a certain extent, this cultural mixing brings about a revival of traditional values and ideologies, differences are produced in a new, more harmonious and interdependent world (cited in Lewis 2002: 349).

My own effort here has been directed at emphasising that in the relationship between the local and the global, the global could sometimes be the element or set of values that are subordinated and that the local could sometimes be the element or set of values that are dominant. This means that the global could resist, challenge or be dominant over the local, or, conversely, it could be resisted or dominated by the local. The local does not only successfully protect itself against detrimental effects of the global but also purposefully remakes the global resources to meet local expectations and achieve its political, economic, cultural or religious goals. If we think of the

McDonald's vegetarian-only restaurant example in terms of the viewpoints stated above, we can see how the local gained the initiative and gave priority to its religious and cultural requirements. McDonald's has attempted to localise itself by opening vegetarian-only restaurants in India's hallowed religious lands to attract the attention of thousands of devotees. For the purpose of creating new business opportunities abroad, the multinational company has made efforts to deal with different local cultures and actively responded to the needs of the local market at great risk to its specialty – the beef hamburger and its implications. But even so, as a 'cow slaughterer', McDonald's restaurant still cannot measure up to a set of standards required by local people and religious and national organisations. Certainly this incorporation of local needs can be argued as a way of manipulating the local and further enhancing its global power. Yet the local may not seem so passive in choosing what it wants. In this case, the local is more like a decider than a victim. This serves to demonstrate that the local and the global are inextricably linked; their relationship is not monotonous and unchanging but labyrinthine and negotiable. The examples above are examples of the local resisting and challenging the would-be dominant values of the global or the West.

The following sections will illustrate the connection and interactivity of the local and the global from two aspects: mobility and reversibility. The former is to see the local and global and their nexus as different interconnections and networks that are changing continuously and irregularly. The function of this section is to summarise and reinterpret some major scholars' different views of the local-global debate, and then put forward my own views. Reversibility refers mainly to the reversibility of the roles of local and global and particularly highlights that either local or global can be dominant; in other words, the idea refers to the coexistence of both dominating and being dominated in the same phenomenon. How this is done will be explained in the following paragraphs.

3.2.3 Mobility

How the relationship between the local and the global is conceptualised is a contested subject in many academic fields, especially in human geography. In the pursuit of globalisation, scholars and experts from various areas of study have defined, explained, analysed, and visualised the local and the global and their relationship from different or even completely opposite viewpoints. Many of them have attempted to adopt the word/concept 'mobility' to explain the essence of the global and its interaction with the local. In the context of globalisation, the so-called mobility is often thought of as a series of different 'flows' of people, money, information, technology and so on. Appadurai (1990: 297-9), for example, identifies that globalisation embodies five modes of 'flows' in terms of money, technology, people, images, texts, goods and ideas: ethnoscapas, technoscapas, finanscapas, mediascapas, ideoscapas (cited in Barnard 2005: 151-152). Yet it is not my purpose here to go over Appadurai's '-scapes' theory again, but rather to elaborate that the world's influential power centres change constantly and other places must make an effort to adjust to new environments accordingly, which shows that the relationship between the local and the global is mutable, labyrinthine and fugitive. This is what the mobility in the chapter refers to rather than cross-border flows in globalisation.

From more than one million years ago, when our African ancestors dispersed across five continents, to the creation of worldwide networks driven by technological innovation and frequent economic and multicultural exchange, global patterns have been gradually formed, and then thoroughly broken; after that, new world patterns were increasingly structured, maintained, collapsed, and restructured (Marr, 2012). During this process, the most influential and dominant centres always shifted. With the constant change of global economic and political situations at different times, the local frequently assesses the sameness and the otherness between itself and the rest of the world, and purposefully establishes substantial connections with other areas. Connection, disconnection, network, these words are key to interpreting how these main power centres interact with each other and with other places and how those different cultures are more or less dominant.

French social theorist Bruno Latour is inclined to believe that the world consists of different levels of networks that connect diverse geographical units. The local and global 'offer points of view on networks that are by nature neither local or global, but are more or less long and more or less connected' (Latour 1993: 122, cited in Gibson-Graham 2008: 31). Latour (1996: 370, cited in Herod 2009: 228) points out that the world cannot be envisaged and structured by 'notions of levels, layers, territories, [and] spheres', instead, it should be conceived of as being 'fibrous, thread-like, wiry, string, rope [and] capillary' networks, in which dynamic relationships among various places are built up. Drawing on Latour's viewpoint, Gibson-Graham (2008: 31-32) states that 'the global and local are but different 'takes' on the same universe of networks, connections, abstractness, and concreteness'. In this sense, the local and the global are used as terms for comparing 'shorter and less connected networks' with 'longer and more connected networks'. Meanwhile Gibson-Graham emphasises the difference between local networks and global networks. She suggests that 'shorter and less connected versus longer and more connected networks imply a concrete difference that resonates with conceptions of power differentials. Great size and extensiveness imply domination and superior power in our western discursive universe' (2008: 31-32).

In the model of *Networks*, Crang (1999) similarly argues that the local and the global are defined in terms of networks of connection and disconnection. He suggests that 'we can see both the local and the global as made up of networks or sets of connections and disconnections that any one local place has to a host of other places the world over. In consequence, we may need to view the local and the global not as different scales (small and large) but as two ways of approaching these same social and spatial networks' (1999: 45-49). By analysing the example of English tea, Crang (1999) points that England's features (Englishness) are formed through global and colonial networks (sugar is from the West Indies and tea is from Sri Lanka and India), both in the past and in the present. This serves to demonstrate that each local place

creates and develops its special cultural character by way of connecting with the rest of the world. In order to better understand the local and realise its value rather than consider it from a parochial perspective, 'a global sense of place' is believed to be a necessary approach (Massey 1994, cited in Crang 1999: 47). Correspondingly, the global is not an organised, nested, unitary and logical system (such as the capitalist world economy) but, rather, 'a mass of globally extensive yet locally rooted practices and technologies of connection... It comprises multiple, specific geographies of mobility, through which wider systemic networks are created, maintained and re-invented' (Crang 1999: 45-49). In making such an argument, a variety of flow and movement, such as money, information, technology, people, commodity and 'localized sense of the global' are essential to understand the global.

In short, more recent theories have attempted to describe the relation of the local and the global by means of using the concept of networks and primarily interpret the local and the global by way of the properties of their relation, instead of the properties of themselves. That is to say that those social activities do not have an essentially global or local nature, but they may take on local or global positions or identities as a result of the different relationships that they enter into. Indeed not all social phenomena in areas of contemporary life can be clearly construed via the approach of networks. However, the idea plays an important part in the formation of my own viewpoint. It is that, under the premise of ceaseless interaction between local networks and global networks, transition, decrease, or increase of the world's dominant centre(s) directly influences the development of the rest of the world – assimilation and integration or dissimilation and marginalisation.

This argument related to the mobility of the local and the global is based upon and bolstered by the analysis of the research object – Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. The impact of the movement of global power centre(s) (longer and more connected network) on the local (shorter and less connected network) and the ways in which local forces cope with, respond and adapt to these changes and new conditions,

can clearly be seen in the development of Beijing's wayfinding systems since the early 20th century. To better illustrate this point of view, let us take a look at a brief summary of the evolution of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing, which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent analysis of the following chapters. Through the centuries, the world has undergone multiple transformations from the European-dominated colonial networks, to two antagonistic super powers – liberal-capitalist and authoritarian-socialist camps during the age of the cold war, and then to the rise of a dominant capitalist market model of globalisation, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997: 7-9). Along with this process, Beijing's urban landscape and local people's way of life had profoundly changed. Furthermore, the design of the graphic wayfinding system of Beijing as a part of urban landscape had been greatly influenced by global and domestic factors, as well as displaying distinct external characteristics during these periods. In the first period characterised by European colonial expansion, the blue enamel square doorplate written in traditional Chinese and Arabic numbers was one of the main features. In the second period, during which the Chinese government leaned towards the pro-Soviet/Communist camp in the 1950s but opposed the Soviet Union and the US in the 1960s, the doorplates and road signs and their names were laden with socialist and communist symbolism, anti-Soviet revisionism and anti-American imperialism. In the third period – a new global era and a market-dominated world – one part of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems is used to identify and reflect local folk culture, while another large part is utilised to help to define Beijing as a world city. It is for this reason that these urban public signs from different periods in Beijing are interpreted and analysed to provide visual evidences to reinforce the argument: the relation between the local and the global is not fixed and unchanging but rather mutable. The alteration, increase or decrease of global centre(s) or superpower(s), which generally project power through their global network, affect local cultural, economic and political conditions that shape their own identities. With this in mind, the focus now turns to the other aspect of the relationship between the local and the global – reversibility.

3.2.4 Reversibility

In this section, the global-local one-way binary opposition will be challenged, because the use of a reversible conception is necessary to understand and explain what is going on in Beijing's signage systems. The reversibility of roles of the local and global is going to be explored and explained. A number of scholars have presented some ideas challenging the understanding of the relationship between the local and the global as a simple binary form. For example, J.K. Gibson-Graham (2002) identified three ways of considering the local and the global and their relationship: 'perspectives' 'the same' and 'process', in which the relationship of the local and the global is restructured and re-examined. At the second point, 'the same', Gibson-Graham points out that the global is the local and the local is global (2002: 30-33). Les Back (1998: 76) lays great stress on seeing the local and global as a relationship rather than a binary opposition. He argues that in order to comprehend a place or community, 'we need to identify the global in the local and the local in the global'. John Tomlinson (1997) is opposed to the notion of homogenisation and Westernisation; he argues that the cultural interaction between the non-West and the West should be regarded as a two-way process rather than homogenised and one-way. For Wallis and Malm (1987: 128), the international cultural interaction does not necessarily lead to cultural homogenisation and domination by extrinsic cultures but, on the contrary, may lead to the reinforcement and enrichment of local traditions and values, resulting in the formation of 'local cultures with universal elements' or 'universal cultures with local elements' (cited in Teow 1999: 39). They respectively stress that the local and the global are inextricably linked and enable each other; simple binary opposition is an outmoded, imperfect and incomplete generalisation of the complicated relationship between the local identity and the global communication. However, at present the reversibility of position of the local and the global has not received as much attention in these scholars' discussion as it should. In the course of this dissertation, I will continually explain and exemplify this point, so as to develop a better sense of the reversible relationship between the local and the global.

My research mainly concerns reversibility and, therefore, more attention has been paid to strengthening the argument that the global could be dominated by the local. Only when two variables are reversible and multifaceted are their interrelations dynamic, volatile and full of possibilities for change, competition, or cooperation. In view of current social, economic, political, military and cultural phenomena, the relationship between the local and the global is apparently far from fixed but filled with infinite possibilities. This point of view will be introduced here and will be illustrated and exemplified by the evolution of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing in functions and appearances in later chapters.

The local and the global have often been regarded as two ends of the hierarchy of scales and each derives meaning from the other. As two sides of the binary, the meanings signified by the global and the local are usually deemed contrary. Herod (2009: 223) argues that '(...) there exists a correspondence in much Western thinking between the global and the abstract, and between the local and the concrete, such that global activities are often perceived as somehow more abstract and less concrete than are local ones'. As Ley (2004: 155) says, 'Globalization theory constructs the global as a space that is dynamic, thrusting, open, rational, cosmopolitan and dominant, while the local is communitarian, authentic, closed, static, nostalgic, defensive (but ultimately defenceless) and the site of ethnic, sexual, regional and other fragmentary identities.' In some scholars' views, the dualism of local and global is gendered, the local is regarded as 'feminine', frail, and subjective, while the global is 'masculine', strong and objective (Freeman 2002: 1009). In accordance with this gendering, the local is conceived as passive and the global is conceived as active. Smith (2001: 157) says that in the global-local duality of social theory, the local is often associated with 'a cultural space of stasis, ontological meaning, and personal identity (i.e. the "place")' and the global is associated with 'the site of dynamic change, the decentering of meaning, and the fragmentation/homogenization of culture (i.e. the "space" of global capitalism)'. J.K. Gibson-Graham (2002: 27) summarises the dualism that local often

symbolises as ‘small and relatively powerless, defined and confined by the global’, ‘the global is a force, the local is its field of play; the global is penetrating, the local penetrated and transformed’; globalism is considered as ‘synonymous with abstract space, the frictionless movement of money and commodities, the expansiveness and inventiveness of capitalism and the market. But its other, localism, is coded as place, community, defensiveness, bounded identity, in situ labor, noncapitalism, the traditional’. Nevertheless, I argue that the one-directional global-local duality is inaccurate and even wrong for analysing the relationship between the local and the global. Likewise, the global, the continental, the national, the regional, and the local, the fixed hierarchical division of scale (see figure 3.2) is no longer capable of serving as a tool for interpreting and reflecting some cultural, political and economic phenomena that are the consequence of the dynamic interaction between the local and the global .

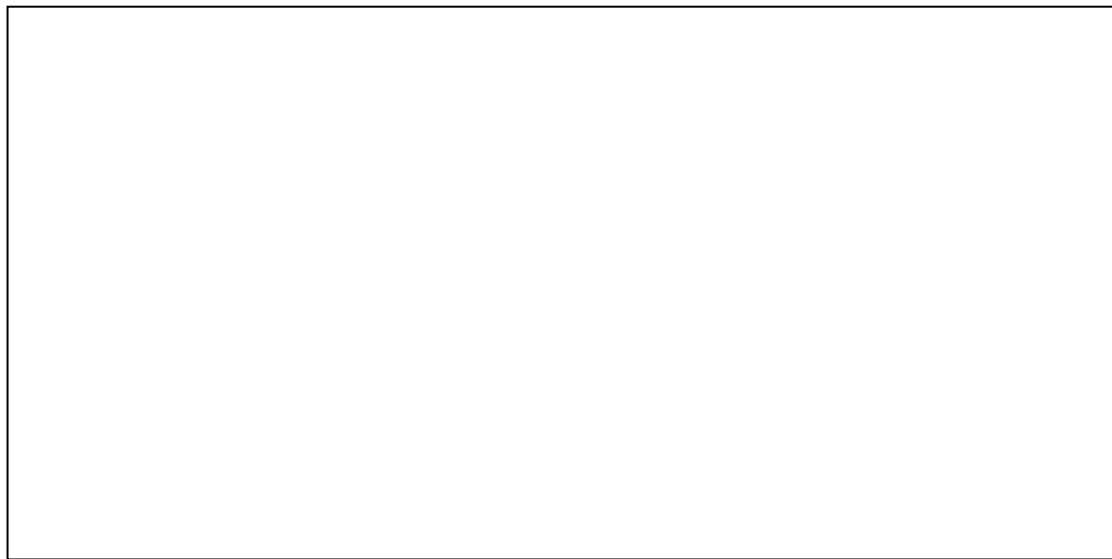


Figure 3.2 Metaphors of scale, from left to right: Scale as a ladder, concentric circles and Matryoshka (nesting) dolls.

Source: Herod 2009: 227-228.

Figure 3.2 shows three conventional metaphors employed to depict the relationship between the local, global and other scales (Herod 2009: 227-228). Each one contains

a very different implication with its descriptive name; nonetheless, all share one feature: they represent the typical scalar hierarchical system, which has for a long time been situated in the core of mainstream scales theories. These graphics also share the feature that they are non-reversible: they cannot account for (represent) the fact that the same element (not making burgers out of beef, for example), can be both globalising and localising. Neither can they show that the local can effectively resist, appropriate and even dominate the global resources. This is the weakness of all such geographical representations of the local-global relation. To be precise, the top/bottom and centre/margin metaphors of the local and the global are insufficient for my argument because my argument requires movement and reversibility.

As shown in Figure 3.2, the three metaphors evidently reflect that the hierarchy of scales is neat, settled, idealised and has clear and well-defined boundaries between different scales. Certainly, the geographical hierarchical system provides an intuitive and simple theoretical framework for displaying and analysing some characteristics of the local and global nexus early in the process. Nevertheless, technological innovation and economic and multicultural exchange and cooperation have brought about a dramatic transformation in communications, the speed of information access and worldwide awareness. As a result, the world is becoming more multifaceted, changing from disconnected to connected, and then to mutually cooperative and dependent, from a number of self-contained and isolated tribes to multiple economic, political and cultural networks which have penetrated across the globe. Thus the implications different scales used to represent are mutually infiltrated and the hard boundaries between them have become less absolute and blurred, especially at the cultural level. More than that, the relationship between the local and global is not confined to a single way where the global is always larger than the local, the global encompasses and contains the local or the local certainly gives way to the global. As Cvetkovich and Kellner claim:

Although the local and the global might be understood as two different

directions from which to challenge the viability of nationalism as a category of political, economic, and cultural analysis, they should not necessarily be understood on the quantitative or spatial model of a continuum between smaller (local) and bigger (global) spaces or places. Other grids of power and space, such as race and gender, can require a different way of conceiving the relations between the local and the global (1997:14).

Indeed, under some conditions, the interactive process between the local and the global is alterable and reversible rather than changeless and nonreciprocal. In other words, both of them are kind of coexistence of dominating and being dominated. This is the core of this section and another key point of this thesis. Obviously, local-global dichotomy or geographical scalar diagrams fail to perceive the ways that the global and the local interact with each other. In various academic fields and disciplines, theorists are beginning to reconsider how global and more systemic force interacts with local and more exclusive force. They endeavour to theorise the intersection of the global and the local, how they mediate each other and how the new structures and hybridisation are being produced by their current communications. My own attempt here is to stress that in the relationship between the local and the global, the global could sometimes be the element or set of values that are subordinated, and that the local could be the element or set of values that are dominant. This means that the global could be dominant over the local and, in some cases, it could also be dominated by the local. The local does not only successfully oppose the global power but also purposefully remakes and appropriates the global resources to meet local demands and expectations and achieve its political, economic and cultural goals. Consequently, their relationship is complex, dynamic and always being negotiated in different situations. Instead of the unchanging and one-way communication pattern, their relationship is exchangeable and reversible.

As can be seen from Figure 3.3, I adopt a Möbius strip continuum to illustrate one facet of the relationships between the local and the global. It is an attempt at

representing the idea that one thing, the same phenomenon, can appear and be understood as two things, the local and the global. The Möbius strip is named after the 19th-century mathematician August Ferdinand Möbius. It can easily be constructed by taking a paper strip and attaching it after making a half-twist to form a loop. Unlike a closed circular strip, a Möbius strip has no inside or outside, no beginning or end, and no clear hierarchy and division. Similarly, the boundary between the local and the global is blurred and indistinguishable; they could be both inside and outside and their roles are reversible. That is, the local is in the global and the global is in the local. This diagram more accurately depicts the interchangeability between the two than the way other depictions from geography suggest a hierarchy (higher or lower, and inner or outer). Therefore, in contrast with these hierarchical diagrams, this diagram with its emphasis on reversibility could be helpful to cast off the fetters of dichotomy and would be a more apt reflection of one aspect of the relationship between the local and the global.

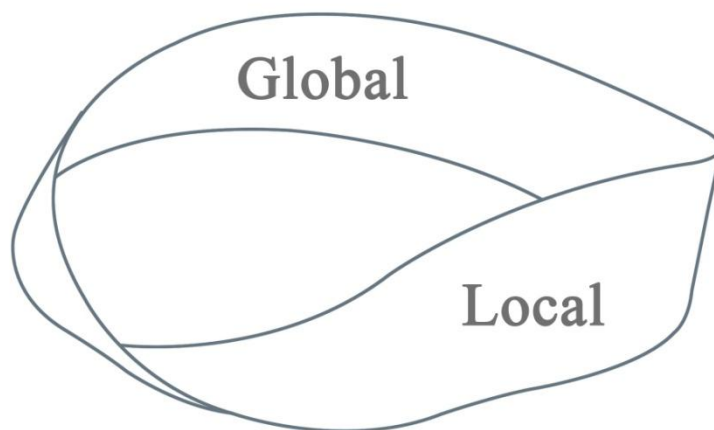


Figure 3.3 Möbius strip representing the reversible relation between the local and the global.

Source: drawn by the author.

In short, in the global and local binary pattern, the global is privileged as an abstract, dynamic, homogenising and powerful force that the local has to confront and defend itself against; on the contrary, the local is frequently conceived of as an enclosed, static, ineffective and defensive but defenceless and weak community. Although this approach can present certain features in regard to their relationship, local and global value judgments are made in large measure from the position of the global. Such a distinction and dichotomy between the local and the global is problematical for magnifying the influence of the global and minimising and underestimating the value of the local. In fact, the relationship between the local and global does not always imply that the global is constantly or simply dominant. Instead, the relation is always being negotiated and the resistance of the local is possible or forthcoming; sometimes the local even has the power and inalienable right to make full use of opportunities created by the global.

Accordingly, the misleading and non-reversing binary theory cannot apply to comparing, examining and explaining the key characteristics and influence of the local and the global in political, economic and cultural dimensions. In many instances the local can effectively resist the global and even dominate it, and the process of resistance and reconstruction may breed new cultural hybridisation. The argument will be further demonstrated and proved by investigating the changes in the function and the graphic components of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems of different times in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

3.3 Urban Design and Graphic Design

As noted above, one of the aims of the chapter is to provide an understanding of how the issue of the local and the global relate to graphic design, urban design and to Beijing's identity as a local and global city as it is constructed in its wayfinding signage. Section 3.1 has presented two key features of the interactivity between the local and the global: mobility and reversibility. This section will examine graphic

design and urban design in the contexts of the local and the global, and it is divided into two parts. First, there is a review of the definitions and functions of graphic design and how graphic design as the product of a mix of local and global values is used to construct cultural and social identity or identities (meanings). Why the relationship between the local and global is discussed and well illustrated by the visual analysis of graphic components of wayfinding systems will also be explained. Second, there will be an explanation of the affiliation between graphic design and urban design as well as how they work together to make available an identity, a meaning and a brand to a city or town.

3.3.1 Graphic Design and Wayfinding Design

3.3.1.1 Graphic design

Graphic design has been developing for approximately one hundred years and according to Palacio and Vit, has evolved through three stages: 1) from its initial understanding as commercial art in the late 19th century; 2) to the word as brought to light by William Addison Dwiggins in 1922; 3) to its present status as a visual communication discipline covering a wide range of specialties in the 21st century (Palacio and Vit 2009: 21). Different scholars have taken different approaches to define this field. For example, Barnard (2005) reviews some definitions and these are paraphrased as follows. Tibor Kalman (1991) defines graphic design as ‘a medium... a means of communication’, based on ‘the use of word and images on more or less everything, more or less everywhere’ (Kalman 1991: 15, cited in Barnard 2005: 10). Richard Hollis points out that graphic design is ‘the business of making or choosing marks and arranging them on a surface to convey an idea’ (Hollis 1994: 7). While Paul Jobling and David Crowley (1996) suggest that there are three elements that constitute graphic design. The first is that graphic design is produced and reproduced in great quantities; the second is that it is easily reachable and available to a large audience; the third is that it spreads and expresses information by combining words and images (cited in Barnard 2005: 11). In addition, Richard Hollis (1994) explains

how words and images work together in a piece of graphic design. He points out that words and images, in many cases, are utilised together; either text or image may be the foremost component of a graphic design work, or ‘each may have its meaning determined by the other’ (Hollis 1994: 7). In some cases, the information it conveys has depended on ‘the precision of words to give an exact meaning to an ambiguous image’ (ibid.). Landa (2006) argues that graphic design can be understood as ‘a visual language that is used to convey a message to an audience, and is a visual representation of an idea that relies on the creation, selection, and organization of visual elements to create an effective communication’ (2006: 4). And she has identified six formal graphic elements: line, shape, value, colour, texture and format, used as a base for two-dimensional design. To put it simply, graphic design is one of the means, methods or languages of communication that are used to convey information and ideas to the public by means of using different visual elements and ever-changing graphic techniques. However, graphic design is much more than simply conveying information; it is often used to add and construct values, meanings and identities. I will address it in more detail in Section 3.2.1.2.

It is clear that graphic design is a diverse and sophisticated composite of dissimilar visual materials and media (advertising, timetables, signs, posters, books, etc.) that involve different techniques and processes (photography, typography, bookbinding, typeface design and digital technologies and so on). The graphic urban wayfinding system that is the primary focus of this thesis is a common and typical form of graphic design. Thus, wayfinding design contains a number of essential attributes and properties of graphic design defined above; nevertheless, More than posters, book covers and advertising, it embodies very exclusive characteristics and a special understanding of the relationship between graphic design and environment. The following section will explore the scope and definitions of wayfinding design.

3.3.1.2 Wayfinding design

Before coming directly to the exhaustive account of the scope and classification of

wayfinding design, it is worth saying a few words about the spatial behaviour of wayfinding. The term 'wayfinding' is a relatively new one, dating from the early 1960s. It was first used by the American architect Kevin Lynch in his *Image of the City* (1960). Lynch (1960) coined the phrase 'way-finding devices' to denote maps, street numbers, route signs, bus placards and so on, but his theoretical foundation is based on the concept of 'spatial orientation' and relates to the process of forming a mental map of one's surrounding environment depending on one's cognitive ability and memory (Lynch 1960: 4). In the early 1970s, some cognitivists, such as Steven Kaplan, Roger Downs, and David Stea, began to reinterpret and re-recognise wayfinding as a new approach to studying and describing the phenomenon and process of finding one's way (Arthur and Passini 2002: 25). The relatively new concept of wayfinding, which substituted for the old term 'spatial orientation', was introduced to describe the process of finding a destination in a familiar or unfamiliar environment (ibid.). Specifically, wayfinding includes three closely interrelated processes: decision making, decision execution and information processing (ibid.). Carpmann and Grant (2002) argue that wayfinding is a form of behaviour; successful wayfinding means that you know where you are, know your destination, know the best route or available route to your destination, you can recognise the destination when you arrive and know how to return (2002: 427). Arthur and Passini (2002) stress that wayfinding design is largely dependent on a comprehensive understanding of the wayfinding process (2002: 26). That is to say, one of the most fundamental functions of wayfinding design is to help people solve problems of reaching a familiar or unfamiliar destination. The following paragraphs will provide a more detailed explanation of wayfinding design.

After World War II the whole world entered the cold war period and scholars, commentators, and designers actively advocated the idea of 'humanizing increasingly complex modern urban spaces' (Gibson 2009: 13). In order to respond to this need, new design disciplines appeared, such as 'architectural graphics signage or sign-system design, environmental graphic design, and wayfinding' (ibid.). As time

went by, an increasing number of large firms and individuals began to promote specialisation of signage and wayfinding design (ibid.). According to Gibson (2009), three scholars have made a great contribution in generalising the term ‘wayfinding’. As noted earlier, in 1960 Kevin Lynch first coined the term. Twenty years later, Romedi Passini wrote *Wayfinding in Architecture* and further explored the field and in 1992, Passini collaborated on *Wayfinding: People, signs and Architecture* with Paul Arthur, a Canadian designer. Arthur rethought Lynch’s ideas, developed many novel wayfinding programmes and created the term ‘signage’.

Generally speaking, wayfinding design is conceived as a subset of environmental graphic design. Environmental design involves ‘the application of design to a specific environment. Whether in service of a museum, an airport, a train or subway station, an amusement park, a movie theatre, a shopping mall, or an entire neighbourhood, environmental design aids and enriches the way in which the destination is experienced, navigated, and understood’ (Palacio and Vit 2009: 30). Environmental graphic design (EGD) has been defined as ‘the graphic communication of information in the built environment’ and contemporary EGD activity includes ‘the development of a systematic, information-cohesive, and visually unified graphic communication system for a given site within the built environment’ (Calori 2007: 2-4). These given sites can refer to different kinds and scales of buildings and settings ranging from a single building to a city or to a transportation system, all of them have intricate communication needs; for the purpose of responding to these needs, contemporary EGD is divided into three distinct but interrelated components – signage and wayfinding; interpretation; and placemaking (Calori 2007: 4) (Figure 3.4).

Signage and wayfinding orients people to a site and helps them navigate it;

Interpretation tells a story about a site;

Placemaking creates a distinctive image for a site (Calori 2007: 4).

As such, it is easy to realise that wayfinding design is an inseparable part of

environmental graphic design and aims to create a recognisable and legible living environment for people. It is worth pointing out that for Calori, wayfinding design is not separated from traditional signage design, but is broader than it (Figure 3.5). As Calori (2007) emphasises, wayfinding design or the wayfinding clue is a broad concept that not only covers graphic images and information displayed in signage programs, but also physical clues such as well-defined pathways, salient landmarks, as well as hand-held GPS systems (Calori 2007: 5). This point will be further proved by Arthur and Passini (2002), who argue that wayfinding design is composed of spatial planning and environmental communication or architectural components and graphic components. As Calori (2007) points out, the prominent feature of EDG that separates it from other types of design is that EDG is aimed at communicating environmental information to people by means of words, symbols, diagrams, and images (Calori 2007: 5). This is also the key to separating wayfinding design in the EGD sense from other forms of wayfinding design. Accordingly, in the EGD sense, wayfinding design is a practice of organising spatial and environmental information, developing maps, signs and other graphic devices and eventually facilitating help for people to find their way around.

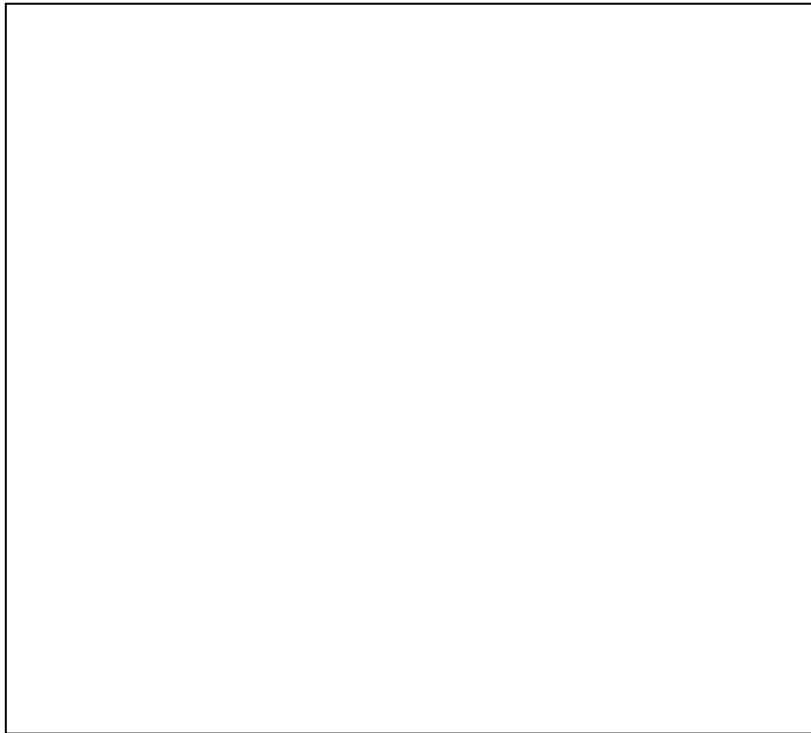


Figure 3.4 The three constituent parts of EGD and how they interrelate with each other.

Source: Calori 2007: 4.



Figure 3.5 Signage plays an important role within the broader realm of wayfinding clues.

Source: Calori 2007: 5.

Arthur and Passini (2002: 42-53) suggest that wayfinding design consists of two major parts: spatial planning and environmental communication.

Spatial planning has generally been the field of architects and urbanists. It determines the location of entrances, exits, and destination. In other words, it is directly related to organisation of spaces, circulation systems, and the visual accessibility of buildings (Figure 3.6). In general, spatial planning consists of three phases: identification of the constituent spatial units; grouping of spatial units (similar functions tend to be grouped together); organisation and linkage of units and zones.

The second major part of wayfinding design is environmental communication, which is providing the relevant information in the environment to help users solve their wayfinding problems. It is an issue that involves architectural and graphic design. According to Arthur and Passini (2002: 42-53), architectural communication should

define and communicate basic information about entrances, exits, paths, colonnades and circulation systems (Figures 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9). Graphic design should reinforce and describe the architectural information in more detail and indicate the exact location of these destinations, such as signage on major entrances, circulation systems and landmarks, and site maps with pre-visit information or “you are here” maps (Figure 3.10). The two types of information are interrelated and interplay with each other. Moreover, auditory, tactile and kinetic means of communicating information can often be used to communicate the same information.

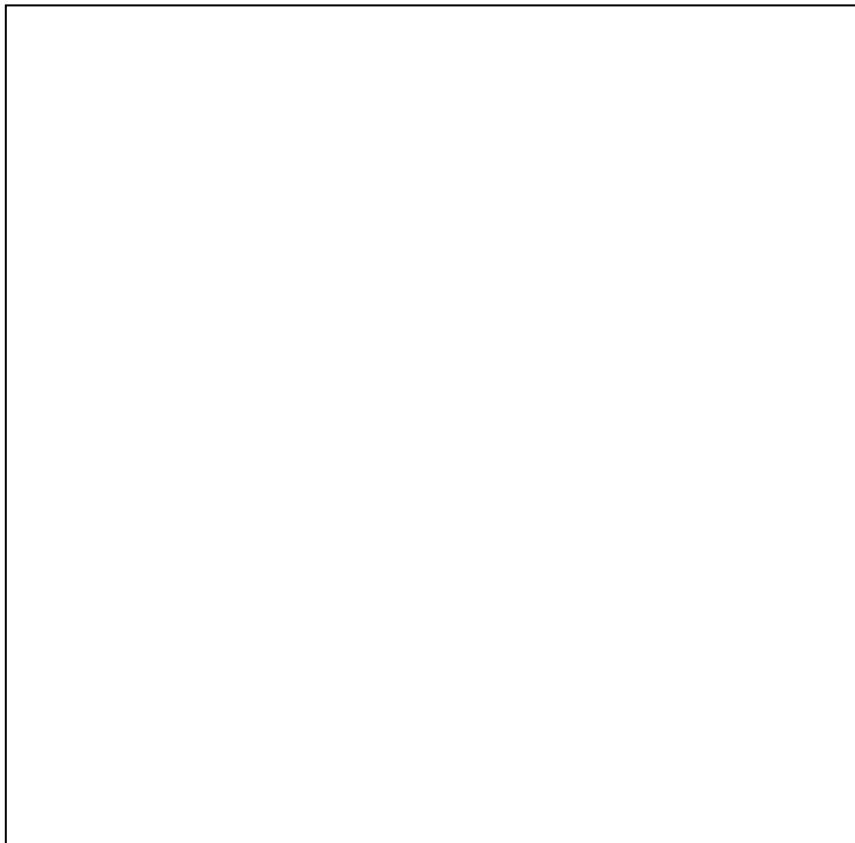


Figure 3.6 A decision diagram of spatial planning.

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 44.

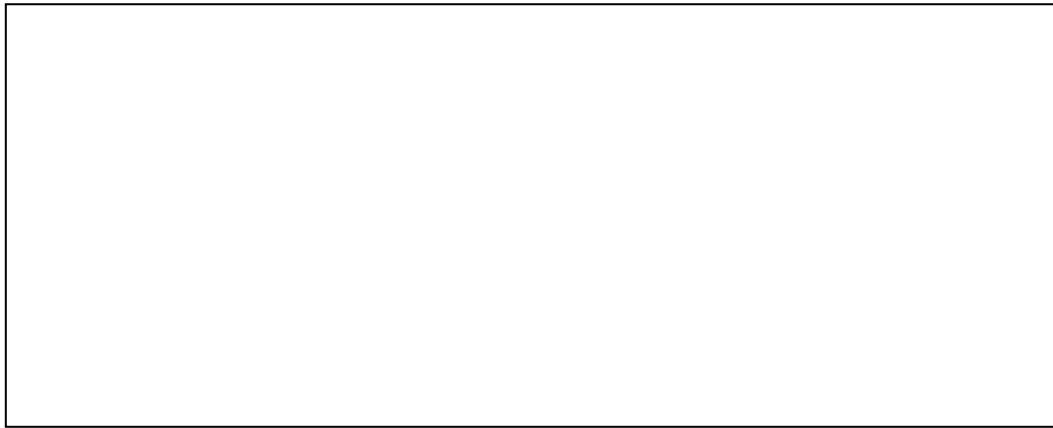


Figure 3.7 Flush, projected, and recessed entrances. Projections and recesses are especially effective if the approach is oblique.

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 118.

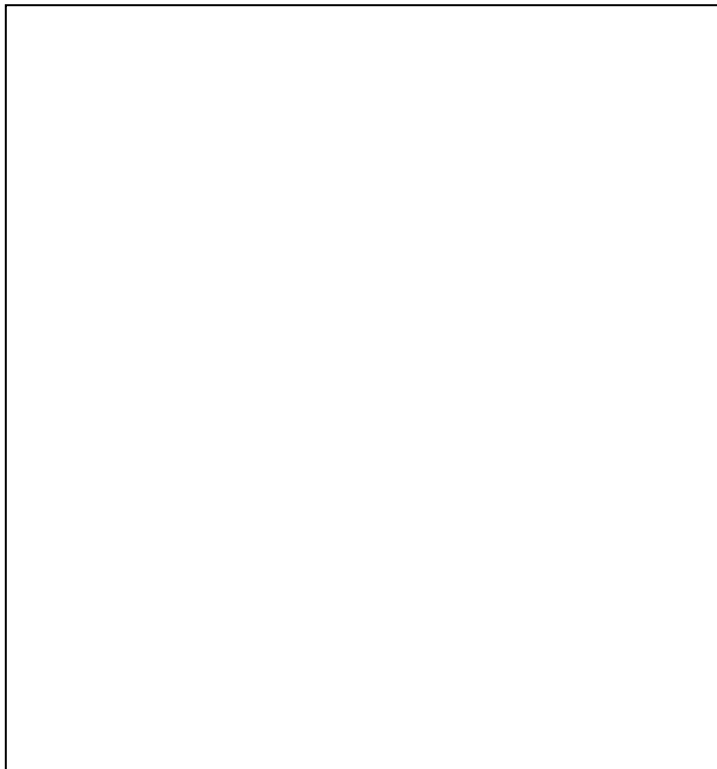


Figure 3.8 Bernini's colonnade to St Peter's, Rome. Colonnades have been used to emphasise the circulation and lead the visitor to the entrance of an important place.

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 121.

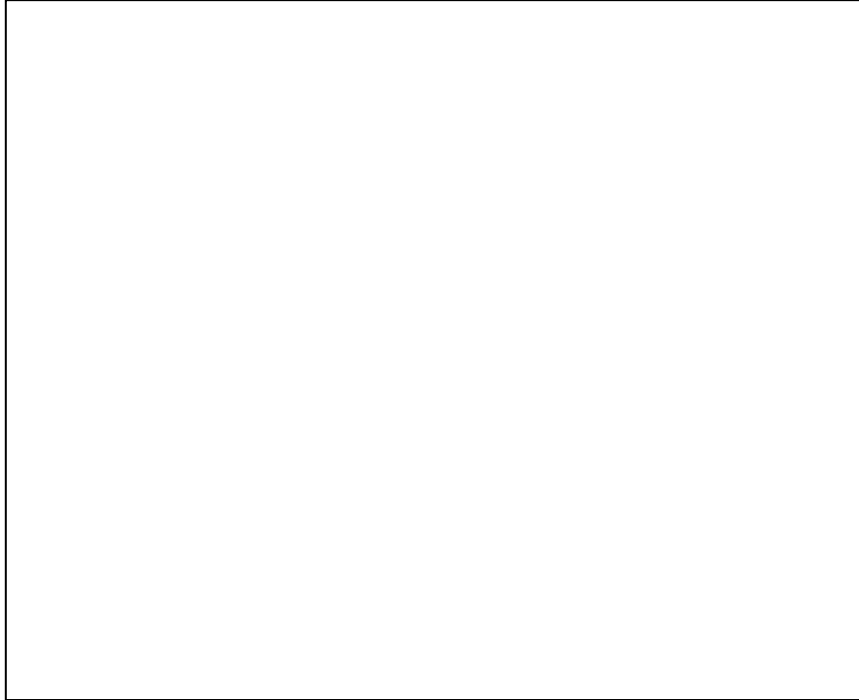


Figure 3.9, Landscaping can emphasise the location of the entrance.

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 122.



Figure 3.10, 'You are here' map of Loughborough University.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Essentially, the spatial planner should be in charge of spatial organisation of a setting and its circulation systems. The graphic designer, on the other hand, should be responsible for the graphic information system. But, in reality, the spatial planner cannot neglect the graphic communication of information in a building environment; the graphic designer's job is more than designing signs and maps and a series of visual information. Thus, they are complementary to each other (Arthur and Passini, 2002) (Figure 3.11).

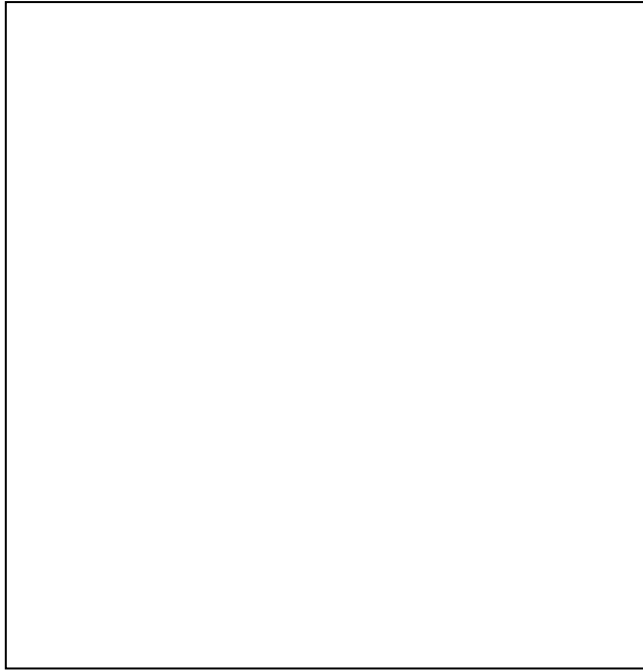


Figure 3.11 The wayfinding pyramid.

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 53.

In my research, the urban wayfinding system or design refers particularly to the graphic communication of information in urban surroundings or urban wayfinding design in the EGD sense. That is, graphic components of wayfinding design are taken as a research object, rather than architectural components. Arthur and Passini (2002: 142-7) provide the following detailed classification of graphic information of wayfinding system according to functional information types, formal information types and sign types.

(1)The functional information types are divided into orientation and general information about the setting (information that provides users with an outline of the surrounding environment, where they are and where the destination is located, and other correlative information about setting, such as, maps, floor plans, building directories, and safety information) (Figures 3.12, 3.13); directional information to destinations (information that helps users follow a correct route to a destination, such as signs with arrow, intelligible descriptions about landmarks or characteristics of

building) (Figure 3.14); and identification of destinations (information that identifies the destination, such as signs with names, safety signs identifying local hazards) (Figure 3.15).

(2)The formal information types refer to the tools used by designers to communicate. There are four main categories: typographics; hand graphics, computer graphics, photographics; pictographics; and cartographics. Colour is also regarded as an important tool.

(3) The sign types are categorised by function and physical characteristics. By function, there are orientation signs (maps, hours of service, and building directories) (Figures 3.12, 3.13); directional signs (direction arrows) (Figure 3.14); identification signs (signs with name) (Figure 3.15).

By physical characteristics, there are self-supporting on a post or plinth; wall mounted; or suspended from a ceiling (Figure 3.16).



Figure 3.12 City map of Berlin.



Figure 3.13 Interior map of Sisi Museum (Vienna).

Source: photographed by the author, 2010. *Source:* photographed by the author, 2010.



Figure 3.14 Signs of subway (Berlin).

Source: photographed by the author, 2010.



Figure 3.15 Signs with building names at entrance to destination (left); sign of building (right).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Figure 3.16 Signs may be supported (1), suspended (2), mounted on a flat surface (3), or cantilevered off a wall (4).

Source: Arthur and Passini 2002: 147.



For Gibson (2009: 47), most wayfinding systems can be divided into four categories

of signs: identification, directional, orientation, and regulatory. In large measure, Gibson's and Arthur and Passini's classifications of wayfinding signage are based on their practical functions ranging from orientation function to directional function to identification function. However, the difference between their work is that Gibson suggests that graphic wayfinding systems do not only present needed information to people, but also link this information to a place's identity. As Gibson suggests, 'Styled appropriately, they also express a place's personality, character, and even its historic context. These signs can communicate a place's identity explicitly by presenting an actual logo or more generally by evoking an image' (Gibson 2009: 48). Put differently, wayfinding signage system is regarded a means of articulating a place's character, identity and its cultural, social and historic contexts by way of texts, images, symbols, diagrams and colours. As a place's identity is an expression or outcome of negotiation between a range of values and beliefs, graphic wayfinding systems can be considered as where different values meet, collide or merge with one another. As Richard Hollis (1994) reminds us of graphic design's function, 'There is an instinctive urge to do more than merely convey a message, a desire to give that message a unique character' (1994: 7). This serves to demonstrate that graphic design (wayfinding design) plays a key part in the construction of a place's meaning through its cultural, political, social and symbolic functions, instead of solely through its informative function. In what follows, drawing on Barnard's (2005) work, we will examine the functions of graphic design, which provides a substantive theoretical and analytical framework for interpreting and understanding the functions of graphic wayfinding design as well as the global-local debate, which is of major interest to me.

3.3.1.3 The Functions of graphic design

As far as functions of graphic design are concerned, Landa (2006) believes that a powerful graphic design solution can 'persuade, inform, identify, motivate, enhance, organize, brand, rouse, locate, engage, and carry or convey many levels of meaning' (2006: 4). Barnard (2005) argues that the functions of graphic design could be explored in two ways: 1) 'the social, cultural and economic functions of graphic

design’; 2) ‘the functions of individual examples’, for instance persuasion, informing, decorating, (2005: 13). The social and cultural functions would directly relate to globalisation/localisation or the interaction of local/global identities, and to the construction of Beijing’s meaning and identity as a city; the other functions would be informing as to where and what things are and may be decorative and aesthetic. Thus, as one of the main theoretical foundations guiding the investigation into the study of Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems, the following paragraphs will introduce Barnard’s accounts of graphic design’s functions in more detail. It will first explain the functions of individual examples of graphic design. Then it will introduce how graphic design links to society, politics, and culture.

Barnard determines the functions of individual examples of graphic design by surveying and comparing several previous studies that investigate the functions of graphic design. According to Richard Hollis, graphic design has three central functions (Hollis 1994: 9-10). The first is ‘identification’: using graphic design to display and describe ‘what something is or where it came from’, such as corporation logos, signs of goods, and heraldry. The second function refers to ‘information and instruction’ and graphic design is applied to ‘indicate the relationship of one thing to another in direction, position and scale.’ For example, maps, direction signs and diagrams. The third function concerns ‘presentation and promotion’, posters and advertisements are the best examples in this category. Jacques Aumont (1997) also puts forward three fundamental functions of graphic images: the ‘symbolic,’ the ‘epistemic’ and the ‘aesthetic’ respectively (1997: 54-5, cited in Barnard 2005: 13). Symbolic images mean exactly what the name suggests: representing or symbolising something that could be a god, a spirit, an idea, a religious belief or a cultural value. Epistemic images are religious or secular images that are created to convey information and knowledge about the world to people, such as portraits, botanical illustrations, and maps. Aesthetic images are dedicated to producing aesthetic perception for pleasing and attracting viewers. For Richard Tyler, the functions of graphic design include information, persuasion, decoration, and magic (cited in

Barnard 2005: 14-8). Informing and communicating information, ‘knowledge or intelligence’ certainly characterise the informative function (Barnard 2005:14). The second function is persuasion, namely persuasive or rhetorical function. As its name suggests, these graphic images are intended to ‘persuade, to convince or merely affect a change in thought or behaviour’ (Barnard 2005: 15). The decorative function is the third function of graphic design. The aim of this kind of graphics is to entertain and please the spectator. The fourth function, the magical function, is mostly concerned with two things dealt with by graphic design. The first is similar to Aumont’s symbolic function, which is that these symbolic religious images are a very important means for establishing communication with or gaining access to the realm of the holy. The other thing that graphic design does is to ‘transform one thing into another thing’ (Barnard 2005: 16). That is, by using a variety of techniques of graphic design, such as drawing, collaging or printing, things become different from what they really are.

The above comparisons of three accounts about the functions of graphic design help identify or clarify the basic functions of graphic design as well as help define the scope of my own work. It is worth pointing out that these functions do not operate separately but work together at the same time. In most cases, a graphic image may show more than one function. ‘There can be no piece of graphic design that is only decorative, or only informative. It is the case that any and all examples of graphic design will perform more than one of these functions’ (Barnard 2005: 17). It was suggested earlier that the graphic urban wayfinding system is one of the most common types of graphic design, and for this reason several functions of graphic design, particularly informative, rhetorical and decorative functions, can be performed in an assortment of external and internal graphic wayfinding systems. The concrete expression of these functions in the wayfinding information and signage is that an effective wayfinding programme can address information and navigation needs, balances the needs of different user groups, as well as maintains and enables a prominent place’s identity. As such, a wayfinding design connects information that people actively search for to an experience and feeling of safety and convenience.

More importantly, it also links needed information to a sense of place, value, and identity or brand. This, therefore, suggests that the graphic wayfinding system is directly or indirectly, deliberately or unintentionally, affected and shaped by different values; in turn, it is a tool for supporting and reproducing these conflicting or consistent values and meanings. As a result, for the ever-growing city of Beijing, graphic wayfinding systems have increasingly gained importance for its capability to assist the generation of a legible and well-designed urban space, and for its potential to respond to and reinforce the city's different identities and ideologies in different periods of history. And since the interaction and intersection between graphic design (wayfinding design) and society and culture within different local and global contexts is the prime concern of this thesis, the following paragraphs will further explore how signage works culturally, socially and politically, and the ways in which it negotiates local and global values or identities.

Having defined what is meant by the functions of individual examples, the next section will now move on to explain the social, cultural and economic functions of graphic design identified by Barnard. Before a more detailed explanation about these functions of graphic design, it is important to note that this section primarily focuses on the social and cultural functions of graphic design. This is because that the theoretical ideas pertaining to the two functions outline a significant approach to accounting for why graphic wayfinding signs can reflect and be utilised to construct, identify, reproduce or convey values of the local or the global. In his analysis of what roles graphic design plays, Barnard (2005) argues that graphic design does not only reflect or indicate social and cultural values, but 'is one of the ways in which those values and attitudes are constructed, reproduced and challenged' (2005: 57). Therefore, Barnard claims that 'graphic design produces social, cultural and economic relations; to that extent, graphic design is productive of society, culture and economy' (ibid).

First of all, the social function of graphic design will now be considered. In an

investigation into the relation between graphic design and society, Barnard (2005) identifies class and institution as the main components of society. And then, graphic design is regarded as 'one of the ways in which the identity and existence of social classes and social institutions are established and assured...also one of the ways by means of which that identity and existence may be challenged, or resisted' (Barnard 2005: 59). This means that in a society consisted of classes and institutions, different classes (dominant and subordinate) have their own ideologies, ideas, needs, beliefs and interests, which have a large influence on how they feel and treat institutions. As a creator of ideas, defender of values, or communicator of beliefs, the dominant classes or subordinate classes might use graphic design to protect interests of the dominant classes, maintain social hierarchy, or assert the right of the subordinate classes, challenge an unequal social order. As Barnard (2005) notes, in one respect, graphic design might be an effective means that is commonly used to justify the interests of the ruling classes, 'operating politically to enhance the power and status of those classes'; in another respect, graphic design may serve to defend the special interests of the subordinate classes (2005: 61).

These theoretical perspectives about the social function of graphic design help establish connections between graphic design and political demands and social systems, which provide me with a key method to conduct an analysis of my own research object – Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. It is clear that graphic product, poster or illustration, for example, is an ideal means of strengthening or contesting dominant ideologies. As is known to us, the propaganda poster or illustration is influential because it is effortlessly reachable, readable and understandable to most people. In the same way, as a graphic product, graphic wayfinding signs have these features described above, and also have their own characteristics. For example, unlike poster, wayfinding system is an inescapable part of everyday life; first and foremost, it provides necessary information of direction and navigation, meanwhile, it could convey and mediate political messages in some special periods. Especially, in the context of Chinese revolutions, Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were designed to introduce new political ideas, encourage

revolution, raise morale, and inspire action. It is obvious, hence, that the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing here have displayed an evident social function. Taken together, it suggests that Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems contribute to the construction of identity of the city, maintain the social order and political legitimisation, and establish Beijing's relation to other cities both within and without China. Moreover, as the identity formation directly relates to interaction between local values and global values, local discourses and global discourses, and local priority and global priority, it is reasonable to say that Beijing's wayfinding systems can be where the local and the global convene and where the local adapts to the global or the global adapts to the local. These views and concepts are most useful in comprehending and describing visual evidences gathered in Beijing. A more detailed analysis of the social function of Beijing's wayfinding signs is detailed in chapters 5,6,7,8.9 and10.

Secondly, the cultural function of graphic design proposed by Barnard will be explained here. Similarly, before the relation between graphic design and culture is detailed, Barnard firstly defines the meaning and scope of culture, which is more suitable for the discussion of graphic design. That is, 'culture may be thought of as the beliefs and values (the ideologies) of groups of people and the ways (the signifying systems-both products and processes) in which those beliefs and values are communicated, reproduced and contested' (Barnard 2005: 68). With regard to its relation with graphic design, Barnard suggests that graphic design is regarded as 'a cultural activity' and 'a form of communication' (2005: 67-8). More precisely, Barnard (2005) argues that graphic design is one of the 'signifying systems' through which people develop, express and communicate their values and beliefs with each other and is one of the means that people might use to reproduce their values and beliefs or oppose other values and beliefs that are inconsistent with their interests (2005: 67-8). As Barnard suggests, the cultural function of graphic design is to communicate, diffuse or resist dominant beliefs, values and discourses that reinforce social order and hierarchy. This viewpoint provides insights into the cultural role and significance of the graphic design (both products and processes), and the ways in

which the graphic design relates to culture. As suggested previously, the theoretical views of the social function of graphic design provide a theoretical underpinning that supports the case study of Beijing wayfinding systems. Likewise, the views about the cultural function of graphic design play the same role in understanding and explaining these visual data collected in Beijing. As with the posters or graphic advertisements, the graphic components of urban wayfinding system is also a graphic product containing texts, colours, images and information that functions culturally and deals with a variety of values and beliefs. Hence, the ways in which graphic design has been used to generate, strengthen or resist social, political and cultural values and meanings are equally applicable to the interpretation of different urban graphic wayfinding systems.

Given all that, this section has investigated the meanings and functions of graphic design. Especially, the functions of graphic design proposed by Barnard (2005) are approached from two different angles: the function of individual examples of graphic design and the social, cultural and economic functions of graphic design. The former involves the informative, persuasive, decorative and magical functions. The latter contains the idea that graphic design is one of the ways in which social and cultural meanings are produced, reproduced, communicated, or negotiated and coordinated due to different motives and standpoints. These theories provide perspectives and insights into the role of graphic design in the communication process of information, meanings, values and beliefs. They also offer the key theoretical foundations that enable me to analyse the relationship between political relations and cultural identities, and the graphic components of wayfinding system of Beijing. Having explained how the graphic design relates to social order and cultural values, the next section will explore the interaction between local values, global values and graphic design in some detail.

3.3.1.4 Local values, global values and graphic design

For Barnard (2005), the beliefs and values may refer to ‘any and all aspects of the

world and its contents as they are experienced by the group in question: nature, children, material goods, gender, other people and so on' (2005: 68). He also emphasises that the meaning of graphics is the outcome of the interaction between the cultural values and the graphic elements, that different cultures have different values and beliefs, and different values and beliefs will construct different meanings (2005: 158-59). This thesis focusses chiefly on global values and local values, Western prevailing values and Chinese (Beijing) values. The interlacing, cooperation or conflict between these different values are communicated through graphic design (graphic wayfinding systems) as one signifying system, as well as deciding on appearances and features of graphic products and production of their meanings.

Nisbett's (2005) comparison of Westerners and Asians gives us a glimpse of how values, beliefs, communications and logics can differ. He explains that most scholars who believe that Westerners and East Asians have respectively developed their own systems of thought and value for thousands of years consider that:

European thought rests on the assumption that the behavior of objects – physical, animal, and human – can be understood in terms of straightforward rules. Westerners have a strong interest in categorization, which helps them to know what rules to apply to the objects in question, and formal logic plays a role in problem solving. East Asians, in contrast, attend to objects in their broad context. The world seems more complex to Asians than to Westerners, and understanding events always requires consideration of a host of factors that operate in relation to one another in no simple, deterministic way. Formal logic plays little role in problem solving. In fact, the person who is too concerned with logic may be considered immature (Nisbett 2005: 16).

Building on these assertions, Nisbett argues that, whereas the 'collective or interdependent nature of Asian society' is in line with 'Asians' broad, contextual view of the world' and they believe that events are greatly intricate and effected by many

different factors, the ‘individualistic or independent nature of Western society’ is in consonance with the ‘Western focus on particular objects in isolation from their context’ and their belief that they can manage the objects’ behaviour once they grasp the rules controlling the objects (Nisbett 2005: 17). He also argues that Westerners and East Asians have employed different approaches to maintain their different systems for thousands of years; the two dissimilar approaches that are shaped in terms of ‘profoundly different social relations, views about the nature of the world, and characteristic thought processes’, are the Western self-reinforcing system and the Eastern homeostatic system (Nisbett 2005: 20). Thus, suffice it to say that Western values, forms of communication and logics fundamentally differ from Asian ones. As Lewis (2003) suggests, ‘Things that seem obvious, or cut-and-dried, in Europe or the United States are not at all evident to Asians. Westerners often refer to black and white, right and wrong, good and evil. These are threatening concepts to most Asians, who are completely at ease with the ambiguity of seemingly incongruous components functioning in harmonious coexistence’ (2003: 207). Hence, it is almost certain that there is an essential distinction between the global values and logics dominated and circulated by the West and the local ones enriched by other non-Western cultures. As explained in the preceding section, graphic design is a way of reproducing or challenging social order and dominant social values as well as the visual creation of beliefs and values that are imperative elements for building cultural identities. It can, therefore, be said that graphic design could be used to build, defend and disseminate local values or global values or a compromise reached by the two significantly different value systems. In turn, as graphic design is where local and global meet, the interaction and interweaving between local values and global values could be reflected in graphic design and could be revealed by means of analysing the visual elements of graphic products.

There are many examples of investigating the relationship between the local and the global, and local and global values through the analysis of visual components of graphic products, such as posters, advertisements, and brands. For example, by

examining examples of McDonald's advertising in Singapore, and HSBC's and Nike's websites, Barnard (2005) has been able to conclude that global values are slightly adjusted to adapt to local differences in order to acquire greater profits or are commonly reinterpreted in different local contexts, and local culture is a source of difference and potential resistance (2005: 153-8). The effective adaptation of global values and cultures to local culture, custom and tradition is also made quite clearly by the case of how these sweeping globalising corporations rebrand or redefine themselves and manage complexity in diverse local markets. The rebranding of the American fast food restaurant franchise SUBWAY in China is one of the most obvious examples. The product, the green and yellow logo, the packaging and the décor of the restaurants in China are basically consistent with its American ones. The difference is that it has a special Chinese name, *Sai Baiwei* (赛百味), which is used in its storefronts and packaging in China (See Figure 3.17). In fact, its Chinese name is a transliteration of SUBWAY. However, unlike McDonald's or KFC's Chinese name, the three Chinese characters adopted by SUBWAY are meaningful for the majority of Chinese people. *Sai* (赛) is used as a verb and means exceed or be better than. *Baiwei* (百味) is a noun phrase and literally means a hundred tastes, but is often used to refer to all kinds of food and tastes. Thus, *Sai Baiwei* (赛百味) denotes exceeding all kinds of food and tastes. As a result, for most Chinese people, the name is not only simple and catchy, but is afforded a local meaning and interest. Noticeably, it is not the case that these Western multinational corporations impose a set of global/ Western values and culture on the rest of the world, but rather that they endeavour to localise themselves in many emerging foreign markets and set up a base of communication with people of different cultures by applying some of these cultural elements in their commercial advertising. Some might argue that adoption and appropriation of the local cultural elements is one of multinational corporations' global marketing strategies, which are designed to achieve their commercial goals and increase their global market share. They might also argue that, in this case, graphic design play a key part in rebranding the fast food chain in the local market, advertising and promoting their products to the local consumers and finally stimulating consumption,

so as to reinforce their market dominance in this field. However, rather than a series of foreign elements collected by Western merchants to meet the domestic demands for exotic products or a kind of marginalised culture that is subordinate to Western popular culture, the local cultural values and preferences have become a crucial factor that transnational enterprises must take into consideration when they attempt to devise a global solution or method. It reveals to us that from a marketing point of view, local culture's values, faiths, expectations and inclinations need to be respected and valued, rather than disregarded, neglected and 'conquered'. It also reveals that local culture is not a simple attribute of the prevailing Western cultural system, but a potential resistance nurtured by local difference, interests and initiatives.

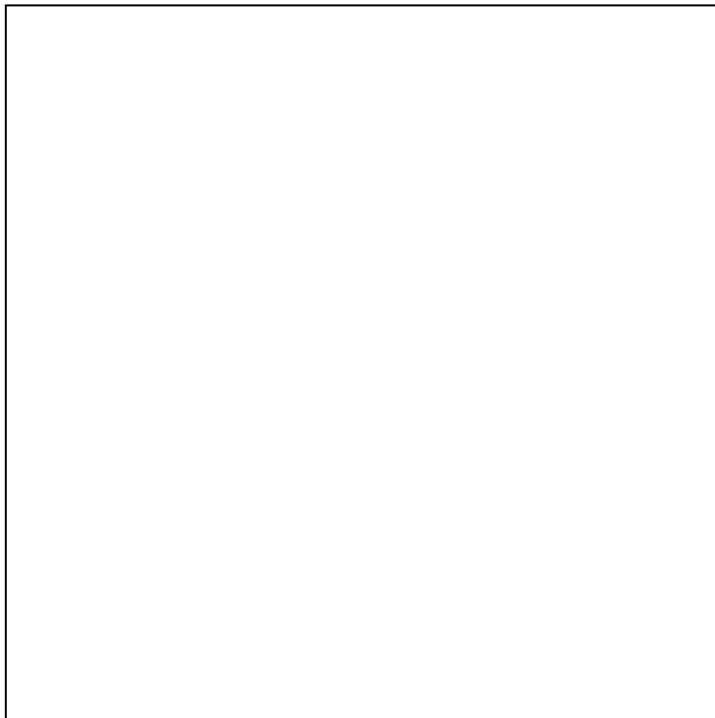


Figure 3.17 SUBWAY in China.

Source: the official Sina weibo (Chinese microblogging) of SUBWAY, 2015.

It will be clear now that the visual analysis (colours, layout, typography, imagery, information and so on) of graphic objects is a rational, effective and reasonable way to explore and identify the relationship between the local and the global, as these graphic components are all cultural, political and ideological. The case studies based on the analysis of graphic visual elements allow researchers to understand and

examine multiple dimensions of the interaction between the local and the global. In Barnard's (2005) cases, he points out that in the light of the essence of communication, the potential effect of this process of globalisation is not that global values and interests are simply imposed on local cultures; communication is not 'about the simple one-sided domination of the powerless by the powerful' (2005: 160). He also emphasises that 'the local culture is a source of puzzlement and potential resistance, rather than something to be dominated and assimilated' (2005: 160-1). This view would be supported by Lewis (2003) who writes that 'the assumptions, values, and beliefs of cultures change slowly, not quickly – in some cases they hardly change at all...Absorption of modern techniques, fast-food chains, and fashion has virtually nothing to do with deep-rooted core beliefs' (2003: 230).

In my case study, this idea that ineradicable local differences could challenge and resist the homogenising and overwhelming power of global forces is further endorsed, proved and expanded by analysing and discussing the functions and visual evidences – graphic wayfinding systems in Beijing. As one of the forms of graphic communication, the urban graphic wayfinding design can be interpreted as a kind of visual creation, a reproduction of cultural values and beliefs and a form of communication in which political relations and social structures are constructed and communicated. Consequently, the graphic wayfinding system is able to reflect the close interlacing and mutual compromise between local values and global values. The interpretation and examination of the relationship between the local and the global are made possible by unscrambling and analysing graphic wayfinding systems. That is to say, the mobility and reversibility of the relationship between the local and the global proposed in Section 3.1 could be examined and exemplified by comparing and decoding the change in the role and appearance of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing from different periods.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the graphic components of the wayfinding system are typical graphic objects used specifically in an urban environment. So they consist

of the attributes and functions of graphic design. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the graphic wayfinding design has also been provided with the properties of urban design. For this reason, differing from other graphic products functioning on their own, such as commercial advertising and propagandist posters, graphic wayfinding design is intimately bound up with urban design. It works together with urban design at the same time, so as to productively and effectively realise the cultural, political and social functions. Although this thesis focuses on graphic design and wayfinding design, the concepts and scope of urban design and its interaction with graphic design warrant further exploration. The following sections will explore the relationship between graphic design (wayfinding design) and urban design.

3.3.2 Graphic Design in Urban Design

3.3.2.1 The relationship between graphic design and urban design

In this section, I attempt to integrate graphic design with urban design and show the role of graphic objects in the urban environment. I first briefly introduce several different definitions of urban design, and then emphasise that urban design is an integrated practice, yet, the mainstream theories of urban design do not consider graphics as its essential component. The main goal of this section is to provide a method to reinterpret urban design as an interdisciplinary subject that includes graphic design. Some scholars (e.g. Arthur and Passini 2001, and Harland 2011) have attempted to question the strict distinction between urban design and graphic design. Their accounts will be used to support my argument and explanation pertaining to the interplay between graphic objects and physical objects in the built environment. These authors build graphic design into urban design and they argue that the graphic element is a basic part of urban design that provides us with important examples and theoretical evidences. Finally, graphic design is built into urban design as a whole; they work together to ensure the normal function and operation of a city and create a legible, secure and well-organised urban environment. In addition to their practical function of arranging spatial order, graphic design and urban design can be seen as an

effective tool for meeting the diverse cultural, social and political needs and expectations of city users, and enhancing their experiences in the city. In the next section, the notion that will be tested is that urban design and graphic design are where the local and the global meet, where the local and global are negotiated and where the identity of the city is constructed.

The phrase ‘urban design’ was invented in North America in the late 1950s, as a substitute for the unsophisticated and to some extent obsolete term ‘civic design’ (Carmona, Heath, Oc and Tiesdell 2003: 3). Urban design has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as a discipline concerned with setting and distributing physical objects or forms (architecture, street furniture and infrastructures), coordinating their relationship and creating a spatial order for people in a city. For example, Barnet (1982) suggests that ‘Urban design is the generally accepted name for the process of giving physical design direction to urban growth, conservation, and change. It is understood to include landscape as well as buildings, both preservation and new construction, and rural areas as well as cities’ (Barnet 1982: 12). Hartshorn (1992) emphasises that a large urban design project such as residential communities or regional shopping centres, concerns ‘a team effort’ by professionals that spans planning, architecture, and landscape architecture (Hartshorn 1992: 449-50). In this view, urban design is located within the domains of urban planning, architecture and landscape design, and thus, it is clear that urban design is a cross-disciplinary subject. The interdisciplinary nature of urban design could be exemplified by the launch of the Urban Design Alliance in 1998, composed of five specialist institutes – town planners, landscape architects, surveyors, architects and civil engineers (DETR and CABE 2000: 9). More specifically, urban design overlaps city planning related to ‘broad policies about the distribution of activities in space and the linkages between them ’; it partly covers civil engineering ‘in ensuring the buildability of large-scale elements of infrastructure’; it also overlaps landscape architecture in refining the ‘detailing of the space between buildings and in designing for sustainable futures’; and ultimately it intersects with architecture in solving ‘how

buildings front and make, behaviourally and symbolically, the public realm...urban design while overlapping these fields has developed its own area of expertise' (Lang 2005: 391-3). Therefore, urban design involves all the physical components of a public place and the spatial arrangement of these components, as well as the way in which people's movements and activities are linked to urban space as a social venue.

Judging by the observations above, the kernel of urban design has long been about making and arranging physical forms of a city for the public and thus the city's physical objects and settings lie at the heart of the professional field of urban design. It seems that the interaction between physical objects and graphic objects, urban design and graphic design, is not seen as one of the critical principles forming the core of urban design. The current state of mainstream urban design theory is not up to the task of developing my project. Hence, some new viewpoints will be added to the argument regarding urban design and the generation of a legible and distinctive urban space through the cooperation of graphic design and urban design. As will be revealed in this section, the boundary between graphic design and urban design becomes fuzzy and graphic design will be shown to be an essential part of urban design.

Guy Julier (2000) states that 'Many design consultancies have also moved from the consideration of objects, images and spaces to the investigation and provision of relationships and structures. The traditional demarcations between disciplines such as graphic, product and interior design have receded' (2000: 2). Likewise, there is a close connection and increasing interplay between graphic design (especially for graphic wayfinding systems) and urban design. In many cases, graphic design and urban design are, and should be, complementary to each other. They are both used to connect visual information and built surroundings and to link graphic objects and environmental objects. This point is clearly illustrated by Arthur and Passini's (2002: 84-205) classification of wayfinding design mentioned in the previous section.

Wayfinding design can be seen to consist of two components: architectural components and graphic components. The former involves spatial planning and

architectural wayfinding communication. The latter is concerned with graphic information and graphic visual communication. Wayfinding requirements have played a vital role in bringing physical objects (built environment) and graphic objects (graphic information) together into a single whole. As Arthur and Passini (2002) highlight, ‘Wayfinding requirements, whether they be at the regional, urban, or architectural scale, are integral to the design process – from the most general, overall spatial organization of the setting to the articulation of the form-giving features, and right down to the individual architectural and graphic messages’ (2002: 42). As noted earlier, architects, urban planners and landscape architects are involved in organising space, communicating different circulation systems, articulating and highlighting physical features of buildings, landmarks or other street furniture. One role for graphic design is to set up a sound graphic information system that can be utilised to provide or strengthen architectural or environmental structure and information. For the sake of creating a friendly, safe, understandable, accessible and appealing wayfinding environment, architecture, city planning and graphic design are unlikely to function separately and independently within the design process, but rather to interact and collaborate with one another. Architectural wayfinding information and graphic wayfinding information, therefore, have to be intimately related. Despite the fact that urban wayfinding design does not fully equate to urban design; the former is an integral and pivotal part of the latter. Consequently, suffice it to say that graphic design has its own special function involving providing detailed and accessible navigation information and guidance for people within the process of urban design. It can thereby be suggested that urban design is the art of making three-dimensional spatial setting and two-dimensional information system interpretation and articulation of the features of the setting.

Even though graphic design plays a key role in the course of designing a safe, accessible and memorable city, some scholars suggest that graphic design can be viewed or studied as urban design itself. Robert Harland (2011, 2012) argues that graphic objects can be perceived as urban objects and therefore as a part of the

process and product of urban design, which is analysed and supported by the *micrographic*, *mesographic* and *macrographic* theoretical model inspired by geography and sociology (Harland 2011: 148-288 , 2012: 8-13). He also (2011) suggests that a class of objects or artefacts in the urban environment could be taken as ‘empirically external graphic objects’ (Harland 2011: 149). They generally comprise ‘maps, street numbers, bus placards, outdoor publicity, lettering, fly posters, traffic signs, direction signs, banners, screens, lighting, manholes, timetables and others’ and these objects are also considered as ‘architectural communication, commercial vernacular, large-scale graphic images, street furniture, urban objects, inscription, outdoor information media, and environmental information systems’ (Harland 2011: 274). In addition, ‘the silhouette of a building, uniforms, statues, bollards, graffiti, walkways, doors, gravestones, hazard warning tape, even confetti, and more’ should be thought of as graphic objects, so as to get a more complete understanding of what graphic design as urban design might be (ibid.).

In conclusion, it becomes obvious that although many scholars’ and professionals’ concerns about urban design are more about the processes and products of architecture, landscape architecture, engineering and urban planning, graphic design is significant and essential to successful urban design. In this section, the definitions and basic features of urban design and its relationship with graphic design have been explained. Additionally, we can also find out more about cultural, political and social functions and significances of urban design beyond its superficial physical forms and visual appearances. In the meantime, I will argue that graphic design (wayfinding design) can underpin the creation of these functions and significances of urban design. The following paragraphs will explore why urban design can be used together with graphic design to produce, reproduce and convey values, and to foster a city’s identity.

3.3.2.2 Graphic design (wayfinding design), urban design and city identity

Regarding the functions of graphic design discussed earlier, it was suggested that graphic design is where the local and the global meet and where mutual interweaving

and negotiation between local values and global values occur. It was also suggested that graphic design possesses social, cultural and political functions; so it (graphic wayfinding design) is applied to convey dominant social and cultural values and establish identities or meanings for a city. Likewise, urban design covers much more than the visual effect and physical setting of buildings; the social, political and cultural dimensions and functions should also be considered and taken into account. In other words, urban design can be an effective means of communicating prevailing ideologies, cultural beliefs or social values, as well as providing urban wayfinding systems. If so, as with graphic design, urban design is a medium upon which the local and the global interconnect and often collide. As Roo argues, 'the urban is where the local and the global meet, where the local adapts to the global, and where the global receives impulses from the local' (Roo 2012: 140). So, the meanings of a city emerged as the product of the interaction between values of different cultural, political and social groups, and graphic objects and physical objects. A primary concern of this section is to explain how urban design and graphic design, as cultural intermediaries, are appropriated by politicians or governments to achieve political and cultural purposes, and to position or reposition a city in the context of the local and the global. Many of the theorists probing different dimensions of urban design's functions, in addition to Lang's notion of aims of urban design discussed below, also include theories such as Carmona et al's (2003) six dimensions of urban design, Zukin's (2003) notions of cultural function of urban design, and Marcuse's (2003) idea about urban design' political and social function.

For Lang (2005), the goals of urban design are that, 'It should be designed to encourage economic growth. It should provide a sense of historic continuity to enhance people's self-images. It should help sustain the moral and social order of a society and should be designed with a sense of justice for all to the extent that those are physical design concerns' (Lang 2005: 20). Thus, it is clear that urban design has a role to play in economic development, preservation of culture and maintenance of social order. Indeed, the aims and functions of urban design are wider reaching than

the visual effect or spatial layout of buildings, and economic, social, cultural, and historical dimensions must be considered. In *PUBLIC PLACES, URBAN SPACES* (Carmona et al., 2003: 36-210), six dimensions of urban design – morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional and temporal, which are regarded as ‘the everyday material of urban design’ – are discussed.

In the perceptual and social dimensions of urban design, the cultural, political and social functions of urban design can be revealed from two positions (Carmona et al., 2003: 87-129):

- 1) Urban design actions contribute to a place’s identity or image and enhance the sense of place, which can be considered as significant cultural and social functions played by urban design. Carmona et al. argue that instead of being a simple biological and cognitive process, perception of environment is also ‘socially and culturally ‘learnt’’, hence, the environmental image is more than a cognitive knowledge or a map of physical settings, the social, cultural and emotional meanings rooted in or stimulated by urban environment, and is a key component of an urban image (Carmona et al., 2003: 88, 92). Urban design is one of the strategies of highlighting the social and cultural aspects of an urban imagery and contributing to the construction of cities that can provide essential spaces for cultural and social events. Moreover, Carmona et al. also emphasise that ‘While urban designers cannot make places in any simplistic or deterministic manner, they can increase ‘place potential’ – the likelihood that people will consider the space a significant and meaningful place’ (Carmona et al., 2003: 101).
- 2) Urban design is used as a potent means for political legitimacy and the maintenance of dominant power structure and social values. According to Knox (1984: 110), the symbolic meaning of architecture and environments has changed at various times with different prevailing ideologies, from a society dominated by royalty and aristocracy to the present society run by ‘big government’ and ‘big

business', however, the ultimate goal of symbolic meanings of all manmade environments is 'to legitimise a particular ideology or power system by providing a physical focus to which sentiments could be attached' (cited in Carmona et al., 2003: 94). Knox (1984) argues that rather than being a simple manifestation of the political and economic power held by individuals, groups and governments in different historical periods, the built environment is more like a means by which the dominant political or economic power is ensured (Knox 1984: 107, cited from Carmona et al., 2003: 95). In many cases, particularly in totalitarian, imperial or colonial regimes, the built environment has often been used to symbolise political power (Saoud 1995, cited from Carmona et al., 2003: 95). It is clear that one of urban design's concerns is to respond to the prevailing political beliefs and social values. It is also suggested that by attaching symbolic meanings to the building space, urban design and urban design practitioners, as a bridge between society and environment, have been appropriated by the ruling class.

For Zukin (2003), architecture and urban forms are two cultural products that are the main components of the urban landscape as well as being material and symbolic (Zukin 2003: 178). The political and social function of urban design can also be clearly exemplified by Marcuse's (2003) case study of Berlin, in which he states that 'what is being constructed in Berlin can certainly be called meaning; but it can also be called by its short name: power...while form, location and symbolism tend to support purpose, the building on a lavish scale of the new Government Center in Berlin, with a paranoiac concern for security, and pomp, and a subservience to every wish for comfort and efficiency and representational fashion by the leaders of the state, is *per se* an expression of the power of that state' (Marcuse 2003: 154).

Taken together, these results suggest that, apart from aesthetics, convenience and safety concerns with physical components of an urban space and their spatial arrangement, urban design and planning seek to attend simultaneously to social, cultural and economic development and transformation. Moreover, urban design and

planning have long been seen as an effective management instrument and intervention mechanism to enable the leadership to deal with social, cultural and political issues in a productive manner. Thus, it is not difficult to see that urban design and graphic design (graphic wayfinding design) have similar cultural, social and political functions. As Julier (2000) notes, design including graphic design and urban design has been a measure of political symbolism, appropriated by government to achieve political or economic purposes. It might even be argued that in some cases, graphic wayfinding systems can display strong cultural and social effects, because they are themselves an integral part of a comprehensive urban design and change subtly along with every change of urban design. The relationship, therefore, between urban design and graphic wayfinding design is not that of exclusion, but that of integration. Although the transformations of urban forms and fabric are sometimes not concurrent with the changes of graphic wayfinding systems, in the majority of cases, they are complementary rather than irrelevant and competitive.

With the deepening influences of economic globalisation and market liberalisation, the city has been regarded as a product and graphic design and urban design are a city's packaging or advertising, promoting the city to global markets. In responding to the trend of globalisation and the transformation from an industrial to a post-industrial economy, cities become the agents of the process in which culture is associated with business, service, tourist and leisure industries for creating more employment opportunities and wealth for the local population (Booth and Boyle, 1993). In this case, graphic design and urban design have played an important role in regenerating, reconstructing and branding identities of cities. In short, graphic wayfinding design and urban design are frequently applied in response to ever-changing political, economic and cultural situations, increasingly changing technology and environment, and the interaction between the local and the global. All these concepts and arguments will help me analyse the graphic urban wayfinding systems of Beijing at different historical periods.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has investigated the interaction between the local and the global. It has argued that the relationship between the local and the global can be viewed in two new ways – mobility and reversibility. The unidirectional binary opposition which separates the local from the global is challenged, and the initiative and elasticity of the local are highlighted. It has also reviewed the definitions and functions of graphic design (wayfinding design) and urban design. The identifying, informative, symbolic, rhetorical and decorative functions on one level and its social, cultural and economic functions on another level have been fully explained. These functions are able to account for the process of identifying, branding and marketing a city, why graphic design is one of the ways in which political power, cultural belief and social order are propagated, duplicated or challenged and resisted. The notion of graphic design that is not simply the conveying of information but the construction of meaning and identity has been put forward. It has also been explained that graphic design (wayfinding design in particular) and urban design can not only enrich and integrate visual forms of a city, provide personalised and intimate experiences for tourists and residents, but also are ways of reproducing and communicating social, political and cultural values. The ways in which graphic design and urban design may relate to the local-global issue have also been explained. Building on the theories of this chapter, Chapter 4 will present a brief historical context and process for examining the concrete example of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems.

Chapter 4 Literature Review –Historical Context and Process

4.1 Introduction

After reviewing the theoretical literature in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 proceeds to review the literature relevant to the change in Beijing's identity and its relation to architecture and urban space. Much of Sections 4.2 and 4.3 is aimed at exploring how the absolute authority and legitimacy (meaning) of the central government (from imperial emperors to chairmen of political parties) are constructed by means of Beijing's urban planning and design and architectural design. The links between Beijing's identity and its spatial construction are emphasised. The meaning (identity) can be interpreted as the identity of the emperor or the empire in Section 4.2; later in Section 4.3, it will be about the political ideologies that the authority tries to convey to its citizens and the meaning as a brand that is being created by the government and sold to tourists in the globalised world. The two sections will provide an explanation of the historical context and the process of acculturation through which old Beijing's identities were challenged, abandoned and eventually replaced. This will enable me to analyse the wayfinding systems of Beijing and develop my own argument about the intense communication between the local and the global. I will argue that traditional Chinese doctrines, beliefs and values and modern Western thoughts and technologies have an immense and decisive effect on the visual design and construction of Beijing. Furthermore, I will show how China's rulers have attempted to implement and accomplish their political ambition and cultural policy and how to make sense of the world and themselves through transforming representations of urban space.

4.2 Traditional Urban Design and Planning of Beijing

This section begins with an explanation of how we might understand the design and configuration of Beijing in the light of traditional Chinese ideas (such as the Divine Right of the Monarch) and traditional Chinese doctrines (Confucianism). Besides, it will be explained that for the purposes of assuring national stability and legitimising

the emperors' dictatorship, ancient astrology and *YinYang Wuxing* cosmology are employed to protect and strengthen the imperial rulers' cultural identities and faith, and are applied in urban planning and design. This section will also show that ancient Chinese urban configuration and architecture, as a carrier of cultural significances and political ideologies, are a main external expression of the blend of different doctrines, theories and rulers' political motives. It will show how urban design and planning is a means of generating and communicating social, cultural and political values in imperial China. This section principally takes as examples the hierarchy of architecture of the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC) and the Forbidden City of Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1912 AD).

4.2.1 The Centralised Composition of Beijing and the Confucian Ceremony System

Confucianism was the ruling idea and overriding value system of Chinese ancient society and gradually developed into the central concept of the regime throughout most of the history of imperial China. Thus, the Confucian literati was the incontestable ruling class of China for the past two thousand years and they 'were a group rooted in secular interests, entrenched in political power and social prestige, and highly cultured in literary classical education' (Weber 1951: xxviii). Chinese rulers progressively promoted, privileged, trusted, and depended on the Confucian scholar class. At the same time, the Confucian scholars strenuously defended the emperor's authority against any acts of sedition or secession, and expanded, strengthened and sanctified the power of the emperor by studying, and disseminating Confucianism (Liu 2006). As a result, the imperial family and the Confucian class drew great vested interests from endorsing Confucianism. They benefitted from the established ritual, ethical and political systems, which produced particular Confucian value systems and sugar-coated serious social inequality. Meanwhile, these ethical, ritual and political systems laid the foundation for the formation of the empire's identity and China's identity at the time.

For Weber (1951: xxix), the kernel of the Confucian and Taoist principles was 'the

tao, the immutable order of harmony, tranquillity, and equilibrium underlying the universe and human society. The Confucian orientation for man lay in making rational adjustment to the eternal cosmic and social order'. The Confucian considered the world 'as given' and the fabric of the 'given world' is constituted of 'five cardinal relations' (*wulun*): relations between sovereign and subject, parents and children, brothers, husband and wife, and friends. The central ethical obligation within these relations was piety' (Weber 1951: xxix, xxxi). Confucius believed that if all people (ruler, minister, father and son) behave and act in conformity with their social position, class and definition, and fulfil their specific obligations, the world will be an extremely well-ordered, peaceful system. 'The Confucian ethic required an educated person to control every act of his life conduct according to *li* [propriety] or traditionalized normative rules governing the correct behavior in every significant social situation. This was to fit the individual into the cosmic and social order and to repress passions that might disturb its equilibrium and harmony.' (Weber 1951: xxxii). The design, layout and the architecture of Chinese cities were used to highlight and convey these core values in the Chinese imperial contexts. In this rigidly ritual Chinese society, the ubiquitous hierarchical architectural system and urban spatial configuration were viewed as an important component of the ritual system and its outer expression (Zhu 2007). In the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC), its hierarchy of architecture is basically embodied in three aspects (Zhu 2007: 221):

- Architectural types, all architectures are strictly classified. There are certain exclusive, large, tall and spacious buildings which are reserved solely for the emperor, some buildings are designed for the aristocrats, and ordinary people are banned from using these specific architectural forms.
- Architectural size and quantity, the dimension of the cities and palaces, the height of the halls, the height and quantity of the gates and so on are stipulated according to the social status of the occupant. The emperor's palace, for instance, has five entrance gates. The aristocrats' palace has three gates, all of

which are smaller than the emperor's gates.

- Architectural decoration, colour, placement and structure, a number of specific colours, architectural decorations, roofs or ceilings belong only to the emperor; others are not allowed to copy them. For example, the pillars in front of the emperor's central hall are red. For the aristocrats and bureaucrats of different levels, their hall pillars are black, cyan, and yellowish brown respectively.

Ever since the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 B.C.), the architectural expression of Confucian ritual systems was widely used, improved and refined by governors of other dynasties. Typically, architectural design and urban planning were also used to combine the Chinese traditional political and religious doctrines of the Divine Right of the Monarch and the Mandate of Heaven with China's ritual system and patriarchal society. In imperial China, absolute regal authority is glorified, deified and idolised by the Confucian scholar class. In the Confucian doctrine of the Han dynasty – Dong Zhongshu's *'Interaction between Heaven and Man'*, a monarch was worshipped as the representative of heaven on earth and the appointer of the Mandate of Heaven (Li 2000). Likewise, in Chinese folklore and indigenous religions, the monarch was referred to as the scion or son of heaven and as the incarnation of a dragon. Therefore, the Chinese emperor's city and place were modelled on the imaginary celestial emperor's Heavenly Palace.

Ancient Chinese astrologers believed that heaven is a complex system of stars and constellations consisting of 3 enclosures (*Sanyuan*) and 28 constellations (*Xingxiu*) (Zhu, 2007: 187). Among these stars, the Emperor Star (*Ziweixing*, Pole Star) was deemed the core of the heaven. The Purple Forbidden Enclosure (*Ziweiyuan*, which is one of the three enclosures and is near the north celestial pole, was thought to be the place where the celestial emperor lives. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Chinese emperor's palace is called the Purple Forbidden City (*Zijincheng*) and thought to be the centre of the world since he is regarded as the son of the celestial emperor. The

emperor was considered the incarnation of the polar star, while his subjects are likened to other stars that revolve around the polar star (Zhu 2007: 193). In the second chapter of the Analects of Confucius, the Master said: 'if you (the emperor) govern with the power of your virtue, you will be like the North Star. It just stays in its place while all the other stars position themselves around it' (translated by A. Charles Muller, 1990, revised 2013). In short, the concepts of the Mandate of Heaven based on the 'kinship' between heaven and the emperor, as well as the harmony between man and nature (heaven), are the solid foundation of Chinese traditional political ideas, the soul of Chinese ancient theocratic theories, and the root of design principles of Chinese urban space (Zhu 2007: 193-198). Since the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 B.C.), all through the ages, the ruling class attempted to promote and legitimise the amalgamation between political structures, state institution and astronomical systems. Under the influence of this kind of traditional culture, the planning and design of a regal city is believed to be a very important way of achieving such amalgamation (ibid.).

Accordingly, the Purple Forbidden City on earth corresponds to the Purple Forbidden Enclosure in heaven. The Purple Forbidden City is the centre of Beijing, and the Hall of Supreme Harmony is the centre of the Purple Forbidden City and the emperor's throne decorated with dragons is located in the hall. The hall is also the site for the coronation ceremony of the emperor and empress, royal weddings etc. Because of this, the Hall of Supreme Harmony symbolises the highest ceremonial centre of the whole empire. A straight central axis from north to south passes through the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Purple Forbidden City and the whole of Beijing. Other important buildings are laid out along the central axis and relatively subordinate buildings, courtyards and garden are symmetrically planned on the west and east sides of the axis. Around the Forbidden City, there is the Temple of Heaven located in the southern part of Beijing, the Temple of Earth situated in the northern part, the Temple of the Sun located in the east, and the Temple of the Moon

positioned in the west. A moat – Golden Water River encircling the Forbidden City, is compared to the Milky Way, the Six Eastern Palaces and Six Western Palaces in the Forbidden City symbolise the stars in the sky (Zhu 2007: 186). These symmetric building complexes were to simulate a sacred, venerable, orderly and precisely stratified heaven and highlight the concept of heaven-man oneness and the supremacy of imperial power. (See Figure 4.1)

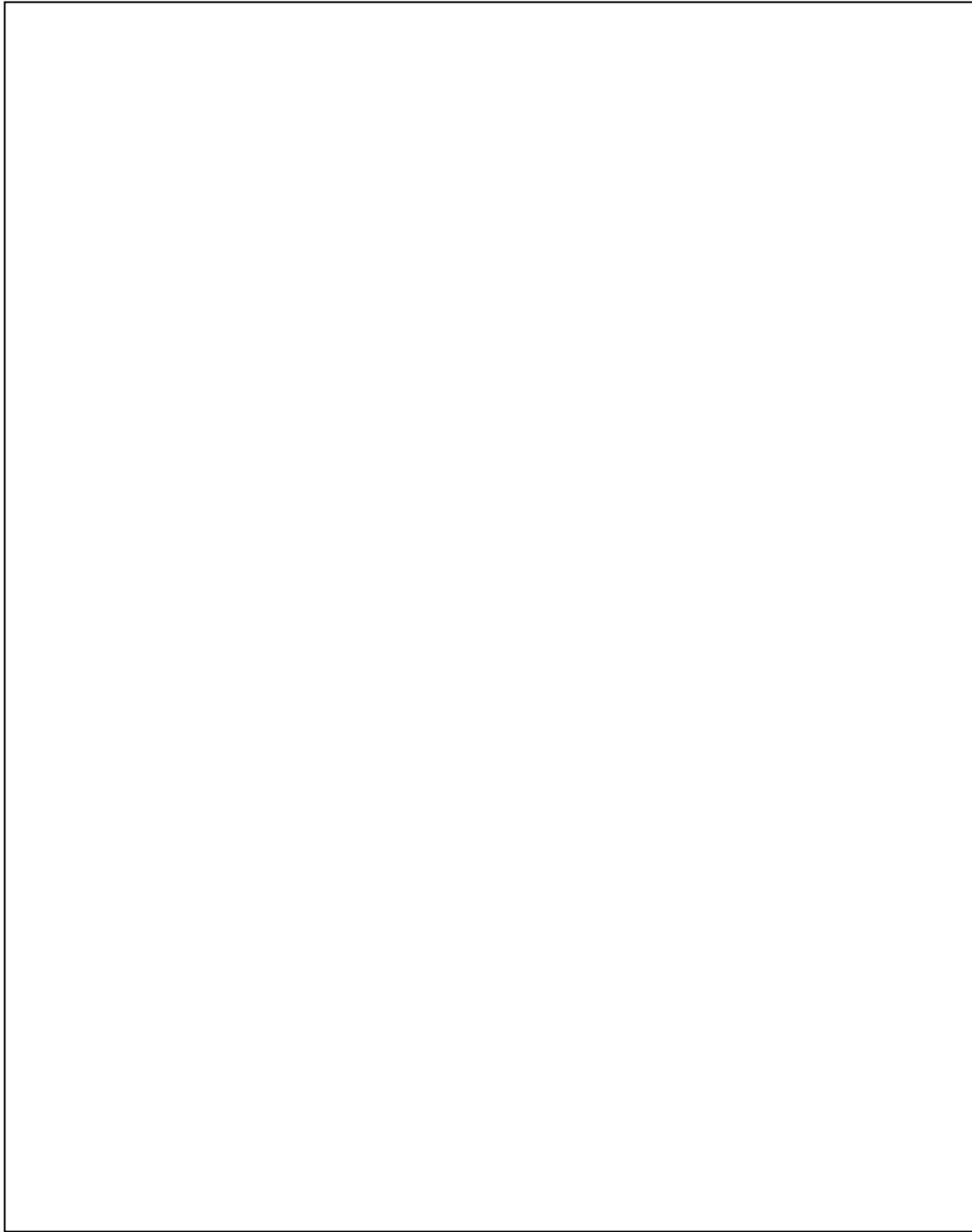


Figure 4.1 The maze of architecture of the Purple Forbidden City.

Source: The Palace Museum <http://www.dpm.org.cn/shtml/2/@/8797.html#306>

In addition to the overall layout, the supreme imperial authority can also be seen in each small detail of these palatial buildings. In the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1912), the governments had established a set of rigorous rules to govern public and private buildings. According to the *History of Ming*, one of the official Chinese

historical books, during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) the hierarchy and regimentation for architecture is more inflexible and harsher than other Chinese dynasties (Zhu 2007: 225). Under the rules for construction of a capital city, from the layout, location, height, and size of buildings to the ornaments of walls, pillars and beams, even the colour, material and style of door knocker are stringently prescribed to reflect different hierarchical status.

The gilded doornails, for example, are fitted on these huge vermilion gates inside the Forbidden City. Nearly every gate has nine rows of doornails and each row comprises nine doornails (See Figure 4.2). Nine, the single number, was known as the biggest number in Chinese culture. It represents long lasting stability and peace and implies the emperor's absolute power. In the Qing dynasty, the official ordinance states that the doornails are only to be used in imperial palaces, temples and royal aristocrats' mansions. Each door of the imperial palace and temple is allowed to have nine even rows of doornails, each with nine doornails; the door of the Qinwang's (Prince of the first rank) mansion has nine rows of seven doornails; Junwang (Prince of the second rank), National Duke and the same rank of royal members, nine rows and five doornails; Duke, seven rows, nine doornails; Marquis, Earl, Viscount and Baron, five rows and five doornails.

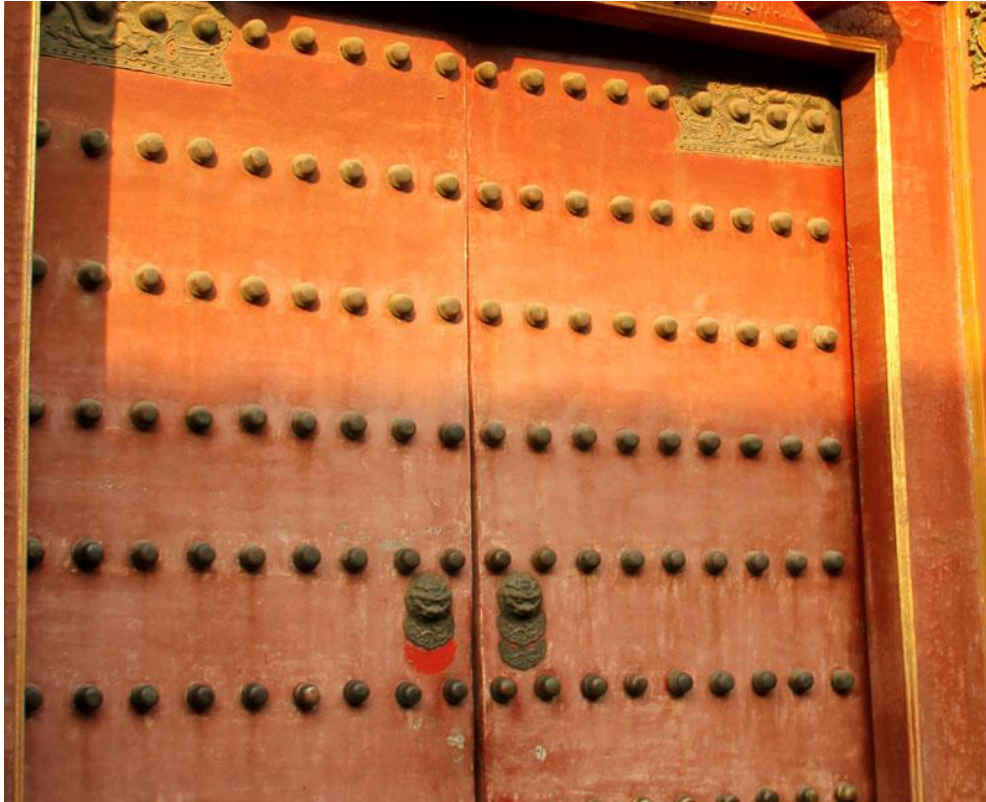


Figure 4.2 81(9×9) nails on the imperial door.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Like the lucky number nine, the Chinese dragon belongs only to the emperor and is utilised in the emperor's palaces, clothes and tombs. Inside the imperial architectural complexes of the Ming and Qing dynasties, statues and paintings of dragons are seen everywhere, on windows, doors, walls, roofs, stairs, and on the emperor's throne (See Figure 4.3). All these architectural details and numerological applications are to emphasise that the emperor is the incarnation of the Polar Star, the embodiment of the omnipotent Chinese dragon, the son of heaven, and is at the top of the ritual system and the social hierarchy.



Figure 4.3 Dragons in the Forbidden City.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

In conclusion, we can say that the urban planning and design and architecture of Beijing are closely related to those of the ancient Chinese political, moral and ethical codes and encourage an orderly society along with a harsh ritual hierarchy.

Architectural style and spatial composition are based on the Confucian ritual system and directly mirror this system's key values. The next section will explore the influences of *Yinyang Wuxing* theories on the planning and design of Beijing.

4.2.2 The Design of Beijing Embodies *Yinyang Wuxing* Theories

The orthodox Confucian ceremonial system and ancient theocratic theories are the dominating factors considered for ensuring the interests of the upper class. They have created a significant impact on the design of Beijing from the overall layout to the

architectural detailing. Similarly, *Yinyang Wuxing* theories have also played an important role in the design of ancient Chinese cities. They are mainly applied to the selection of location, layout and colour of architecture. For those imperial buildings or gardens, the name is also an influential element to be considered. Likewise, the primary purpose of implementing these considerations is to ensure social order and to maximise and legitimise the rights of the emperor.

Ancient Chinese architects and artisans skilfully fused *Yinyang Wuxing* concepts and cosmology with the hereditary patriarchal clan and ritual system. The concept of *Yinyang* mainly embodies ancient Chinese cosmology. It is used to depict how opposing things or forces are complementary to each other in nature. According to the concept, all things in the world are the products of the combination of *Yin* and *Yang*. Everything is constantly evolving and changing in accordance with the change of *Yin* and *Yang*. Moreover, *Yin* and *Yang* are intertwined with each other; they are mutually opposite, interdependent, and transferable. Many natural phenomena or objects are classified as *Yin* or *Yang*. For example, sun is *Yang*, moon, by contrast, is *Yin*, day is *Yang*, night is *Yin*, hot is *Yang*, cold is *Yin*, man is *Yang*, woman is *Yin*, an odd number is *Yang*, and an even number is *Yin* (ibid.).

Wuxing is one of basic concepts which took shape in the Warring States period (476-221 BC), which is the complement of the *Yinyang* theory. *Wuxing* is widely applied to many fields in Chinese culture including philosophy, numerology, architecture, astrology, traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, etc. *Wuxing* includes five elements – Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. Ancient Chinese people believe that the five elements are the basic substances constituting the whole of creation (Zhu 2007: 255). All things and all phenomena on the earth can be abstractly sorted into five types based on different attributes of the five elements. The correlations and interactions of all things can be deduced and interpreted by using the five elements. *Yinyang* and *Wuxing*, the unique cosmology and thoughts profoundly seeped into Chinese people's lives, practices and ways of thinking. The design of

these palaces in Beijing is the best example that reflects the cosmology of *Yinyang Wuxing* and embodies the combination between the cosmology and the stringent patriarchal clan, such as male-preference primogeniture.

An example can be demonstrated by the symmetrical arrangement of buildings and gardens in the Forbidden City, which are grouped into two main parts – outer court and inner court. The outer court, situated at the front of the inner court, consists of the southern segment of the Forbidden City, where the emperor wielded power and held significant national ceremonies. The inner court, including the northern segment, was the dwelling for royal families, such as the empress, princes and princesses.

According to the theory of *Yinyang*, the front is *Yang*, the rear is *Yin*, the south is *Yang*, the north is *Yin*, the odd number is *Yang*, and the even number is *Yin*. The outer court, located in the south and front part of the royal architecture complex pertains to *Yang* and therefore, the numbers of major buildings, walls, and even stairs of the outer court are odd numbers (Zhu 2007: 251-253). For instance, the number of the main halls in the outer court is three. They are the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony. Conversely, the inner court is built in the north and rear section, which pertains to the attribute of *Yin*. The architectures, courtyards, and subsidiaries of the inner court are all organised in an even numbered order (ibid.). By the same token, the east is *Yang*, the west is *Yin*, the man is *Yang*, and the woman is *Yin* in the theory of *Yinyang*. In this way of thinking, these buildings located in the east of the inner court are the residences for the crown prince, whereas those buildings situated in the west are the empress's or concubines' residences (ibid.).

On the basis of the analysis above, we can see that *Yang* stands for man, masculine, strong, confident, powerful; *Yin* symbolises woman, feminine, soft, tolerant, and compliant. The royal architectural space partitioned and arranged in line with *Yinyang* guidelines serves to demonstrate that ancient China is a patrilineal society, in which the male has occupied a superior central position in the strict social hierarchy, while

the space left for the female has been inferior and marginalised. Similarly, the *Wuxing* theory as the complement to the *Yinyang* theory was used to coordinate the relation between buildings and also to categorise those architectural spaces for political purposes. In terms of the *Wuxing* Theory, the five basic elements are related to different colours, seasons, cardinal directions, and so on. Wood is related to the direction east, spring, and the colour green; Metal is correlated with the west, autumn and white; Fire represents the south, summer and red; Water is associated with the north, winter and black; Earth is associated with the centre and yellow. In view of this, most grand imperial buildings are roofed in yellow glazed tile. The colour yellow indicates the third element in the *Wuxing* concept – Earth. The earth has long been established as a symbol of the centre of the universe and is placed in the middle of the five elements to highlight the implied meaning of being a centre. This consideration has to a large extent supported the worldview or cosmology in ancient China that regards China as the centre of the earth. The Forbidden City was considered to be the centre of the entire empire. The respected and honourable colour yellow became the sign representing the imperial family and symbolised legitimacy of the emperor's identity as the son of heaven and the land-owner of the whole country. Moreover, in order to highlight the supremacy of the emperor, the aristocrats were prohibited from using yellow, and the colour green was used instead. Ordinary people were only allowed to use grey tiles (See Figure 4.4).

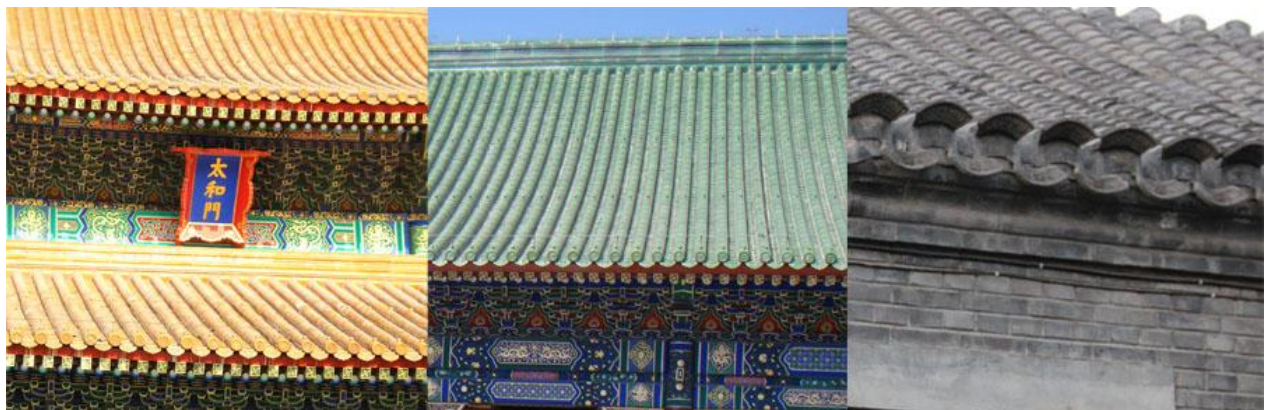


Figure 4.4 Yellow glazed tiles (imperial palace), green glazed tiles (the mansion of an

aristocrat) and grey tiles (ordinary people's residence) from left to right.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Hence, the entire city is an essential and effective communication tool that is utilised to deify the emperor and empress and convey their wishes to commoners and non-aristocrats. As Shi (1998: 63) emphasises, 'The urban spatial hierarchy represented powerful testimony to, and physical proof of, the imperial order. The form of the capital city was just one of the many means the Chinese emperors used to display their legitimized position as both rulers and guardians of tradition'. *Fengshui* doctrine, *Yinyang Wuxing* theories, patriarchal clan hierarchy and Confucian ethic and ritual theories are wedded to produce the conventions of architectural and urban forms. Nonetheless, during the 19th century, as the Qing dynasty gradually lost its power and witnessed its weakening, the design of Beijing directed by traditional beliefs and values was regarded as one of major hindrances to social improvement and was out of step with economic transformation, political restructuring and cultural change in China at that time (Shi 1998). Simultaneously, the modern Western technologies, cultures and ideologies in social and natural sciences had created a considerable impact on various spheres in Chinese society, which therefore contributed to the changes and reforms happening to the national and cultural identity of Beijing and its urban design principles. These changes will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.3 The Influences of Western Ideologies and Technologies on the Design and Construction of Beijing

Together with the indigenous Chinese elements discussed in Section 3.3, Western cultural, political and economic thoughts and sciences also have a great influence on the design and construction of Beijing. In the early 20th century, the government decided to rebuild the city and this project of modernising Beijing continues today. Shi (1998) believes that Western urban planning experiences, technologies and Chinese traditional values and beliefs have been the central factors in reconfiguring

Beijing in the early Republic era (1912). During this period, ‘The traditional hierarchy of space gave way to a new order based on an ideology that took material well-being and modernisation as the measure of progress’ (Shi 1998: 61). When Beijing entered the People’s Republic epoch in 1949, with the signing of *Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance* (1950), there had been an upsurge in the imitation of the Soviet Union’s development model on the Chinese mainland. In this case, Soviet theories and experiences of city planning and design profoundly affected the later planning ideas of Beijing in the 1950s. In 1960, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union began to loosen; from 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution took place; Chinese Reform and Opening was initiated in 1978; China entered into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001; Beijing held the 29th Olympic Summer Games in 2008. These historical events and the cultural and political meanings behind them and the transformation of Beijing’s symbolic meanings are inextricably linked.

In comparison to the design of the city and architecture of the Chinese imperial period, the spatial arrangement and buildings of Beijing underwent a radical change after the 19th century. The Beijing’s enormous spatial transformation reveals how Chinese governments of different periods responded to and coped with Western forces and influences, and how they adopted various measures in efforts to recapture the city’s past glory and self-confidence. In the following section, this point will be analysed and explained. The influence of Western ideologies and technologies on social and political reform and the spatial arrangement and architectural style of Beijing, as well as the connection between urban spatial change and different political, cultural, ideological and technological conditions will be explored. The historical process of these changes can be divided into several different time periods. This section will focus on three particular historical eras — from the Late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China (1860-1948), from the foundation of the People’s Republic of China to the Cultural Revolution (1949-1976), and from the Reform and Opening Up (1978) to the present.

4.3.1 The Disintegration of the Late Qing Dynasty and the Beginning of the Republic of China (1840-1948)

In fact, Chinese cultural and national identity had been changing significantly throughout this period, as the then governments and social elites adjusted to new trends, such as the debate between Chinese superiority and Western barbarian inferiority in the mid-19th century, the emergence of Anti-Manchuism at the end of the 19th century, the dispute between Neo-Confucianism and the ‘total Westernisation’ in the early 20th century. Generally, by this period various Western, Japanese and German ideas and theories including Marxism were sown into China, took root and grew. Many Chinese intellectuals made an attempt to redefine China by thoroughly understanding foreign ideas and integrating them with Confucian traditions. As a result, the search for a new Chinese identity gave rise to several movements of reform and produced many different cultural and national identities over the period 1840-1948. This section will focus on the shift of cultural identity of China from imperial monarchy to republic because this particular transformation of cultural identity is vital to the development of modernisation and urbanisation of China and its effect on the reconstruction of Beijing is unprecedented. The building of cultural and national identity of the period after 1949 will be discussed later in this section.

According to traditional Chinese cosmology or worldview, the core concept concerns ‘the universal pre-eminence of the Son of Heaven (*t’ien-tzu*) who presided over *t’ien-hsia* ‘all under heaven’, a term that was often used to embrace the whole world including everything outside of China. For the Chinese, China was not viewed as a part of Asia, much less of the ‘Far East’; it was Chung-Kuo, or the Middle Kingdom, that embodied civilization itself’ (Hao and Wang, 1980: 143). As shown in Section 4.2, the Chinese emperor was worshipped as the representative of heaven on earth, the appointer of the Mandate of Heaven and the son of heaven. Beijing was the capital of the Chinese empire or everything under heaven, and the Purple Forbidden City, which was the centre of Beijing, was the highest centre of power of the Middle Kingdom

during both the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Manchus who ruled the Qing dynasty, were a non-Sinic people, and to pure Han people, they were 'foreigners'. However, as time went on, the Manchus were increasingly sinicised and steadily prolonged the Sinocentric worldview and cultural identity into the 1800s (Hao and Wang 1980). Hao and Wang argue that 'Sinocentric ideas originated from the fact that China's superior size, power, history and resources all made her the natural centre of the East Asian world' (1980: 143). Regarded as the ruling class of China, aristocrats, bureaucrats, and Confucian scholars were both the immediate beneficiaries and active facilitators of the Sinocentric cultural and national identity. They made up only a small and interconnected portion of the population but had a remarkable amount of control in all sectors of society and destiny of the ancient empire. Since the cultural and national identity was destined to benefit the ruling class, they tended to adopt the worldview to build up cities, govern the country, compile historical books, make laws, maintain a hierarchic Confucian society, and even direct China's foreign policy (the non-Chinese were called barbarians).

By the mid-19th century, Western 'barbarians' with advanced weapons and thoughts completely shattered the confidence of the Chinese people, gradually changing their world view and shaking Chinese faith in their own superiority. In order to adapt to the new situation, the embattled Chinese ruling class had to reevaluate the 'barbarian's' capability and identity and cope with the fact that the traditional world view could not account for the complete unidentified and turbulent situations. Accordingly, the governments of the time took a series of measures to reverse the adverse and intricate state of affairs, such as establishing a proto-foreign office in 1861, translating international laws in 1864, and setting up diplomatic missions abroad after 1876. Through these measures, by 1880 China had been incorporated into the Western nations' diplomatic system as an independent sovereign nation (Hsu 1980: 84). This means that 'In form, the Confucian universal empire (t'ien-hsia) had been metamorphosed into a nation-state (kuo-chia), but in spirit the old Middle Kingdom world view still lingered' (Hsu 1980: 70). As the idea of Sinocentrism progressively

lost its power and influence on the daily life of the Chinese people, a national consciousness principally manifested in the political and the economic areas was aroused in the 1860s and 70s; Meanwhile, Westerners were no longer assumed to be barbarians or animals by the Chinese government but to have equal status with the Chinese (Hao and Wang 1980: 189). At the same time, in the wake of the questioning of the old cultural and national identity, an identity crisis occurred. According to Meissner,

Each individual, group and nation always tries to redefine his/her/its identity when it is challenged, endangered or broken. This is understood as an identity crisis. The search for and redefinition of a new identity is a process of adaption, in which a new equilibrium is sought between traditional elements and new challenges. The identity crisis is solved as soon as a new equilibrium however temporary, is achieved (Meissner 2006: 41).

Therefore, when the traditional Chinese cultural and national identity was challenged, despised, and even destroyed by Western-style thoughts and armaments, open-minded and patriotic Chinese intellectuals started to find a new identity in every possible way to break the deadlock. The new identity was the republic.

During the 1911 Revolution known as the Xinhai Revolution, a series of events and movements spread across the Chinese mainland. The revolution ended in the demise of the Qing Empire and the birth of the republic. These changes in political institutions represented a metamorphosis from dynasty to republic and denoted that ‘during the 1900-13 periods Chinese society split and began to reunite along new lines’ (Gasster 1980: 464). Sun Zhongshan was the first president of the Republic of China and his Three People’s Principles were the guiding ideology of the *Xinhai* Revolution. The Three People’s Principles consist of *Minzu* (nationalism), *Minzhu* (democracy), and *Minsheng* (people’s livelihood and welfare). The revolutionary movement chiefly emphasised anti-Manchuism and republicanism. The goals of

republicanism, which was the spirit of the new identity, were tantamount to the second and third of the Three People's Principles, *Minzhu* (democracy) and *Minsheng* (people's livelihood) (Gasster, 1980: 493). Moreover, Sun Zhongshan was not an advocate of total Westernisation. Confucianism and Western political liberalism were blended in his Three People's Principles and he tried to preserve the superiority of traditional Chinese culture, in the meantime actively promoting the implementation of Western democratic institutions in central government (Meissner 2006: 6). Altogether, the concept of *Tianxia* (all under heaven) was replaced by *Guojia* (state), the theocracy and autocratic monarchy of the Chinese emperor was replaced by people's rights and livelihood, imperial consciousness was replaced by democratic and equal consciousness, and the identity of Beijing changed from being the centre of hierarchic Confucian society and Chinese empire to the one the capital of the republic and a civilian city. This transition of cultural and national identity was mainly responsible for sowing the seeds of the rebuilding of Beijing. The following paragraphs will explain how the transformation of national and cultural identity was mirrored in the change of Beijing's urban design and planning. It is mainly based on the study by Mingzheng Shi, *Rebuilding the Chinese capital: Beijing in the early twentieth century* (Cambridge, 1998).

Shi argues that Beijing's spatial modification in the early 20th century was associated with both internal and external factors. In the first place, the external factors refer to the build-up of the Beijing Legation Quarter and the introduction of Western technology. The Beijing Legation Quarter (*Dongjiao Minxiang*) was the area in the Inner City of Beijing, in which many foreign legations, companies, churches and banks were clustered since 1860 and Chinese residents living in the area were forced to relocate. The Western-style architectural complex and modern public facilities provided local residents a chance to catch a glimpse of Western urban life. The miniature Western urban landscape and municipal administrative mechanism epitomised the primary features of the Western municipal system. The establishment of the elected Administrative Commission, the broadening and tarmacking of the main

boulevards, improvements in urban infrastructure such as street lamps and telephones, and other public services such as education, police and fire, and public health services, were all western-inspired improvements. Shi believes that ‘Both the Administrative Commission and the wide range of urban services available in the Legation Quarter demonstrated by example to the Chinese municipal institutions in the greater Chinese city what a modern city should look like and how it should be run’ (Shi 1998: 65).

Western technology was regarded as another external factor. The foreign businessmen played a key role as mediators in the diffusion of advanced Western technology into China. This is due in part to the fact that in an effort to open up new markets in China, a growing number of foreign-owned but Beijing-based trade companies were created. The owners of these businesses and their employees made improvements to the poor urban amenities of Beijing through the use of new materials and technologies, thus creating a favourable and healthy living environment. Unintentionally, however, they had accelerated the inflow of Western technologies and ideas, and the utilisation of new technology in Beijing. Consequently, Western urban management experiences and technologies provide a necessary support for the transformation of Beijing’s urban space. In addition to these external factors, internal factors provide further impetus for the spatial transformation. These internal factors will be described in detail below.

As China entered the new era it became clear that – the republic, and the imperial urban planning and design of Beijing were irreconcilable with the economic, political and cultural requirements of a modern society and a modern city. Eventually, the imperial city was replaced by the civilian city through the break-up of the Qing Empire and the founding of the republic, by population growth, urban expansion, commercialisation, and the development of a pluralistic society. These are the main internal factors. The rebuilding of Beijing and the consequent remoulding of its identity were largely attributable to the interaction between the internal factors and the external factors. The internal factors were the essential driving force behind adopting the new technologies, promoting public works and services, demolishing the old city

walls, and ultimately redesigning Beijing. As with the Qing Empire (see Section 3.3), the urban space had again become an effective political and cultural tool in the republic era. The new breed of leaders used it to express and convey their political intent and shape the new cultural identity. As Shi argues, ‘The urban built environment (Beijing) increasingly reflected the representations of space by the powerful state, who saw urban space as something to be shaped for social purposes’ (1998: 66) and ‘As a product of the dominant forces of government, the urban landscape increasingly articulates the ideological intent of the republican state who planned and shaped the urban form in their modernist ways’ (1998: 78-79). The following paragraphs will cite a few examples based on Shi’s study outcome: the reconstruction of the city gates, the rise of the public park, and the demolition of the city walls.

Beijing Municipal Council (京都市政公所) was instituted in 1914 to conduct the rebuilding of the capital of the republic. Most members of the new municipal institutions, who received modern educations in China or Western countries, were more accepting of new ideas, able to manage a modern city and keen to modernise Beijing by profiting from Western technology. For these reasons, they paid more attention to modelling the urban reconstruction on Western urban experiences and civilian life rather than preserving traditional Chinese spatial structures. With the collapse of the Great Qing dynasty, the imperial spatial order had lost its original meanings. These undoubtedly splendid city gates, representing the highest pinnacle of imperial power, had lost their defensive function and had no practical application. They also caused an obstruction to traffic. As a result, many city gates were wholly or partly removed or redesigned to relieve traffic congestion. Western architects and engineers such as the German architect, Curt Rothkegel, and the English architect, L. Meyarva, were put in charge of building Western-style architecture and modernising the city. Some redesigned traditional city gates were decorated with Western-style railings and balconies, surrounded by trees and benches, and European-style fountains were placed around them. In a sense, these governmental measures had the effect of

creating an entirely new meaning for the city, as a venue for public entertainment and recreation (Shi 1998). Similarly, many imperial gardens, altars and temples, such as the Summer Palace and the Altar of Land and Grain, were converted into public parks. The Forbidden City was also transformed into a museum; members of the general public could now step into the former imperial palace.

In order to improve traffic flow and facilitate commerce and travel, a complex urban road network was constructed in Beijing. Many public streets and boulevards were built and used to divide and access the former imperial spaces, and many city walls had been torn down in the course of urban reconstruction. For example, three sides of the Imperial City wall had been pulled down in 1922 and a cross-shaped road network was developed to link the Inner and Outer Cities, which broke the previous spatial pattern. During the Manchu Qing Empire, city walls were utilised to divide Beijing into the Outer City, Inner City, Imperial city and the Forbidden City. Manchu aristocrats, bureaucrats, and merchants lived in the Inner City, whereas the common people and Han Chinese lived in the Outer City. The strict physical segregation of Beijing was meant to underscore the division of social classes and ethnical segregation. In the era of the republic, the city walls of Beijing lost their original cultural and imperial meanings and many actually disappeared.

In summary, Shi believes that

All these changes, based on a republican ideology and according to a modernist agenda, amounted to a substantial redesigning and the first major rebuilding of the imperial capital in hundreds years...Changes in political power relations invariably affect the transformation of the city form and the urban built environment (Shi 1998: 72, 78).

The design and spatial arrangement of Beijing for the duration of the Qing dynasty was used to deify the emperor and legitimise his supreme power. Conversely, the new

design and planning of Beijing during the republic of China aimed to legitimatise the common people's demands and improve people's quality of life by modernising the urban built environment. It is worth pointing out that although Western urban planning and administration ideas and modern infrastructure were adopted within some Chinese cities, traditional urban layouts of most Chinese cities were well-preserved: 'walled, intensive and compact in morphology' (Lu 2006: 12). However, the panorama of imperial Beijing was destroyed and reconstructed to promote the transition to a brand-new socialist capital city since the early 1950s, and thus the continuity of the traditional spatial arrangements was interrupted.

4.3.2 The Foundation of the People's Republic of China and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1949-1976)

The urban spatial configuration, architectural design and landscape architecture of Beijing and its identity as a capital city have been rapidly transformed again since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) – a socialist state – in 1949. In general, in a one-party state, according to Weatherley (2006), ideology as an effective instrument is used to establish political legitimacy for single-party rule and in order to consolidate leadership, the ruling party, like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), propagates its ideology to 'unify society's value system or world view' (Weatherley 2006: 10). As a socialist country, the official and prevailing ideological consensus of the PRC is Marxism, 'a scientific doctrine which prioritizes the interests of the proletariat or working class as the most progressive force in society and sets out the historical and social conditions that will lead inexorably towards a communist future' (Weatherley 2006: 10). The party and government gain their legitimacy from the masses by widely disseminating this Marxist ideology. As White (1993:149) states, in the long term the CCP plans to persuade its people to believe in the advancement of Marxism and integrate the masses into 'the ideological world of the political elite' (cited in Weatherley 2006: 11). In the short term, the CCP strives to develop and render a mutually beneficial cooperation between the party and the people: the party can better preserve political stability and lead the country as the Marxism ideology

‘provides it with the intellectual clarity and moral authority which in turn affects the ‘masses’ through good example and effective leadership’; the masses are more enthusiastic to accept core values of the CCP and support its leadership (ibid.). In doing so, a virtuous and upright image of the new ruler of China and a new sense of national identity are increasingly shaped. The new identity of China refers to an independent socialist state which gives priority to the interests of the proletariat or working class. As the capital of the PRC, Beijing is positioned as the political, cultural and economic centre of the new China and as a showplace or model city for socialism and communism.

However, in the early days of the PRP, the leaders were inexperienced in building up a socialist country and a socialist capital; so looking to the USSR and Moscow as an example, national industrialisation, planned economy, and urban modernisation were launched by the political elites and intellectuals in China (Han, Zhang and Gao 2009: 15-20). The PRC and the USSR concluded a treaty called *Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance* in 1950; this was the first bilateral treaty to be signed by China after the establishment of the PRC (Luan and Li 2004: 94-103). This treaty marked a new beginning of the USSR- China cooperation in political, military and economic arenas, reaching a peak in the mid-1950s, and the Soviet Union provided considerable economic, technical, political and military aids to the new Chinese regime (Luan and Li 2004: 94-103, Lüthi 2010: 27-28). Thus, from mid-1950 to mid-1953, the political institution and official ideology of China was rapidly and efficiently Stalinised (Lüthi 2010: 28). In fact, as early as the 1940s Stalinism had been steadily implanted in the minds of party members and Stalin’s thoughts and doctrines had a huge influence on the formation of belief and way of thinking of CCP members (Li 2010: 107-108).

Generally, Stalinism often refers to the totalitarian ideologies and political system that is characterised by ‘the victory of socialism in one country, class struggle, state ownership of industry, heavy industrialization, and forced collectivization’

(Li 2010: 108). Li (2010) identifies Stalinism as being composed of ‘Stalin’s own distinctive codification of Marx’s and Lenin’s ideas’ (2010: 109). The Soviet model, also called the Stalin model, is characterised by the socialist political, economic, cultural and diplomatic system developed by the USSR in the 1930s (Kong 2010: 153). With regard to urban planning and design, the Soviet model or Stalin plan refers mainly to a townscape as a means of expressing a progressive culture that consists of broad and neatly framed streets, symmetrical layout of buildings, and a vast array of parks and public gardens (Perchik 1936: 19, cited in Castillo 1997: 41). Stalinist architecture is associated with the socialist realism and neoclassicism (Wolfe 2011: 101). A group of wedding cake-shaped skyscrapers known as the Seven Sisters in Moscow are typical examples of Stalinist architecture (Wolfe 2011: 108). These buildings with multiple tiers and immense structures are characterised by ‘Dorian columns and towering heroic statuary cast in ferroconcrete’ (ibid.). There were attempts to present Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union, as a model for emulation by other member countries. As Richardson (2000) states:

Moscow was intended to be, and to a great extent did become the socialist metropolis, and its new wide streets, impressive government offices and apartment buildings, its monuments to revolutionary heroes, and its infrastructure improvements became models for other Soviet cities to follow (Richardson 2000: 293).

Unlike the countries of Eastern Europe that were compelled to follow the Soviet model, China vigorously chose to copy this model (Kong 2010: 155). An upsurge of learning from the Soviet Union was sweeping across China, Soviet urban planning thoughts and experiences as a part of the Soviet Model began to take root, and thus laid the theoretical and practical foundation for Chinese modern urban design and planning (Han, Zhang and Gao 2009: 15-20). On the eve of the founding of the People’s Republic China, the Beijing Urban Planning (*Jihua*) Commission was

constituted to set about dealing with the issues of Beijing urban design and planning and the Beijing municipal government invited many domestic intellectuals and Soviet experts to engage in the reconstruction of Beijing (Han, Zhang and Gao 2009: 15-16). Between 1950 and 1956, the Soviet Union dispatched nearly 6,000 experts from architecture, urban planning, transportation and economy to boost the socialist construction of China (ibid.). The 1935 Moscow Master Plan was introduced by a team of Soviet experts to China and with their help, Soviet-style urban design and planning was embodied in the rebuilding of Beijing, for example, the design of Tiananmen Square as a political and ceremonial centre in Beijing and Red Square in Moscow have some shared features (Hung 2006: 156, 159; Liang 2014: 46). As the CCP's leaders received assistance from the Soviet Union and launched an irresistible social revolution, Beijing's spaces, layout and architecture became tinged with strong elements of Soviet design and planning ideologies. The following paragraphs will present two concrete examples.

1) The remoulding of Beijing's urban space

In the early 1950s, under the guidance of Soviet experts, Beijing's municipal government began to remould the old city and rearrange urban road systems with the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square at the intersection of a north-south axis and an east-west axis (BDDPA 1993: 32-35). As shown in the master plan of the 1935 Moscow urban improvement scheme, 'virtually every structure outside the Kremlin walls would be razed and rebuilt' (Castillo 1997: 41). In the First Five-Year Plan of 1928-32, traditional buildings were generally considered to be incompatible with an industrialised socialist city and were razed or effectively reused for different purposes, for example, adaptations of cathedrals into museums, churches into workers' clubs (Castillo 1997:35). Similarly, many traditional and religious buildings and walls of Beijing were considered undeveloped, backward and superstitious and an impediment to industrialisation and modernisation, so were vacated or reused. For instance, Beijing's outer city walls were completely razed in the 1950s and the inner city walls

were removed due to the construction of tunnels for the Metro in 1965 (Wang 2003: 244). In his analysis of space and culture of Beijing, Liang points out that:

The city plan of imperial Beijing symbolized the mandate of heaven as a timeless ideology. This ideology was in crisis when Western and Japanese imperialism battered down “all Chinese walls” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was considered as feudalist ideology. Chinese revolution was the native response to the crisis of the old order; it embraced the narrative of progress and evolution. This narrative then informed the transformation of imperial Beijing into the socialist capital: old symbols of feudalism such as imperial walls and axis mundi must be destroyed and new socialist elements must be introduced (Liang 2014: 46).

Beijing’s urban layouts and road networks were remoulded by reference to the reconstruction of Moscow. According to the 1953 overall plan of Beijing made by reference to the Soviet model, Beijing was divided into different functional zones and blocks, for example, industrial zones were located in suburbs and residential zones were placed between newly-built industrial zones and Beijing’s old districts (Sit 1995: 92-97, cited in Lu 2006: 94). Moreover, the entire city was demarcated by greenbelts and was linked by a traffic network constituted by several ring roads and radial sub-arteries (ibid). As Lu (2006) stresses, modern China’s urban form ‘was derived from Western and Soviet repertoire’ (Lu 2006: 15). Hence, new Beijing’s spatial patterns were heavily influenced by the Soviet Union and were preliminarily shaped in the 1950s.

2) the Soviet Stalinist architecture of Beijing

Accompanying such significant changes in the spatial patterns of Beijing and the marginalisation of traditional architecture, a series of Stalinist buildings, squares, and monuments were built in the 1950s. In 1958, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the

founding of the PRC, Tiananmen Square was enlarged, an obelisk called Monument to the People's Heroes was erected and a range of national celebration projects, known as the Ten Grand Buildings were built (Zhu 2009: 94-95; Hung 2006: 149). Some representative Soviet elements can be found among the Ten Grand Buildings. For instance, the Soviet-style Beaux-Arts idea that was brought to China by Soviet planners and architects was adopted in the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of Chinese Revolutionary History. A spire crowned with a five-pointed star and symmetrical layout was used in the Military Museum of Chinese Revolution, and the design concept of the wedding cake shaped skyscraper can be found in the Cultural Palace of Nationalities (See Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 The Cultural Palace of Nationalities, built in 1959.

Source: Photographed by the author, 2011.

The two examples illustrate this point that the adoption of the principles of Soviet urban planning and architecture design was influential in forging a new urban space

and identity of Beijing in the early stages of urban reconstruction in Beijing in 1950s. Despite the fact that the Chinese leader, Mao, determined to end party relations with the Soviet Union in early 1966 (Lüthi 2010: 28), Soviet-style urban planning and some buildings with strong Soviet features were still used to consolidate the new identity of Beijing as the capital city of a socialist state. Along with the deterioration of the relationship between China and USSR, Mao launched the infamous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During the Cultural Revolution, not only was Beijing's urban construction terminated, urban planning institutions were also abolished and the overall plan for Beijing was discontinued (BDDPA 1993: 50). Mao's core thoughts were anti-urban and anti-architecture and he strived to remove the clear boundaries between urban and rural areas (Liang 2014: 48-49). On account of an influx of rural labours to cities, the population density of the old urban districts rapidly increased and large numbers of small factories and rough and ready shacks were shoddily built in residential areas (Liang 2014: 48). As a result, many cities were filled with overcrowded and shabby neighbourhoods, and Beijing is no exception. Besides, in the campaign of destroying The Four Olds launched by Red Guards in 1966, traditional artworks and heritages were considered as symbols of feudalism and superstition and were ruthlessly demolished (Kraus 2012: 44). A mass of traditional buildings, cultural relics, murals, steles, statues of the Buddha, paintings and string-bound books were seriously damaged or destroyed and almost all artists and writers were persecuted (Wang 2003: 325-335). Consequently, in 1958, 4922 of the 6843 officially specified valuable cultural relics and historic sites had been devastated since the start of the Cultural Revolution and the number of destroyed and lost steles, sculptures, paintings and book was immeasurable (Wang 2003: 333; Macfarquhar and Schoenhals 2006: 118-121). It is clear, therefore, that urban design, planning and architecture are political and cultural. In China's case, they have been used to express the communist goal and convince its people of the legitimacy of the ruling party, because the constructs in architecture and urban design of Beijing are based on the central ideologies of the CCP.

Since then, Beijing has become an increasingly incoherent and discordant mixture of different architectural forms and textures – dilapidated traditional Chinese timber buildings, stately Soviet-style neoclassical halls and high-rises and tumbledown shacks. Beijing’s old skyline defined by grey pagodas, walls, multi-coloured archways and towers have been replaced with a new one dominated by smoking factory chimneys and disparate enormous Soviet-style buildings with traditional Chinese roofs (Figure 4.5). After the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the adoption of the Reform and Opening Up policy in 1978, Beijing’s meaning and role changed accordingly. Subsequently, the change of Beijing’s identity triggered a further transformation in the urban landscape and contours of Beijing. The following section will explain all of these changes.

4.3.3 The Implementation of the Reform and Opening Up Policy (1978) and 21st-Century China

In 1978, the new Chinese leader, Deng , launched a series of economic reforms and carried out a more scientific, open and moderate political, economic and diplomatic policy, in place of Mao’s radical revolutionary movements and endless class struggles (Liang 2014:49). Under an imperative to motivate the stagnant urban economy, a series of new initiatives prompted a shift in development strategy ‘from overemphasized self-reliance to participation in the world market and from inward-looking, self-sufficient production to outward-looking trading in the context of globalization’ (Zhu 1999: 2). The creation of special economic zones in some coastal cities, the rise of private companies and the change from preferential development of heavy industry to production in line with the needs of the market accelerated China’s economic transformation from ‘a centrally planned economy’ to ‘a market economy with Chinese characteristics’ (Lu 2006: 143; Zhu 1999: 2). Also, it is important to note that the new reform policies were clearly not intended to wholly substitute the centrally planned economic system with a capitalist market economy, but to adjust the previous planning system, thus making it more decentralised and suitable for economic growth (Zhu 1999: 3). Instead of rooting out the present political system,

the reform was only employed as a tool to consolidate the party's leadership and legitimacy (ibid.). Moreover, by a gradual weakening of the ruthless centrally planned socialism and effective implementation of new reform policies, living standards of the individual have been raised, poverty has been alleviated, and there has been a rapid increase in skyscrapers, highways and other projects regarded as symbols of the modern city (Whyte 2012: 229). Specifically, these relatively liberal and open political, economic and cultural policies triggered new interests in urban space exploration of Chinese cities. During the post-socialist period, reconstructing the socialist cities into international metropolises is the main goal of long-term urban renewal programmes of many major cities (Liang 2014: 49). The rebuilding of the isolated and enclosed socialist urban space into a multinational and open space was intended to 'envision a radical break with the recent past' (ibid.). Many great cities undertook new urban renovation schemes, which included the construction of a Central Business District (CBD) that is generally characterised by avant-garde architecture and satellite towns; the cellular and linear patterns of urban expansion as 'the axis of urban development – a symbolic as well as pragmatic tool to unite the random patches of urban sprawl' continued to be used by municipal governments (Liang 2014: 50). As before, Beijing, because of political, cultural and historical considerations, has been renovated as a new model of a modern metropolis for other Chinese cities to follow.

As mentioned in the previous section, under the impact of the Soviet Union and Mao's leadership, Beijing had been rapidly and significantly industrialised. Since the 1978 Reform and Opening Up policy, Beijing entered a new period of development. According to the four instructions relating to capital construction put forward by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of CPC in 1980, Beijing is to be the political centre of China, but not necessarily the economic centre; Beijing will be built into an important 'showcase' to display the new China to the world, and into a great city with excellent public order, a clean environment, advanced technology, prosperous economy and culture (BDDPA 1993: 52). In the official approval documents of the

Overall Planning Scheme of Urban Construction of Beijing of 1983 and 1993, the State Council emphasised that Beijing is the political and cultural centre and the development programmes of Beijing need to move away from heavy industry in the future (Wang 2003: 69). Eventually, in 1999, Beijing's municipal government planned to move 134 industrial enterprises that produced environmental pollution out of Beijing in five years (ibid.). By enforcing these governmental decrees, numerous towering factory chimneys that used to dominate Beijing's cityscape were removed, and the old city's celebrated skyline and traditional axial lines were gradually restored and expanded. It is clear that there were attempts to present Beijing as a highly civilised, developed and flourishing metropolis. With Beijing's growing economy, increasing urbanisation and rising international status, exclusive natural and cultural attributes that contribute to boosting a city's global competitiveness became the priority of the construction of Beijing. This point is well illustrated by the goals of the Beijing City Master Plan (2004-2020): the city leaders have focused their efforts on building Beijing into a national capital, world city, historical and cultural city and hospitable city. To achieve these goals, the city authorities have made a city branding strategy to enhance Beijing's appeal as a tourist and investment destination and funded a number of projects for Beijing's reconstruction. The two most prominent projects are the conservation and restoration of Beijing's historic and cultural relics, as well as the construction of the CBD with cutting-edge high-rises.

As was explained in the previous section, in the 1950s, Mao was keen to create a Soviet-style Beijing and to raze the old walls and buildings to make way for new architecture, enormous squares and broad streets. For the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), most of the city walls that encircled and defended Beijing were removed and so the layers of the imperial urban patterns were demolished. The imperial culture and tradition had been completely discarded and had fallen into decay. By contrast, in the new period of Reform and Opening Up, China's new leaders began to enact laws to preserve the heritage of Beijing and other old cities, for example, the Protection Law of Cultural Relics of the PRC (1982), the Heritage Protection

Regulation of Beijing (1987), the Protection Plan for the 25 Historic and Cultural Protection Areas of Beijing (2001). An increasing number of historic buildings in Beijing have been repaired, several destroyed city gates and archways have been restored to their original style, and the urban landscape located along the traditional north-south central axis has been preserved. (See Figure 4.6)



Figure 4.6 A well-preserved ancient temple (left); an archway located at the central axis of Beijing was partially destroyed, but was rebuilt in 2008 (right).

Source: Photographed by the author, 2011.

The architectural complex of the Imperial City and the Forbidden City is the centre of the urban central axis extending 7.8 kilometres from north to south and has significant cultural meanings for Chinese people, so it has become the most important protection area and historic asset. Beijing's related authority, under the Protection Plan for the Imperial City of Beijing 2003, has provided statutory measures to protect the imperial

architectural complex as a whole. For instance, in order to preserve the wholeness and integrity of the old city of Beijing, the height of the buildings in the Imperial City and surrounding the Forbidden City must be less than 9 metres (BMCUP 2009).

According to the Protection Plan for the 25 Historic and Cultural Protection Areas of Beijing issued in 2001, the new 25 historic and cultural protection areas that cover a total area of 1038 hectares and a number of other old historic districts account for approximately 38 percent of the old city of Beijing (BMACH 2005). As a result, although a large number of cultural and historic relics vanished between 1950s-1970s, a great deal of effort has been devoted by the local government to restoring the original appearance of Beijing, aimed at enhancing Beijing's image as a cultural and historical city.

From Figure 4.7, we can see that skyscrapers have sprung up throughout Beijing's CBD. Many of them are designed by celebrated international architectural firms. The CCTV Headquarters, for example, was designed by Dutch architect, Rem Koolhaas of OMA (see right bottom image of Figure 4.7). The China World Trade Centre Tower III was developed by the American architectural firm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The Beijing *Yintai* Centre was the work of American architects, John Portman and Richards Mixon. In fact, an increasing number of skyscrapers inside Chinese cities' CBDs were or are being designed by world-renowned architects. As Liang (2015) notes, 'The great Chinese city is like an experimental ground where the world's leading architects can carry out utopian projects unlike anywhere else' (2015: 61). The CBD of Beijing that features many of China's instantly recognisable skyscrapers has grown into an international financial centre, attracting a host of transnational corporations. For instance, as of 2011, Beijing's CBD had attracted 169 international media institutions, 110 international organisations and Chambers of Commerce, 50 regional headquarters of top international corporations, 160 of the Fortune Global 500, 252 international financial institutions, as well as having hosted significant numbers of international meetings and commercial exhibitions (BCBD 2011). Consequently, Beijing's CBD has become one of the most popular trade and investment destinations

in the world. Modern and postmodern skyscraper complexes, creating Beijing's new skyline, have become the iconic sites of the modernised and internationalised Beijing. The new skyline is used, together with the traditional skyline marked by the traditional yellow and grey roofs, to represent Beijing's new identity – a world-renowned, historical and cultural city.



Figure 4.7 The skyscrapers of the CBD in Beijing.

Source: Photographed by the author, 2011.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has explored the transformations in Beijing's identity and its urban form and space from imperial China to the present. In the first place, it has investigated

how imperial China's rulers attempted to implement and accomplish their political strategies and create and reinforce their cultural identities through urban space as a symbolic representative of social and cultural values. The ways in which Beijing was purposefully designed and planned to follow traditional philosophical thoughts and ritual systems, convey political intentions, and maintain the established social order, have been explained. And then the blend between Western ideologies, urban experiences, and technologies and Chinese traditional values and beliefs, which has been the central factor in reconfiguring and rebuilding Beijing after 1912, has been investigated.

In short, from 1840 (the First Opium War) to the present, Beijing was constantly faced with internal (local) and external (global/Western) powers that have impacted on the dynamics of Beijing's identity and its urban space. Internal turmoil and external threat spurred Chinese rulers at different times to re-evaluate themselves and adopt a series of new principles and policies in economy, culture, military, technology, and diplomacy, including urban planning and design. Hence, the meanings of Beijing vary in accordance with the changes in its political and social structures. There have been five phases in Beijing's symbolic meaning: a well planned imperial city; a metropolis with a republican spirit; a totally industrialised but relatively isolated capital of a socialist country; an open and modernised Chinese-style socialist city; and a cosmopolitan city. Urban design and planning has played a decisive role in the creation and consolidation of these meanings. As argued in Section 3.3.2 Graphic Design in Urban Design, urban design and planning is often used in conjunction with graphic wayfinding design, to construct a city's meaning and identity, and can therefore reflect internal (local) political power relations and its connections with external (global) forces. Accordingly, Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems have been applied in response to changes in Beijing's meaning. The subsequent discussion attempts to make use of these relevant concepts (Chapter 3) and contexts (Chapter 4) to explain how issues of the local and the global are found in practice and in the specific case of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems and why Beijing's wayfinding

signage looks the way it does. The development of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems can be divided into six main phases: First Phase 1840-1912, Second Phase 1912-1949, Third Phase 1949-1964, Fourth Phase 1964-1978, Fifth Phase 1978-2001 and Sixth Phase 2001 to present. The analyses of the functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems in these six phases will be detailed in the following four chapters.

Chapter 5 First Phase 1840 to 1912 – *Baojia* System

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 will deal initially with the exclusive function of the paper doorplates in the imperial period of China, explaining the nature of the doorplate system that is distinct from the modern door number as a part of the graphic wayfinding system. It will show that the doorplates of the *Baojia* system were full of local features, unique to the Chinese imperial culture. The doorplate system was employed in combination with the imperial urban layout to control, supervise and manage the population. The chapter will then explore how traditional paper doorplates were partially replaced by Western-style oval metal doorplates. Through an exploration of the replacement of Beijing's doorplates, the tension between the local (imperial culture) and the global (Western culture) will be discussed. It will be argued that political weakness and military impotence had put local powers at a competitive disadvantage and the local culture was profoundly permeated and affected by Western powers. Moreover, in the face of an unprecedented challenge that destabilised the old value system and social order before the creation of a new one, the local government responded passively to the conflict between itself and the West by superficially imitating its Western counterparts and rigidly maintaining the old system. In this case, the local is being dominated by the global. This point of view will be further exemplified by analysing the graphic visual elements of the paper and oval metal doorplates of Beijing.

5.2 *Baojia* System – Doorplates Registry

In order to better understand the functions of the paper doorplates in imperial China, it is important to distinguish the doorplates of the *Baojia* system from the modern doorplates or door numbers in urban graphic wayfinding systems. The central imperial government of China's imperial age did not need to build an easy-to-understand, systematic and functional graphic wayfinding system in their cities, and the doorplate of the time served as a mere instrument of managing,

monitoring and controlling urban and rural dwellers rather than as a part of urban graphic wayfinding systems. For this reason, these residential doorplates are completely different from modern or Western doorplates, both formally and functionally. Therefore, no obvious link or communication between the local and the global is found in the local paper doorplate. Only with the gradual replacement of the *Baojia* system and paper doorplates by the Western police system and metal doorplates and road signs around 1908, did the collision between China, as represented by Beijing, and the West, the local and the global, become visible on the new metal doorplates of Beijing.

The section has been divided into two parts. In the first part, I argue that there was not a complete, designed and comprehensive graphic urban wayfinding system in Chinese cities of the imperial time and I point out there are two main reasons for this. The point in arguing that the paper doorplates should not be regarded as a part of urban graphic wayfinding systems is to emphasise that the most important function of the doorplate system in imperial China was to restrict its citizens from travelling and to supervise their behaviour. In the second part, I will argue that the paper doorplates are a key part of the *Baojia* system (a kind of population administration system), rather than a series of number signs by which people would be guided along their routes towards their destinations. It will highlight that the paper doorplates were a symbol of strict imperial social order and impenetrable class hierarchy. Their three main functions will be explained: household registration certificate, monitoring and policing tool and indoctrination and admonition of the masses. The replacement of the paper doorplates by the Western-style doorplates and the weakening of its three traditional functions indicate one aspect of the relationship between the local and the global, namely, how the local is penetrated, influenced and dominated by the global.

5.2.1 'Wayfinding' in Ancient China

According to Hongying Dai's *Jiu Zhongguo Zhian Fagui Xuanbian* (1985) (the selected public security laws and regulations of old China), before the implementation

of the late Qing reform (1901-1911), there were no complete or proper graphic urban wayfinding devices: there were no city maps, road signs, door or street numbers in Beijing. On the basis of my own analysis, two reasons may explain why in Chinese imperial time there were no appropriate graphic wayfinding devices in this oriental empire with such a large population.

The first reason lies in the strict hierarchical nature of the society and the severe government population management measures. Imperial Chinese society was extremely stratified in terms of wealth, education, occupation and lineage. In the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) for example, Rankin, Fairbank and Feuerwerker (1986: 30) point out that the hierarchical social class structure could also be divided into ‘a flexible two-tier structure: a small, educated, wealthy elite stratum or ruling class (about 5 per cent of the population) and the vast majority who mainly did manual labour either on the land or in the cities’. Admittedly, these lower class people’s social status – at the bottom of the ancient Chinese social stratification system – determined that they had very little or almost no power and control over their own lives. In contrast, the upper class people or the Chinese ruling elites were entitled to enjoy ‘a concentration of political power (office holding), economic power (wealth), social power (prestige), and what might be called cultural power (education)...’ (Naquin and Rawski 1987: 114).

The lower classes had no option but to endeavour to adapt to the harsh living conditions and obey the laws and the inequitable social order, which gave priority to the upper classes’ interests over the common good. For maintaining and perpetuating the hierarchical and ritual social structure, the privileged classes resorted to every possible means to legitimise their position, and exploit and manage all available manpower and material resources. Urban planning and architecture design were one of these means. As was explained in Chapter 4, as the empire’s capital, Beijing was purposefully designed and planned to follow traditional philosophical thoughts and ritual systems, convey political and cultural intentions, and keep the established social

order. The resplendent and magnificent royal architectural complex and gardens, the imposing aristocratic and bureaucratic mansions, the grey, dull residential buildings and the dilapidated huts of the slums systematically and hierarchically constituted ancient Beijing's urban space. Not only could the ordinary people not enter the royal forbidden zones without permission, but their activities were strictly monitored and normally restricted to the specified residential areas which were called *Lifang* (里坊).

As far back as the Western Zhou dynasty(1046—77), the *Lifang* system was seen as the basic unit of ancient Chinese residential zones, the city planning system, and the urban administration system as well as the product of ancient Chinese etiquette and laws (Liu, Zhou and Chen 2007: 171; Tan and Zhang 2006 : 51; Wang 2007:133-135). According to Qi (2003: 63), in the urban *Lifang* system, the entire city was laid out on a neat grid pattern and was divided by regular and straight avenues into several square or rectangular blocks, each square block was enclosed by massive walls and four or eight gates (See Figure 5.1); most of these square spaces were used as residential areas called *Li* (里) or *Fang* (坊), and some of them were reserved for the market complex named *Shi* (市). There was a cross street in each *Fang* and residential houses were built on both sides of the street, meanwhile special administrative officials and soldiers who were responsible for preserving public order and enforcing law were quartered in every *Fang* (Qi 2003: 63). A wide variety of shops were distributed in the two *Shi* (market) and most business activities were confined to *Shi* (He 1996: 488). Additionally, during the Tang dynasty (618-907), drums were beaten at sunrise every morning and sunset every evening, when the gates of *Fang* or *Shi* were about to open or close; the government imposed a strict night-time curfew; citizens and officials who disregarded this decree would be sentenced to severe punishment (Qi 2003: 65; Li 2007: 133).



Figure 5.1 The urban plan of Changan in the Sui (581-618) and the Tang (618-907) dynasties.

Source: He 1996: 491.

Under the *Lifang* system, ancient Chinese cities completely lacked public places, because the residents' daily life and social activities were confined to these enclosed spaces (Liu, Zhou and Chen, 2007: 173-4). In brief, to further enhance control over citizens' behaviour and ideologies and to preserve the hierarchical social class structure, the imperial Chinese rulers developed a set of different levels of rigid population management such as the *Lifang* system. In this system, the ordinary people were only able to go to a few designated public places (such as markets and temples) at a given time (a strict curfew), which might reduce the demand for a systematic and thorough graphic wayfinding system of the entire city. Furthermore, during the construction and development of an imperial capital city, the emperor and aristocrats

simply took into consideration their own needs instead of public services. To put it bluntly, even if the citizens needed smooth and safe roads, adequate public facilities and effective urban graphic wayfinding systems, the rulers utterly disregarded their demands.

Along with the economic boom and the expansion of the urban population, the enclosed *Lifang* system began to collapse in the middle to late Tang dynasty (618-907) and finally was replaced by a new urban management system – *Xiangfang* (厢坊) and *Baojia* (保甲) systems in the mid Song dynasty (960-1279) (Tan and Zhang 2006: 51; Zheng and Zhou 2011: 115-6; Li 2007: 132-138). The most distinct feature of this new population management system was that a large proportion of the walls of *Fang* and *Shi* were pulled down, so almost all enclosed living spaces were destroyed; the trading and commercial activities were no longer restricted to *Shi*, but were spread over the whole city (Li 2007: 134-138; Li 2005, 118-120). The new urban construction and rules allowed greater freedom of movement for the common people. Nevertheless, the shift from the enclosed *Lifang* system to the *Xiangfang* system was only about a change in the external form – the walls and gates of *Fang* and *Shi*, rather than an alteration in the essence of the autocratic monarchy (Liu, Zhou and Chen 2007: 174). The *Lifang* system and its variants – *Xiangfang* system and *Baojia* system, as stringent population management regulations which were made by exploiting classes to control their subjects, continued down to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Qing dynasty (1644-1912), and even the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949) (Wang 2002: 51-53). Basically, even after the actual walls and gates were torn down, the mass of people were still kept under close governmental surveillance and control. The imperial Chinese political, social and cultural systems were to promote the private material interests of the ruling class, not the public interests and social needs. Against such a backdrop, considered and clear graphic wayfinding systems could neither be created nor popularised.

The second reason why there were no proper graphic urban wayfinding devices in

imperial China is that a substantial number of city gates, inscribed horizontal boards fastened to or carved on the gates of *Fang* or *Shi*, and the special names of streets and alleys already met the local residents' basic daily needs of finding their way home or locating themselves within the urban space and there was no need for anything else. To understand this, we must consider how the local inhabitants created their own city images by using these environmental clues in the complete absence of a comprehensive graphic urban wayfinding system. It must be acknowledged that the references for navigation or the environmental mental image may vary considerably between inhabitants. Thus, this section will focus on these physical clues used by the majority group instead of exploring individual differences. These clues to orientation can be broadly classified into two types: the imperial urban spatial arrangement and the special names of the streets or alleys, and landmarks. These two kinds of environmental references will be explained in the following paragraphs.

1) **The imperial urban spatial arrangement and the special names of the streets or alleys**

The arrangement of urban space was an effective way of identifying and segregating different social classes in the imperial period of China. As a result of this, the imperial capital city was partitioned into different zones in terms of different social classes and functions. Accordingly, these different zones were potential environmental references for local residents. There are two major principles of division of the urban space in imperial China. The first is class. In Changan of the Western Han (206 BC-9AD), for instance, the mansions of the nobles were mostly situated in northern and central Changan, while the commoners' homes were placed in the northeast corner. There was a huge gap between different classes of society both economically or geographically. The central government and its subordinate departments enacted and enforced laws to ensure strict observance of urban spatial separation between the different social classes; due to fear of stern legal punishment, most ordinary residents organised their lives within the spatial hierarchical system. The second principle is occupation. In some cases a group of people with similar jobs lived in the same *Fang*

(residential area) and these *Fang* were named after the inhabitants' occupations. Such as, *Tongshang* (通商, the literal meaning is commercial intercourse) *Fang* and *Dahuo* (达货, it literally means the arrival of the goods) *Fang* were where most residents were artisans, merchants, craftsmen, and butchers; the residents who lived in *Tiaoyin* (调音, tone tuning) *Fang* and *Yuelu* (乐律, musical temperament) *Fang*, were engaged in diverse occupations related to music (Zheng and Yang 2004: 85). From this we can deduce that local residents or visitors would have been familiar with the spatial order and functional division and they were capable of drawing a rough mental map, with which they could find their way around. Where they were allowed to go, where they were forbidden to enter, where they could purchase raw materials used in production, or where they could find their friends who were butchers or musicians.

Indeed, the combination of names of districts, streets, or alleys and occupations, industries, the major functions of different administrative areas, or location seemed to significantly attract the locals' or strangers' attention. Particularly after the walls of the basic units of ancient cities, *Fang* or *Shi* were torn down, commercial streets or alleys quickly mushroomed and acted as multiple new commercial centres spreading through all the residential areas. According to the record of Zhu Yixin's *Jingshi Fangxiang Zhigao* (the capital streets and alleys chronicle) of the Qing dynasty (1982), there were approximately 2077 streets and alleys, including 978 alleys in Beijing; many streets or alleys were named after their businesses, their locations, local features, landmarks or famous people. Such as, Donganmen Dajie (东安门大街, Dongan gate street) indicated that the Dongan city gate was located in this street. Guanglushihou Donghuamenwai Beichangjie (光禄寺后东华门外北长街 literally means Guanglu temple rear Donghua gate outside north long street) meant that this street was located at the back of Guanglu temple and outside the Donghua gate, and was a north-south oriented street. Huoyaoju Hutong (火药局胡同 gunpowder bureau alley), as its name implies, an arsenal was built in this alley. Maiyangrou Hutong (卖羊肉胡同 it literally means selling lambs) was the lamb market. Similarly, Yangmao Hutong (羊毛

胡同, wool alley), Maxian Hutong (麻线胡同, twine alley), Shoupa Hutong (手帕胡同, handkerchief alley) are good examples of how the names of alleys were integrated with their businesses. So in a sense, the street names are themselves wayfinding systems.

In studying the principles of spatial division of the Chinese imperial capital city and the methods in naming *Fang*, streets or alleys, it became apparent that the vast majority of local residents and some out-of-town visitors could have a clear mental map of the capital city, which might be able to meet their needs for their daily journeys.

2) Landmarks

Kevin Lynch notes that,

Landmarks, the point references considered to be external to the observer, are simple physical elements which may vary widely in scale. There seemed to be a tendency for those more familiar with a city to rely increasingly on systems of landmarks for their guides – to enjoy uniqueness and specialization, in place of the continuities used earlier. Since the use of landmarks involves the singling out of one element from a host of possibilities, the key physical characteristic of this class is unique or memorable in the context...Some landmarks are distant ones, typically seen from many angles and distances, over the tops of smaller elements, and used as radial references...Other landmarks are primarily local, being visible only in restricted localities and from certain approaches.

(Lynch 1960: 48, 78)

This is a helpful definition in that it stresses certain fundamental characteristics of a landmark. These key characteristics include a variety of external physical components of a city and these physical elements are easily identifiable and memorable. They are

much higher and bigger than their immediate surroundings as ‘radical references’ or they are local environmental clues that have obvious features and contrast with their background. Lynch also suggests that as one becomes more and more familiar with a city, one is more likely to depend on various landmarks for orientation. These characteristics of landmarks presented by Lynch can not only be employed to investigate the structure of modern urban wayfinding systems but also identify the urban landmarks of China’s imperial period.

In today’s modern cities, the efficiency of graphic wayfinding systems can be maximised by the visualisation of physical landmarks in these systems. In other words, the integration of landmarks into wayfinding systems can make some parts of the city more observable. In these Chinese cities of the imperial period, landmarks were even more crucial in creating a legible urban image in the absence of a complete urban graphic wayfinding system. A few examples of landmarks including city gates, arches, and pagodas that might have been used by the residents of the capital city will be presented in the following paragraphs.



Figure 5.2 The Guozijian (国子监) arch of Beijing.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

In Beijing during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and other Chinese capital cities of different dynasties, city gates, arches (*Paifang*), thoroughfares, streets and alleys all connected different parts of a city. Due to the large quantity and great size of these city gates and arches, they were distinct landmarks that were helpful to the vast majority of local residents for their daily life. The Chinese style arch, *Paifang*, have many different forms and functions and were made from various materials, such as wood, bricks, stones, white marble or coloured glazes. The style as shown in Figure 5.2 is typical of the Qing dynasty, which denoted the entrance of a *Fang* or a street. There are other special *Paifang* that were the gates or markers of temples, gardens, mausoleums, bridges or ferry crossings. Generally, a *Paifang* consists of two red wooden pillars on stone bases and a horizontal beam decorated with multi-tiered glazed roofs and carvings, forming a frame and crossing the street. The name of the arch – *Guozijian* 国子监 (Figure 5.2) was written on the inscribed board in Chinese calligraphy and fastened to the middle of the arch. The arch was higher than adjacent buildings and more colourful than the invariably grey dwellings. This is, in fact, a relatively simple and common form of *Paifang* in Beijing of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Some large *Paifang* have finer, more elaborate and complex structures with more pillars, gates and roofs. They were larger and more magnificent and were located in the main streets of Beijing. Not only were they used as landmarks but they were also treated as ‘graphic traffic signs’, as the inscribed board engraved with their special names could identify the urban architecture, bridges, streets and districts. Therefore, it is conceivable that ancient Chinese people employed the *Fang* gates and subsequent *Paifang* as environmental references, to and from which they travelled. Even now, both inside and outside China, the *Paifang* are commonly utilised as indications of area boundaries of a city. For instance, the *Paifang* is a popular architectural form in Chinatowns around the world. The Chinese style arch with its unique oriental appearance is in marked contrast to the surrounding European streetscape, which endows it with the characteristics of a typical urban landmark – ‘uniqueness and specialization’ (Lynch 1960: 78) (See Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3 The *Paifang* of Chinatown in the Soho area of London.

Source: photographed by the author, 2012.

The city gates played the same role as the *Paifang*. The city walls of Beijing of the Ming and Qing dynasties contained sixteen city gates, including nine gates of the Inner city and seven gates of the Outer city. The city gates are of different sizes and heights, but they are all massive and highly decorated. The Zhengyang gate shown in Figure 5.4 is the biggest city gate; it is 43m high, 41m wide and 21m deep (Zhang

2009: 83-85). The double-eave hip-and-gable roof covered with grey tiles and green glazed edging tiles, scarlet walls, perpendicular rectangular board inscribed with the gate's name and its immense size make it a particularly eye-catching landmark. As seen from the above analysis, the *Paifang* and city gates were the sites where people and goods moved in and out of the city as well as being easily identifiable landmarks, which facilitated the production of part of a city's image. As a result, it is possible to hypothesise that on the basis of a rules-based urban spatial order, unique names of streets and alleys, and abundant landmarks, ancient Chinese people could meet their basic needs of navigation in their day-to-day life without a consistent graphic wayfinding system.

In conclusion, this section has given an account of and the reasons why the capital cities had no complete, usable and convenient graphic visual wayfinding systems for the ordinary residents throughout most of the imperial time. There were two reasons. One is that lower class people's activities were greatly restricted to specific spaces and times, and the lack of vibrant public spaces and the government's indifferent attitude toward public affairs and environment significantly reduced the need for people to travel. This directly created unfavourable conditions for the production of effective and comprehensive graphic urban wayfinding systems. The other reason is that the readily understandable administrative division, prominent city gates and *Paifang*, and other urban details enabled local residents to move easily in certain restricted spaces. Accordingly the residents of imperial Chinese cities might not have been very keen to create systematic graphic wayfinding devices or even pay little attention to this subject.



Figure 5.4 The Zhengyang (正阳) gate of Beijing.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

So far this chapter has focussed on the discussion that: there were no graphic wayfinding devices or complete urban navigation systems in the cities before the late Qing dynasty (1644-1912). These urban inhabitants could have had little sense of

what a graphic wayfinding system might mean. However, such explanations seems to have overlooked the fact that the ‘doorplates’ were widely utilised and had been posted on the doors of all households since the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). This then raise questions about the ‘doorplates’: Was the doorplate a kind of graphic wayfinding device in imperial China? If not, what were the doorplate’s functions and roles? Can they reflect the interaction between the local and the global? The following section will attempt to answer these questions.

5.2.2 Doorplates in the *Baojia* System

The functions and forms of the earliest doorplates of China are different from modern door numbers. What exactly is the difference? What kind of local characteristics and values do the doorplates exhibit? This section seeks to answer this question by analysing the *Baojia* system and its relationship with doorplates.

According to the *Dictionary of Chinese Ancient Life*, the definition of the *Baojia* (保甲) system is:

It was a rural grass-roots community administrative system of civil and social control and law enforcement, and was created by Wang Anshi (王安石, 1021-1086) during the Xining (熙宁) period (1068-1077) of the Northern Song. The basic unit of the *Baojia* system was the *bao* (保), which included ten families. One of male members of the ten families was selected as the *baozhang* (保长) – the head of the *bao*. The *dabao* (large *bao* 大保) consisted of fifty families. Likewise one person was chosen as the *dabaozhang* (大保长) – the head of the *dabao*. Each ten *dabao* composed a *dubao* (都保). The *dubaozheng* (都保正) and the *fudubaozheng* (副都保正) – the head and the assistant head, were selected from the constituent members of the *bao*. The structure and nomenclature of the *Baojia* system changed somewhat over time. In the Qing dynasty, for example, the *Baojia* system had reached its mature form and been adopted at the rural and urban levels, ten households

constituted a *Pai* (牌), ten *Pai* constituted a *Jia* (甲), and ten *Jia* formed a *Bao*. The information about a household (including numbers, names, ages, occupation, etc.) and its assets (land ownership and livestock) were to be listed in *Menpai* (doorplate 门牌) and *Baojiabe* (household register 保甲簿). Under the *Baojia* system, the majority of people were involved in mutual aid and mutual supervision and surveillance. The *Baojia* system in particular was employed in conscription, tax collection, forced labour, policing, census, and local militia organisation.

(He, Li and Hu 2003: 52-53, 84-85, my own translation)

The definition of *Menpai* (doorplate 门牌) is:

This can be illustrated by the doorplate of the Qing dynasty. During the reign of Qinglong Emperor (1735-1796), whether in the rural or urban areas, all residents were organised by the *Baojia* system. Doorplates and household registers were the basic and key components of the *Baojia* system. The printed paper doorplates (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6) were issued to every household, posted on the main gate of each household and usually contained the name of the head of a household, his occupation, the number of able-bodied males, the number of other family members (women, children, relatives and servants), and the amount of landholdings, and so on. The headmen of *Pai*, *Jia* and *Bao* could closely and continuously monitor residents by studying their doorplates and recording their daily movements, and reported the inspection results to the local authority at the end of each month.

(He, Li and Hu 2003: 52-53, 84-85, my own translation)

From the above two definitions, we can see clearly that the *Baojia* system is the local community administrative system, which is a basic and useful instrument for

enforcing law, preserving grassroots social security and allocating manpower, material and financial resources. This system was initially implemented only in rural areas; not until the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) was the *Baojia* system used to administer the urban population. Thus, eventually all rural and urban residents were grouped into a hierarchically administrative system to serve the political, military and economic aims of the state. With respect to the primary duties of the leaders of this administrative system, Heijdra (1998: 462) considered that the community leaders in the Ming dynasty ‘served one year out of every ten years...During his year on duty, his principal function was to supervise the collection of the annual summer and autumn tax quotas...The other formal responsibilities of the community head (*li-chang*) included the maintenance of local order, the arbitration of disputes, and the maintenance and compilation of the Yellow Registers.’ The Yellow Registers refers to the household registers, although Heijdra has not mentioned the other key component of the *Baojia* system – the doorplates, in fact distributing, maintaining and scrutinising the doorplates were duties of these *li-chang* as well. The *Baojia* system had contributed to keeping track of every household and acted as a way of ruling over the ordinary people throughout the imperial times. Because the household registers and paper doorplates served as main evidences for the investigation and inspection of most residents, they were the fundamental devices that guaranteed the effectiveness of the *Baojia* system. Through the analysis of the content of the *Baojia* system and the duties of the community leaders, it reveals to us the unique position of the paper doorplates in the population managerial system and its strong local cultural features. There is no awareness of any other part of the world and no global influence here. This contributes to the almost hermetic sealing off of China from the rest of the world.

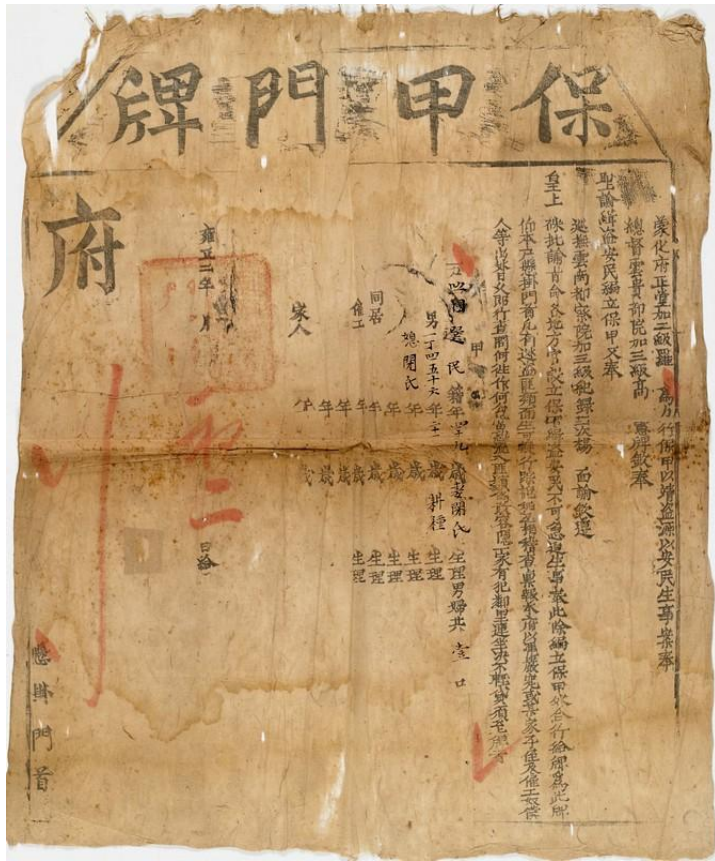


Figure 5.5 Doorplate of the second year of the reign of Yongzheng Emperor (1724).

Source: National Tsing Hua University Library – Rubin Yang’s personal collection

http://www.lib.nthu.edu.tw/guide/exhibits_and_events/cultural%20relics/content.htm

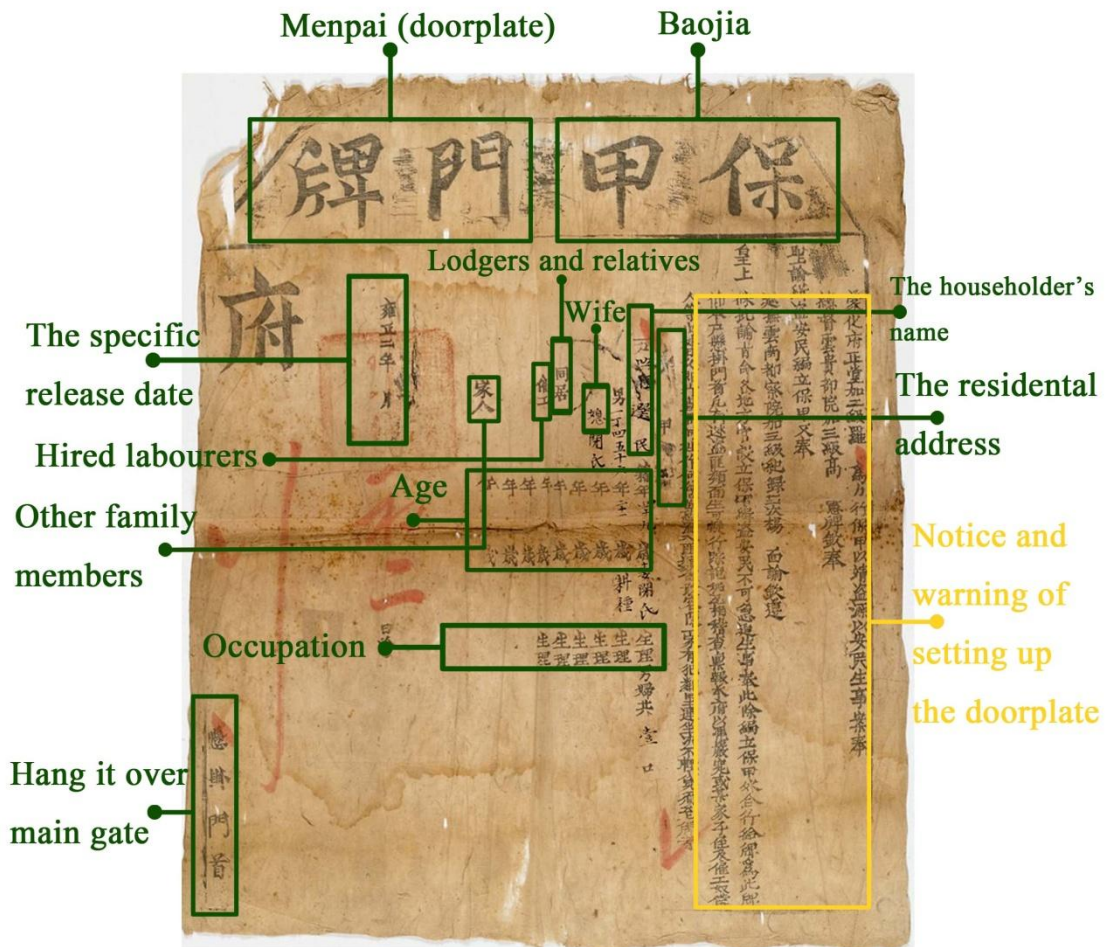


Figure 5.6 Doorplate of the second year of the reign of Yongzheng Emperor (1724), my translation.

Source: National Tsing Hua University Library – Rubin Yang’s personal collection
http://www.lib.nthu.edu.tw/guide/exhibits_and_events/cultural%20relics/content.htm

Based on the journal paper, *Control of Grass-roots Society with Menpai Baojia System in the Qing Dynasty: A Study Based on the Original Qing Doorplates*, written by Yan (2013), and the books, Wen Juntian’s *Zhongguo Baojia Zhidu* (China’s *Baojia* System) originally published 1933 and Huang Liuhong’s (1694) *Fuhui Quanshu* (福惠全书), I will list three main and distinctive functions of the doorplates in the *Baojia* system.

1. The household registration certificate

By observing and comparing the doorplates of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) and the

Republic of China (1912-1949) and studying literature, such as Wen Juntian's *Zhongguo Baojia Zhidu*, it is easy to see that these doorplates vary slightly in content, format, size and appearance. Yet the key constituent part of the paper doorplate – the householder's personal information remained largely unchanged. The most elementary part of the personal information as shown in Figure 5.6 includes the householder's name, address, age, occupation, details of his parents, spouse, children, relatives, servants, hired labourers, birth, death, marriage, divorce and movement. Some special doorplates contain more private information including a householder's appearance features, such as a tall man with beard, disability, scholarly achievement, criminal history, the amount of landholdings and livestock. An occupant's personal information recorded in the paper doorplate and household register definitively identified an individual as a legal permanent inhabitant of a particular region, who had certain rights and obligations. At the same time, it served as the basis for arbitration of property inheritance, tax revenue, conscription and forced labour. By the issuance of doorplates, the government identified and classified different groups of people in terms of their social status and intended to affect their perception and recognition of their self-images; a resident's occupation, which was a required field in the doorplate, was important proof for the government in recognising his social class (Yan 2013: 136). Hence, it is evident that the doorplate was like the identification card of every household as it was used as a tool of census and household registration rather than graphic reference for wayfinding.

2. The monitoring and policing tool

Wen Juntian (1933: 307) notes that the aims of organising people under the *Baojia* system were to keep track of all residents' movements, and inspect and defend against escapees, bandits, robbers and potential criminals. The doorplate was an integral part of the *Baojia* system, not least because the paper doorplate displayed a householder's detailed personal information, but also because other important related information was also made easily accessible to the public. The other related information usually included the names of a householder's next door neighbours, the names of lodgers,

the names of a householder's paternal and maternal relatives living in the same household (See Figure 5.7). Additionally, there are some doorplates shown in Figure 5.8 that show the names of the leaders of three levels of administrative subdivisions (*Pai*, *Jia*, and *Bao*). This clear and detailed demographic information, which was written on the paper doorplates, ensured the successful implementation of the *Baojia* system and laid the foundation for subsequent routine inspection and investigation of all households.

Huang Liuhong's (1694: 245) *Fuhui Quanshu* contains an exhaustive account of what characteristics and forms these doorplates of the Qing dynasty have and how the community leaders used them in daily inspection and supervision. He records that:

In accordance with the relevant governmental provisions, each head of the *Pai* comprising ten families was responsible for ensuring proper maintenance and accuracy of a duplicate of the household register for regular inspection, which carefully recorded the number of members of every family. The head of the *Pai* checked off the number of each family by comparing the household register with the doorplate each sunset and inquired about the ten families under his jurisdiction, such as whether the householder would go out? Are there any stranger(s) or lodger(s) staying overnight? If stranger(s) have stayed in a household for several nights or has the household had frequent contact with stranger(s) recently? The head had the power to interrogate the stranger(s), the members of the household and their neighbours. The head could round up and detain those suspicious strangers who could not justify themselves and report it to his superior.

(cited in Yan 2013: 134, my own translation)

On the basis of the description of daily inspection above, it is hardly surprising that the doorplate served as a tool to limit and monitor residents' movements and control crime. Besides the householders' personal information, their neighbours', relatives',

visitors' and lodgers' information or the information of community leaders recorded on the paper doorplate were to enable mutual surveillance and provide reference for enforcing collective punishment. To avoid this collective punishment, mutual responsibility, surveillance, suspicion and denunciation became necessary actions and duties between neighbours, relatives and officials; an informer would be rewarded appropriately, while a person withholding information or harbouring criminals would be severely penalised (Zhang and Deng 2003: 99-112). Thus, the mutual monitoring, cooperation and shared responsibility between all permanent residents were further strengthened by clearly recording nearly all the related people's names on the special doorplate. The efficiency of monitoring people in the *Baojia* system was crucially determined by the authenticity, transparency and thoroughness and accuracy of the residents' information (Zhang and Deng 2003). The doorplates, as the primary information carrier, played an indispensable role in the population management system. Through these paper doorplates, the *Baojia* system succeeded in limiting and monitoring population mobility and increasing social stability. In that light, the doorplate can be viewed as a tool for monitoring and policing.

and care for the young, develop good neighbourly relations, inherit traditional values, promote frugality and morality, and obey the national laws (Wen 1933: 35-42). These doorplates with *Xiangyue* were to help the masses understand their responsibilities and persuade them to be law-abiding citizens.

Correspondingly, the strict official decrees and prohibitions written on the doorplates did not just moralise and instruct people but warned the public to scrupulously abide by the laws and regulations. A doorplate of the twenty-second year of the reign of Jiaqing Emperor (1817), for example, shows the fifteen most common felonies, including: harbouring criminals, prostitution, illegal gambling, butchering farm cattle without permission, minting coins without permission, as well as the punitive measures, such as decapitation, hanging and banishment (Yan 2013: 135-137). The doorplates with these harsh official prohibitions warned all residents that they must strive to obey all governmental bans to avoid these cruel punishments. Therefore it indicates that either the doorplates with the *xiangyue* or with the governmental decrees were intentionally designed to indoctrinate a group of people to uncritically accept whatever the national or local governments declared.



Figure 5.8 Doorplate of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).

Source: Wen 1933: 289, my translation.

To sum up, the three functions of the paper doorplates in the *Baojia* system, especially the latter two, are entirely different from the functions of modern doorplates, and may even have served completely opposite purposes. Although there are obvious differences between the paper doorplate of imperial China and the modern door number, this is not to deny that the doorplates of the *Baojia* system do have a function of informing people of the surrounding environment. In fact, as mentioned above, the paper doorplates provide more detailed and private household information than do modern doorplates. Modern doorplates are still a critical part of the national census and household registration system in the 21st century. They are also instrumental in creating a free, friendly and convenient urban environment for ordinary residents and tourists. In comparison, while the *Baojia* system's doorplates seem to be aimed at

building a good social order, they actually engendered hostile and oppressive urban and formal atmospheres. The upper class of imperial China held their material interests, safety and prosperity above the welfare of the common people. Under this special historic background, the rigid doorplate system deprived the commoners of the most basic freedom of movement, stifled their thoughts, violated their privacy, and finally created these hierarchical communities. It is safe to say that in large measure the roles played by the *Baojia* system's doorplates are antithetical to those of the modern door numbers.

In this case, the functions of household registration, population surveillance, and indoctrination reflect the local (Chinese) administrative system, population control and management system, and indirectly reveal ordinary people's daily life and their indigenous values and beliefs. In fact, the design of the paper doorplate system is line with the spatial separation and design of the cities of imperial China. The hierarchical and ritualised traditional urban space (royal palace, aristocratic and bureaucratic mansions, commoner's buildings, and poor people's huts) classified people geographically and spatially into an assortment of groups. As argued in Chapter 4, the entire city was an essential and effective communication tool that was utilised to deify emperor and empress, legitimise their rights, and convey their wishes to commoners and non-aristocrats. Besides performing the main functions of registration, surveillance, and indoctrination, the paper doorplates were also a vital medium for the people to strengthen their individual identity recognition and awareness of social class. So, the paper doorplates and the urban and rural planning and design have always reinforced and complemented each other since the Song dynasty (960-1279). Against such a backdrop, the traditional Chinese social structure, relationship and imperial order were preserved and perpetuated. These identities— the Middle Kingdom (China) as the centre of the world, the capital city as the centre of the kingdom, and the monarch as the scion or son of the heaven —were thereby further intensified. It is evident that the paper doorplate system is a special product of the Chinese imperial time and epitomises the local social structure and political system.

An exhaustive study of the paper doorplates of the *Baojia* system can increase the understanding of the Chinese native cultural, political and economic changes and continuities in different periods of time and places. For that reason, the paper doorplate as the product of a hermetically sealed Chinese culture is a clear reflection of the local characteristics, i.e. the deep-seated Confucian hierarchical norms. From the perspective of its practical functions, the paper doorplate cannot stand for the imposition of global or Western values on local cultures, a convergence between local power and global power or the assimilation of the local to Western culture. Thus, the paper doorplates of the *Baojia* system especially in the dynastic era cannot show the complexity of the cross-cultural collision or compatibility between the global essence of globalisation (Westernisation) and Chinese national and ethnic identities. Until 1908 during the Late Qing Reform (1901-1911), under the guidance and promotion of the developed Western municipal system and police system, new durable metal doorplates and road signs appeared on the streets of Beijing. These kinds of doorplates and road signs, which possessed some of the qualities of the Western graphic wayfinding systems and signified the reduction of their original functions, reflected how the local has responded to the global threat.

In Section 4.3, it was explained that after the First (1840-1842) and Second Opium Wars (1856-1860), the Chinese were exposed to Western science, technologies, ideologies, and cultures and had, as a result, abandoned the belief that China (the Middle Kingdom) was the only civilised kingdom in the world. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Chinese government's willingness to adopt advanced Western knowledge and technologies fuelled a succession of nationalist movements and reforms, such as the Self-Strengthening Movement, Hundred Day's Reform and Late Qing Reform. A series of new policies and strategies concerning the form of regime, economy, military, diplomatic relations, education, transportation, telecommunication, urban planning, and municipal administration were implemented by the government. Amid these new policies, the introduction of a Western-style police system and an

emulation of Western municipal management brought about many changes in the appearance and function of the local doorplates. The most striking changes were that (1) from a design point of view, the paper doorplates with detailed personal information were gradually replaced by the solid metal doorplates with only a door number and names of street, district or police station (see Figure 5.9); (2) from a functional standpoint, the doorplate's three original functions were greatly restricted and weakened. Moreover, the process of issuing and installing doorplates was simplified. According to the law of Qing government – the Regulation of Household Survey promulgated in 1908, the household survey simply involved two steps: the survey of the actual number of households and number of residents (cited in Dai 1985: 31-38). As the first step, the investigator checked and numbered all households within his jurisdiction and ended by installing metal doorplates with an assigned number and address. The format, size and material of the doorplate were explicitly defined in the regulations. The second step was that all residents were required to fill out registration forms including the personal details of the householder and other family members. The investigator needed to collect these registration forms, number them serially and bind them into volumes. All families had a compulsory duty to report all births, deaths, and marriages to a nearby police station within three days. Therefore, I would argue that these changes in the doorplates indicate that, following the global expansion of Western powers, the late Qing government was trying to 'westernise' its cities. Just like introducing cars, trams and bikes from the West, laying railroad tracks and telephone lines, and paving muddy roads with asphalt, the Western-style doorplates and road signs were manufactured to replace the paper doorplates of the *Baojia* system in urban areas. Taking into account the changes in the form of the paper doorplate and the decline of its traditional functions, the local was significantly affected and increasingly dominated by the global (Western) power. The passive and ambivalent attitudes and actions of the Qing government toward the challenges and opportunities posed by the West made the local less competitive and dynamic.

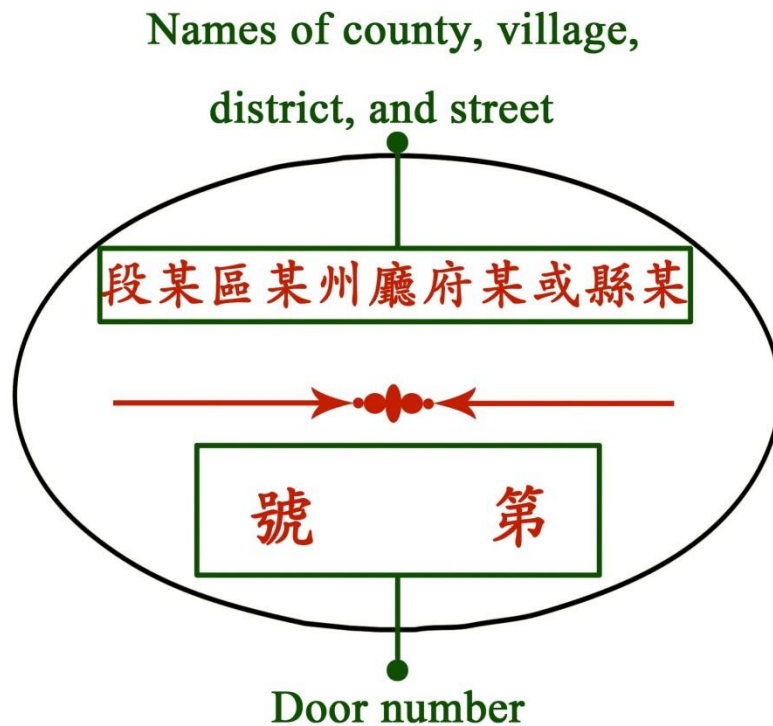


Figure 5.9 Doorplate of the late Qing dynasty (1908).

Source: Drawn by the author according to descriptions of the doorplate in the Regulations of Surveying Household promulgated in 1908, cited in Dai 1985: 32.

At the time, the Chinese people and their government believed gradual Westernisation to be the way forward. However, the late Qing government tended to feel rather ambivalent towards Western culture and power. On the one hand, they believed that the only solution to revive China was to learn from contemporary Western practices. On the other hand, they firmly insisted that traditional Chinese beliefs and values were unquestionably superior to those of the Western ‘barbarians’. For example, ‘Learning the superior technology of the barbarian, in order to control him’ is the slogan and aim of the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1894) (Snyder and West 1997: 166). Yet, faced with Western military aggression, the late Qing government recognised the formidable Western threat and was forced to negotiate with the foreign powers. Therefore, in order to reverse the failing destiny of the Great Qing, the late imperial government passively, reluctantly and rather perfunctorily adopted the Western technologies and political institutions in the early 20th century. The hesitant and ambiguous attitudes toward the West can be clearly seen in the imitation of the

modern Western police system and the change in the way the Qing government designed and used the doorplates.

With respect to the imitation of the Western police system by the late Qing government, Han points out that after 1900 the Western imperialist powers forced the Qing government to establish a police system to protect their political and economic interests and personal safety; in order to prevent conflict of interest and maintain its rule, the Qing government had to create a military-like police system in the urban areas (Han 1993: 4). Nevertheless, the modern Chinese police system of this period was created under the framework of the traditional *Baojia* system, since the rural areas were still organised through the *Baojia* system; even in the cities, the police system was intermingled with the old organisational principles and degenerated into an insignificant complement to the army (Han 1993: 5, 8). It is therefore not difficult to see the passive resistance, irresolute reforms and cosmetic changes of the Qing government. Likewise, these metal doorplates and road signs did not play such a positive role as they did in Western countries. It seems that the three traditional functions of the doorplates had been sharply reduced to one main function – household registration. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 5.9, the concise and readable doorplate is very similar to those of today, protecting personal information and directing people to their destinations. However, the function of these metal doorplates and road signs to give directions to the ordinary people was not greatly strengthened as a result. Even though the paper doorplates were substituted by simplified metal doorplates and road signs in Beijing, these metal doorplates and road signs were still used to reinforce the old spatial order and to maintain the existing class hierarchy rather than introduce equality. This point can be strongly supported by the fact that while these new doorplates and roads were installed in Beijing, the strict hierarchical and ritualised urban space was not significantly changed. Ordinary people were still confined to specific places and were strictly isolated from those in power.

Hence, I would argue that in such a situation, the transition from the initial *Baojia*

system's paper doorplate to the Western-inspired metal doorplates and road signs underlines that the local responded to the global (Western) intrusion and threat in a passive fashion, by blindly importing technologies and equipment, and mechanically imitating Western municipal, police and other systems. Eventually, the local was influenced and dominated by the global. In the next section, this argument will be further illustrated by the comparison of the graphic components of the paper doorplate and the oval metal doorplate.

5.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 1840 to 1912

As argued in the previous section, the paper doorplates that were used as a population management and control tool over centuries reflect an inveterate traditional local culture and a political system; by contrast, the oval metal doorplates reflect the immense influence of global (Western) power on the local (Beijing). Similarly, the same argument can be found and intensified by the analysis of the change in the graphic components of Beijing's doorplates from 1840 to 1912 that concerns us in the present section. In the analysis of the paper doorplates' functions earlier, it was shown that there is a stark functional difference between the traditional Chinese doorplates and modern wayfinding devices. The former were intended for restricting people's thoughts, requiring people to live in designated areas and monitoring people's activities. The latter are looking to create a convenient and safe living environment for people. It is because of the difference in doorplates' functions that their appearances are accordingly diverse. For instance, compared with modern graphic wayfinding devices which are mainly made of durable metal, the traditional Chinese doorplates of *Baojia* system are made of paper, which allow for regular replacement and updating. The regular inspection, replacement and updating of every household's doorplate enabled the local government to effectively implement its population control methods and laws. It can be said thereby that the paper doorplate is one of the offerings of traditional local culture and politics; in turn, it was employed to maintain traditional social stability and core values. For that reason, the paper doorplate is filled with

distinctive local visual features and is a bearer of local cultures and meanings, rather than a medium where the local meets the global. This point of view is clearly established and supported by evidence from the following analysis of the graphic elements of a typical paper doorplate of the Qing dynasty.

In *Fuhui Quanshu*, Huang Liuhong (1694: 244) described the form of the doorplate of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), he noted that the sheets of the doorplate, which were made of white paper, were printed in a Regular Script style; all residents were required to fill out the forms using an ink brush; after checking all the information by the leaders of the *Jia*, every household needed to paste up the doorplate on a pearwood board and hang it on the main front gate (cited in Yan 2013: 135). From Huang's description and Figure 5.10 below, we can see that this paper doorplate includes many characteristic local visual elements. First of all, the typeface printed in the locally produced white paper, is one of the traditional calligraphic style – Regular Script style. The basic strokes of Regular Script were normalised in the Tang dynasty (618-907); it is the earliest reference typeface for woodblock printing in the Tang dynasty and is one of the four most common printed typeface styles in China today (Han and Liu 2011: 162-164; Liao 2009: 239-240). In the Qing dynasty, this kind of typeface was widely applied on official notifications and decrees that were publicly posted on a wall. Therefore, Regular Script, with its strong and clean strokes, was intended to create an atmosphere of authority, significance and obligation. Thus this typeface is an evident local cultural and political element. Second, the order of texts of this paper doorplate reflects a habit and convention of writing and reading of the local people. For example, the title of the doorplate –牌門甲保 should be read from right to left. The main texts should be read from top to bottom in vertical columns and then right to left. Like the typeface, the traditional right-to-left writing written direction and the overall typesetting exhibit exclusively local convention and culture. Third, as shown in Figure 5.10, a set of Chinese numerals based on Chinese characters is employed to indicate the date on the doorplate. The Chinese traditional numeral system comprises two sets of characters representing numbers 0 to 10:

simplified Chinese (〇, 一, 二, 三, 四, 五, 六, 七, 八, 九, 十) and traditional Chinese (零, 壹, 貳, 叁, 肆, 伍, 六, 七, 八, 九, 十). The Chinese numeral system is well-known and is often used for everyday writing in China. It is an important component of Chinese indigenous culture. The numeral used on the doorplate is a simplified Chinese character and without doubt is important as a local cultural element. Fourth, a faded stamp of an official seal can be found in the upper left side of this sheet of doorplate. From the Eastern Zhou (770B.C. –221 B.C.) to today, Chinese people use a seal in place of a personal signature on documents, contracts, official paperwork and art works to confirm validity and authenticity. Thus, in Chinese culture, a stamp of a seal stands for credibility and legitimacy. As seen in Figure 5.11, the imperial seal of the Qing dynasty symbolises the emperor's power, legitimacy and authority and it was used on significant imperial documents and edicts. The stamp of the official seal was an integral part of the paper doorplate and afforded the doorplate with the force of law for the local people. It can certainly be said that the stamp on the doorplate embodies the uniqueness of the local culture.

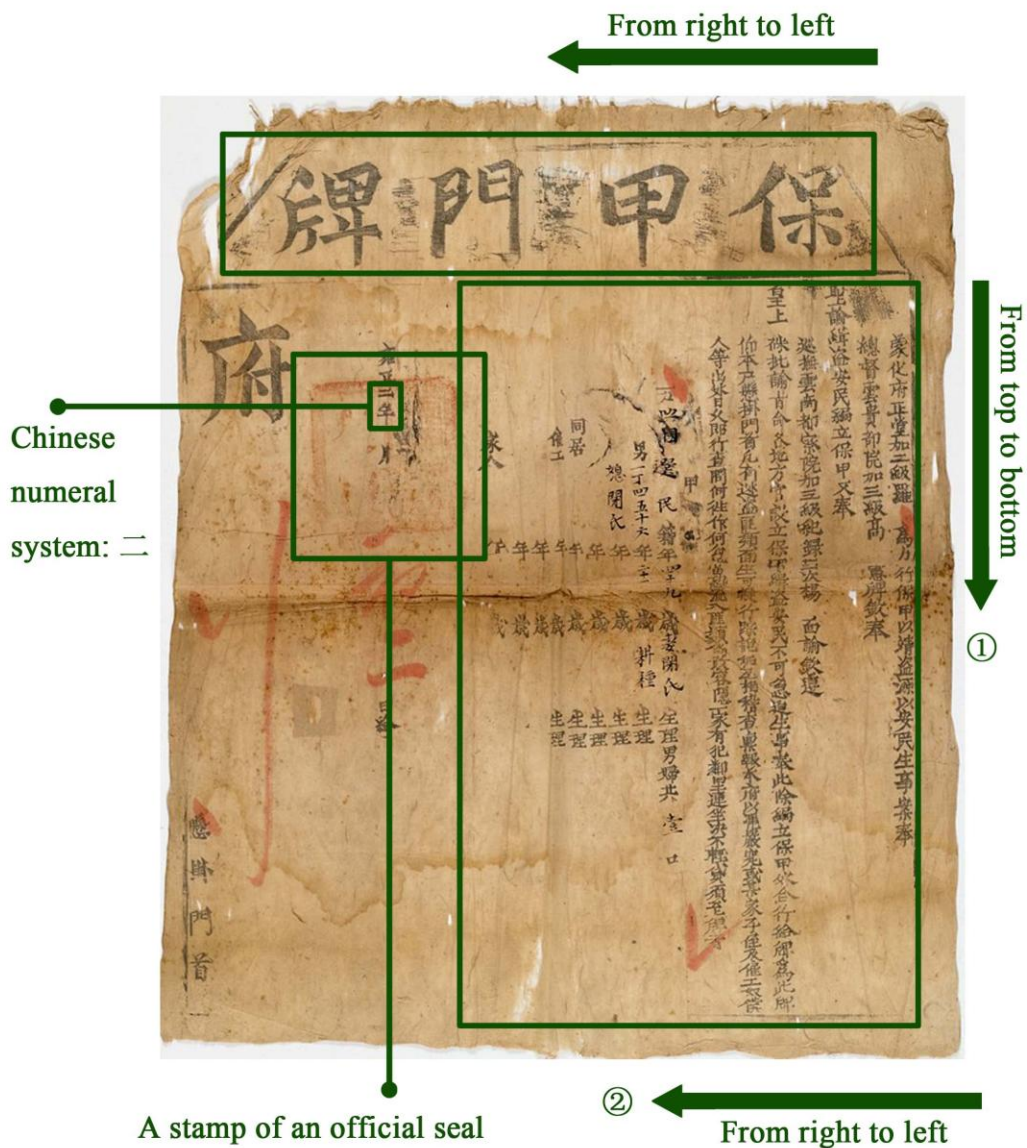


Figure 5.10 Doorplate of the second year of the reign of Yongzheng Emperor (1724).

Source: National Tsing Hua University Library – Rubin Yang’s personal collection

http://www.lib.nthu.edu.tw/guide/exhibits_and_events/cultural%20relics/content.htm

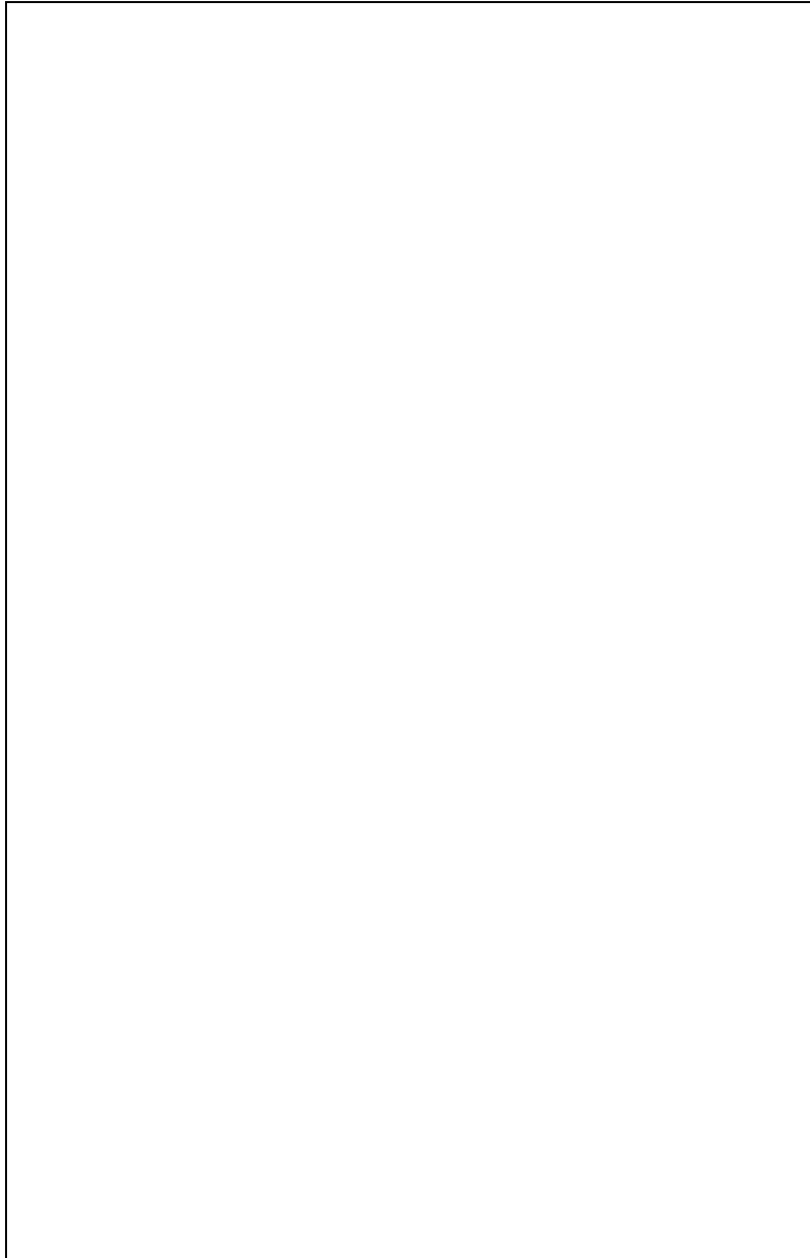


Figure 5.11 The emperors' imperial seal of the Qing dynasty. It is an emblem of the imperial power of Qing dynasty.

Source: The Palace Museum, <http://www.dpm.org.cn/shtml/97/@/109304.html>

Taken together, these findings suggest that the paper doorplate is a part of the local history, culture, custom and politics and a 'defender' of the local values at that time. So it is apparent from Figure 5.10 that the local graphic visual elements are strong, compelling and overwhelming. However, a new form of doorplate was developed in 1908 in response to social reforms and technical improvement. There were significant

differences between the old doorplates and the new ones. Eventually, the old doorplate system was abandoned and the new Western-style metal doorplates and road signs increasingly dominated the urban space of Beijing. More importantly, these new signs created a new graphic visual narrative of how the local meets the global.

By comparing the paper doorplates of the *Baojia* system (Figure 5.10) with the metal doorplates of the late Qing dynasty (1908) (Figure 5.12), it is easy to see that the content of the residential doorplate has been simplified, its size has been significantly reduced, its shape has been changed from rectangle to oval, and its material has changed from paper to tinplate. In accordance with the description of the Regulations of Surveying Household circulated in 1908 (cited in Dai 1985: 32), the oval doorplate's perimeter is approximately 40cm, with red text on a white background and is made of *Yangtie*. *Yangtie* literally means foreign iron, according to the Modern Chinese Lexicon (2005: 1577-1578), which is tinplated or galvanised iron sheet. This kind of iron was called foreign iron in China because the material and the casting and smelting technology were imported from the West or brought into China by foreign traders. Some other names of imported goods begin with the Chinese character *Yang* (foreign, 洋) such as: match was named *Yanghuo* (foreign match), kerosene was called *Yangyou* (foreign oil) and cotton sheeting was called *Yangbu* (foreign cloth). Therefore, because of their Western origins, the material – *Yangtie* and the casting technology used in the production of the metal doorplates of the late Qing can be regarded as noticeably global elements.

With regard to the colour and shape of the metal doorplate, these could be either local or global visual elements. At present I have not found any literature that concretely and accurately describes the appearances of the metal doorplates and road signs installed in foreign settlements of Beijing during the late Qing dynasty. Thus, I cannot make a detailed comparative analysis of the doorplates mounted in the residential areas of Beijing and those installed in the legation districts of Beijing. Nevertheless, when it comes to the use of colour and shape in graphic design, they are employed to

convey and organise information, create atmosphere and mood, and represent meanings. It can be seen from Figure 5.10 that the rectangular paper doorplate, with straight edges and corners and its sharp contrast between black text and white background, legibly conveys important information and symbolises firmness, standard and order. In contrast, the oval metal doorplate with its curved lines and bright red and white colour combination implies tolerance, flexibility and approachability. These external characteristics of the oval doorplate do not correspond with the Qing government's strict control over society. In addition, oval metal plaques, signs and door numbers have been widely used in European countries for centuries. The tradition of using oval metal doorplates might have begun with the European door plates being brought to other countries. As shown in Figure 5.13, an oval shaped brass manufacturer's name plate detailed 'George Prices Safe Co, Bankers Engineers, Wolverhampton' was attached to products manufactured by this company. The production period of the George Price's company is from 1837 to 1901 (Black Country History 2015). Thus it could be inferred that the name plate was produced between 1837 and 1901. Oval was a very popular sign shape in Europe in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. This is also exemplified in the collections of number plaques in 'Below Stairs of Hungerford', an antique shop dealing in artefacts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (See Figure 5.14). These doorplates produced around the 1920s/ 30s in the UK have the following features: oval-shaped, metal (enamel or iron cast) and two colour combinations (black and white, red and white, and blue and white). Not only is their shape similar to the metal doorplate of the late Qing dynasty (Figure 5.12), but one of their colour combinations – red text and white background is also similar with the late Qing doorplate. Even now, oval signs and doorplates are still commonly used in the UK that could be considered a continuation of the tradition (See Figure 5.15). It may be the case therefore that the oval shaped outline and the red and white colour combination of the late Qing doorplate have a strong global (Western) quality.

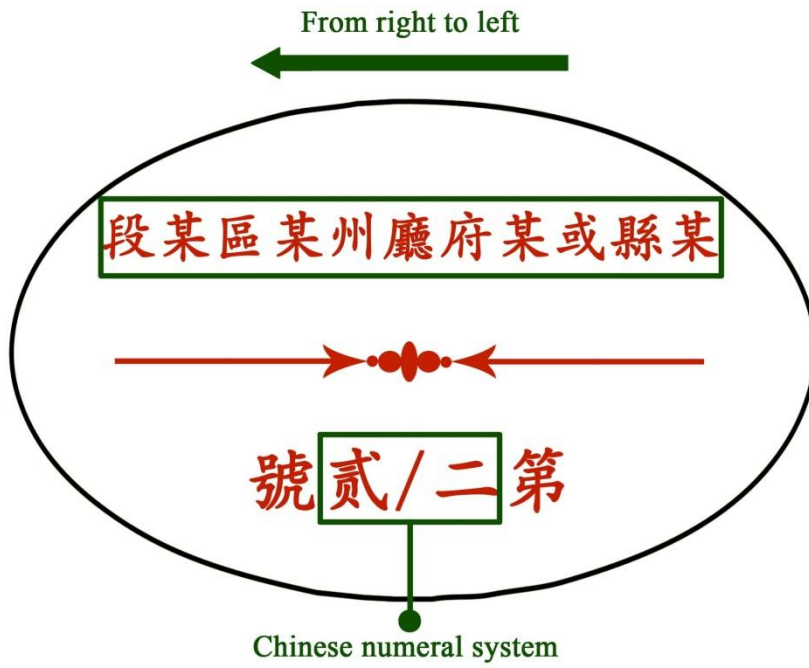


Figure 5.12 Doorplate of the late Qing dynasty (1908).

Source: Drawn by the author, Dai 1985: 32.

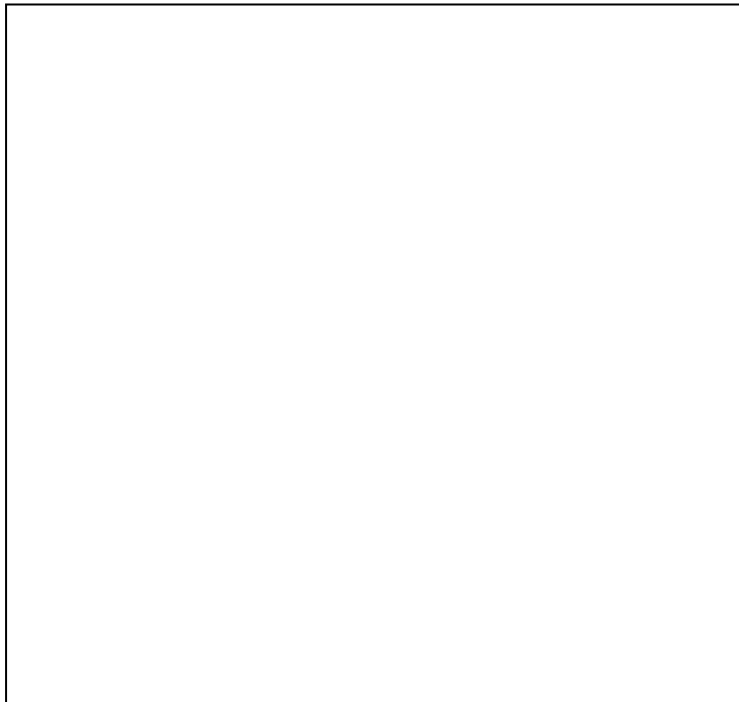


Figure 5.13 George Prices Safe Co., Plate. Production Place: Wolverhampton,

England. Production date: around the middle of the nineteenth century.

Source: The History of Locks and Locksmithing Museum

<http://www.historyoflocks.com/sp002.html#TOP>

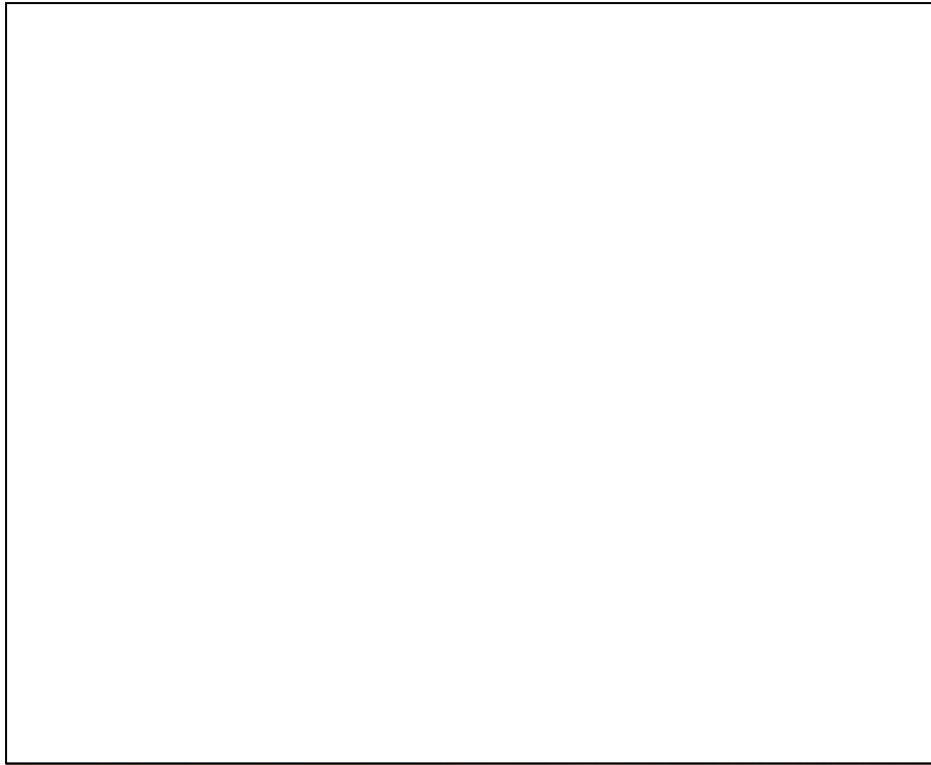


Figure 5.14 Oval shaped enamelled or cast iron doorplates, 1920s/ 30s.

Source: Below Stairs of Hungerford

http://www.belowstairs.co.uk/acatalog/Online_Catalogue_Name_Plates_House_Numbers_Other_Plaques_4.html



Figure 5.15 Current door number and fencing company name plaque in Loughborough, UK.

Source: photographed by the author, 2015.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to infer that the metal doorplates of the late Qing partially imitated and adopted the function (police and municipal system), material (metal), shape (oval) and colours (red and white) of doorplates of European legation areas. Accordingly, tinplate road signs were probably produced during the same period. As these new signs were mostly installed in urban residential areas, it was necessary that they were readable, understandable and clear to commoners and local officials. Hence, some local visual elements can be found on this doorplate. Figure 5.12 shows some noticeably local visual elements: the Regular Script typeface, layout (the convention of right-to-left reading) and the Chinese numeral system. It is clear that the new design of the local doorplate is neither a complete imitation of the doorplates of foreign settlements nor an indiscriminate continuation of the paper doorplates. Instead, the local visual elements and global visual elements are blended and reconciled on the new metal doorplate through an adaptable and diverse approach. However, in terms of the social and political contexts in which the metal doorplates

and other roads signs are created and used in Beijing, the new design with its emphasis on the combination of local and global elements can hardly represent anything but the passive imitation and response of the local. On the one hand, by comparing the paper doorplate's graphic visual elements with the new one, it is evident that the local doorplates were simplified and partially westernised. Thereby, the original three functions of the local doorplate system have been greatly diluted. On the other hand, rather than creating a convenient and legible urban environment for local people, the prominent roles played by the new and simplified doorplates were still to register permanent residence, manage the population, and preserve the public peace, ultimately perpetuating the Chinese imperial order and traditional social structure. Although the two aspects may appear to be contradictory, they can reflect the late Qing government's irresolution and vagueness, as well as its passivity and compromise.

Even though the form of the doorplates of Beijing was changed from a complex paper one into concise metal one; instead of reinforcing a new identity of Beijing or China, they still reflected an entrenched faith in the old social and spatial order as well as an unbridgeable gap between different classes. Thus, in my view, the functions of orientation and direction of the doorplates and road signs stemming from Western society had not been rapidly and vigorously developed and promoted by the late Qing government. This owes in part to the fact that all these economic, cultural and political measures made by the Qing government were aimed at contributing to rid China of foreign control and privilege, and revive the Manchu dominance. In that case, the interests and needs of the common people were still not deemed to be a priority. Building a safe, convenient, identifiable and legible urban environment for ordinary people was not considered by the Qing rulers as a worthwhile goal. The doorplates and road signs were more an instrument of class rule than wayfinding devices extensively used by common people. In other words, only the exterior form and some of the functions of Western-style doorplates and road signs were copied by China's last imperial government. In large measure, the blind imitation of Western orientation

signage system embodies one relationship between the local and the global. The relationship is that the rapid development of science and technology accelerated unprecedented global expansion of Western powers, whereas the local (the Qing government) responded to Western invasion by resolutely preserving their identity and only passively learning from and simulating the West. In this way, the local was disturbed and penetrated by the global.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has explained how the function and visual appearance of Beijing's doorplates were transformed between 1840 and 1912. It has also shown how the relationship between the local and the global altered, along with great changes in the function of Beijing's doorplates. In the first section, the ways in which paper doorplates were used to manage, supervise and indoctrinate the population, facilitate the creation of social and cultural identities, and convey the urban core values and attributes of Beijing have been explained. The three original functions of the paper doorplates of imperial China were: the household registration certificate, the monitoring and policing tool and the indoctrination and admonition of the masses. The imperial order, system and hierarchy of China were maintained by the strict implementation of the doorplate system and urban design and planning principles. The replacement of the paper doorplates by the Western-style metal doorplates and road signs in urban areas and the decline of the paper doorplates' three conventional functions around 1908 define the main characteristics of the historical period, in that the local responded to global invasion and threat by passively and perfunctorily imitating modern Western technologies and institutions. It also reflects that the local (China) was disconcerted by the loss of its prominent position in East Asia and succumbed to the global penetration and expansion of Western powers. In this case, it is evident that the local was dominated by the global. The second section approached the same argument from a different angle – an analysis and comparison of the graphic visual elements of Beijing's paper and metal doorplates. The complicated paper doorplate comprised of purely local visual elements was gradually replaced by the

simpler metal sign in which local visual elements and global visual elements were interwoven into daily life. Nevertheless, these metal signs were designed and used by the late Qing government to sustain its old social, cultural and political structure. Hence, the oval metal signs did not represent the late Qing government's determination to reform its obsolete system and values, but rather displayed its irresolution and passivity in the struggle against the Western threat. Consequently, the local was confused, infiltrated and dominated by the overwhelming global forces led by the West. However, the relationship between the local and the global is far more complicated and intricate than a simple binary one in which the local is always controlled and dominated by the global. The complexity, reversibility and mobility of the local-global interaction will be explained in the following five chapters. Chapters 6 to 10 will identify more examples and build on the analyses of Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 6 Second Phase 1912 to 1949 – Public Orientation and Direction Signage System

6.1 Introduction

As the new government overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China in 1912, the hitherto unchallengeable imperial social structures and spatial order were eventually broken down and discarded, making way for new political institutions and social values. In line with the introduction of those new ideas to Beijing's identity and its urban design, there were also some new features that had been added to Beijing's doorplates and road signs. The two most striking features are: 1) the function of orientation and direction of the doorplates and road signs were gradually enhanced; 2) Beijing's doorplates were redesigned, normalised and localised. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the replacement of the paper doorplates with the Western-style metal doorplates indicates that the local is penetrated by the global and passively responds to global forces. This chapter, and the one following, will explore the new and more equal interaction between the local and the global as reflected in the changes in Beijing's doorplates and road signs between 1912 and 1964. But first, this chapter will focus on the significant changes in the function and design of Beijing's doorplates and road signs occurring over the period 1912 – 1949. Chapter 7 will focus on the period 1949 – 1964. Chapter 6 will first show how the function of wayfinding of the doorplates and road signs has been greatly increased in line with the new identity of Beijing – the capital of the republic of China. It will be argued here that the local is no longer a passive recipient of Western (global) ideas and influences but is keenly engaged in negotiating global forces and appropriating global resources for its own cultural and political ends. Then it will move on to further illustrate and support the argument by analysing the graphic visual elements of Beijing's doorplates. As argued in the previous chapter, the substitution of the metal oval signs for the paper doorplates reveals one aspect of the interaction between the local and the global – the local being influenced and

infiltrated by the global. Likewise, these changes in the functions and appearance of Beijing's doorplates between 1912 and 1949 reflect another aspect of the relationship between the local and the global – the local is able to actively resist the homogenising effects of the global and incorporate global values to realise its identity transformation. This point of view is exactly what is meant by the reversibility that is defined in Chapter 3.

6.2 Urban Public Orientation and Direction Signage System – Doorplates and Road Signs

In Chapter 5, it was argued that the metal doorplates and road signs made during the late Qing dynasty were used to maintain the traditional social and political structure, rather than provide public benefits. Yet, in the period of the Republic (1912-1949), the durable and concise doorplates and road signs' function of providing orientation and giving a postal address for ordinary people was increasingly strengthened. It is one of two chief changes to Beijing's doorplates and road signs. The other change is that Beijing's doorplates and road signs were redesigned and localised to meet the needs of local residents, especially those at the lowest levels of Chinese society. These signs were widely used in the new cityscape of Beijing where the traditional imperial space was severely reduced, and were employed to consolidate the newly formed identity – that of the Republic. Since then, these doorplates and road signs of Beijing have become progressively more important, more complex and more functionally successful. They have also played an important part of building a new urban meaning. In this case, the correlation between the local and the global reflected in the changes in the design and function of the signage systems of Beijing was different from the one before 1912. These changes in Beijing's doorplates can be seen as an example of the local attempting to seize the initiative from the globalising Western powers in order to take a more active role in properly assessing advantages of Western civilisation and allowing themselves to reflect on their own traditional core value system. The two key changes in the function and form of Beijing's doorplates and the interplay of the two opposing forces (the local and the global), which is embodied in

these changes, will be discussed further in this chapter. Before the two main changes made to the doorplates are detailed, the reasons for the changes will be first presented and then explained in the following paragraphs.

It was proposed in the previous chapter that the modern house numbering system (doorplates) and road signs of Beijing was originally imported from the West. In order to understand and describe the changes in Beijing's doorplates and road signs, it is necessary to look at the development history of modern house numbering system in Europe. In the mid-18th century, the house numbering scheme was applied on a large scale and spread throughout Europe. At first, house numbering was not intended to help inhabitants and tourists orientate themselves, but to support early modern police administration, military recruitment and taxation (Tantner 2009: 7). Essentially, house numbering was used to 'give the state access to the riches and resources of every house, and to make it easier to control, tax or recruit their inhabitants, or to lodge soldiers' (ibid.). Some examples are as follows: parts of the suburbs outside Paris were numbered between 1727 and 1728 to effectively conduct censuses and limit the number of new buildings; in 1768 the house numbering system was implemented in many French cities to support the lodging of soldiers in civilian houses, and subsequently in 1790 a new house numbering system was applied in Paris and other French cities for taxing, governing and policing the population (Tantner 2009: 10, 16). Other European cities, Madrid (1750/1751), Copenhagen (1771), Geneva (1782), Berlin (1797), Vienna (1806) and Florence (1808) carried out the practice of house numbering in succession (Tantner 2009: 13, Rose-Redwood 2008: 287). It is evident then that rather than a wayfinding device, the early modern house numbering (doorplates) was initially adopted in Europe to control and govern the population. Interestingly, as an apparatus of control and supervision, the early European house numbering system bears a strong resemblance to that of China's paper doorplates.

It is worth mentioning that doorplates or house number and road signs had both been used and popularised since at least the mid-18th century. The example of London's

house number and road signs illustrates this point. In 1765, the Court of Common Council of London passed a law that required the city to number houses and position street signs at the corner of each intersection (Rose-Redwood 2008: 287). It can thus be suggested that the early European house numbering systems were supplemented and supported by the installation of street signs. The house numbers were used, together with road signs, to create legible and accessible urban and rural spaces for the authorities. Although the early modern house numbers and road signs were created for the benefit of the authorities, Tantner (2009) highlights that house numbering equally made houses, streets, and an entire city legible to the public and was employed for their own ends (Tantner 2009: 18). The personal use of urban doorplates and road signs generally involves wayfinding and postal addressing. The needs regarding orientation and postal address of the ordinary people had been considered and fulfilled when planning urban space and house numbering system by local governments in Europe and America of the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, in the 19th century, the rapid development of the postal service substantially prompted widespread use of house numbers in cities in England (Rose-Redwood 2008: 287). At the start of the 20th century, house numbering had become an important concern and task of municipal government and was institutionalised among city engineers and managers in America; spatial legibility became a chief principle of designing streetscapes and house numbering systems (Rose-Redwood 2008: 291). What has become evident here is that the function of providing orientation and postal address of the house numbering system, which was once considered secondary and insignificant, had been continued, solidified and institutionalised in the West during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

One of the significant effects of the French Revolution (1789-1799) was the introduction of house numbering in many German, Swiss and Dutch cities (Tantner 2009: 16). As is often the case, at the end of a sweeping revolutionary war or a drastic collision among different values based on different cultures, the victor would bring many of its systems, institutions and principles to the vanquished. Following the First

Opium War (1840-1842), Western powers forcibly set up many concession territories in main port cities of China and they had their own legal jurisdictions, executive institutions, laws, and police forces under the shield of extraterritorial privilege. These concessions had become a channel for Chinese people to observe Western society and a hotbed of stimulating the occurrence of new Chinese economic, political and cultural reforms. During this time, the Western police system, house numbering system (doorplates and road signs), and municipal management system were introduced to many Chinese cities and seriously impacted China's traditional urban administration system. Facing both external (Western powers' requirements) and internal (Chinese scholars and reformists' promotion) pressures, the Western police system was imported and established by the Qing government around 1905 (Han 1993: 4, 7). From then on, the police officers, constables and police stations spread all over the state from provincial level to county level administrative areas. Therefore, the modern Western-style police force and house numbering system (metal doorplates and road signs) increasingly displaced the old-time administrative system – *Baojia* system and its paper doorplates. Meanwhile, these signs installed in the foreign legation districts and concessions provided references for the design of the metal doorplates and road signs that were applied in many Chinese major cities in the early 20th century. Each foreign power was given the right to set up its municipal council, develop their own urban culture, and seek to make their settlements feel like 'home'. As discussed in Chapter 4, the architectural complex, modern public facilities and municipal administrative mechanism in the legation districts and concessions provided a miniature Western society and urban landscape for Chinese officials and ordinary residents. As we shall see, it also provided a reference model for the reconstruction of Beijing in the early 20th century. The public services, such as sewage and policing, and public infrastructures, such as urban furniture, street lamps and telephones, became available in major cities of China and greatly altered the imperial urban scenery. Likewise, the doorplates and road signs that appeared in the streets, roads and alleys of Western concessions or Legation areas, were imitated by the Chinese government, both in external features and functions.

As explained in the previous chapter, it is clear that due to the late Qing government's passivity to a thorough social reform, the police system and house numbering system were executed under the old social and cultural order characterised by rigid social hierarchy. Hence, the doorplates and road signs of Beijing as an administrative instrument were utilised to maintain the traditional spatial configuration; meanwhile, the *Baojia* system still lingered and continued in most Chinese rural areas. However, with the decline of the empire and the advent of the republic, the imperial urban space was taken over by the civilian and republican urban spaces. In comparison with the ordinary people of the imperial period, the republican citizen's rights to free movement were further guaranteed. During the huge political and cultural shift from an empire to a republic, a number of city gates and walls were removed, city spaces were greatly expanded, residents' daily activities and commercial events were no longer confined to specific areas, and civilian rights were somewhat safeguarded. At the same time, the demands of the Chinese people for privacy, and safe and convenient working and living environments continuously increased. The growing demands accelerated the improvement and redesign of the system of doorplates and road signs. Under this condition, the doorplate and road signs' functions of providing orientation and a postal address had been addressed and strengthened by the new Chinese government.

Basically, the learning and adoption of Western policing and municipal management systems and a house numbering system, and the growing basic needs of people for safe and convenient urban environments, exerted a massive influence on the functions and forms of the metal doorplates and created favourable conditions for the wide application of road signs in China. In the following paragraphs, by analysing different examples, specific changes in the urban doorplates and road signs will be identified and the relationship between the local and the global as embodied in the process of the alteration will be clarified.

In this historical phase 1908-1912, the major role played by the doorplates and road signs of Beijing was still to register permanent residence and manage population, and preserve the public peace, ultimately perpetuating the Chinese imperial order and traditional social structures. From this it can be summarised that the function of orientation and direction of the doorplates and road signs had not been rapidly or vigorously developed and promoted by the late Qing government. As stated earlier, the function of supporting wayfinding and postal services of house numbers and road signs for the ordinary people had been developed and institutionalised in the West as early as the 19th and early 20th centuries. Although the Western-style house numbering system was introduced to China in the early 20th century, the function of providing orientation and location information for the common people was not officially promoted, as it was incompatible with the traditional Chinese social structures. Thus, building a safe, convenient, identifiable and legible urban environment for the ordinary people was not considered by the Qing rulers as a worthwhile goal. Under this condition, the doorplates and road signs adopted by the late Qing government were more like the early European house numbers – as an instrument of class rule rather than wayfinding devices. Put differently, only the exterior form and some of the functions of Western-style doorplates and road signs were copied by China's last imperial government.

As a result, any attempt to superficially and automatically reproduce and adapt to some aspects of Western civilisation was destined to fail. These measures and strategies adopted by the Qing government could not save its tottering and shaky empire in the end. A string of military defeats to foreign powers and a number of unequal treaties signed between China and foreign countries exposed the Qing government's corruption, weakness and incompetence, which gave rise to strong Chinese nationalism and anti-Qing sentiment during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1912, the last imperial dynasty of China, which ruled from 1644 to 1912, collapsed, thus putting an end to over 2000 years of Chinese monarchy. In the same year, the open- and liberal-minded reformers established the Republic of China. The

traditional Chinese imperial and feudal national identity was challenged by the Western-style democratic ideas and was abandoned by the new Chinese rulers. Thus, the new Chinese regime's way of reacting to and appropriating Western learning was different from preceding ones. They constructed their own identity (sameness) and others' identities (otherness). The new identity was formed, continued and made evident to residents using a series of methods including reorganisation of urban space and redesign of doorplates and road signs.

In Chapter 4, it has been explained that the new identity is republicanism, a form of *minzu* (nationalism), *minzhu* also known as *minquan* (the people's power and democracy) and *minsheng* (the people's livelihood) of Sun Zhongshan's Three People's Principles. The principle of democracy and the people's power chiefly means that the political right resides in the people; the principle of people's livelihood points to a particular concern for people's economic and social well-being (Sun 1924). The two principles are entirely antithetical to the divine right of kings and the monarchical despotism of the time. In this context, Beijing's identity was changed from serving as the home of the emperor and his families to a civilian city. The old strict social order and hierarchy was weakened and undermined. The people's civil and political rights began to be recognised and enshrined. In Chapter 4, it was discussed that the urban space had again become an effective political and cultural tool in the republic era. The new breed of leaders used it to consolidate their political dominance and new cultural identity. A number of public works, such as the improvement of transport infrastructure and public services, the increase in public squares and parks, and the demolition of the city walls were financed and constructed by the new government. These initiatives encouraged more people to use the public urban space and made people's daily life and travel more convenient. Meanwhile, these doorplates and road signs gradually were widely utilised by local residents to locate and direct themselves in new Beijing and provided the necessary condition for the development of the civil postal service.

As can be seen from Figure 6.1, the form of doorplates of the early Beiyang Army period (1912-1928) is based on the late Qing's doorplates (see Figure 5.9). In contrast, the doorplates of the Nanjing nationalist government of the Republic of China (1928-49) shown in Figure 6.2, have undergone great changes. The colour and shape of the doorplates have been transformed from red and white to blue and white, from oval to rectangle. Moreover, the ordinary resident's doorplates are subdivided into two types: the doorplates for the front door and the doorplates for the side or back door. In fact, the exact time of the change in the form of the doorplates during the period of the Republic of China is not recorded. However, the time when oval doorplates were replaced with rectangular doorplates and road signs in China can be estimated. From Figure 6.4 below we can see that the 1914 doorplate located in a district of Shanghai is already metal, blue and white, and rectangular. Moreover, its typeface and typesetting is almost the same as those of Beijing (Figure 6.3). It is possible, therefore, that the oval metal or wooden doorplates (Figure 6.1) were only used in the very early years of the republic of China and soon they were substituted by the rectangular doorplates and road signs around 1914. Another evidence for this assumption is that the nationalist government of the Republic of China developed new regulations for surveying households and stipulated that officials needed to issue and install doorplates when they started house-to-house surveys respectively in 1915 and 1929 (Huang 2013: B13). The red and white oval doorplates were perhaps replaced with the blue and white rectangular ones during these periods (see Figures 6.3 and 6.4). Besides, by analysing some related materials and historical photographs taken by foreign reporters, businessmen and the Chinese residents, this finding, while preliminary, suggests that:

- (1) The blue and white tinsplate or enamel rectangular doorplates and rectangular road signs appeared in some main cities of China, such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Nanjing around 1914-1915 and possibly even earlier than that. Within the concessions or international settlements in large Chinese cities, the road signs were usually rectangular and bilingual with Chinese and English or

other languages. The doorplates were mostly blue and white rectangular or square metal plates, for instance, the doorplates of the Shanghai International settlement (1843-1943) are square blue signs with white texts, and those of the Shanghai French Concession (1849-1943) are blue rectangles with white texts, whereas the areas outside the two concessions, *huajie* (Chinese communities) had rectangular doorplates with black texts on a white background (Huang 2013: B13).

- (2) During the period from the Late Qing Reform (1901-1911) to the Republic of China (1912-1949), the *Baojia* system and police system were closely combined to maintain social control. Thus the paper doorplates, wooden doorplates and tinplate or enamel doorplates were often mixed throughout all the cities and villages. In general, in the interest of reducing costs and improving the urban environment, the rural doorplates were usually paper (like the doorplate of the *Baojia* system) or wooden (see Figure 6.5); while the urban doorplates and road signs were delicate and fine enamel rectangles (see Figures 6.3, 6.4 and 6.6). All these doorplates were classified and used to mark the front door and the back or side door. In addition, the shape, graphic layout, size and colour of the doorplates of different cities are to some extent dissimilar.
- (3) As to the sequence of door numbers in China, one of the most commonly used numbering schemes is that odd numbers tend to be on the left hand side of the road and the even numbers tend to be on the right. The vast majority of roads running from east to west are numbered from the east end with odd numbers assigned to the south and even numbers to the north; the roads running from south to north are numbered from the south end with odd numbers on the west and even numbers on the east. Another numbering scheme is that the door numbers go up sequentially on one side of the road and come back down to the other side. Similarly, these ordered numbering schemes stem from the Western settlements in China.
- (4) The redesign of the doorplates. Even though the external features and the

numerical systems of doorplates of Beijing or Shanghai were made with references to Western-style doorplates system, the municipal councils or relevant authorities, particularly after 1912, did not indiscriminately and completely copy the Western settlements' doorplates, but redesigned them to suit the local situation. Figure 6.7 shows current European doorplates. It is reasonable to conjecture from these present doorplates the basic characteristics of the doorplates of Western concessions or legation areas in China (1845-1945). Generally speaking, the European doorplate is usually (but not always) a metal plate with numbers on it, or only a door number without a metal plate affixed to the fronts of buildings, which distinguishes the houses. The vast majority of Chinese urban doorplates are composed of Arabic numerals, one of three Chinese indigenous numerals (two different sets of Chinese character numeral systems and Suzhou numerals), and the name of the road or street and district (see Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.6). These clear and defined urban doorplates coupled with their subdivision (front door and back or side door) and road signs had greatly facilitated the local residents finding their way, locating and accessing urban public space.

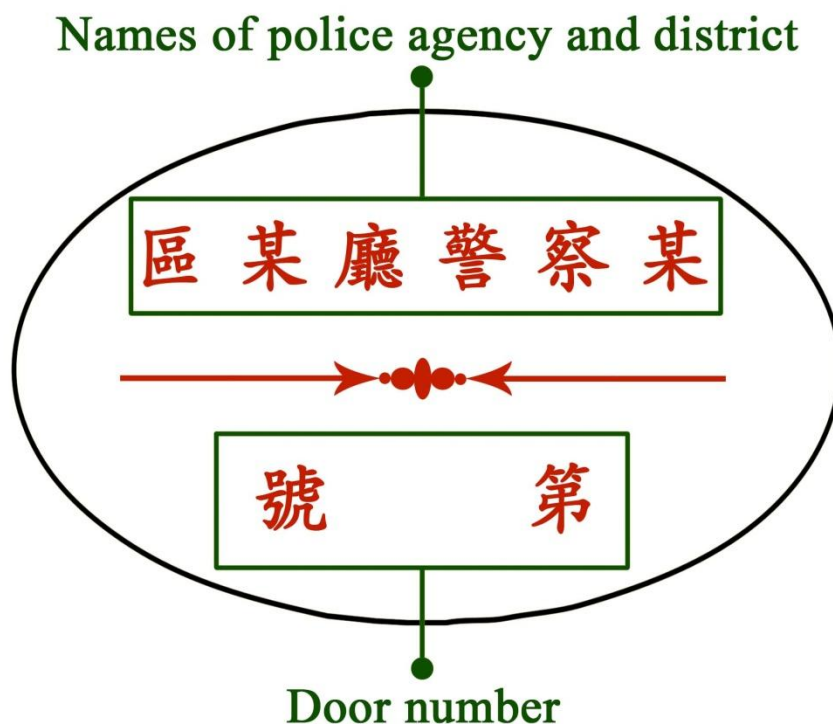


Figure 6.1 Doorplate of the early Beiyang army period of the Republic of China (1912-1928): perimeter ca 53.3cm, red text on white background, made of wood. Its appearance looks almost exactly the same as the one of the late Qing dynasty. Thus it can be seen that in the early days of the Republic of China, the doorplate's exterior of the late Qing dynasty continued to be performed.

Source: Drawn by the author according to the descriptions of the doorplate in *Statute Book of the Republic of China* (Legal Rights Committee 1924: 495).

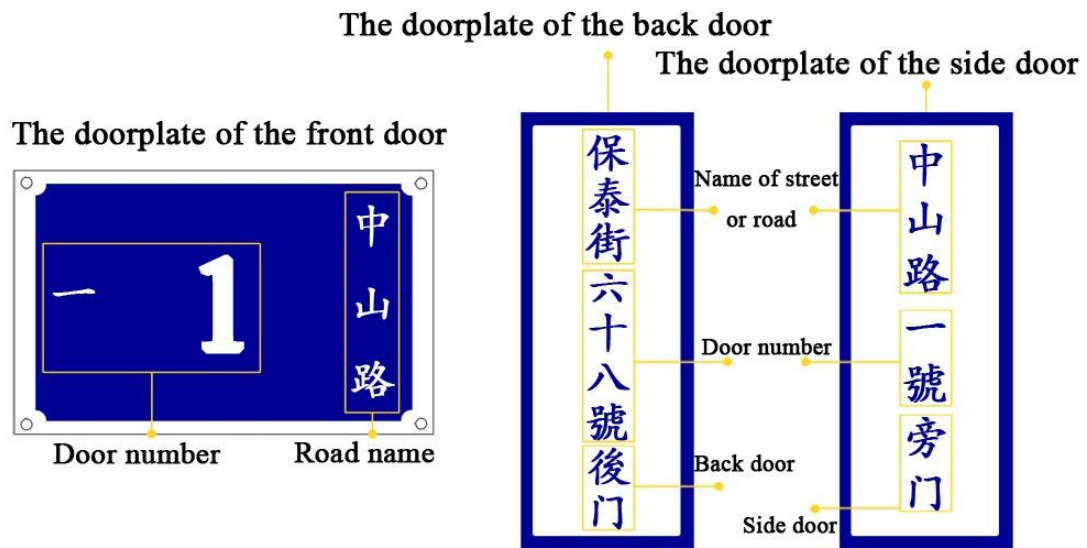


Figure 6.2 Doorplate of the Nanjing Nationalist Government of the Republic of China (1928-49), under police system, the ordinary residents' doorplates are classified into two types: the doorplates of the front door and the doorplates of the side or back door. All of them are made from tinplate. The front door's doorplate is about 16cm wide and 11cm high and white text on a blue background with a white edging; the side or back door's doorplate is 18.5cm high and 6.5cm wide and blue text on a white background with a blue edging.

Source: Drawn by the author according to *Compilation of Laws and Regulations of the Republic of China – the Domestic Affairs* (Compilation Division of Legislative Yuan of National Government 1934: 221-222).



The door number : 川X (Suzhou numerals) stands for 24

Figure 6.3 Beijing Doorplate in the period of the Republic of China in Chinese mainland (1912-1949).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 6.4 Rectangular and blue doorplate of Shanghai (white text on blue background) (1914), cited in Huang (2013), *an overhaul of the system of household registration in the early years after liberation of China*.

Source: *Xinmin Evening News*, 20th January, p.B13, 2013

http://xmwb.xinmin.cn/html/2013-01/20/content_29_1.htm

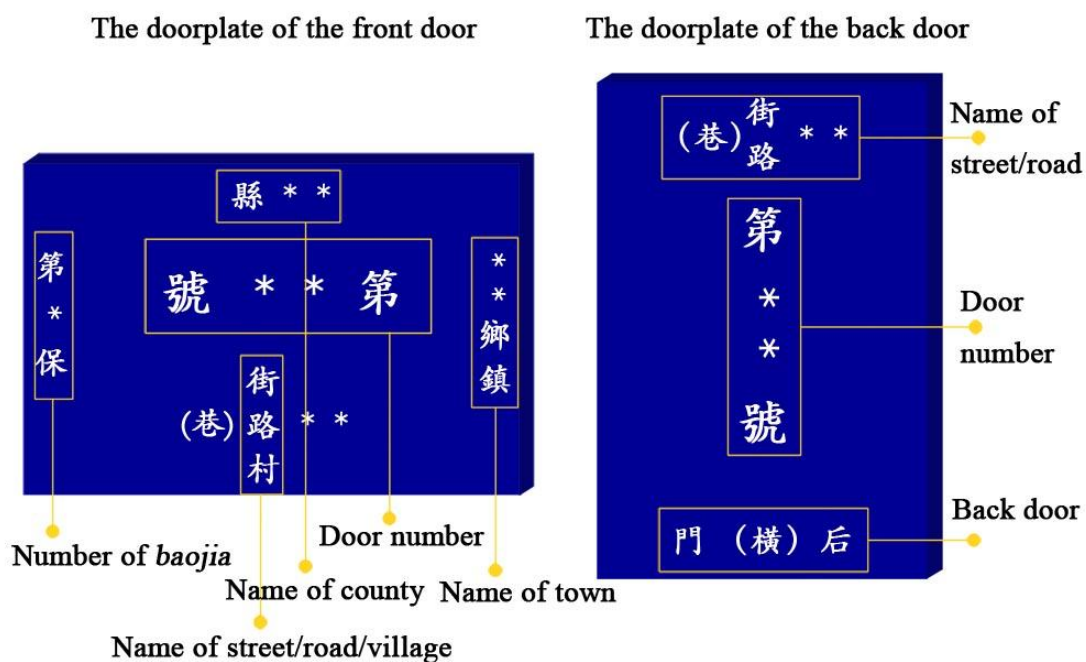


Figure 6.5 Doorplates of Wujiang county, Jiangsu province, in the Republic of China (1946). The wooden doorplate of the front door is about 12cm wide, 8cm high and 1cm thick; the doorplate of the back door is 8cm wide, 12cm high and 1cm thick. The background is blue and the text is white.

Source: Drawn by the author according to *the Archives of Wujiang County*:

00002-00014, cited in Xie 2006: 56.

The doorplate of the front door

Road sign

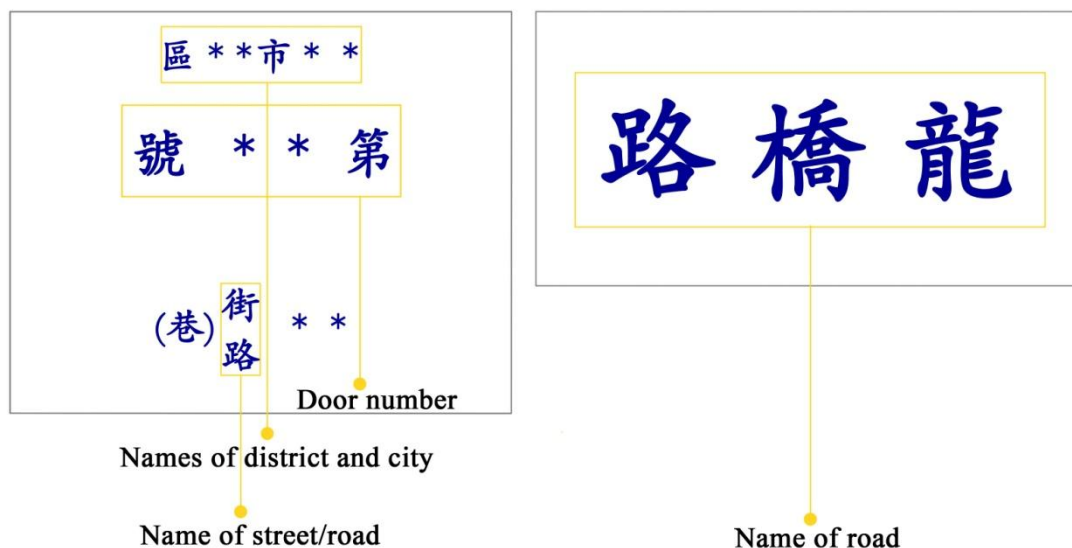


Figure 6.6, the city's doorplate and road sign in the Republic of China (1946). The doorplate and road sign are both made of enamel. The doorplate is 13.32cm high and 16.65cm wide. The road sign is 19.98cm high and 39.96cm wide. They both have blue text on a white background.

Source: Drawn by the author according to *the Archives of Wujiang County: 00002-00014*, cited in Xie 2006: 56.

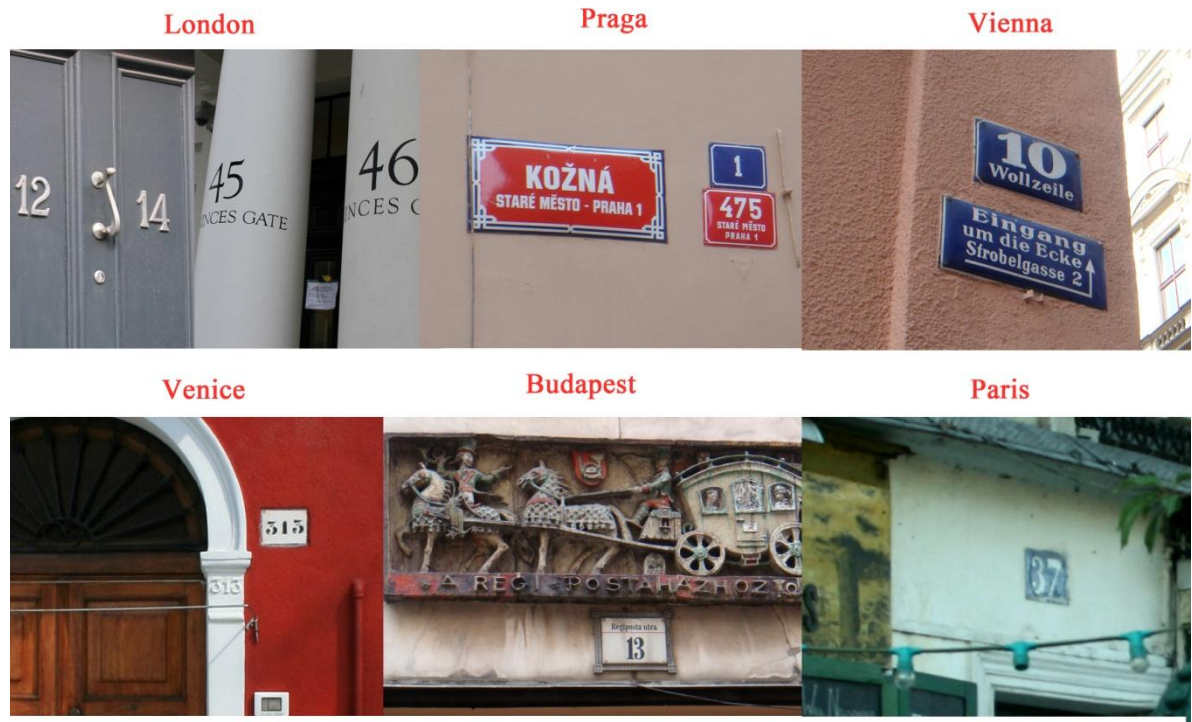


Figure 6.7 Current doorplates of several European cities.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011-2013.

From the above analysis, it is quite evident that the systems of the doorplates and road signs had become more efficient and popular and developed into an important requirement for Chinese residents after 1912. With the production of the new national identity – that of a republic – several large Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai had been undergoing an immense expansion through modernisation, industrialisation and population influx. They had devoted themselves to becoming modernised cities. These Chinese modernised cities have many common characteristics, for instance, broad roads, complex traffic networks, increased use of motor vehicles and bikes, and high population density. The more succinct and durable blue and white doorplates with assigned numbers and road signs began to play an irreplaceable role in orientation and postal addressing in the large and medium-sized Chinese cities. Although the doorplates and road signs were adopted in somewhat different forms, in different areas (city and countryside) and different cities, basically their appearances, colours, materials, functions and numbering schemes came into

being by intimating and redesigning the signage system of the Western concessions or legation districts in China.

Unlike the oval doorplates of the late Qing period, which were used to support the old imperial social structure, the Western (European)-style doorplates and road signs were made to promote an active shift to the new republican order where people had much more freedom and many rights. The former passively and mechanically imitated from the West without catching the essence of what it represents and how it works, the latter made full use of the European-style signage system to assist in the formation of the new urban or national image. For instance, as shown in Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 during the era of Republic of China (1912-1949), the doorplates of the ordinary households usually contained two sets of numerals; one is the system of Arabic numerals, the other is one of three indigenous numeral systems including Suzhou numerals and two sets of Chinese numerals based on Chinese characters. There are many possible ways to explain why Arabic numerals appeared on the local doorplates. One reasonable explanation is that Arabic numerals were broadly used in the doorplates of Western settlements in China; as the imitation of Western-style doorplates, the local government naturally regarded Arabic numerals as an important component of a doorplate. An alternative explanation might be that Arabic numerals were popularised by the Chinese government as a means of promoting its own modernisation, therefore the numeral system began to be applied in every facet of Chinese life, and the doorplate is one example of this. Whatever Chinese government's motives or targets might have been in those days, Arabic numbers on the doorplates of the ordinary residences, hospitals and stores benefited many foreigners' travel in China. While the Chinese indigenous numeral systems were applied to cater to local residents' needs. The ordered, consistent and mixed numeral systems were incorporated into the new spatial order of urban buildings and roads, supporting the modern spatial structure and orientation of Chinese big cities. In the meantime the road signs increasingly changed from an original administrative tool for household registration and demographic census to a critical part of urban graphic

wayfinding system which played a vital function in safe and smooth pedestrian traffic flow. In addition, the external forms of doorplates and road signs, such as colour, typeface, material, shape, size (see Figures 6.2, 6.5 and 6.6) were defined and regulated by law of the central government. In varying degrees, these standards of the doorplates and road signs differed in various areas of China. However, in the same area or city, their size, colour, graphic layout, typeface, content, and even specific installation location were guaranteed to be consistent. The consistency of the urban doorplates and road signs enhanced their visual identifiability and legibility for local residents.

The development and popularisation of the doorplates with dual numerals and road signs was in line with the expansion of urban public space and transit in the republican era. Moreover, not only do these succinct doorplates and road signs enable them to have a clear and defined postal address, but also they protect citizens' private and personal information. Therefore, it is safe to say that the Western-style doorplates and road signs with some strong and distinct local characteristics contributed to the transformation of China's major cities after 1912. Accordingly, the relationship between the local and the global reflected in the public signage system of China's main cities after 1912 differ greatly from that embodied in the doorplates and road signs of the late Qing dynasty. It can be explained more clearly by comparing three different types of relationships between the local and the global as follows.

Before the First Opium War (1840-1842), the Ming government began to pursue a tough isolationist policy in 1433 and the Qing government continued the same policy till 1842. The *Baojia* system was enforced by the government to tighten civil surveillance and control over the entire empire. The paper doorplate was the key to success for the thorough implementation of the population control system and it merely emphasised the imperial internal hierarchical relations, contact, balance, and management. During this stage, the local (the Ming and Qing governments) knew something was happening outside China, but decided not to establish or maintain

contact with the outside world, believing that they had nothing to gain or learn from the outsiders. This is the first kind of relationship between the local and the global. After the First Opium War (1839-1842), the closed door policy of China failed and a succession of military defeats to Western powers reshaped China's world view and forced it to learn from the West. It is clear that China was in a weak position politically, economically and militarily and it responded to the invasion and penetration of global (Western) culture and power in a passive manner. This is the second kind of relationship, which is reflected in the change from the paper doorplates of the *Baojia* system to the oval metal doorplates of the police system in the late Qing dynasty. The form and function of doorplates and road signs underwent a significant change again after 1912. In response to the changing needs of local residents and the modernised urban space, the functions of orientation, direction and postal addressing of the doorplates and road signs were enhanced and popularised. The main aim of this change was to place emphasis on the new local identity. At this stage, the local was not negatively resisting Western dominance but rather taking the initiative by appropriating global (Western) available resources to build up a new national identity. This is the third type of relationship between the local and the global. The shift from the first to the third kind of relationship reveals that the local has the capability of overcoming global challenges and turning inferiority into superiority, and graphic design (graphic wayfinding signs) has a part to play in this process. This point of view will be further examined and proved in the following section.

6.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 1912 to 1949

The most significant changes in the wayfinding signage of Beijing since 1908 are not only about their practical functions and meanings, but about their appearance involving material, shape, colour and so on. This provides primary materials and information for the visual analysis undertaken in this section. Building on the preceding analysis of Beijing's wayfinding signage, the rectangular paper doorplates began to appear around the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), the oval metal

doorplates replaced the paper doorplates in Beijing by 1908, subsequently, the blue and white doorplates, alley and road signs dominated Beijing for decades until 1964. The paper doorplates used over centuries reflect a deep-seated traditional local culture; by contrast, the oval metal doorplate reflects the influences of global (Western) power on the local (Beijing). However, the oval doorplate has not been extensively promoted in China and has less influence than the blue and white doorplates and road signs. The use of the blue and white doorplates and road signs with finer design was widespread in China and exerted profound effects upon the succeeding urban signage system of Beijing. So the blue and white doorplate was selected as the targeted object of the visual analysis of this section as it can more explicitly embody the dynamic and complex pattern of relationship between the local and the global.

The historical context: Beijing was transformed from an imperial capital into a civilian city with a republican spirit during the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949), and the urban design and planning along with new-style graphic wayfinding systems were used to construct a new urban space in a remaking of Beijing. This has been discussed at length in the previous section. We will not go over this ground again here; what concerns us in this section is the visual analysis of graphic components of the blue and white doorplate. As was argued in the previous section, the doorplates and road signs had contributed to enhance the new national identity as their functions of orientation and direction had been strengthened. In particular, special attention had been paid to the interests and demands of common people; these metal urban signs were carefully designed and refined, and since then local ordinary residents more frequently and consciously used these signs in their daily lives. For the convenience of local residents, the government made these public signs more comprehensible and readable as far as possible for all people including the literate and the illiterate. Besides, habits, customs and aesthetic preferences were taken into account in the design of the doorplates, alley and road signs. In the meantime, due to the Chinese government's efforts to keep up with and learn from the West, global (Western) factors were also important graphic components of the Chinese wayfinding

signs (take Beijing as an example). These wayfinding signs possess two different attributes – the local and the global, in their external forms. Although the Beijing government lacked the full awareness and understanding of the value of urban branding at that time, in order to have local residents daily needs met, the proportion of the local factors in these wayfinding signs is significantly higher than the proportion of the global factors. The local preferences and habits predominate in the design and use of the Beijing's wayfinding signs. The following paragraphs will investigate the interrelationships between the local and the global by analysing and comparing the graphic elements of the doorplates of Beijing.

As noted in Chapter 5, the forms of Western-style road signs and doorplates were practically unknown to local residents in Beijing, because the old doorplates were made of paper and primarily served as a tool of population management rather than orienting signs. It was not until 1908 that the new-style oval tinsplate doorplates were used to identify every house in Beijing during the Late Qing Reform (1901-1911). The Beijing government slowly but surely developed its own forms of urban doorplates and other signs with local distinctiveness throughout the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949). In such circumstances, Beijing's doorplates, based on practicability and local aesthetic standards, displayed the pronounced localised features and reflected the lifestyle, habits and visual aesthetics of local residents. As shown in Figure 6.8, although inspired by early doorplates of Western settlements in China, the typical Beijing doorplate of the time of the Republic of China displays a strong sense of the local, Chinese-style aesthetics and clarity and legibility in visual presentation for local people.

1

¹ Liu peng is a local resident and is an amateur photographer. He is enthusiastic about his



Figure 6.8 Doorplate of the period of the Republic of China from the Chinese mainland (1912-1949).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011; personal collection of Liu Peng¹.

This kind of doorplate (made from durable materials such as enamel for long term use), was normally displayed on the front gate of each household in Beijing, just like Westerners did, both in their settlements in China and in their native countries. This metal-enamel material is actually still used in the manufacture of road signs and doorplates in present-day Beijing and other Chinese cities. The difference is that in Beijing, besides the main front gate, the doorplates with specific names, which are dissimilar from the front gate, are affixed to other doors such as the back or side door. This is in part because of the particular structure of Beijing's residential buildings, in which the most frequently used door is, but is not limited to, the front door/gate. The side and back doors are often employed by local residents in Beijing. It is therefore possible to say that the design and installation of doorplates exactly correspond to the local architectural configuration and the traditional layout of the local residential areas.

As a result, Beijing's residents could easily locate themselves in both familiar and unfamiliar neighbourhoods. These enamel doorplates became a familiar sight in the alleys and streets of Beijing and the smallest physical aspects of Beijing's cityscape.

As can be seen from Figure 6.8, this plate contains a lot of information. The traditional Chinese characters on the far left indicate the district name in Beijing, and the traditional Chinese characters on the far right indicate the street name. In the middle, Arabic numerals '24' and Suzhou numerals (苏州码子) '卅×' both represent the door number. These traditional Chinese characters are from one of the conventional calligraphic styles – Regular Script styles, Yan (颜)². The basic strokes of Regular Script were normalised in the Tang dynasty (618-907); It is the earliest reference typeface for woodblock printing in the Tang dynasty and is one of the four most common printed typeface styles in China today (Han and Liu 2011: 162-164; Liao 2009: 239-240). Yan is the surname of a famous calligrapher – Yan Zhenqing (颜真卿) from the Tang dynasty. His Regular Script style is an overwhelming and imposing aesthetic and has the qualities of simplicity, vigorousness and masculinity, providing the character with a distinctive strong, simple and clear-cut edge; it created a new Chinese calligraphic style and has proved popular ever since, having a deep and far-reaching influence on many calligraphers after him (Han and Liu 2011: 162-164). Indeed, the use of this kind of typeface reveals the aesthetics of local people for this style. Hence, these Chinese characters are purely local (national) cultural elements. Moreover, the arrangement order of the Chinese characters indicates a habit, convention and way of reading and writing at that time, reading either from right to left in horizontal rows or from top to bottom in vertical columns, and right to left. Figure 6.9 shows that, traditionally, Chinese characters are written from top to bottom in vertical columns and from right to left. This Western reading and writing system, reading from left to right and top to bottom adopted in most countries of the world, was advocated for the duration of the China's New Culture Movement in 1919.

² In an interview with me in Beijing, an associate professor of graphic visual communication – Ziyuan Wang says that these traditional Chinese characters used on the blue doorplate have strong calligraphic features of Yan.

Besides, the overall graphic layout and typesetting of the residential doorplate exemplified the traditional aesthetic conception – orderly and symmetrical beauty. In general, the symmetrical aesthetic conception is embodied in the design and layout of traditional architecture, interior design, the arrangement of furniture and other adornments, and the composition of some calligraphies and paintings. As shown in the blue and white doorplate, all graphic components are arranged relatively symmetrically and correspond with each other, reflecting the time-honoured compositional principle. Likewise, the traditional written direction of the Chinese characters and the doorplate’s overall typesetting exhibit unique local conventions and cultural characteristics.

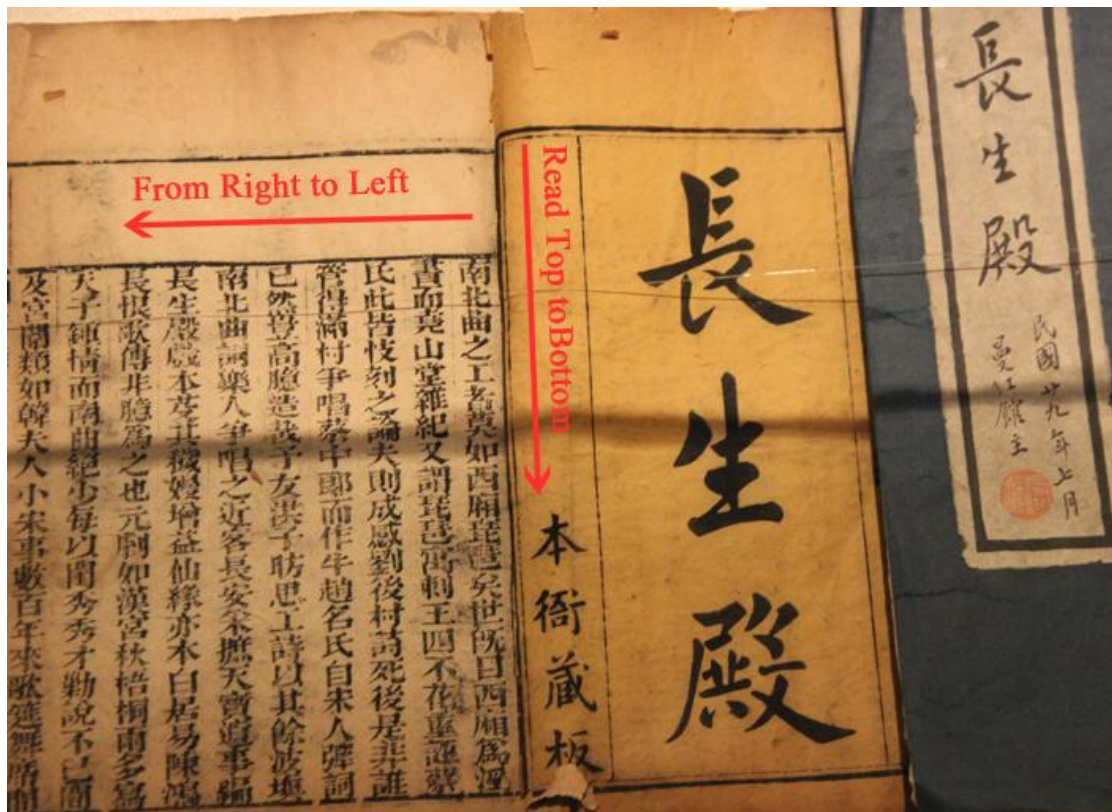


Figure 6.9 Script of the Palace of Eternal Youth (长生殿), printed in the 29th year of the Republic of China (1940).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011; collected by the Temple of Confucius at Beijing.

Referring to the number of this doorplate, two distinct numerals were used to express the same meaning – twenty-four, due to the daily habits of people of the day (ordinary Chinese people still adhere to their own numeral symbols – Suzhou numerals) and characteristics of that era in China. The Suzhou numeric system is a variation of an ancient Chinese calculating system – Rob-numeral system (*suanchou* 算筹) and was applied in the usual computations of business, as shorthand in bookkeeping, pawn tickets, invoices, contracts and bank notes for example. The Suzhou numeral system consists of a well-defined set of symbols, ○ (0) | (1) || (2) ||| (3) × (4) ㄣ (5) 𠄎 (6) 𠄏 (7) 𠄐 (8) 𠄑 (9) 十 (10) (Qiu and Li 2011). Hence, 24 is || ×. Suzhou numerals date back to the Song dynasty (960-1279). They were popular in the market of Suzhou (hence, the name Suzhou numerals) during the middle of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and from around 1862 to 1967, they were commonly used nationwide, playing a key role in commercial trade. Although Suzhou numerals have gradually been replaced by Arabic numerals, nowadays the ancient commercial numerals are still used in Hong Kong and some Chinatowns around the world. Apparently, the reason for using these conventional numerals, with which the vast majority of local people were familiar, on Beijing's doorplates was to meet the special needs of local populations. According to Evelyn Rawski's (1983) and Jiang's (1933) researches, in traditional Chinese society, the male literacy rate was 30%, the female literacy rate was 2-10%, thus the total literacy rate was less than 20%; in the early period of the Republic of China (1912-1949), China's literacy rate was about 15% (cited in Xiong 2009: 5). In the 37th year of the Republic (1948), nearly 39.85% of the population of Beijing (1,713,312) aged 6 years old and over were completely illiterate (Han 1985: 45). Although a great shift was taking place in society at the time, it was still impossible for these local residents including such a large number who were illiterate to learn Arabic numbers or Western writing system in a short time. Whereas the Suzhou numbers was the most well-known local numeric system, therefore, with support of this set of numerals, the doorplate of every family of Beijing could maximise the effects of orientation and direction in the local communities.

In addition, in spite of the frequent use of the Suzhou numerals in daily business-related activities in China, the application of the Suzhou numerals in public signs was possibly more popular in Beijing than in other Chinese cities. Research confirms that the doorplates of other major Chinese cities, for example Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou, in the age of the Republic of China, consisted of Chinese characters, a Chinese character numeral system, and Arabic numerals. The Chinese character numeral system comprises two sets of characters representing Chinese numerals: simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese or *xiaoxie* and *daxie*. For instance, 三十 (simplified) and 叁拾 (traditional) both are used for 30. The Chinese character numeral system is also well-known and is often employed for everyday writing in China. Usually, these two sets of numerals based on Chinese characters were employed individually or together to identify a residential address in Nanjing, Shanghai and other cities. Whereas along with Chinese character numerals (mostly with the simplified ones), the Suzhou numerals played an integral part in defining a clear and comprehensible address in Beijing. And besides, the Suzhou numeric system was also generally used in other signs and registration plates in Beijing at the same time. For example, a white and black metal licence plate for vehicle issued by the Capital Police Department³ (1912-1928) and displayed at the Beijing Police Museum only contains Chinese characters and Suzhou numerals. Thus, it seems that the use of the Suzhou numerals in urban public signs, particularly in the doorplates is peculiar to Beijing. Suzhou numerals, which are similar to the traditional Chinese regular script mentioned above, can represent local (Beijing) cultural elements, in contrast to the Arabic numerals ‘24’, which represent global cultural distribution, exchange and fusion.

Arabic numerals evolved from a Hindu system of symbols and were introduced into Europe in the early Middle Ages. They were spread by medieval writers such as

³ The Capital Police Department (京师警察厅) was the official public security regulatory institution of Beijing in the period of Beiyang government (1912-1928) and was established in 1913. From this we can see that the licence plate was made sometime between 1913 and 1928. The blue and white doorplates were produced at roughly the same time.

Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa and increasingly replaced the Roman numerals throughout Europe in the seventeenth century (Pannekoek 1989: 200). In the 13th century, Arabic numerals were brought to China, and until around the end of 19th century, they were widely applied as part of a modern educational system (Zhang 2009: 113). These days, Arabic numerals have become the most commonly used numeric system worldwide and are referred to as a universal numerical notation. The Arabic numerals adopted to number local residences by the Beijing government can be interpreted as either the subtle infiltration of the global force or local willingness and capability to borrow ‘ideas’ from the West. Whichever it is, the Arabic number displayed above the middle of the doorplates is an evident global cultural element. One aspect that should be mentioned is that on the doorplate Arabic numerals are not employed singly, but in combination with Heavenly Stems (*tiangan* 天干) which is a Chinese system of sequence used to record and express the date. Essentially, the system comprises ten special Chinese characters – 甲, 乙, 丙, 丁, 戊, 己, 庚, 辛, 壬, 癸. In this case, Heavenly Stems integrated with Arabic Numerals denote the sequential order of doorplates, instead of the exact date. Accordingly, the next number to follow 24 甲 should be 24 乙. This form of expressing sequence is somewhat similar to door numbers used in the UK. For instance, the next number following 24 Bridge Street could be 24A Bridge Street. It is apparent that Arabic numerals are imbued by a global factor, but this blend of Arabic numerals and Heavenly Stems comprises many local characteristics and national styles.

Based on these visual analyses, the findings suggest that the doorplate is a mixture of local (Beijing and the whole nation) factors and the global factors, in which the dominant position of the local factors is entrenched and intensified. This is partly because the function of orientation and direction of the Beijing’s doorplates and road signs were gradually valued and promoted by local government at that time, and with careful consideration of practicality and usability, the Beijing government developed locally recognisable and legible doorplates with distinct local features. Furthermore, given the low literacy rate, most local people probably were not acquainted with these

imported numerals. That is to say that Arabic numbers were completely lost and meaningless here. Such a global numeric system mingled with a bunch of well-established local elements does not prove the ascendancy of the global power and the weakness of the local. But it may be indicative of the active and progressive adaptation and learning of the local actor to new challenges. In the reformation process of Chinese national identity – from empire to republic, from traditional agricultural society to modern industrial society – the concerted efforts and positive cooperation of all government departments were pivotal to the successful social transition. And many necessary measures were taken by different government agencies to ensure the modernised transformation of China. The usage of Arabic numerals on the doorplates was one of measures of the national government popularising modern (Western) education and knowledge. This measure reflects the local government's firm determination to modernise or partly westernise its cities and country. However, when the local traditional and habitual values and cultures were challenged by the enormous global power, compromise and acquiescence, or strong resistance or self-superiority and self-confidence were found in the process, in which the old society had become unbalanced and a new social alternative was being born. In the blue and white doorplate, a range of local visual elements and global visual elements were concentrated on this little metal plate. Through the amalgamation of different elements, the requirements of the city, policymakers, and local users determined the preponderance and priority of these local visual elements.

As with Arabic numerals, the rectangular shape possesses global factors and the colour has a general design property. The rectangle, in particular, is a signifier of globalisation, and it is most commonly used to convey the idea of general information worldwide⁴. Similarly, as the triangle is used to express the idea of warning, so the circle is used to express the idea of prohibition. Even though these shapes

⁴ In accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals, which is an international treaty designed to standardise traffic signs, information signs should be rectangular, danger warning signs should be equilateral triangular and diamond shaped, and regulatory signs should be circular, inverted equilateral triangular, and octagonal. The convention was formulated in 1968 and entered into force in 1978.

representing various traffic rules were standardised in the multilateral agreement – the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals in 1968 – some of these signs (shapes or meanings) possibly had been universal in parts of Europe for a long time. Since the late 19th century, with Western colonial expansion worldwide, Westerners began building their settlements in major Chinese port cities and bringing their own lifestyles and all kinds of modern amenities including urban public signs to China. In the last section, it was pointed out that the Beijing government learnt and imitated the modern urban signs system, doorplates and road signs, for example of the Western legation districts or concessions in the early 20th century. So, it is highly likely that the rectangular shape of the Beijing doorplates was modelled on one of Western settlements in China.

The material (tinplate or enamel) of the doorplates and road signs as well as the manufacturing techniques come from the West. As noted in Chapter 5, Beijing's oval doorplates (1908) are made of *yangtie* (tinplate), *yangtie* means foreign iron; tinplate was referred to as *yangtie* because this kind of material and the processing technology were imported from the West. Equally, the casting technology of modern industrial vitreous enamels was introduced to China by Europeans. In fact, the Chinese people had used enamel on copper objects as early as the 8th century; the Cloisonné enamel technique was introduced into China through Arabic regions in the 13th to 14th centuries, as well as the imported craftsmanship becoming mature and forming its distinctive aesthetic style in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) (Sullivan 1999: 239; Shao, Gou and Wen 1983: 1-2). Through most of its history in China, enamel has been largely used in jewellery, ornament and decoration; it is not until the 19th century that enamel was gradually applied to everyday usage. The first cast iron enamel factories appeared in Europe between 1800 and 1835 and nearly half of them were built in Germany; afterwards, due to continuous technical improvements, industrial enamel was applied to thinner and lighter steel, and enamelling sheet steel came into its own in Europe in the late 19th century and was introduced into other countries and regions (Shao, Gou and Wen 1983: 1-2). In 1878, German and Austro-Hungarian everyday

enamel products were imported to China; after 1914, foreign-owned enamelware plants began to emerge in Shanghai; in 1917, the first Chinese owned enamelware factory was opened in Shanghai (He 1996). The doorplate, alley and road signs are examples of the application of this material in China. Hence, it is possible to infer that the shape, material and casting technology of Beijing's doorplates are evident global or Western factors.

Regarding the colour of the doorplate of Beijing, there are two related conjectures about the colours blue and white, as a global factor or a local factor. The first is that, just like the shape and material of the doorplate, the colours blue and white are derived from the imitation of those located in Western settlements; the doorplates were blue and white rectangular enamel plate in some of Western settlements established in China between the mid-19th century and the mid-20th century. So far I have not found any reliable information or images about the appearance of the doorplates of these Western settlements during the concession period (1845-1945). Yet the current doorplates of these European countries which once owned one or more concession territories within major Chinese cities can be regarded as a good reference to learn about the fundamental characteristics of the doorplates of their concession territories. For example, there were nine countries, UK, France, USA, Germany, Russia, Japan, Belgium, Italy and Austria-Hungary, who set up concession territories in China; among them, France had four concession territories and Austria-Hungary had one, and they respectively built legations in Beijing around 1861 (Fei 1991: 241-266; Ren 1992: 508). Hence, the design schemes of the doorplates and road signs of French or Austro-Hungarian settlements were probably the models that the Chinese government decided to imitate. Figure 6.10 shows current doorplates of Paris and Vienna, which are likely to be a continuation of the design style formed more than 100 years ago. By comparing the two cities' doorplates with Beijing's (Figure 6.8), it can be seen that these doorplates share several common features: shape (rectangle), colour (blue and white), Arabic numbers, and probably the same material (enamel). In the light of this analysis, it is fair enough to say that the colour of the doorplates of

Beijing is a global visual factor.

Paris



Vienna



Figure 6.10 Door numbers of Paris and Vienna.

Source: photographed and collected by the author, 2011-2013.

However, meanings of colour and shape might vary due to the fact that in different cultures these may have different meanings. The second conjecture is that due to some political motivation, the colours blue and white of the doorplate were intentionally used to stand for a political party—the Chinese Nationalist Party. The Chinese Nationalist Party was the ruling political party during the Republic of China era on the Chinese mainland (1912-1949); its party flag was Blue Sky with a White Sun (青天白日) (see Figure 6.11). This flag, designed by Lu Haodong in 1895 and refined by Sun Zhongshan, contains many different meanings:

This colour blue stands for the local values of nationalism, liberty,

‘brightness, purity, and freedom, and thus a government that is of the people’, the white represents democracy, fairness, ‘honesty, selflessness, and equality, and thus a government that is by the people’; the twelve rays of the core symbol of the flag – the white sun denotes twelve traditional Chinese hours of a day, each of which is equivalent to two modern hours, indicating continuous perseverance, progress and self-improvement. As a whole, China as a big country in the Far East, is likened to the sun rising in the east in the flag, meanwhile the blue sky white sun entails that sun is shining over freedom and equality (Ministry of the Interior 2014; ROC 2014; KMT 2014).

Apparently, the Blue Sky with a White Sun flag of 1895 can be interpreted as a symbol of the integration of Chinese culture and Western culture, the historical and the present, and the traditional and the modern. It also reflects the essence of the new identity of the Republic of China.

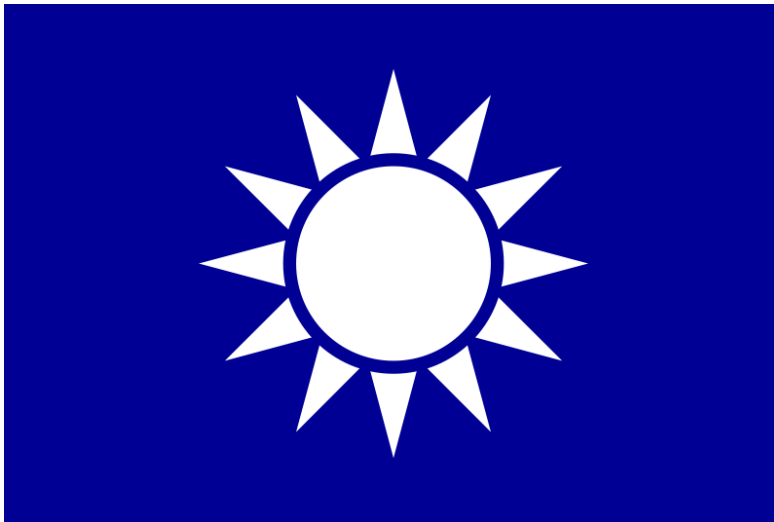


Figure 6.11 The Blue Sky with a White Sun flag (青天白日旗).

Source: public domain.

It is clear to see that the blue is one of the main colours of this flag and, so the present ruling party in Taiwan (the Republic of China), the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) makes use of this blue to identify itself as before and name itself as the Pan-Blue Coalition. Hence, blue is viewed as a symbol of the Chinese Nationalist Party. The

chief colour of the doorplate in Figure 6.8 shows a hue between ultramarine blue and Prussian blue and, perhaps this was not chosen casually, but was based on the special meaning of this blue in China. The colours of Beijing doorplates could be associated with the political colour of the Chinese Nationalist Party. Even though the blue and white take on some connotations of modern Western concepts, such as liberty, democracy and equality, they have been used to identify the local political party, parts of their political ideals, and even partial new characteristics of the country. If so, the colours blue and white of Beijing's doorplates are able to be explained as local cultural factors. Indeed, neither of the two conjectures excludes the other and parts of both may be true.

All the analyses above justify a point that local cultural factors intertwine with global cultural factors, though the local appears more dominant than the global. It should be observed that the use of the Yan style of Chinese calligraphy, Suzhou numerals, direction of reading, and symmetrical typesetting reflect traditional aspects of Beijing at that time, while the rectangle, material, colour blue, and Arabic number show the influence of the global power. The combinations of all these elements are tokens of both cultural amalgamation and conflict. In the battlefield of conflict of diverse cultures, in order to have the local political purposes and the particular kind of aesthetic and living needs of the local people met, the local visual elements are even more prevailing and powerful. However, this does not mean that global power is fragile and vulnerable. Essentially, in some cases, global power is influential, pervasive, and even somewhat invasive. In this case, the global factors: doorplate (the modern doorplate and other public signs of China stem from the West), shape, colour, material, and technology, is more like a water container, which is filled with local factors. The influential global factors are effectively used to express the modern aspect of the new identity of China and determination of reformation of the local government, while the precedence of local factors reveals a deep-rooted faith in the superiority of authentic traditional Chinese culture. All this serves to emphasise the initiative, adaptation, and resourcefulness of the local, instead of the one-way

global-local dualism, which tends to stress the dominance of the global and the weakness of the local.

6.4 Summary

The dramatic changes in the function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding signage from 1912 to 1949 have been investigated in this chapter. The local visual elements and the global visual elements in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing of this historical period have been identified and analysed. The results of this suggest that both local and global factors permeate and interact with each other in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems; the combination of the two types of visual elements has bred new and peculiar visual forms that are a manifestation of underlying ideologies and are employed by the local authorities to persuade its citizens to accept and agree to their political ideas and cultural messages. Hence, instead of being passive and stagnant, the local is ambitious and resourceful. The next chapter will introduce more examples to illustrate the continuation and consolidation of Beijing's public orientation and direction signage system and their appearance from 1949 to 1964. The relationship between the local and the global will be explored by largely analysing the change or constancy in the function and exterior of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems.

Chapter 7 Third Phase 1949 to 1964 – Public Orientation and Direction Signage System

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin to investigate the relationship between the local and the global by analysing the roles and appearance of Beijing's 1949 – 1964 graphic wayfinding systems. The first part will focus on why the functions of orientation and population management of Beijing's doorplates and road signs were retained and adopted by the new communist government after 1949. It will address this question from two perspectives – a wayfinding perspective and a population management perspective. And then it will be argued that although the urban graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and other large Chinese cities were designed and installed by the previous Nationalist government, it did not prevent the new communist government from using these signs to consolidate its position as a new guardian of China. It will also emphasise that the relationship between the local and the global, as mirrored in the unchanged functions of Beijing's signage systems, is that the local is eagerly involved in appropriating global resources for its own political and cultural purposes. The second part will explain why Beijing's signage system had not been redesigned from a social angle until 1964. The same argument regarding the interaction between the local and the global will be illustrated from a visual perspective.

7.2 The Continuation and Consolidation of Urban Public Orientation and Direction Signage System after 1949

The twentieth century was a chaotic, intricate and transformative phase in China's history, when traditional social and cultural values were challenged, undermined and sometimes even fused with Western ideological thoughts. As a historian of modern China, William Kirby (2001) notes the twentieth century was one of the eras of transformation in China and, from a political point of view, it witnessed the fall of the Great Qing Empire, the birth of the Republic of China in 1912, the triumph of China's

war of resistance against Japanese aggression in 1945 and China's rise as a world power (Kirby 2001: 114). He also points out that twentieth-century China experimented with a variety of political and social ideas, the most obvious influence on China's social and political experiments and practices being the Soviet model (ibid.). In short, China made a transition from an empire to a modern nation-state in the 20th century after undergoing a series of essential transformations in social, political, economic and cultural structures. From the analyses of Chapters 5 and 6, it can be seen that the changes in appearance and function of the doorplates (the house numbering system) and road signs of Beijing were roughly in line with each major transition of China during the first half century of the twentieth century.

To summarise, the first significant change in Beijing's doorplates and road signs occurred in 1908. During this period, the Qing government initiated an intense reform known as the Late Qing Reform (1901-1911). China was standing at a major crossroads of history. This period saw a good deal of determined imitation of various Western systems including educational, military and political affairs. Although strong reform did not save the dynasty, it was still an important turning point in the course of the transition of China. The second obvious change occurred in the early years of the Republic of China (1912-1949). China became the first republic of Asia in 1912 (Kirby 2001: 118). The foundation for China's imperial politics, culture and philosophy was thoroughly destroyed and the Western concepts of liberation and democracy dominated China's political scene (ibid.). The rearrangement of Beijing's urban space and the redesign of its doorplates and road signs not only reflected the mainstream social and cultural transformation, but were also utilised to solidify the transition from an empire to a republic. Interestingly, there was no change in the function and design of Beijing's signage systems between 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established, and 1964, when the third major change in Beijing's signage systems took place. It had been fifteen years since the Chinese people had found a new identity in 1949 after a range of social and political upheavals. In 1964, Beijing's doorplates and road signs were redesigned and were endowed with

new meanings and functions. Over the previous fifteen years, the existing functions of providing orientation and ensuring population management of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were simply continued and consolidated. Under this condition, their appearances were basically unchanged and were well maintained during the period. The following paragraphs will explain why the functions of urban orientation and population management remained as before. The focus of the next section is on why the designs of Beijing's doorplates and road signs were not changed at this important transition point of China.

One main reason suffices to explain the continuation and maintenance of the functions of orientation and population management of the doorplates and road signs of Beijing. The reason is that the house numbering system and road signs continued to play an irreplaceable role in preserving social order and stability in the early years of the new regime. For the leaders of any new regime, their first priorities are to alleviate the impact of wars on people's lives, restore public order and eventually enhance people's trust in the new regime. The new communist government who took over mainland China in 1949 was no exception. Having undergone the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Second Chinese Civil War (1945-1950), China fell into chaos. In order to become a stabilising force, in the early years of the new China the leadership spared no efforts to ally with the Soviet Union, suppress counter-revolutionaries, formulate the China's First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) to stimulate economic and industrial growth, and enact land reforms. Within the historical and social context, Beijing's and other big cities' doorplates and road signs played an active role in maintaining social tranquillity and ensuring a functioning urban space and society. It can be explained from two perspectives, either from a wayfinding perspective or a population management perspective.

With regard to the wayfinding perspective, after the regime change of 1949, Beijing's doorplates and road signs were still used to provide direction in urban environments and provide a postal address for ordinary people. Kirby (2001) argues that the

twentieth century undoubtedly saw a full scale industrialisation of China; industrialisation produced fundamental changes in the Chinese way of life, altering how the Chinese people worked, where they worked, what they produced, consumed and wore, and how they lived and died (Kirby 2001: 114). Likewise, the Western-inspired house numbering system and road signs that were officially introduced around 1908 and improved about 1914 essentially changed how the Chinese people found their way around, how they created their cognitive map and how they identified and located their home. After more than four decades, the graphic wayfinding systems had deeply infiltrated Chinese people's daily life and had become an integral part of it. Hence, it is easy to understand why the communist government made enormous efforts to maintain the social order by keeping the existing urban signage systems in China's large cities. For example, in September 1949, the Shanghai municipal public security bureau issued a temporary decree concerning integration of the street, road and alley signs and doorplates of Shanghai (Huang 2013: B13). The key principle of this decree was that most signs be maintained intact and that missing, incorrect or damaged signs be located and replaced (ibid.). By the end of that year, 14,000 alley signs and doorplates were repaired or refitted and the number series was ensured to be applied to the doorplates and alley signs in the correct sequence, by so doing, providing all citizens with easy access to municipal services containing household registration, installation of lighting and water lines, and postal service (ibid.). At its simplest, the argument is that sound and comprehensive graphic urban wayfinding systems have become an important means for creating safe, supportive and convenient environments for inhabitants in the modern Chinese society. It should be clear by now why not only was the function of orientation of Beijing's doorplates and road signs continued, but was even further enhanced.

Turning now to the population management perspective, as the name implied, these doorplates and road signs of China's major cities were a vital means of population management and social control. They can be effectively used to control and manage the population, primarily because they are an essential factor for the successful

implementation of the Chinese household registration system. In fact, the indissoluble connection between doorplates and household registration system can be dated back to the dynastic period of China. The paper doorplates with detailed household information of the empire era (see Chapter 5) as well as the oval doorplates and household registers of the late Qing dynasty (see Chapter 6) are examples of that. In the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949), for the purpose of managing the population more effectively, door numbers, road signs, national identification cards and national population registers were strongly linked. Not surprisingly, the graphic urban wayfinding systems still served a prominent function for the government of managing the population, promoting a stable society, preventing violence and getting the new communist government on its feet between 1949 and 1964. For instance, in 1949, the reorganisation and repair of Shanghai's doorplates and alley signs that were regarded as a foundation for the implementation of household management were put on the agenda; as a result, 500 population registers and 700,000 doorplates and alley signs were mended and reorganised (Huang 2013: B13). These existing reliable and readable signs and reorganised population registers were very effective in identifying citizenship, carrying out political events, providing municipal services, arresting criminals, and thus preserving social order (ibid.). It is clear now that the house numbering system and road signs that were inherited from the previous government were not changed, but were still used to legitimise and support the new government rule.

It is worth pointing out that the effect of these signage systems was mainly reflected in the management and control of the urban population of China. This is because in the first fifteen years of the new government, the urban population of China boomed, and the urban signage systems had a role to play in easing the social pressure caused by the urban population explosion. For instance, the transfer of political power to China in 1949 sharply accelerated and stimulated urban population growth; China's urban population increased quickly from around 57 million in 1949 to about 100 million in 1957, and to 131 million in 1960 (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 357).

Throughout the dramatic population migration from the villages to the cities and towns, the existing urban graphic wayfinding systems continued to make vital contributions to people's daily lives and government's population management policy. In another example, between 1960 and 1964 a large number of industrial plants were closed because of the reduction of expenditure with a 50 per cent fall in employment in China; therefore almost 14 million unemployed people were returned to the countryside and the remaining city populations were strictly controlled (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 374). 'A program of complete household registration, rationing of grain and other daily necessities, and household checks' enabled the new government to keep a high degree of control over urban inhabitants (ibid.). Undoubtedly, the existing door numbers and road signs were indispensable in the promotion and implementation of the programme of complete household registration and household checks. Overall, from these two perspectives it is revealed to us that the old functions of orientation and population management of the doorplates and road signs in most of China's major cities, especially Beijing and Shanghai, were completely maintained and that, therefore, there was no need to change the signage systems. They were applied to create a stable social environment for ensuring a smooth transition from the old force to the new one.

Having defined the main features and functions of the signage system of Beijing between 1949 and 1964, I will now move on to analyse and explain the interaction between the local and the global in this crucial historical transition. In Chapter 6, it was argued that in the years following 1912 and up until 1949, the modified and localised European-style graphic wayfinding systems in Beijing and other big cities were employed to strengthen the establishment of a new urban space and a new national identity – that of the Republic. It was also argued that the incorporation of Western signage systems into Chinese modern practices shows that local is not a simple passive recipient of Western (global) ideas and influences but is keenly engaged in negotiating global forces and localising global resources for its cultural, economic and political purposes. Henceforth, the adoption of this Western signage

system had deeply left its mark on the DNA of China's urban construction and social control. Thus, in the early days (1949-1964) of the communist authority, the same graphic urban wayfinding systems once again played a significant role in maintaining public order, implementing social control and eventually ensuring a smooth transition to the new government. It is because the continuation and strengthening of the functions of orientation and population management of doorplates and road signs of China's main cities efficiently facilitated the relative stability of post-war Chinese society. It is clear that the global resource (Western-rooted signs) once again became an effective means of addressing local development needs.

Indeed, since 1908, the official introduction of the Western numbering scheme and sign systems profoundly penetrated ordinary people's daily life and completely changed local people's behaviours or habits of organising their life and perceiving their urban space. From the perspective of behaviour or habit change, we can see that Western factors had spread and penetrated Chinese society, which clearly highlights the penetration and dominance of global power. Nevertheless, most of these doorplates and road signs were considerably localised to meet local people's needs and intentionally used by the local governments to achieve identity transformations. From this perspective, the process, in which the Western sign systems were accepted, used, modified and sustained by the local, had led to the creation of a local version or experience of modern urban space arrangement and population management. However, this is not to say that local power is indestructible and almost always capable of repelling the invasion of global power.

In this thesis, instead of presenting the indestructibility of the local, we deal only with how the local flexibly responds and adapts to changes led by the global power. The resourcefulness, determination, resilience and dominance or the weakness, obedience and concession displayed by the local in confronting the penetrative influence of the global make the relationship of the two opposing powers bidirectional, changeable and reversible. In this case, during this period between 1949 and 1964, the initiative

and flexibility of the local is reflected primarily in the maintenance and reuse of the existing graphic wayfinding systems. The infiltration of the global or Western factors into local society had not homogenised and eradicated the local culture. On the contrary, these localised Western signs had been merged into the local street landscape and culture. The next section will examine the relationship between the local and the global by means of a visual analysis of the doorplates and road signs of Beijing and Shanghai between 1949 and 1964. The major reasons why the design of Beijing's doorplates and road signs was not changed during this period will be explained.

7.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 1949 to 1964

It can be seen from Figure 7.1 that the blue and white Beijing's doorplates remained largely unchanged until about 1964 when the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China was celebrated. That is to say, there was no change in the appearance of Beijing's doorplates that was designed by the previous government between 1949 and 1964. In the previous section, it was suggested that the new government continued and made maximum use of the functions of orientation and population management of the doorplates and road signs in large Chinese cities between 1949 and 1964. It seems reasonable to make a close connection between the functions of these signs and their appearances. In other words, the continuation of these signs' functions directly resulted in the preservation of their form and appearance. In turn, the unchanged and consistent graphic wayfinding systems not only saved the central government and local governments at all levels a great deal of money, but also ensured the smooth running of the graphic wayfinding systems in a short period of time. However, it is not the only way to explain why the design of Beijing's doorplates and road signs was not altered between 1949 and 1964. It is also because there are many cases in which rearrangement and redesign of graphic elements does not necessarily affect the basic function of a signage system – orientation and wayfinding. In fact, there are many other factors, such as economic and social status or propagation of political and cultural ideologies that also have a

direct effect on the design of a city's graphic wayfinding systems. The subsequent discussion will attempt to explain from a social angle why the appearance of Beijing's wayfinding signs remained the same between 1949 and 1964.



Figure 7.1 Beijing doorplate from 1947 to 1984 (According to author's investigation, the change in the appearance of Beijing's doorplates took place around 1964/65).
Source: Brochure of Comparisons between Old and New Doorplates Numbers of Chongwen District of Beijing (北京市崇文区新旧门牌号码对照簿) (Chongwen

Government 1984).

Through an analysis of a range of secondary data and visual data from many sources, one interesting finding is that the redesign of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing was often a part of reform schemes. For instance, the first change from the paper doorplates to the oval metal doorplates occurred as a part of the Late Qing Reform; the second change from the oval doorplates to the rectangular doorplates and road signs was made to contribute to the new urban construction and planning in the early years of the republic of China. Certainly, after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, a series of reform measures aimed at facilitating transition into a socialist country was set out. As mentioned in Section 4.3.2, as a newly established socialist country, the reconstruction of China's capital was strongly influenced and inspired by Soviet models and theories. In the early years of the PRC, the central government followed the lead of the Soviet Union and attempted to present Beijing as a model city for socialism and communism. The Beijing Urban Planning Commission, having responsibility for the renovation of Beijing, was established in July 1949. A team of Soviet specialists of architecture, urban planning and transportation were sent to China to support its socialist modernisation between 1950 and 1956. For this reason, the Soviet model (the 1935 Moscow Master Plan) and ideology had left a deep imprint on the new Beijing's urban landscape and architecture. The new Beijing's spatial pattern and architectural style were preliminarily formed in the 1950s. The remoulding of urban space, as it were, remained fundamental supports for the formation of the new national identity in China. Within the new spatial configuration, the design of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems stayed largely unchanged for nearly fifteen years. One reason for this, as maintained earlier in this chapter, is that the functions and design of the existing graphic wayfinding systems had worked well for years; therefore a complete replacement of the old systems was considered unnecessary by the new authority.

Another reason is that during the period of transition to the new order in the 1950s,

while the new authority faced a number of challenges and tasks, both internal and external, Chinese society was relatively fragile and volatile at the time; in this situation, the redesign of the existing graphic wayfinding systems was not a priority for the new government. As Fairbank and Goldman (2006) state, since the Communist Party took power in 1949, Mao and the CCP considered the re-establishment of a powerful central authority of a unified and centralised country and the remake of its core principle and social structure on the basis of the new theories of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, as their most imperative problem and the highest priority (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 360-361). Teiwes (1987) points out that after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new leaders confronted many intimidating problems: 'society and polity were fragmented, public order and morale had decayed, a war-torn economy suffered from severe inflation and unemployment, and China's fundamental economic and military backwardness created monumental impediments to the elite's goals of national wealth and power' (Teiwes 1987: 51). Although by 1957 a powerful centralised state had been created and its national economy had become more stable and thriving, the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) which caused a severe famine, and the strained relations with the Soviet Union in 1960 seriously raised the threat of social unrest. Under these conditions, it is apparent that the redesign of the existing sign systems aimed at erasing the previous government's influence, was not the new government's main concern at the time.

In fact, besides minimising the previous regime's influence and consolidating the new power, there should have been other motives the new government had for redesigning and updating the existing sign systems at that time. For example, the layout and typeface used on the old graphic wayfinding signs was inconsistent and irreconcilable with the new government's reform schemes of simplification and Latinisation (Pinyin) of Chinese characters. The new communist government was committed to simplifying and Latinising Chinese characters. In January 1956, the Communist State Council broadcast a scheme for simplifying Chinese characters and, in the same year, the

Chinese Characters Reform Commission published the scheme of phonetic alphabet of Chinese characters (Pinyin). In addition, the traditional writing system and vertical layout (from top to bottom and from right to left) was gradually abolished and a new writing system (from left to right) and horizontal layout was advocated in the conference of the national language reform in 1955. The typeface, typesetting and Latin letters used on the existing signs of many of China's big cities especially in Western settlements and concessions, respectively were traditional Chinese characters (written from right to left) and a combination of English or French and one of the Latin alphabet systems (written from left to right) that were specifically used to transcribe Chinese. These Latin alphabet systems are often referred as to Romanisation or Latinisation of Chinese. There were several different Latin alphabet systems. The variability of the systems in different cities or different areas of the same city was due to different creators who spoke different European languages. One of the most influential and widespread transliteration and Romanisation of Chinese system is Wade-Giles that was widely used in English-speaking world. The Wade-Giles system initially was created by the British diplomat Sir Thomas Wade in the mid-19th century and was amended and refined by Herbert Giles in his *Chinese-English Dictionary* (1892). The Wade-Giles system is very dissimilar from Pinyin that was designed and spread by the new government in the 1950s. For instance, 'East' (东) in Wade-Giles is tung, yet in Pinyin, it is dong.

The Wade-Giles system combined with traditional Chinese characters and English often appeared on the signs of Western settlements in many of China's big cities, particularly in Shanghai. As shown in Figure 7.2, a typical Shanghai street sign of 1945 was characterised by the traditional writing system, Wade-Giles and English: 路東正中 (traditional Chinese characters and from right to left typesetting) and Chung-Cheng Road (Wade-Giles and English). Similarly, in Figure 7.3 below we can see that the name of a street of Shanghai was written on two metal rectangular signs in two languages in 1925: traditional Chinese characters as well as Wade-Giles and English. The texts on the upper sign were written in Wade-Giles and English –

NANKING ROAD; the lower sign was in traditional Chinese and was read from right to left – 路京南. According to the new government's 1950's language reforms – simplified Chinese, from right to left typesetting and Pinyin, the two street signs should be written like: 中正东路, Zhongzheng Donglu; 南京路, Nanjing Lu. Hence, there are clear differences in the two systems.

Under an imperative to popularise the new writing system (simplified Chinese and horizontal typesetting) and new Latinisation scheme (Pinyin) in China in the 1950s, these urban signs should have borne the brunt of the language reform in cities and should have been changed and redesigned according to the principles of the new writing system. Yet, they did not change at all through the the 1950s and the early 1960s. It indirectly demonstrates that between 1949 and 1964, in pursuing political reform and economic growth at all costs, the central government did not regard the design issue of urban signage as an urgent problem. Nonetheless, the reform of Chinese writing system and the popularisation of Pinyin at the time laid a firm foundation for the redesign of the doorplates and road signs of Beijing and other cities in 1964.



Figure 7.2 Streetscape of Shanghai after the victory of China's resistance against Japan in 1945.

Source: Life Magazine photographic collection: <http://time.com/photography/life/>

Liupeng's (one of my interviewees) private blog:

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_491bcbfd0102dt53.html?tj=1



Figure 7.3 Guards in front the Louza police station in Shanghai during the May 30th Movement, Saturday 30 May 1925.

Source: Virtual Shanghai <http://www.virtualshanghai.net/photos/albums?ID=2098>

As far as the interaction between the local and global is concerned, the findings or conclusions of the visual analysis of Beijing's doorplates that was carried out in Chapter 6 (1912-1949) are also applicable to the present chapter (1949-1964), since the graphic visual elements of Beijing's doorplates and road signs did not change a great deal between 1912 and 1964. Thus, the localisation of the Western-inspired signage highlights the initiative, creativity and flexibility of the local. The one-way global-local relationship is challenged and a dynamic and reversible relationship between the local and the global is emphasised. More specifically, even though these old visual elements such as blue and white colours were not utilised to intentionally express the new socialist identity of China, the concise, readable and familiar appearances with strong local features still helped local people smoothly adapt to the new living space. At its simplest, the design of the old graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing had its own role to play in making the transition to a socialist country. The unchanged functions and appearance of Beijing's and other cities' graphic wayfinding

systems between 1949 and 1964 show that in the particular period of time, by way of maintaining part of the existing systems that involve all aspects of people's life, the local managed to seek a firm foothold in the unstable society and ultimately nourished its identity as a legal successor of China. The initiative and flexibility of the local is faithfully reflected in the continuation of the existing graphic wayfinding systems, both in functions and in appearance.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the reasons why the functions and appearance of the existing graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were maintained between 1949 and 1964. One reason is that the existing and consistent urban sign system was, to a certain extent, an effective means for the new government to resume social order, manage population and target criminals. Another important reason for not changing the sign systems' design and functions is that, facing a turbulent society, conflicting interests and deep divergences within the party and increasing economic pressures, the central government did not pay much attention to the redesign of the urban signage. Instead, the new authority maintained the existing urban sign systems and brought fully into play the advantage of them in restoring public order and civil life. As explained in Chapters 5 and 6, the dynamic amalgamation and conflict between local and global systems, local ideologies and global ideologies led to two great changes in the design and functions of Beijing's signage systems in the early 20th century. The responses and negotiations of the local to the threats of global power are embodied in the two profound changes. However, in the period between 1949 and 1964, the responses, adaptability and flexibility of the local are embodied in the maintenance of these existing urban graphic wayfinding systems.

Along with the economic recovery and radical political events in the 1960s, a range of new schemes were employed by the government to renew and redesign Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems at a more intense pace. This is the time when the

communist government was confident enough to adopt a variety of local, Western and Soviet visual elements to underline its political belief and its new identity – a socialist country with strong Chinese characteristics. It is also the time when a ferment of new thoughts developed about the new function of urban wayfinding signs – diffusing and instilling political beliefs and ideologies by the ruling class. Chapter 8 will explore the correlation between the local and the global by investigating the new role of Beijing’s signage systems as a political propaganda tool, as well as analysing the graphic visual elements used in these systems.

Chapter 8 Fourth Phase 1964 to 1978 – A Political Propaganda Tool

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will take the 1964-1978 doorplates and road signs of Beijing as examples to investigate the nexus between the local and the global. First, it will deal with the new function of political propaganda of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. It will explain how the new red signs of Beijing served the purpose of propagandising the dominant political beliefs and rewriting history from two aspects: the colour red and commemorative road names. It will argue that the extensive application of the red road signs and doorplates with commemorative names in China's main cities highlights the potential of the local to merge global culture into its own culture, and the reversible relationship between the local and the global. The second section of the chapter will then deal with the new visual components of the road signs and doorplates of Beijing. The reversibility and mobility of the interaction between the local and the global will be illustrated by analysing these graphic visual components.

8.2 Political Propaganda – Road Signs and Doorplates

In the previous chapter, I argued that due to social instability and economic stagnation and collapse caused by wars and the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), the redesign or update of the existing urban signage systems was not the new government's preferred choice in the 1950s and early 1960s. In order to spur on the weak economy, the agricultural and industrial recovery programmes were actively implemented by the government and had been notably successful in stimulating economic recovery and growth between 1963 and 1965 (Lardy 1987: 391-397). However, the flawed Great Leap Forward policy direction gave rise to deep and long-standing divergences within the party. Lieberthal (1989) states that

In short, during 1958-65 the Chinese Communist movement lost some of its key political assets, both in terms of the organizational weapon it possessed

in the Party and in terms of its reservoir of legitimacy among the population. These losses contributed to the deep divisions that led in turn to the Cultural Revolution (Lieberthal 1989: 298-299).

Under these conditions, a range of political campaigns and propagandas were initiated by Mao to mobilise the masses, underpin the mass line, purge members of the CCP and inculcate the party and masses' allegiance and loyalty to his leadership. For instance, the Tenth Plenum was convened in September 1962 and it signified 'the beginning of Mao's effort to stop criticism of his policies, halt the slowing down of revolutionary momentum, and implement a cultural revolution' (Goldman 1987: 469). A 'Socialist Education Campaign' was initiated in 1962, in which weakening revolutionary spirit was revitalised within the Communist Party via purifying the party (consolidating socialist and removing capitalist, feudalist and antisocialist factions) and calling for the class struggles (Kraus 2012:10). Subsequently, Mao launched the Party Rectification (1964-1965) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). All-inclusive mediums for political propaganda used by Mao and his followers had a crucial role in the diffusion of particular ideologies during this period.

Indeed, before and after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party adopted various modes of propaganda such as urban planning, architecture, novels, poems and operas, which have profoundly political, cultural and ideological echoes, to consolidate and legitimise its position. For instance, as early as the late 1930s, the CCP decisively added its own will and belief into the creation of poems, songs, and novels and then employed them to motivate mass support and eagerness for party policies and plans (Goldman 1987: 433-434). Urban planning and architectural design of Beijing imitating the Soviet style during the 1950s exemplified how the new regime altered and used urban space to express their political ideals. Like easily understandable songs, poems, novels and posters, the urban graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and other large Chinese cities were redesigned and served as an important political propaganda tool in 1964, reaching a climax during the

Cultural Revolution. In what follows, we will analyse in great detail the new role played by Beijing's signage systems between 1964 and 1978.

As noted in the previous chapter, after the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Chinese Nationalist Party in mainland China and established the People's Republic of China in Beijing on October 1949 the blue and white doorplates and road signs had not been changed significantly between 1949 and 1964-65, despite the regime alteration. It was not until the mid-1960s that the distinctive red and white road signs and doorplates gradually replaced the old ones as new and prominent elements of the urban landscape of Beijing. According to an article named *Beijing de Xinlupai* (new road signs in Beijing) written by Ni Haishu⁵, published in the magazine, *Wenzi Gaige* (the Reform of a Writing System) in 1964, we are able to find out more about what the 'new' road signs were like and when they were installed:

New Road Signs in Beijing

Ni Haishu

On the eve of the 15th anniversary of the establishment of our country, the streets in the capital are extremely clean and tidy.

New road signs, on which simplified Chinese and Pinyin are seen side by side, are to be found everywhere.

This is not a milestone project, though it is a fantastic reform. These road signs are guiding people's steps in the direction of advanced civilisation, therefore the characters and pronunciations ought to be correct.

Workers and farmers have all learned simplified Chinese, which should be used in any situation and occasion. If someone is still using complicated traditional Chinese, even primary and middle school students would not be

⁵ Ni Haishu (1918.1988) (倪海曙) is a famous linguist and Chinese character reformer in China. He has made a notable contribution to the reform of Chinese Character and is an outstanding representative of the Romanisation of Mandarin Chinese movement.

able to understand.

The phonetic notation for each character allows whoever has learned the letters to pronounce them properly. To our friends far away, Beijing has never been as close as now.

Beijing now has friends all over the world, which has built up a warm connection among hundreds of millions of people. Please do not underestimate these red letters, since they also symbolise and represent internationalism.

New road signs are built in Beijing, they are beautiful and lovely, and they are praised by everyone. They are passionately guiding us to step onto the new revolutionary road.

(My own translation)

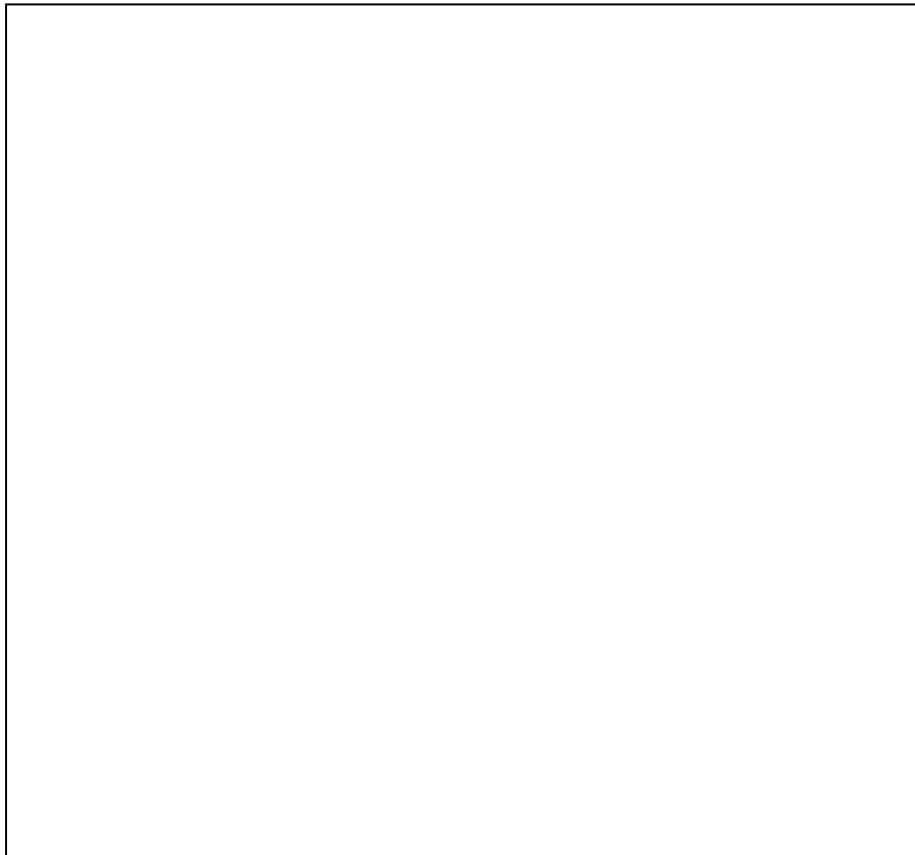


Figure 8.1 A new road sign stands in Tiananmen Square of Beijing (1964).

Source: illustration from the above article – *Beijing de Xinlupai* (new road signs in

Beijing) (Ni 1964).

We can infer from this article and its illustration that the new road signs, which were composed of a rectangular enamel board and a pole, with red simplified Chinese and Pinyin (phonetic alphabets of Chinese) on a white background (see Figure 8.1), were set up on the streets of Beijing on the eve of the fifteenth anniversary of the PPC (1964). The specific content of this article will be discussed later in the chapter. In addition, the record of the book – *Beijingshi Chongwenqu Xinjiumenpaihaoma Duizhaobo* (Brochure of Comparisons between Old and New Doorplate Numbers of Chongwen District of Beijing) (see Figure 8.2) reveals that the blue and white doorplates were replaced by the red and white ones about 1965. So, it is certain that the doorplates of Beijing were redesigned and remanufactured, with the original white traditional Chinese characters on a blue background being converted into white simplified Chinese characters on a red background, in Beijing around 1965. Taken together, these findings suggest that these red and white road signs, alley signs and doorplates were put in place in Beijing about 1964/65. With the significant transition from the old to the new graphic wayfinding systems, a new function of political propaganda appeared. The old functions of orientation and population management and the new function coexisted in all China's big cities. The remainder of this section will focus on the ways in which Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were utilised to subtly indoctrinate the official political ideas to the masses from two perspectives: (1) these new red road signs and doorplates were used to propagandise and underscore the new national identity – a socialist county with its own characteristics; (2) during the Cultural Revolution, these red road and alley signs with new names served as a means of erasing traditional values and beliefs from the masses' collective memories and commemorating new heroes, events, and values.

(1) the red road signs and doorplates spread strong, Chinese-style
communism/socialism

In comparison with the blue and white signs of the era of the Republic of China (1912-1949), the gradual application of the red and white public signs in Beijing are more likely to be associated with the new political position – left-wing socialism and communism – given that the colour red is commonly understood to represent left-wing politics and ideologies (Ghosh, 2011). Examples include the red flags used in the European revolts in 1848, the plain red flag of the Paris Commune of 1871, the flag of the Soviet Union and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Throughout most of Chinese history, the colour red has many different symbolic meanings in Chinese society, officially and unofficially. Nevertheless, the political association of socialism and communism of the colour red was thoroughly and extensively enhanced and popularised in China, accompanying the introduction of Marxism-Leninism and the founding of the People’s Republic of China (1949). During the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the class struggles summoned by Mao were further intensified, the class ranks were erased, and a social order and cultural belief based on Maoist leadership and Maoism were set up (Kraus 2012: 13-19; MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 2006). China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched by Mao Zedong in May 1966 and ended in 1976 with his death. Its goal was to maintain and solidify socialism by evoking class struggle, overthrowing capitalism and feudalism, eliminating bourgeois ideologies as well as to ensure Mao’s absolute leadership over the party. The revolution expanded greatly and came to a peak in the radical movement led by Red Guards (mostly teenagers from middle schools, workers and motivated junior officials). By the time the Cultural Revolution broke out and subsequent class struggles were underscored, praise of the proletariat and the worship of socialism and communism reached a peak. As a result, the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao and its movements used an array of symbols and slogans to create internal solidarity and cohesion, and eliminate political rivals. Red as a strong and powerful political symbol and with its association with communism became the most prominent colour in China at that time. Thus, it is not surprising that red artefacts and imagery containing red and white road signs and doorplates could be found everywhere in China after 1964 and throughout the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Especially for the period of the Cultural Revolution, the colour red had been endowed with new connotations and the whole country was flooded with red images – red flags, slogans, books, paintings and posters and so on. Jiang (2002) has grouped red imagery into two distinct types, ‘Still and Moveable Red’ (Jiang 2002: 108): Still (in the sense of ‘static’) Red contains the red slogans on the walls, red-black posters, and mural paintings; Moveable Red includes red badges, flags, armbands and red *Quotations from Mao Zedong*. In the light of this classification, the red doorplates, street, road and alley signs can count as Still Red for diffusing dominant political information (see Figures 8.5, 8.6, and 8.7). Indeed, the propaganda means of mass communication used by the Chinese Communist Party covered a broad spectrum of art genres between 1949 and 1976, including posters, paintings, books, films, operas, and ballets and so on. As Evans and Donald (1999) argue:

The model people of the posters were designed as much to project a socialism of the future as to provide exemplars for the present. Despite – or very probably because of – this motivation, revolutionary poster art, children’s cartoon books, scant film footage, and even personal memoirs seem to come together in extending the representations of propaganda into lived social experience (Evans and Donald 1999: 20).

Likewise, due to the fact that these public signs were ubiquitous in public space (road signs) and personal space (doorplates), these signs were considered as a visual medium designed to interfere with people’s daily life experience and to convince people to pay more attention to the new identity of China.

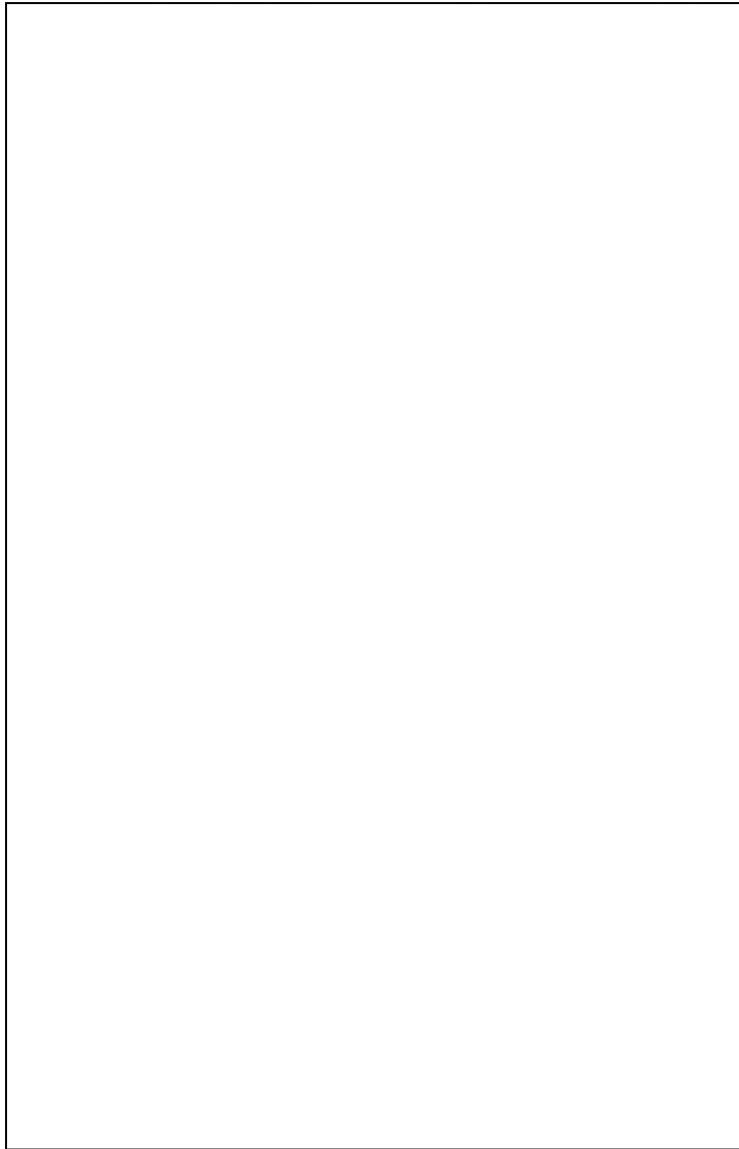


Figure 8.2 Beijing doorplates from 1947 to 1984.

Source: Brochure of Comparisons between Old and New Doorplates Numbers of Chongwen District of Beijing(北京市崇文区新旧门牌号码对照簿) (Chongwen Government 1984).

Generally, in the traditional folk cultures of China, the original symbolic meanings of red are double happiness, jubilation, joy, auspiciousness and prosperity. It is always used in celebrating the Chinese New Year, as well as weddings, birthdays and family gatherings. However, as noted above, the colour red often internationally signifies left-wing ideologies and is commonly associated with communist parties or movements in many countries across the world. Cushing and Tompkins (2007: 14)

argue that the red appearing in propaganda posters during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution symbolised socialism and revolution, the red sun was a sign of Chairman Mao and Maoist Thought, and that the images of Mao stood for the revolution and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Thought (see Figure 8.3). Jiang (2002) believed that in the special historical era, red was reinterpreted as an emblem of revolution, proletarianisation, justice and noble morality and, at the same time, the broad masses of people proved their loyalty to the Communist Party and determination to revolution by using red. Indeed, the Chinese Communist Party and Red Guards had completely associated red with Mao, revolution, and China during this period. The influence and significance of the colour red can also be clearly seen from a song, *The East Is Red*, which was at one time the informal alternative of China's national anthem, *Song of the Volunteers*; it became a household name in 1966, and was broadcast in 1970 from China's first man-made satellite of the same name (Kraus 2012: 30):

The East is red, the sun is up.

China has brought forth a Mao Zedong.

He works for the happiness of the people, and

He is the great savior to the Chinese nation. (Excerpt)

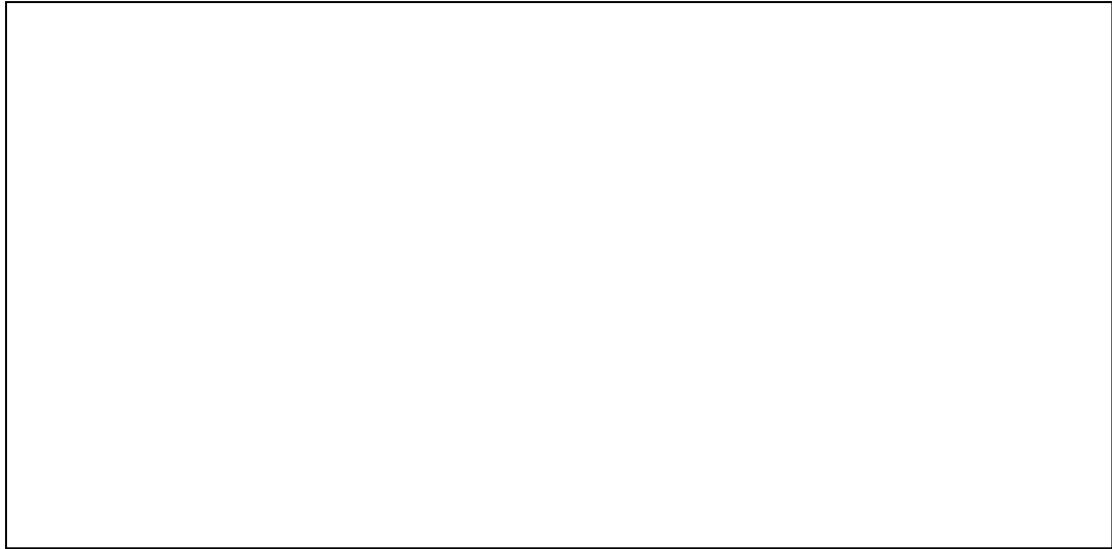


Figure 8.3 Poster: March To Victory With Chairman Mao's Line On Revolutionary Culture, artist unknown, publisher unknown, 1968, 73×156 cm assembled (composite image of three posters).

Source: Cushing and Tompkins (2007: 101).

Therefore, warm and bright red rose to prominence over other colours in this state. Not only was it treated as the authoritative and official symbol of the country, the CCP and the proletariat, but also as the main tool for the diffusion of political stances and ideas, and as a weapon for defending values of the proletarian class against bourgeois ideologies. The Red Guards were not merely active responders but also radical implementers of the process by which red was popularised throughout mainland China. They always wore red armbands and red Chairman Mao badges and carried the Little Red Books (*Quotations from Mao Zedong*) and red banners at their massive rallies. The dress of the young militia woman in the bottom left of Figure 8.4 can be seen as a reference to the Red Guards. Moreover, in July 1966, the Red Guards drew up a circular decree that required drivers and pedestrians to go at the red traffic light and stop when the light had turned green as well as forcing drivers to drive on the left-hand side of the road, which were completely opposite to the previous traffic regulations (Lai 2010: 19; the Research Office of the Chinese Communist Party's history 1998). The reason they gave for the change was that it was inconceivable and

unacceptable that in a proletarian territory, the red light is a signal to stop (Lai 2010: 19). However, the unofficial decree was not enforced and the idea was ultimately discarded. Clearly though, the red that portrayed the communist, Maoist, proletarian, and left-wing political connotations became a sign of advancement and progress in mainland China at the time. As a vital means of education and communication, the red doorplates and roads signs were extensively used in China to support the new cultural and political reform experiment and instil in citizens a new set of proletarian cultures and beliefs.

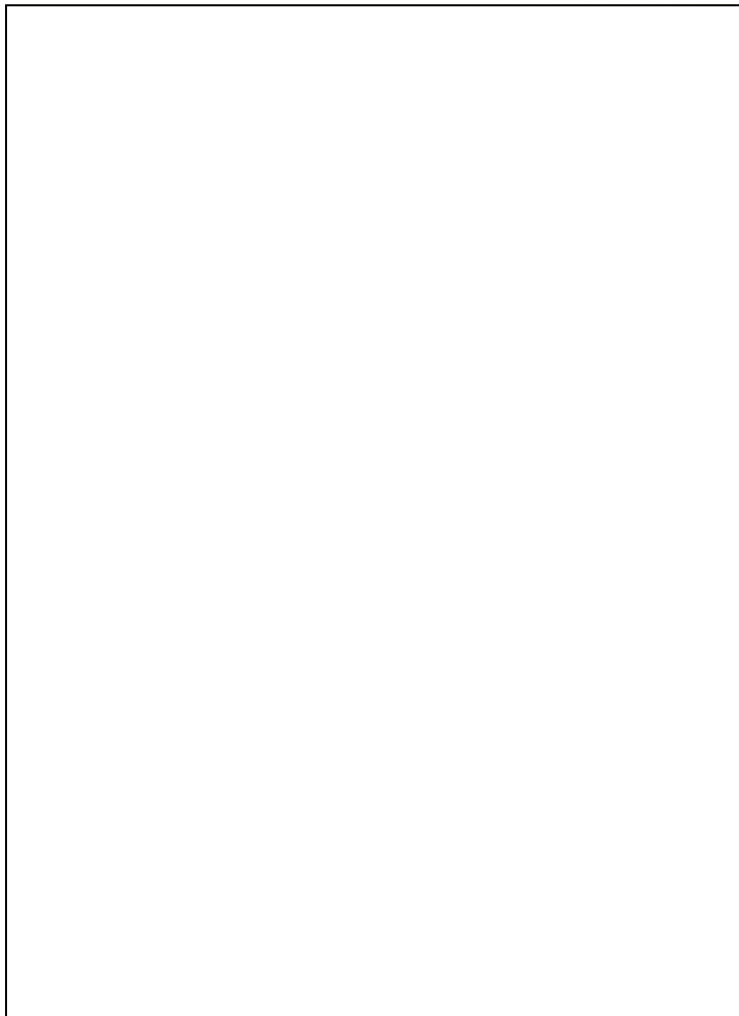


Figure 8.4 Poster: Become A Person Like This One, artwork by Shan Lianxiao, published by People's Fine Art Publishing House, 1972, 106×77 cm.

Source: Cushing and Tompkins (2007: 84).

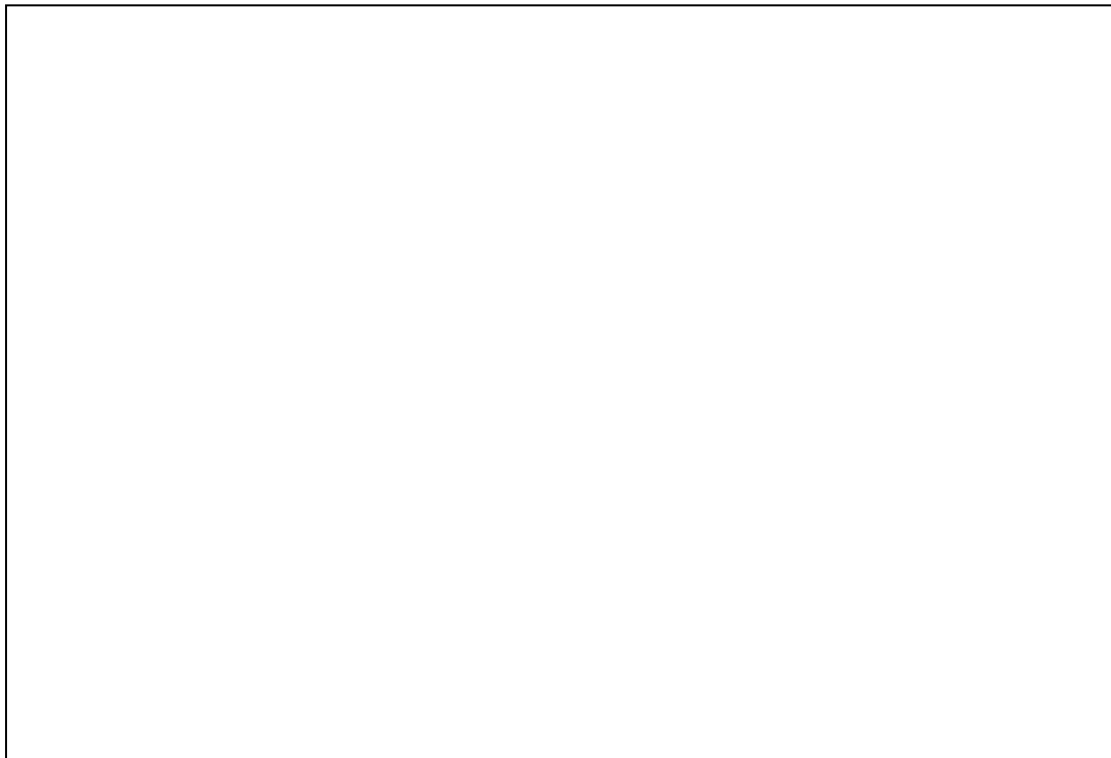
(2) the red road signs and doorplates with new names commemorated new revolutionary direction, heroes, and values

In addition to the colour red, the renaming of streets, roads and alleys of Beijing enabled these public signs to function more successfully in their new role as a political propaganda tool. In the Cultural Revolution movement, traditional arts, opera, classic literature and heritage were often associated with narrow-minded mentality, feudal and backward ideologies and corruption of these highly radical Red Guards. They actively responded to the call of Chairman Mao and strongly opposed the 'Four Olds' (old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas) (Kraus 2012: 44). The 'Four Olds' included not only ancient calligraphies and paintings, antiques, precious old books but also street, road and alley names and even the design of signs. Red Guards modified the street, road and alley names and ensured the systematic application of the revolutionary colour – red – in the street, road and alley signs and doorplates around 1966. As the centre of the revolution, the old names of many roads, streets and alleys of Beijing were resolutely altered; traditional, historical and symbolic names were changed into the names with strong left-wing or Maoist political overtones, such as Mao Zedong's Road, Revolution Friendship Road, Yanan Road, Worker Farmer Soldier Road, East Red Road. Some names directly indicated the revolution direction and the 'dual adversary' (anti-Soviet and anti-US) policy: anti-Soviet Revisionism, anti-Western Imperialism and anti-Feudalism. For example, the street where the Soviet Embassy was located in, was renamed as Anti-Revisionist Road and the Dongjiao Minxiang (东交民巷), in which the Foreign Ministry was positioned, was renamed Anti-Imperialist Road. In addition, some schools and public gardens were renamed, such as Anti-Revisionist Road Middle School and Red Guards Garden. It is clear that these red signs with new names contributed to the creation of a new historical narrative by means of abandoning old names, sealing the collective memories and commemorating the new heroes – Mao and the Red Guards, the Chinese revolutionary sacred site, Yanan, and the new proletarian culture.

Certainly, renaming streets and roads was not original to the Chinese Communist Party. As one of the most historically significant cities in China, Beijing's roads, streets, and alleys had been renamed many times throughout its history, but never as intensely, ideologically and comprehensively as in the Cultural Revolution. In reality, such a method of expressing power and mobilising the masses can also be found in many other cultures and countries. This is particularly evident in the cases of Berlin and Bucharest. Following the Nazi's control over Germany in 1933, the Reichskanzlerplatz in Berlin was renamed Adolf-Hitler-Platz; After the collapse of the Third Reich in May 1945, the new municipal administrations of Berlin instantly renamed Berlin's streets that were inconsistent with the new democratic and anti-fascist Germany (Azaryahu 2011: 483-484). In 1947 socialist Bucharest, the new Romanian government symbolically reshaped Romanian history and the meaning of urban space by naming and renaming streets, by which 'the regime sought to institutionalise the ideology and dogma of socialism and to demonstrate its new allegiances' (Light 2004: 158). In his view of the renaming of commemorative street names, Azaryahu (2011) argues that 'Commemorative street names belong to the ideological foundations of the socio-political order... Expressive of political and ideological reorientation, acts of pulling down monuments and renaming streets are symptomatic of periods of regime change and revolutionary transformations' (Azaryahu 2011: 483). He also identifies the process of renaming the past as containing two parts: the de-commemoration of the old regime and the commemoration of the new regime's heroes and version of history (ibid.). He highlights 'the act of naming streets is an expression of power... Commemorative measures of naming are embedded into the political geography of the city and the cultural geographies of public memory and everyday life' (Azaryahu 2011: 484). Drawing on Azaryahu's arguments, it will be clear now that street signs with commemorative names are one of methods of indoctrination of prevailing political ideologies, rewriting history and mobilisation of the masses.

This view is supported by Light (2004) who writes that '...street names are not eternal.

A change in political order is frequently accompanied by the redefining of the national past through the renaming of streets, new narratives of national history and identity are inscribed onto the urban landscape' (Light 2004: 155). He also argues that '...changing the names of streets (particularly in capital cities, or these locations most closely associated with political change) can have a powerful propagandist effect' (Light 2004: 156). By drawing on the Azaryahu's and Light's ideas about the significance and aim of commemorative renaming of streets, it is easy to see why these red signs with new names in Beijing were undoubtedly playing an important role in inscribing new political beliefs, cultural values and new version of history into urban space and people's everyday lives.



Figures 8.5 The Red Guards of Beijing changing the sign of the road of Soviet Embassy; they renamed this road as Anti-Revisionist Road (1966).

Source: Documentary – *The Footsteps of the Republic* shot by The State Archives Administration of the People's Republic of China, 1999.



Figure 8.6 The sign of Anti-Revisionist Road.

Source: The author made this image by reference to the Documentary- *The Footsteps of the Republic* shot by The State Archives Administration of the People's Republic of China, 1999.



Figure 8.7 Beijing doorplate from 1965 to 1984.

Source: *Brochure of Comparisons between Old and New Doorplates Numbers of Chongwen District of Beijing* (北京市崇文区新旧门牌号码对照簿) (Chongwen Government 1984).

From the previous discussion, it can be seen that while the red signs offered

directional assistance and population management, they also served the purpose of expressing the new national identity and history, as well as spreading the overriding political ideals in the context of regime alteration. In comparison to the previous three historical phases: 1840-1912, 1912-1949, and 1949-1964, the fourth phase 1964-1978 shows that the Western-inspired graphic wayfinding systems were deeply localised and were completely adopted by the local government to build and spread explicit local values, political ideologies, and cultural identity. This would amount to saying that the local had brought into play the advantage of urban signage systems in communicating political information and rewriting local history. At the same time, as an essential part of the cityscape, Beijing's red graphic wayfinding signs were finally suited to its urban space and architectural style saturated with strong socialism and nationalism, shaped in the 1950s (see Section 4.3.2). Suffice it to say, during this time the local government was confident enough to search for and adopt global resources and experiences to cultivate its own new culture and values, as well as disseminate them at a more intense pace. Although the Cultural Revolution was an utter catastrophe for the Chinese, the red road signs and doorplates with commemorative names as the product of the radical revolution still reveal the powerful initiative and burning desire of the local to find a way to fit into the new world order without being a victim of it.

As noted by Hsu (2000), after the two Opium Wars, modern China actively and enthusiastically searched for a way to survive in the new world led by the West:

The dynamics of change suggests that modern Chinese history is not characterised by a passive response to the West, but by an active struggle of the Chinese to meet the foreign and domestic challenges in an effort to regenerate and transform their country from an outdated Confucian universal empire to a modern national state, with a rightful place in the family of nations. This view avoids the pitfall of "foreign causation" in the interpretation of Chinese history and the implication that China merely "reacted" (Hsu 2000: 13).

Clearly, Hsu argues that the process of modernisation of China that began in the late 19th century was typified by the Chinese people actively seeking a solution, as an alternative to submissively accepting an inequitable status quo. Regarding the incursion and challenge of the West, Hsu states that ‘the intrusion of the West can be construed as a kind of catalyst, precipitating traditional China into its modern counterpart’ (Hsu 2000: 6). By drawing on Hsu’s idea, we can regard the Western-inspired signage as a catalyst or vehicle that assisted in the transformation processes of identity from an empire to a Western-style republic and to a socialist state. Taken together, these results suggest that while Western artefacts were increasingly penetrating local society, they were also being appropriated and localised to shape a new local culture. Hence, the relationship between the local and the global is not fixed – sender and recipient – but reversible.

8.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 1964 to 1978

This section will confirm and develop the findings of the previous section by explaining the graphic elements of the red and white signs of Beijing in terms of the local and the global interweaving and composing each other. The changeable and reversible relationship between the local and the global will be illustrated in this section. Beijing’s red and white road signs and doorplates of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and even earlier (1964-65), as shown in Figures 8.6 and 8.7, are the products of that time and in turn reflect the features of the period – anti-feudalism, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism and pro-communism. Summarising the street, road and alley signs and doorplates of Beijing between 1964 and 1978, the following features became apparent:

- The colour had been changed from white Chinese characters on a blue background to white Chinese characters on a red background or red Chinese characters on a white background.

- Traditional Chinese characters were substituted by simplified Chinese characters and the phonetic alphabets of mandarin Chinese – Pinyin, which is a Latinisation of Chinese writing system, on the road and street signs. The Chinese font – *Song* typeface and its variants Imitation *Song* for example, were extensively applied on the road signs and doorplates. (see Figures 8.6 and 8.8).
- Conventional Chinese vertical text layout was replaced by Western left-to-right horizontal text layout. The red arrow or red arrow with white border appeared on street, road and alley signs (see Figures 8.6 and 8.8).



Figure 8.8 An alley sign in Beijing, installed around 1964.

Source: Photographed by author, 2011.

It is therefore not difficult to discover that, like the doorplates of the Republic of

China (1912-1949) discussed in Chapter 6, road signs, doorplates and other public signs used for the period of the Cultural Revolution exhibited a blend of the local and the global. The distinct difference between the public signs of the two periods is that the red-white signs were more strongly and clearly linked with local political and cultural intentions than the blue and white signs. This is probably partly due to the fact that the Chinese Communist government made a series of more stringent propaganda policies related to politics and culture, and implemented them more systematically, intensively, and even extremely, particularly in the time of the Cultural Revolution. In Chapter 6, it was argued that Beijing's blue doorplates and road signs of the Republic of China might have been designed to represent the political camp in power – the Chinese Nationalist Party. In the case of the red and white graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing, this change from blue and white to red and white was not accidental but planned and deliberate. As explained in the previous section, red was assigned to these road and alley signs and doorplates only because red is associated with left-wing and communistic ideologies, proletariat revolution as well as being a symbol of this state.

All these red and white graphic wayfinding signs of Beijing consisting of different global or local visual elements including colours, shapes, typefaces and typesetting can be utilised to explain the complex dynamic between the local actor and global resources. Latin letters, Arabic numerals, arrows and the left-to-right horizontal layout on the road signs and doorplates and their rectangular shape and enamel material, are clearly globalising (Western) properties. These global elements incorporated with the simplified Chinese characters, as in Figures 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8, reflect the government's urge to accelerate Western-style modernisation and to advocate emulating Western civilization. In the early 20th century, Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong and other social elites and radicals devoted themselves to eliminating social inequality and Confucian ritualism by advocating democracy and science. They believed that traditional Chinese characters and traditional vertical text layout were not suitable vehicles for modern education and impeded the transfer and dissemination of modern

knowledge, thought and technology (Wang 1995: 14-16, 22-23). They argued that simplification and Latinisation (or Romanisation) of Chinese characters could promote mass education and speed up the progress of modernisation (ibid.). Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new Chinese government continued to support the idea of simplifying and Latinising Chinese characters. In January 1956, the Communist State Council authorised a scheme of simplifying Chinese characters and, in the same year, the Chinese Characters Reform Commission published the scheme of phonetic alphabets of Chinese characters (Pinyin). At the third United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names in 1977, the scheme of Pinyin for the Latinisation of Chinese geographical names was approved. Henceforth, large cities in China began to use the simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin on their road signs or other urban signage. In the examples chosen here (Figures 8.1 and 8.6), one can see that the red simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin are the main content of the street and road signs of Beijing. As noted above, Ni (1964) summarises one of the main features of the new road signs in the following paragraphs:

New road signs are built everywhere, on which Simplified Chinese and Pinyin are seen side by side.

This is not a milestone project, though a fantastic reform. These road signs are guiding people's step to the direction of advanced civilisation, therefore the characters and pronunciations ought to be correct.

Workers and farmers have all learned simplified Chinese, which should be used in any situation and occasion. If someone is still using complicated traditional Chinese, even primary and middle school students would not be able to understand.

The phonetic notation for each character allows whoever has learned the letters to pronounce them properly (Ni, 1964).

He is saying that the usage of the simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin on the

road signs is an indication of progress and advancement; using complicated traditional Chinese characters involves a retreat to the ‘unenlightened era’. As to the combination of the simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin, he stresses that as long as you have learnt Pinyin (a phonetic transcription system of Mandarin Chinese using Latin alphabets), you are capable of appropriately pronouncing these characters annotated with Pinyin. In a way, this measure was very effective for enhancing the function of positioning of Beijing’s graphic wayfinding system for the reason that people could effortlessly locate themselves by correctly pronouncing the name of a street or road. Furthermore, the spread of this kind of street and road sign in China’s cities advanced the compromised reform of Chinese characters, that is, instead of totally Latinising Chinese characters, parts of commonly used characters were simplified and a phonetic alphabet system was designed to transcribe the Mandarin pronunciation into Latin letters.

In 1935, a proposal named *Women Duiyu Tuixing Xinwenzi de Yijian* (Our Opinions About Promoting New Written Characters) and presented by 688 Chinese intellectuals, says that:

China is thrown into a life-and-death situation, organising, informing and educating the mass of the people is the critical solution to get our state and nation out of the current predicament. However, writing and reading traditional Chinese characters can be very difficult and it indeed takes a very long time for the ordinary people to master, so these traditional characters have severely hindered the fulfilment of the goal of popularising education and eliminating illiteracy... This new Latinised words are what Chinese people really need.

(Ni 1948: 138.139, my own translation)

In his articles *Wenxue geming yu wenzi geming* (literary revolution and Chinese characters revolution) and *Xinwenzi yu xinwenhua yundong* (new Chinese characters

and new cultural movement) published in 1940, the Chinese educator, linguist and revolutionist, Wu Yuzhang suggested that the reform of Chinese characters must follow the principles of Latinisation and internationalisation (Wang 1995: 19). From this we can further deduce that the simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin here function as the most effective way to promote the spread of general education to the mass of the population and as one of the measures to facilitate the modernisation and internationalisation agenda of China. As in Ni's (1964) description of the new roads with simplified characters and Pinyin, 'Beijing is now filled with the friendship around the world, which has built up a warm connection among hundreds of millions of people. Please do not underestimate these red letters, since they also symbolise and represent internationalism'. In which case, the Latin letters can be interpreted as the fruit of advanced Western civilisation absorbed and exploited by China and as a bridge linking China to the outside world.

Perhaps for the same reason, the Arabic numbers were considered easier for local people to remember and write than the traditional Chinese numeral system based on Chinese characters and were regarded as a universal numeral system. Thus, driven by successive Chinese governments, Arabic numerals had finally taken hold and expanded their influence in China. In this context, this imported numeral system was no longer strange to the Chinese. Through the comparison of the doorplates of the Republic of China (Figure 6.3) and the People's Republic of China (Figure 8.7), it is apparent that in the red-white doorplate, the Arabic numbers had thoroughly superseded the Suzhou numerals, which were once the main component of the blue and white doorplates of Beijing. This red-white doorplate is characterised by more concise composition and content – only containing Arabic numbers and the name of the alley, road or street arranged from left to right. The Arabic numbers have become the sole numeric notations in Beijing's doorplates.

Given all that, it may seem logical to conclude that these global factors have gained the dominant position in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and have seeped

into the modern lives of the Chinese; whereas traditional Chinese customs and habits that were seen as old-fashioned and backward were increasingly abandoned. If so, is it true that China was passively responding to the challenges of the changing world and submissively Westernising or globalising itself by sacrificing its own indigenous tradition and faith? In my opinion, it is less likely that during this period, China, as a relatively weak local actor, indiscriminately worshipped Western culture more than its own and surrendered to the global/Western destructive power. The Chinese government carried out radical reform of traditional writing systems and applied global factors widely in order to give up old mindsets and gradually connect with the modern world, building a new modern country. Nevertheless, the Chinese government had not dropped its demands for political position and interests, and neither had the local essential culture (Chinese characters) been rooted out but rather was adjusted to accommodate the threat of the global requirements, all of which can be fully embodied in the urban graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing.

In terms of globalisation, these Arabic numerals and Latin alphabets that are visible on Beijing's road signs and doorplates can be readily interpreted as the expansion or incursion of Western civilisation, which is fatal to the indigenous culture. Yet, as discussed in preceding chapters, the prevailing global factors, in more local contexts, are intentionally employed by the Chinese state to stress and sculpt the modern aspect of China, which underlines the initiative, adaptability and flexibility of the local. While advancing the construction of a modernised country, China paid more attention to the expression of its ideal political pursuit – communism and the consolidation of the new socialist national identity. Differing from the global factors mentioned above, the colour red and the names of streets, roads and alleys with Chinese-style proletarian revolution resonance were relatively local factors. In particular, the implications of red possess two different qualities: Chinese folk culture and international communism. Given that red is both a traditionally auspicious colour in Chinese culture and a representative colour of international communism, it might seem that the Chinese Communist Party took over an existing, popular and positive

cultural signifier and turned it to their political advantage. In her 1994 book, Andrews writes:

It was widely accepted among Cultural Revolution-era artists that images of Mao should be “red, smooth, and luminescent.” Many of these conventions were developed during the Red Guard art movement and go beyond any oil-painting conventions imported from the Soviet Union. While Soviet socialist realism is still the most evident stylistic source for such compositions, details of color and texture may also be related to the more elegant of preliberation New Year’s pictures. Cool colors were to be avoided; Mao’s flesh should be modelled in red and other warm tones. Conspicuous displays of brushwork should not be seen; Mao’s face should be smooth in appearance. The entire composition should be bright, and should be illuminated in such a way as to imply that Mao himself was the primary source of light. If Mao were in the center of a group of people, all surfaces that faced him should appear to be illuminated. In this way, slogans such as “Mao is the sun in our hearts” could be made tangible (Andrews 1994: 360).

Andrews suggests that under the influence of the Soviet style, the art and design of China during this period took on a new but rigidly prescribed and highly stylised visual form, in which colours (red), brushwork, composition, and technique were strictly specified. Meanwhile she notes that the colour choices and certain details of the Cultural Revolution paintings were presumably taken from preliberation (before 1949) Chinese New Year’s paintings. The Chinese New Year Painting (*nianhua* 年画, literally Year Painting) is a kind of coloured wood block printing and is pasted up upon doors or walls during the Chinese Spring Festival, marking the incoming year and the beginning of new life. Traditionally, the themes and subjects of the Chinese New Year woodcut pictures are miscellaneous, including crop harvest, good luck and good fortune, prosperity, safety and longevity. Their colours are mostly bright, warm, and highly saturated. Various shades of red with its long-established meanings –

happiness, joy, luck and auspiciousness – is one of the most frequently used colours in the New Year Paintings and is their predominant constituent colour. For this reason, throughout the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the colour red could suggest a sense of localness and not necessarily only of communist significance. If Andrews is correct, the colour red appearing in posters, oil-paintings, murals or public signs has a mixed nature, that is to say, it is of two natures – local and global: Chinese folk culture (local) and international communist revolution (global).

Most of these Cultural Revolution artefacts saturated with vivid and vibrant red were deliberately designed to promote cultural strategies and place emphasis on the new sense of identity of the state – a socialist country led by the proletariat and Mao. More specifically, in this particular period, the red, in combination with Chinese realities, represented proletarian revolution and Maoist thought. It is argued here that the Chinese authorities adopted these to declare their communist political beliefs, espousal of Maoist thought, and the defence of socialism and resisting capitalism and imperialism. It could be seen as a very astute political move – to associate good luck, fortune, and happiness of the ‘old’ red with the socialist revolution of the ‘new’ red. Consequently, red remained the most popular colour in China and carried strongly positive connotations, which merged with the present meaning – communist revolution with the influential past associations – traditional folk beliefs and the future goal – an ideal communist country. The Chinese Communist Party therefore succeeded in pleasing and inciting a general audience’s visual sense and achieving the anticipated propagation effects by lending conventional visual elements (colour, image or composition) to the political messages. Meanwhile, a positive image of themselves, the Chinese Communist Party, was created outside and inside the party. Practically, in a way, throughout the Cultural Revolution, the implication of international communism and communist revolution of the colour red had been turned into Chinese-style socialism and communism, Maoism as well as proletariat revolution. In this case, the colour red could even be thought as a totally local visual element.

As far as the simplified Chinese characters are concerned, although the conventional Chinese vertical text layout and traditional Chinese characters that contain a unique local cultural logic and habit had been modified and simplified, the simplified version still retains an evident local factor. Together with the end of the previous imperial dynasty and the coming of age of active learning of Western culture and science, the orthodox Chinese character and values had suffered unprecedented criticism and challenges; however, the traditional culture and legacy were not eradicated. A compromised method, which was the combination of the simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin, was applied to acclimatise the traditional language to the new situation. In fact, the character simplification was chiefly concerned with the decrease of the complex and redundant strokes and the simplification of the framework of characters, as well as the significant reduction of the amount of commonly used and standardised modern Chinese characters. As a result, the essential structure of Chinese characters was retained and adapted to today's requirements. Even if the reformation of Chinese characters aroused considerable controversy, it cannot be denied that to a certain extent it productively succeeded in increasing the literacy rate and maintaining the continuity of the local culture. In a sense, it could even be said that the local culture was stronger and more easily taught to natives and foreigners because of the simplified characters coupled with Pinyin. Additionally, the typeface of these simplified Chinese characters applied on the road signs and doorplates is the *Song* typeface and its variants. In Chapter 6, it was argued that the typeface – Regular Script style employed on the blue and white doorplate – reveals the fondness of local people for the aesthetic of this style. Similarly, having the *Song* typeface as the predominant typeface applied to public signs after 1964 reflected the development of Chinese characters, social change, national policy and the special affection of local people.

The *Song* typeface that evolved from Regular Script is one of the most popular print fonts for Chinese. The key features of the *Song* typeface are: its fundamental structure

and shape are similar to regular script; its vertical strokes are thicker than its horizontal strokes; some decorative lines or triangles are added at the end of strokes (Liao 2009: 239). Unlike the flexible and round strokes of Regular Script, the straight and square strokes of the *Song* typeface are more convenient and fluid for block print. In the year 1949, the new Chinese government unified and standardised the form and use of the printing typefaces (ibid.). As a major printing typeface, like the simplified Chinese and Pinyin, the *Song* typeface was widely applied and promoted by the government. From the 1950s to the present, the *Song* typeface and its variants have often been used in titles, sub-titles or the main body of newspapers, such as the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party – *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily) (Liao 2009: 20). It is also worthwhile mentioning that the *Song* typeface is one of the main fonts for the title and body of text of Mao Zedong’s works (ibid.) (see Figure 8.9). It can be clearly seen that the Chinese government was striving to promote the *Song* typeface as the standard Chinese print typeface so as to meet the local requirements, perhaps because for printing it is a cost- and time-saving font and is clear, concise and legible for most ordinary Chinese people.



Figure 8.9 Quotations from Chairman Mao and other works. The titles of the two books are displayed in a typical Song typeface.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Following the trend of popularisation of the *Song* typeface, it was used for the signage system in public spaces for a long time after 1964. It can therefore be argued that with the *Song* typeface of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing revealing subtle changes in the local society, technology and habits, is an obvious local factor. And what's more, in the red-white road signs (see Figure 8.6), the simplified Chinese characters in *Song* typeface are the most central graphic component; in contrast, the Latin letters (Pinyin) merely play an ancillary role in pronouncing the Chinese words above them. More particularly, the scheme of the total Latinisation of Chinese characters had not been implemented; as an alternative, Chinese characters were simplified and Latin letters remained as a phonetic transcription tool for learning and reading characters. This could shed light on the capacity of the local (China) to keep abreast of the times by giving up or altering parts of local traditions as well as the ability to grasp global resources, selectively assimilate and merge them into local culture. To be clear, this is not meant to suggest that the imitation and reshaping of Western cultures and the modification of the quintessence of traditional Chinese culture are flawless, unquestionable and effortless. The assessment of the achievement of the local is another issue, which we will not pursue in this dissertation. The key point I would like to argue here is that in the interplay between the local and the global, passivity and activity of the local can coexist in face of the threat of the global. In one respect, the local is struggling to deal with, and acclimatise itself to, the new world pattern led by the West; in another respect, it is taking account of its own interests, expectations and what makes up its own identity. Furthermore, facing the opportunities and challenges posed by the process of globalisation, in many cases, the positivity, vitality, resilience and dominance of the local, which are afforded little attention, are apparent and striking. This is exactly what was meant by reversibility presented in Chapter 3: as shown in Figure 8.10, the boundary between the local and the global is blurred; they could be both inside and outside and their roles are reversible.

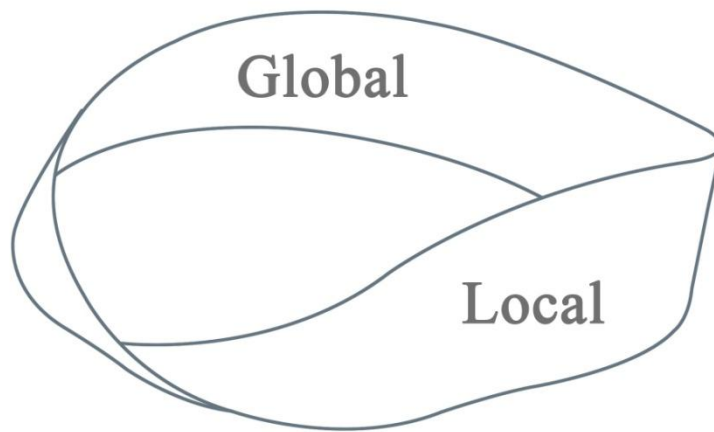


Figure 8.10 Möbius strip representing the reversible relationship between the local and the global.

Source: drawn by the author.

In summary, on the one hand, the Chinese government believed that Western civilisation was somehow more technologically advanced than the Chinese indigenous culture and was worth emulating. On the other hand, the government strengthened its political belief in Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, intensely opposed the capitalist system and were keen to outperform Western capitalist economics. In part, the manifestation of such thinking in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing is that global elements (Latin letter, Arabic numbers, etc.) were adopted to propel the modernisation of Beijing or China; in the meantime the colour red and the simplified Chinese characters were redefined and refined to highlight the national identity – the Chinese-style socialist country and the proletarian revolution led by Mao. The former demonstrates that the Chinese government was making more effort to seek and create

similarity between itself and other countries, so as to strengthen its connection with modern and international communities. It can be seen from the example of the red-white urban signs that more global elements were clearly presented in these red and white signs than their predecessors – the blue and white ones. The latter shows that the Chinese ruling party was wholly committed to the establishment and practice of the socialist core value system of China, seeking to boost cultural self-confidence and sustain social and political solidity, unity and ideological consistency. In these circumstances, the red-white graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing acted as a display of its political beliefs and characteristic local culture. Building on this, it might seem that the local is more energetic, vibrant and vigorous rather than frail, indecisive and powerless.

Having discussed how one facet of the relationships between the local and the global – reversibility – was reflected the red Beijing’s graphic sign systems, I will now explain how the other facet – mobility – is embodied in the changes in the appearances of Beijing’s road signs and doorplates. The concept of mobility concerning the interaction between the local and the global means that while interaction between the local networks and the global networks constantly takes place, transition, decreasing or increasing of the world’s dominant centre(s) directly influence the development of the rest of the world – assimilation and integration or dissimilation and marginalisation (see Section 3.2.3 Mobility for more details). This can be clearly illustrated by the transformation from the blue rectangular signs to the red ones in Beijing, as each corresponds to a significant moment in history.

The late Qing (1908) red and white oval doorplates and the Republic of China (1912-1949) blue rectangle doorplates and road signs of Beijing correspond to the time of European-dominated colonial networks. This is because the production and application of these signs in China was the product of the era dominated by European powers. In the period from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, many influential foreign concessions, settlements, and legations in China belonged to European powers,

such as Great Britain, France, German, Italy and Austria-Hungary; they had a deep influence on Chinese society and modernisation in China's main cities. Whether due to the Qing government's passive response to European threats or the successive authority's active adaptation and localisation of European models, European culture had left its mark on the new China's identity. This can be exemplified by local governments' imitation and promotion of the police system, municipal management system and door numbers and road signs of these European concessions and settlements in China (See Sections 4.3.1, 5.3, 6.2 and 6.3). In comparison, the red sign systems of Beijing correspond to the period of two antagonistic super powers – liberal-capitalist and authoritarian-socialist camps after World War II. This is mainly because these red signs with commemorative names can be directly associated with China's 1960's 'dual adversary' (anti-Soviet and anti-US) policy and its self-identity as a socialist county with strong Chinese features and a part of the world proletarian revolution. Apparently, the 60's 'dual adversary' policy was very different from the 50's 'leaning to one side' (pro-Soviet camp). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the red doorplates and road signs of Beijing principally represented the new China – a socialist state which was guided by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theories, was eager to express its domestic revolution as part of the world proletarian revolution and was opposed to Soviet-Revisionism and American-Imperialism. The red signs, therefore, reflected the 'dual adversary' policy and showed how the local (China) responded and adapted to the new world order of that time.

Overall, the change from blue to red indicates that the immense power shift from European powers to two main conflicting camps (capitalist and socialist) brought about dramatic changes in China's political orientation and elicited the transformations of China's principal culture and ideologies. This clearly illustrates this point of mobility that the change, increasing or decreasing of global centre (s) or superpower(s) which generally wield power through their global network constantly and radically influence local cultural, economic and political conditions that shape their unique identities. Furthermore, the reactions of the local when confronted with

the influences posed by global powers are different in different spaces and times. In essence, the homogenisation of local inherent culture and values, the continuation and enhancement of local culture, and the generation of a new hybrid local culture coexist and interconnect with each other. It can thus be suggested that the relationship between the local and the global is not unchanging but rather mutable and variable.

8.4 Summary

The remarkable changes in the functions and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems between 1964 and 1978 have been investigated in this chapter. The first section has explained the close connection between the colour red and communist belief and proletariat revolution, as well as how the commemorative road and alley names enabled the new function of political propaganda to be added to Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. It has shown that the redesign of the graphic wayfinding systems contributed to the creation and dissemination of new local values and beliefs. Consequently, a new form of local culture was nurtured in response to domestic and foreign tensions and ever-changing world patterns. The local and the global visual elements in the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing of this historical period have been identified and analysed in the second section. The results of this suggest that both local and global factors permeate and interact with each other; the combination of the two types of visual elements bred new and peculiar visual forms, which were a manifestation of underlying political ideologies and were utilised by the local authorities to persuade the citizens to accept and support their political ideas and cultural progressiveness and modernity.

Both sets of arguments led to the conclusion that rather than being passive and stagnant, the local is active, ambitious and resourceful. It is the case that the local do not only successfully resist the process of homogenisation of globalisation, but also appropriate and remodel global elements to cultivate their new culture and power. So, the relationship between the local and the global is reversible and exchangeable.

Additionally, the mobility of the local-global relationship – change and shift of global

power centre(s) giving rise to great influence on strategic priorities and political direction of the local – was illustrated by the change from blue signs to red signs. It reveals to us that the interaction between the local and global is constantly uneven and mutable. The next chapter will continue to explain the two attributes – reversibility and mobility of the local-global relationship – by analysing Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems of 1978 – 2001.

Chapter 9 Fifth Phase 1978 to 2001 – an Instrument for Reshaping the City Image

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse and explain Beijing's cultural, political and economic development in the post-Mao period and the part played by its graphic wayfinding systems in the transformation of Beijing's identity. As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is recognised as the political and cultural centre of China. Since the 1978 Economic Revolution, changes have occurred rapidly in the ancient Eastern city. On the one hand, Beijing was hastily expanding by building modern cityscapes and keeping in line with international standards; on the other hand, Beijing spared no effort to preserve its own traditional culture and ethnic traits, to keep a link with the past by means of preserving its heritage sites. With this background, as a way of producing and spreading meaning, the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing can be a potent instrument of promoting the development agenda and a means of city image enhancement and regeneration. The way in which the new cultural construction of Beijing's identity related to its wayfinding signs and the interrelation between the local and the global will be made clear in the first section. The second section will then deal with the visual components of the 1978-2001 Beijing's wayfinding signs. The reversibility and mobility of the relations between the local and the global will be illustrated by analysing these graphic visual components.

9.2 The Decline of Political Propaganda and Rise of Culture-led Urban Regeneration – Road Signs and Doorplates

Before coming directly to the new function of Beijing's graphic wayfinding system, it is necessary to say a few words about the new policy and strategic priorities of the post-Mao era, which reshaped and vastly enriched China's multiple identities. As discussed in Section 4.3.3 *The Implementation of the Reform and Opening Up Policy (1978) and 21st Century China*, after the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976

and the Chinese Economic Reform (Reform and Opening Up policy) was launched by the new leader Deng Xiaoping, China entered a new stage of social, cultural and political transition. In his review of China's international economic and political relations, Wang identified three kinds of key transition China had undergone in the 1980s and 1990s: 'from a command economy to a market-oriented one; from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial one: and from a non-WTO nation to a WTO⁶ one, without leading to catastrophic turmoil or collapse compared to former socialist countries in East Europe and the Soviet Union' (Wang 2008: 2). Apparently, the 1978 Chinese Economic Reform was the key driving force that triggered all these transitions. To put it simply, the content of the Reform and Opening Up policy includes de-collectivisation of agriculture, reforms of state-owned enterprises, establishment of coastal Special Economic Zones, introduction of advanced Western technology, standards and methods of production and management, and opening up to foreign direct investments, leading eventually to the construction of a socialist market economy. Regarding the effects of the Economic Reform, Brandt and Rawski (2008) state that these crucial shifts, 'from poverty to growing prosperity, from village to city, from plan to market, from public toward private ownership, and from isolation to global engagement', were triggered by the new reform (Brandt and Rawski 2008: 31). It is clear that the former isolation policy has been replaced with active participation in global markets.

During the Cold War, Mao had called for radical revolution and class struggle and intended to 'position China between the two superpowers by tacking back and forth between the two', whereas Deng aimed to seek 'good relations with both superpowers' (Hyer, Zhang and Hamzawi 2016:55). In the late 1970s and early 1980s the new party leaders implemented a series of pragmatic policies to substitute the former class and ideological struggles, thus, nationwide ideological campaigns gave way to economic reforms and opening-up of the state to the outside world (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 407). In the transformation process towards an open, politically steady, economically

⁶ WTO is an abbreviation of World Trade Organisation

prosperous, urbanising and modernising country, the anti-capitalist ideology that was a major component of the political propaganda of the Mao era had been greatly degraded and weakened. Western technology, science, economic strategy and even culture were imported to help China accelerate its transformation into a modern nation. During the mid-1990s, along with the importation of the new communications technologies and the enhancement of the open door policy, foreign influences increasingly penetrated China's major inland and coastal cities, as well as its countryside and hinterland (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 410). Under these conditions, Western-style modern cityscapes and new skylines began to appear in coastal Special Economic Zones and some large cities, including Beijing and Shanghai. It has been shown in Section 4.3.3 that in the effort to make a sharp break with the recent past, the reconstruction of the isolated and enclosed socialist urban space into an open, friendly and international space was implemented in many of China's major cities; Beijing was to be built as a showcase to show the new values and identity of China to the world. Therefore, after 1978, the spaces of many developed Chinese cities were largely transformed, modernised and globalised. For example, much of the outdoor spaces of Beijing were reconstructed and its skyline re-defined by a range of high-rise complexes. The extensive public transport systems and associated infrastructure were significantly expanded in Beijing, enabling, running and maintaining its daily operation.

As the ideology of anti-capitalism was downplayed by the new Chinese leaders, anti-feudalism in the sense of anti-traditionalism was also diluted. China found again the glory and value of traditional culture and belief after the enormous cultural dislocation and political turbulence of the Cultural Revolution. In terms of the *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China* passed at the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in 1981, the Cultural Revolution and theory of Continued Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat were considered as mistaken strategies and were utterly negated (People's Daily 2007). The radical

campaign of destroying the ‘Four Olds’ (old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas) and the anti-Confucius campaign came to an end. As noted in Section 4.3.3, with a nationwide tendency to revive local traditional culture in the 1980s and 1990s, Beijing was presented as the political and cultural centre of China. The renowned old city’s skyline and conventional axial lines that characterised Beijing’s local culture, were actively restored, renovated and expanded. A vast array of laws was made by the new local authorities to preserve Beijing’s cultural relics and traditional cityscape. It was clear that for the Chinese government and people, modernisation and globalisation was no longer the only theme of the new era. The cultural diversity and the rehabilitation of Chinese traditional values and beliefs, which once were abandoned as backward feudal culture during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, were now considered to be as important as modern Westernised civilisation. Therefore, these traditional philosophies, rituals, arts, literature, opera, crafts, fashion, architecture and so on returned to the public eye and took on a new role of providing a sense of historical continuity and local belonging, and a source of identity. Hence, apart from modernising parts of urban spaces, Beijing reignited its interests in preserving and revitalising the time-honoured urban meanings and memories, as well as creating favourable conditions for local people to continue their customs, linguistic characteristics, festivals, architecture, folk cuisine, etc. In short, after 1978 China entered a new period of fast economic growth and relative political stability and gradually became more open to the outside world and much more welcoming of Western influences. The air of Beijing was filled with different traditional cultures and historical echoes as well as the bustle and vitality of modern life.

It appears that the development, trends and strategies of Beijing between 1978 and 2001 were very different from the previous two periods – the Republic of China (1912-1949) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) – which were explored in Chapters 6 and 8. In the period of the Republic of China, the government devoted itself to transforming the hierarchical and imperial spatial order of Beijing into a

modern civilian city; Western technology and ideologies were highly praised, while traditional culture was challenged and criticised by the government and the majority of the social elite and intellectuals. By the time of the Cultural Revolution, Beijing had been built into a typical socialist city with broad streets and a central square and it represented the centre of the proletarian revolution led by Mao. Western culture was often regarded as an unwelcome intrusion of bourgeois values and traditional Chinese culture was treated as a vestige of a feudal past; both were severely forbidden and suppressed. Since the 1978 Economic Reform, Beijing was positioned as an open, tourist- and investor-friendly city with its distinctive identity based on its traditions but enriched by other domestic or overseas cultures. The global cultural and economic participation of Beijing enabled it to become an important hub of global urban networks. Cultural exchange between global culture and local culture has been encouraged, while the preservation and protection of traditional art forms and the city's historical inheritance has been considered as one of Beijing's top priorities.

Against this backdrop, the development of the graphic wayfinding systems in Beijing displays two distinct tendencies: (1) Partial components of public signs and urban graphic wayfinding systems, such as public symbol signs, Underground signs, and motorway signs, were gradually designed in line with international standards (generally referred to as the Vienna convention on signs and signals and ISO) – global factors such as a universal visual language or symbol system were highlighted and used on a relatively large scale; (2) Alley signs and doorplates and Beijing's traditional culture were tied together. These unique red signs incorporated with the traditional urban residential districts (one-storey dwellings and *Hutong*) and streets were preserved and promoted. These new changes in Beijing's signage systems meant that the function of political propaganda was weakened. While the former function was largely abandoned, a new function of the wayfinding systems emerged as a way of creating a new sense of place – an open and modernised Chinese-style socialist city. In terms of the two remarkable changes, the remainder of this section will explain how Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were employed to produce new visual

narratives, highlight the modern culture and the traditional culture of Beijing, and finally achieve the urban regeneration and renewal of Beijing.

First, in order to construct modern cityscapes and enable China's larger cities, including Beijing, to be sufficiently adaptable to the increasingly globalised world, parts of these cities' public symbols and traffic signs were brought into line as far as possible with international standards. From the previous discussion, it can be seen that the new leaders of China were extremely keen to adapt their practices to attract foreign and domestic investments, to get involved in international trade as well as to belong to a new world order. Yet, trade and business are more than just the exchange of capital. They always bring ideas, technology, and standards. Brandt and Rawski (2008) note this exposure to international and global values and practices:

The emergence of foreign-linked joint ventures, and eventually of wholly owned foreign firms, as major elements of China's economy brought millions of Chinese workers, engineers, and managers into direct contact with the technical standards, engineering processes, and management practices needed to compete in global markets. The expansion of supply networks linked to export production or to foreign-owned business connected increasing numbers of purely domestic operators with international standards and practices (Brandt and Rawski 2008: 32).

The role of international standards in global markets and communication can be illustrated by the following example. In the 1980s and 1990s, as Brandt and Rawski state, foreign firms brought technology, management methods and international standards to China. In turn, in order to expand the export market and facilitate bilateral or multilateral trade, China needed to promote international standards of a vast array of goods and services at home. During the same period, a series of international standards of public symbols and traffic signs were introduced to China and had a profound influence on the drawing up of the national standards of China.

Consequently, a variety of national guidelines and standards applicable to traffic and public signs were sequentially formulated and published in the 1980s and 1990s, as follows:

Safety Colours (GB⁷ 2893-1982, first amended 2001)

Interim Regulation on Control and Management of Beijing Doorplates and Building Plates 1986

Marks for Urban Public Transport & General Marks for Public Transport (GB 5845.1-1986)

Marks for Urban Public Transport & Marks for Subway (GB5845.5-1986);

Marks for Urban Public Transport, General and Prohibition Marks for Public Transport (GB/T 5845.10)

Surface Colours for Visual Signalling (GB/T 8416/1987)

Road Marking Paint (GN 47/48-1989)

Road Traffic Signs and Marking (GB 5768-1986, first amended 1999)

The Signs of Urban and Rural Geographical Name (GB17733.1-1999)

The implementation of these regulations and national standards played an active part in standardising traffic signs and public pictograms so that the graphic wayfinding

⁷ GB stands for Guobiao (national standards), and means mandatory national standards; GB/T means recommended national standards. They are issued and managed by the Standardisation Administration of the People's Republic of China (SAC), which is authorised by the State Council and represents China within ISO, IEC and other international standardisation organisations. A standard number and issue year follow GB or GB/T.

systems of the big cities of China became more unified and effective. Furthermore, given that the national standards (GB) were made by adopting international standards and other advanced foreign standards to varying degrees, parts of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing were therefore made more globalised and endowed with new characteristics in the new period. A number of amendments and changes to the standards were made over the years in response to Beijing and other large domestic cities' new identity and new urban landscape – modernity, openness and communication. This can easily be seen in the comparison of a 1985 Guangzhou stop sign with the national standard – Road Traffic Signs and Marking amended in 1999 (see Figures 9.1, 9.2 and 9. 3).

As shown in Figures 9.1 and 9.2, the stop sign of Guangzhou in 1985 was a round, red-white plate attached to a metal post with the Chinese character – 停(stop) in the middle. According to international convention, for example, the *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals*, a red circle with a red diagonal line through it is a prohibition sign rather than a stop sign. However, according to the national standard – *Road Traffic Signs and Marking* (GB 5768-1999), a vast array of new warning signs, prohibition signs, directional signs that were based on the relevant international standards were added into the national standard of China, with the aim of increasingly conforming to internationally recognised standards. It can be seen from Figure 9.3 that the round stop sign was changed in 1999 into a red octagon with a white border and the inscription ‘停’ in white. It is therefore clear that internationally standardised urban graphic design had a part to play in constructing a modern city in China.

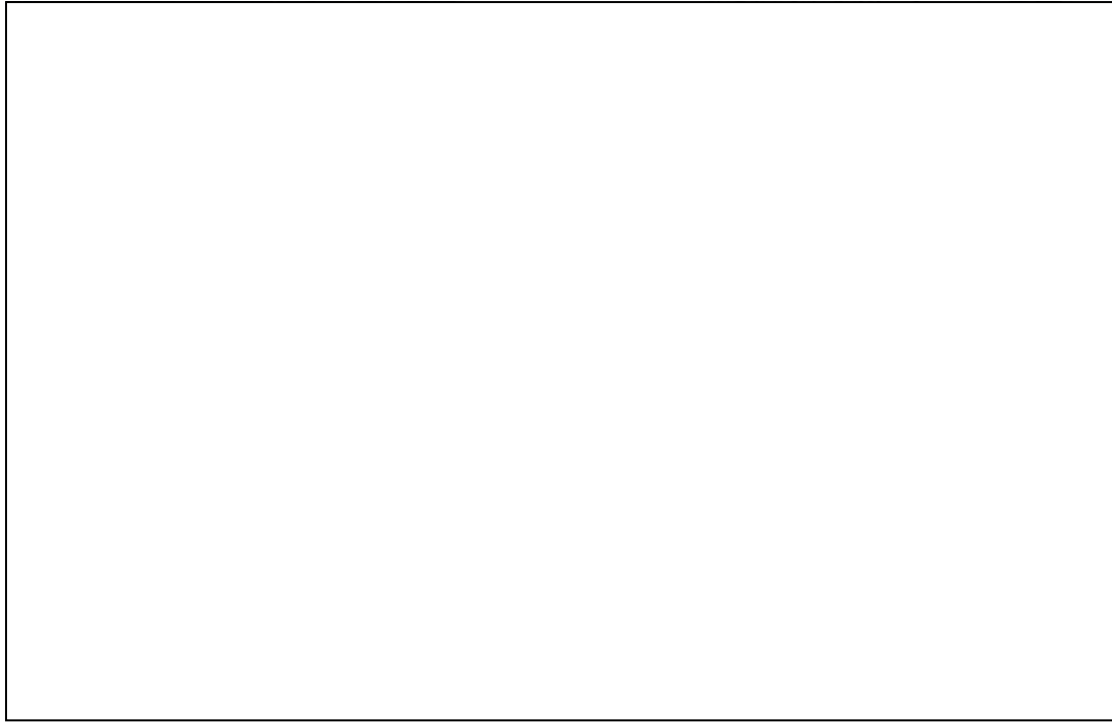


Figure 9.1 A round stop sign was erected at the side of the road of Guangzhou, 1985.

Source: photographer – Aad van der Drift

http://www.360doc.com/content/16/0208/21/17132703_533334932.shtml



Figure 9.2 A round stop sign of Guangzhou.

Source: drawn by the author based on Figure 9.1.



Figure 9.3 Road Traffic Signs and Marking (GB 5768-1999, SAC 1999).

Source: <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/jtyd/438786.htm>

Second, the local people were exclusively bonded to local culture and traditions through the red alley signs and doorplates of Beijing. Unlike the internationally

standardised signs, another new visual narrative was generated and a traditional spatial form was boosted by strengthening the connection between the red signs and Beijing's traditional dwellings – *Siheyuan* and *Hutong*. Traditional culture was brought back to Beijing and was remoulded using distinctive red alley signs and doorplates. The previous chapter explained how Beijing's signage was used to instil the official ideologies in the masses from two angles: (1) the red road signs and doorplates were associated with left-wing socialism and communism, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Thought, and the proletariat revolution; (2) the commemorative street, road and alley names emerged as a way of destroying traditional culture and commemorating new heroes and values. Ironically, after 1978, these former reform 'pioneers' who placed great emphasis on the construction of new order and the destruction of old world, unexpectedly became the 'defender' or 'inheritor' of Beijing's traditional culture. The transition of the role of Beijing's alley signs and doorplates can be seen also from the perspectives of colour and name.

Regarding the colour red, after the Cultural Revolution, doorplates, alley signs and road signs were changed from red and white signs back into white Chinese characters on a blue background in most of the cities, except Beijing. In terms of the *Interim Regulation on Control and Management of Beijing Doorplates and Building Plates* issued in 1986, the doorplates of Beijing are rectangular aluminium plates, with white inscriptions on red background forms (BJCHY 2011). The major reason behind the continued use of the red signs in Beijing was that the political propaganda and strong left-wing ideology associated with the colour red had been weakened and replaced with its original local folk connotations – happiness, joy, luck and auspiciousness. The successor of the Chinese Communist Party – Deng had made valiant and effective attempts to seize and consolidate power by returning to practicality and rationality from fanatical class struggles, correcting the mistaken policy that had led to the Cultural Revolution, and justifying traditional values and cultural diversity. Fairbank and Goldman (2006) point out that:

Deng and his fellow reformers...loosened the party's grip on personal, social, and cultural life as well as economic activities. The purpose was to repair the damage caused by the imposition of the all-encompassing politicization of everyday life during the Mao era...The official ideology of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought continued to be invoked, but few still believed in these ideologies and even fewer acted on them. Chinese society became diverse and its culture pluralistic. Growing numbers of Chinese turned to religion, whether evangelical Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Daoism, or Buddhism (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 409.410).

It is not difficult to see that compared with the Cultural Revolution period that caused China's self-imposed isolation and abandonment of its long-standing history, the relatively open and tolerant Chinese society after the Mao era brought back the values of tradition and encouraged the convergence between the local culture and other cultures. And for this reason, the painful memory of the Cultural Revolution was removed for the masses and the red alley signs and doorplates of Beijing became a conveyor of traditional culture and meanings. Additionally, as these red signs remained only in Beijing, they were, therefore, specifically connected with the city's identity.

Turning now to the street, road and alley names: they were changed back to their original names (the ones they had before 1966) in the 1970s. In Chapter 8, it was argued that during the period of the Cultural Revolution, the historically symbolic and traditional street and alley names of a number of Chinese cities were completely altered into names communicating strong left-wing political values and ideological associations. In the early stage of the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards changed 412 street, road and alley names in Beijing (Chen 2014: 60-64). At the end of 1974 the campaign to change street and road names and Red Guards' radical activities that were regarded as influenced by the far-left ideologies were officially negated; 389 street, road and alley names were changed back to the names they had before the

Cultural Revolution (ibid.). The ideologically and politically driven street and alley names of Beijing essentially disappeared in the 1980s. As an alternative, graphic signs communicating local traditional values and habits were flooding back: red signs with long-established names were extensively utilised to support the conservation of Beijing's heritage and its urban transition from the centre of the proletariat revolution towards a well-known ancient imperial city with distinctive characteristics. As Light (2004) argued, '...by concretising a particular interpretation of the national past, statues and other monuments are one of the means through which national identities are renewed and reproduced...Naming streets is another way in which political orders attempt to inscribe public space with particular meanings' (Light 2004: 155). This may also be seen in the case of the European and formerly socialist city, Bucharest. In order to exclude the socialist past and commemorate the pre-socialist history, some traditional and religious (pre-World War Two) street names were restored in Bucharest in the 1990s and some streets were renamed to recall and celebrate events and historical figures of the early 20th century (Light 2004: 162-166). Similarly, in the case of Beijing, renaming and naming streets to oppose its past in the Cultural Revolution was employed as an effective way of restoring its traditions, past experiences, and reinforcing the 'renewed' identity after 1978.

In summary, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study of the period 1978-2001 is that the internationally standardised signs were used to highlight the modern aspects of Beijing, whereas the extensive application of the intricately designed red signs put the emphasis back on the traditional aspect of Beijing that once faced extinction. Along with the expansion of Beijing's modern cityscape and the preservation of its traditional architecture, the unifying traffic signs and symbols based on international conventions that mingled with red-white metal alley signs and doorplates produced new spatial and visual narratives of how people comprehended and experienced their environment after the 1950's and 1960's political instability and social chaos. It is easy to see that Beijing's wayfinding signs, urban space and identity were strongly intermingled. In this context, the function of Beijing's graphic

wayfinding systems had been shifted from an important tool of political propaganda to an approach of reshaping the city image and assisting a culture-led urban regeneration.

Chapter 8 demonstrated that the Western-inspired graphic wayfinding systems were profoundly localised and were adopted by local government to create and spread explicit political ideologies and cultural identity between 1964 and 1978. This clearly reveals the powerful initiative and desire of the local to find a way to fit into the new world order of two antagonistic camps. Likewise, the new function of Beijing's sign systems, reshaping Beijing's image during the period from 1978 to 2001, can also fully reflect the resilience and initiative of the local. The widespread use of international traffic signs and symbols, the reinstatement of the folk connotations of the colour red, and the restoration of traditional street names served as a reaffirmation that China (Beijing) had begun comprehensive modernisation and urbanisation processes, and had brought back tradition as a key component of its core identity. In this case, the way in which the local government responded to global powers with an open attitude toward global rules and with protective measures to its local culture displays both resilience and resoluteness of the local. The next section will continue to explore the new form of interplay and interpenetration of the local and the global through an analysis of the graphic components of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems between 1978 and 2001.

9.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 1978 to 2001

The previous section has explained that through a series of economic reforms launched by Deng in 1978 and inherited and developed by his successors, China extricated itself from isolation, poverty and backwardness and entered a new epoch characterised by openness, modernisation, urbanisation, and the revival of traditional culture. Under these conditions, Beijing was presented as an open and modernised Chinese-style socialist city. Its new skyline was dominated by a growing array of

towering modern buildings and Chinese-style glazed tile roofs. The role and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were transformed from red-white signs with strong political resonance to a mixture of international signs and red-white signs in a bid to reshape Beijing's image. I initially analyse the graphic components of Beijing's traffic signs based on international conventions, then move to analysing the graphic visual elements of Beijing's primary road signs, alley signs and doorplates that were used to mark the traditional urban space and composition.

The principal road sign for motor vehicles, as shown in Figures 9.4 and 9.5, consisted of a blue rectangular metal board, with white simplified Chinese characters, Pinyin, and arrowheads. Like the road signs and doorplates analysed in previous chapters, local visual elements and global visual elements intertwine with one another in the blue primary road sign. According to the *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals* agreed on at Vienna in 1968 and brought into force in 1978, the traffic information signs (including advance direction signs, direction signs, road or place identification signs, and confirmatory signs) are usually in the shape of a rectangle with white or light-coloured symbols (such as an arrowhead) or inscriptions on a blue background (UNECE 2006: 51). It can be inferred from this that the design of the primary road sign of Beijing was basically consistent with the 1968 Vienna Convention. Thus the shape (rectangle), colour (blue), and contents (arrowhead, Latin letters and right-to-left layout), possess strong globalised attributes. It is worth pointing out that the traditional Chinese top-to-bottom vertical text layout and right-to-left horizontal layout could still be seen in some stores' signboards or heritage sites in China during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, during the 1980s and 1990s, the traditional text layout almost completely died out in public spaces, with a few notable exceptions such as inscribed boards and steles of palaces, temples or some new building modelled on the traditional style of architecture. Hence, the traditional Chinese text layout was completely replaced by the Western horizontal layout in these public signs. Like the Arabic numbers used in doorplates, the Western horizontal layout had been entirely incorporated into everyday life of the Chinese. It

has been shown that as the local people grew accustomed to the new global culture (Arabic numerals, Latin letters and horizontal text layout), a large number of urban public signs in China had been internationally standardised in the 1980s and 1990s.

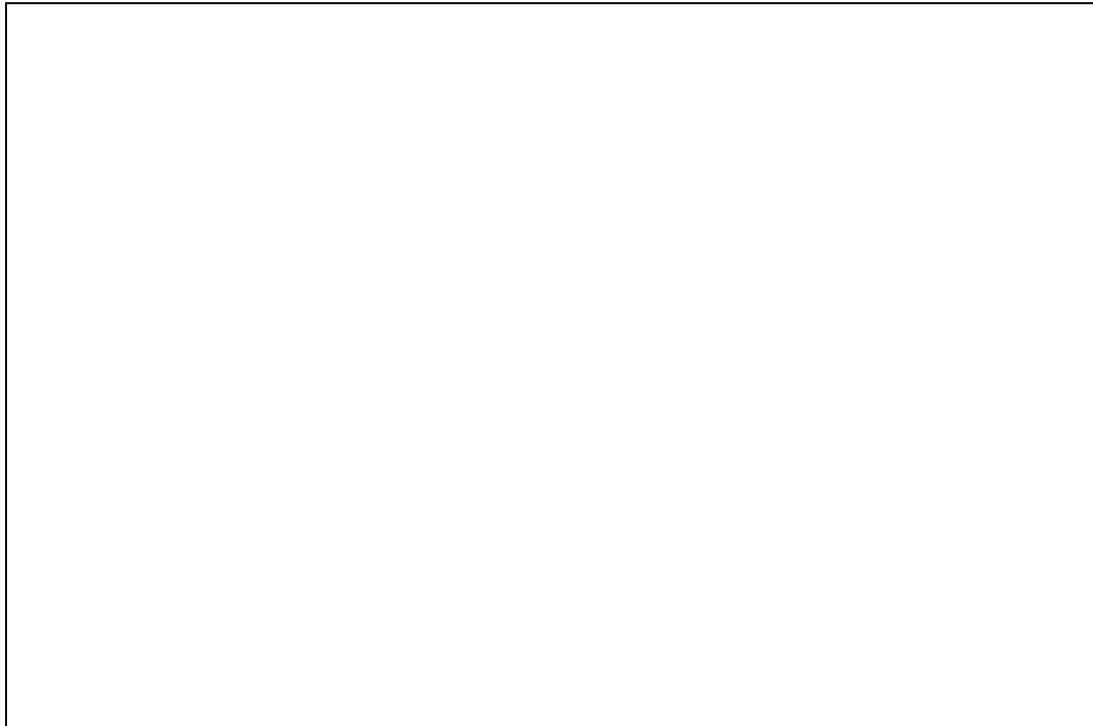


Figure 9.4 Traffic in the morning rush hour, Beijing, China.

Source: Stuart Franklin 1999, Magnum Photos

<https://agency.magnumphotos.com/image/LON21767.html>



Figure 9.5 Primary Beijing road sign in 1999.

Source: drawn by the author based on Figure 9.4.

As explained in Chapter 8, the Latin letters, Arabic numerals, arrowhead, and left-to-right text layout used on the 1960's doorplates and road signs of Beijing together with their shape (rectangle) and material (enamel) were obvious global visual elements. The Latin letters (Pinyin), (as a product of the Latinisation of Mandarin Chinese), were specifically regarded as a symbol of internationalism and a bridge connecting China to the outside world, although China at the time was relatively isolated and politically chaotic. It was argued that these global visual elements and simplified Chinese characters aimed at highlighting the modern aspect of China (Beijing) and attempted to reinforce its connection with the advanced cultures in the world. It has revealed to us that the nationwide promotion and application of these global graphic elements with cultural and educational significances profoundly expressed the government's desire to promote China's modernisation in the 1960s. However, the traffic signs of Beijing were not designed in strict accordance with international conventions and standards in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast, in the 1980s and 1990s, a large number of international public graphic symbols, icons and

signs were adopted in various public locations and were integrated into the relevant national standards and regulations of China. Apparently, the adoption of international standards can facilitate the flow of people, goods, capital, and services into or out of a country. Therefore, compared with the 1960's and 1970's signs, which only used Latin letters, Arabic numerals and the rectangular shape, the 1980's and 1990's roads signs and symbols based on international conventions, manifested and underlined the government's greater intention and determination to modernise China at all costs, as well as a more active attitude toward the global cultural and economic participation of Beijing. Considering the Chinese government's new 1978 open-door policy and more active attitude towards assimilation into the world community, it can be concluded that China went to great lengths to create a similarity between itself and the mainstream global culture.

The shape, layout, colours, arrowhead, and Latin letters are, without doubt, manifest global visual elements, however, the Chinese characters, which are a kind of sans-serif Chinese typeface often referred to as *Heiti* (黑体), dominate the informative sign in terms of both size and position (Figure 9.5). In Chapters 6 and 8, it was suggested that the Regular Script typeface applied on the blue-white doorplates and *Song* typeface and its variants used on red-white doorplates and road signs clearly reflected the change in the positive feelings of the local people, standardisation of Chinese characters, and printing technology. As the main government-promoted typefaces, Regular Script typeface and *Song* typeface were both extensively used in publications, propaganda posters, cinema captions, advertising and other signs. Likewise, the *Hei* typeface is a common printing typeface also greatly promoted by the government. Indeed, the *Hei* typeface has some advantages which have proved to be of great value. It leads to increased visibility and legibility, for example, because its strokes are much thicker than *Song* and Regular Script (see Figure 9.6). The end of each stroke of the *Hei* typeface does not have any decorative lines, points or triangles, and the thickness of its vertical and horizontal strokes are the same, which makes the fundamental structure of *Hei* typeface more concise and clear. Its strokes look thicker

than strokes of *Song* and Regular Script of equal weight. It is an even more cost-and time-saving typeface than *Song* and Regular Script. These are the main reasons why the *Hei* typeface with its clean, neutral and strong appearance became the most extensively used typeface for display setting in China since the 20th century.



Figure 9.6 The Chinese characters – 永 in three kinds of typefaces: Regular Script, *Song* and *Hei*.

Source: made by the author.

As a result, *Hei* typeface in combination with *Pinyin* on the blue road sign is easily legible and accessible from a distance, especially for local motorists, thus ensuring the precedence of the local. The most obvious finding to emerge from these visual analyses is that in the massive tide of globalisation and standardisation, beyond increasing the use of international standards and guiding local people to become better acquainted with these standards, the first priority of the Chinese government is to integrate their own interests and local people's need into international standards in the most productive way. It is the case that the global graphic elements and local graphic elements were blended together to construct and communicate an important aspect of the new Beijing's image and identity – a modern and open city. The flexibility and initiative of the local can be evidently expressed in the design of the blue road sign.

While Beijing was remoulded as a modern and vibrant city, its traditional urban space, relics, customs and street life; were conserved and revived these were referred to as a central part of the characteristic idiosyncrasy of Beijing and as another imperative component of its new identity. With this in mind, the focus now turns to the graphic components of these road and alley signs and doorplates that were considered part of Beijing's traditional urban space. From Figures 9.6 and 9.7 below we can see that a red doorplate with white text and border was mounted above the main gate of a traditional one-storey dwelling (*Siheyuan*) in Beijing. The red alley sign was usually installed on a grey wall at the entrance to an alley (*Hutong*) (see Figure 9.8). The red rectangular doorplates were used to identify houses by their number and road or alley name. The red alley signs were in the shape of a horizontal elongated rectangle with an arrowhead to indicate direction. Taking a close look at the doorplates and alley signs of the two different periods, 1964-1978 and 1978-2001, there seems to be no significant difference in their appearance. The only difference between the two sets of red signs is that the associations of the colour red has changed from the one having two interpretations and natures: Chinese folk culture (local) and international communist revolution (global) to a purely local visual element that marked Beijing's traditional living space. In a similar vein, these evident global graphic elements: rectangle, arrowhead, Arabic numeral system and left-to-right text layout, were blended with local graphic elements: red, Chinese characters (*Song and Hei* typefaces) and traditional names, to restore the spatial narratives at historical places and generate a new visual story. The new visual story is that these red-white doorplates and alley signs were no longer a symbol of Maoist thought and fanatical proletarian revolution. Instead, after the turbulent period when China turned its back on its traditional culture and history, the red signs on which traditional geographical names were displayed, and traditional architecture were tied together to revive the lost glory of Beijing's long-established local culture. Clearly, unlike the mixture of local elements and global elements aiming to reinforce Beijing's position as a modern city, the combination between local and global visual factors were used to echo the local traditional culture.

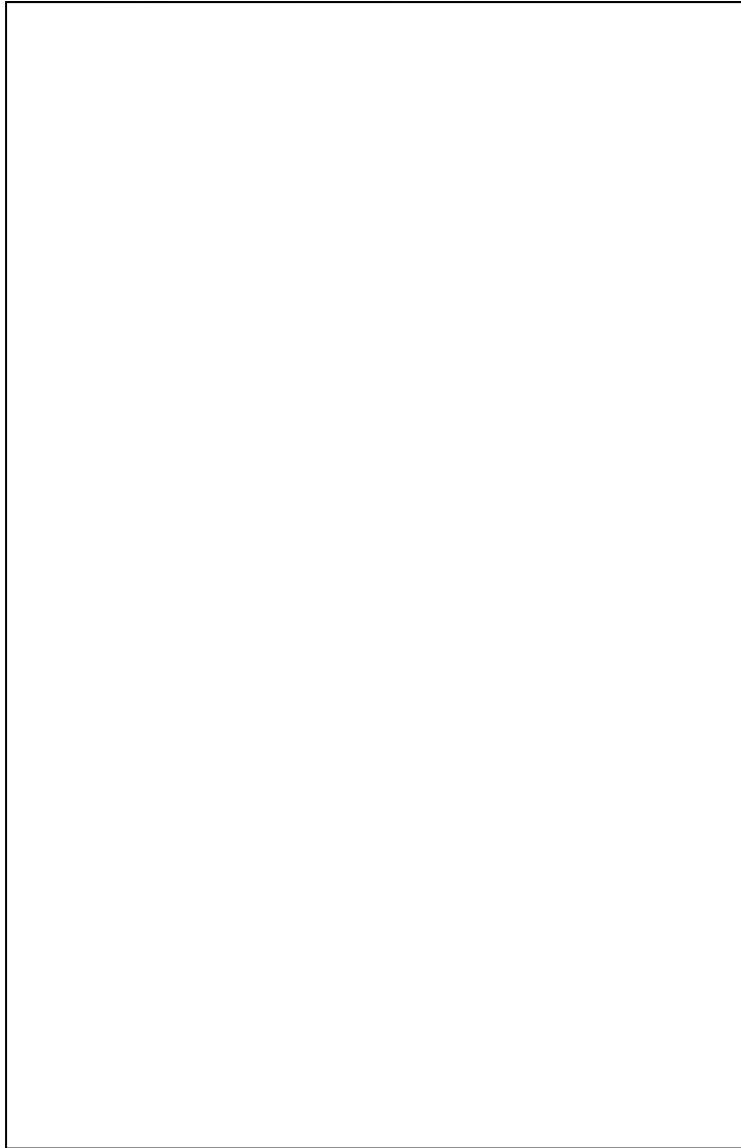


Figure 9.6 A red doorplate of Beijing in 1985.

Source: photographer – Aad van der Drift

<http://toutiao.com/i6200421724325642753/#p=13>



Figure 9.7 A red doorplate of Beijing, which is one of personal collections of Liupeng, who is one of my interviewees. It is apparent that the appearance and material (aluminium) of the red doorplate shown in Figure 9.7 is the same as the one shown in Figure 9.6. It can be preliminarily confirmed that the Liupeng's collection can be dated to the 1980s or 1990s.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Doorplate



Alley Sign

Figure 9.8 A red doorplate and alley sign of Beijing in the 1980s and 1990s.

Source: made by the author by reference to Liupeng's and Zhangyang's collections; they are both my interviewees.

Beijing's primary road signs are another example of how the public signs were connected to Beijing's traditional urban space and spatial arrangement. The example shown in Figure 9.9 is two sets of primary road signs, which were mainly designed for pedestrians. As seen above in Figure 9.5, the blue primary road sign was created for motor vehicles. In general, Beijing had two basic forms of primary road signs (Figure 9.9) in an effort to help pedestrians to find their way easily. One is the red text on a white background, which had been erected on both sides of the road all over the city and indicated a road radiating from east to west. The other was the white text on a green background, indicating a road running from south to north. The pattern of Beijing's layout is an orderly grid, which means that the roads ranged neatly from

north to south and from east to west (Figure 9.10). In this way, the colour system helped people to orientate themselves immediately. Meanwhile, this system connected the grid-like arrangement of Beijing and its function as an effective graphic wayfinding system, which could also contribute to this unique sense of Beijing. It should also be noted that just like red doorplates and alley signs, even though inspired by Western road signs, these primary road signs have generated their own appearance over years and become firmly entrenched in the local culture. The yellow enamel pole and frame and striking sans-serif Chinese character (*Hei* typeface) mixed with Pinyin made them seem like native artefacts rather than alien things derived from the West.

Moreover, according to the 1999 national standard, *Signs of Urban and Rural Geographical Name (GB 17733.1-1999)*, there are two types of urban road signs: one bears a blue rectangle with white text, pointing to an east-to-west road and the other is a green rectangle with white text, designating a north-to-south road. Indeed, the design of the road signs is well-matched to the urban layout of Chinese cities. It is because many of China's cities such as Xi'an have grid-like road networks. It can therefore be confirmed that the red-white and green-white road signs of Beijing that were roughly contemporaneous with the green-white and blue-white ones, were installed in Beijing around 1999. The combination of red-white and green-white distinguished Beijing from other Chinese cities. A popular catchphrase regarding Beijing's road signs was created and circulated amongst the local people of Beijing for years. It was 白东西, 绿南北 (*Baidongxi Lunanbei*), which literally means 'white east-west, green south-north'. The white is the red-white road sign and the green is the green-white road sign and this catchphrase is still in use today. This is how Beijing's road signs were incorporated into and enriched Beijing's local culture. As argued earlier, the traffic signs and symbols that partially meet international standards represent the adaptability and initiative of the local. In comparison, these doorplates alley signs and road signs that contribute to the uniqueness and sophistication of the authentic local culture, can underline the creativity and resourcefulness of the local.



Figure 9.9 Two sets of primary road signs in Beijing for pedestrians.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 9.10 Model of Beijing city planning, Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Through the visual analysis of these signs, it has become clear that during the period 1978-2001, the design of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems was in accordance with the urban regeneration plan of Beijing. Namely, Beijing was trying to nurture its own modern culture while reviving its link with the past and cultivating a unique local culture. All the examples analysed here provide an alternative to the simple one-way local-global dualism in that the local is not passive and powerless, and it is not always making way for global powers. Indeed, the interrelationship between the local and the global in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems, which were significantly affected by the local and global cultural, economic and political environments of the time, showed some striking new features. Specifically, the local and the global are more closely related to each other than ever; however, the collision and cooperation between the local and the global, localisation and globalisation, heterogenisation and homogenisation, still remain and continue. The independency, adaptability, irreplaceability, and to a certain degree, the ascendancy of the local itself, are more clearly manifested in this dynamic and many-sided process of collision and

cooperation.

As far as the mobility of the local-global interaction is concerned, the previous chapter argued that the alteration from blue signs to red signs can directly reflect how China responded to the enormous power shift from European colonial powers to two antagonistic super powers – liberal-capitalist and authoritarian-socialist camps. This is what we mean by mobility, at its simplest, the local is always adjusting its strategic priorities, foreign policy, economic plan and ideologies to respond to the change of global centre(s) or power(s). The 1978-2001 Beijing's graphic wayfinding system can also be used to exemplify this view of mobility. As mentioned earlier, unlike Mao's foreign policies (pro-Soviet in the 1950s, anti-Soviet and anti-US in the 1960s, alliance with the US against the Soviet in the 1970s), Deng's diplomatic strategy was to seek good relations with the two superpowers and seek a position more balanced between the two antagonistic camps. For example, in the early 1980s, China changed its diplomatic strategy from China-US quasi alliance to a peaceful, neutral and non-alignment strategy; it laid a theoretical foundation for the formation of China's positive and neutral foreign relations in the following years (Zhang 2014: 262). As a result, the new diplomatic strategy and practice enabled China to maintain a stable international environment, create a favourable environment for its economic reforms and open-up policy, accelerate its participation in a world market economy and develop partnerships with countries around the world in the 1980s and 1990s (Zhang 2014: 265). Obviously, the focus of the new diplomatic strategy was on connection with the outside world and cooperation with other cultures.

The new strategy can be well expressed and illustrated by the changes in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems: parts of the signs were designed to fit with international standards; those road and alley signs with strong left-wing, anti-capitalism, and anti-revisionism ideologies faded out of the historical scene. To be precise, the widespread application of the neutral and featureless blue road sign (Figure 9.5) and other international symbols (Figure 9.3) characterised the period of communication

where China sought similarities and common interests with other countries around the world. Meanwhile, the de-politicisation and redefinition of the colour red and the restoration of Beijing's traditional street, road and alley names demonstrated China's strong intention to separate itself from the memory of the Cultural Revolution and to support its non-aligned foreign policy and the distinctiveness of Beijing's local culture. Overall, the non-aligned strategic priorities, the coexistence of modern and traditional urban spaces, and the coexistence of globalisation and localisation of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems embody how China readjusted its goals and methods to survive the Cold War and the new era after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Thus, Beijing's wayfinding signage systems between 1978 and 2001 provide an excellent example of how mutable and changeable the interaction is between the local and the global.

9.4 Summary

This chapter has identified and analysed the new features of the function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems of 1978 – 2001. In the first section, it explained Beijing's graphic wayfinding system as an approach for reshaping Beijing's city image and assisting culture-led urban renewal in the post-Mao period. It has shown how some of Beijing's wayfinding signs were redesigned and some were maintained and endowed new associations to support a new image of Beijing as an open and friendly city where modern and tradition landscapes exist side by side. The transformation of the function of Beijing's graphic wayfinding system from a political propagandistic tool to an instrument of urban regeneration reveals the adaptability and resilience of the local to the volatile and changing world pattern. The graphic visual elements including colour, shape, typeface, and layout of the 1978-2001 Beijing road signs, doorplates and alley signs were analysed and categorised in terms of their local or global attributes in the second section. These findings, which are broadly consistent with earlier visual analysis of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, suggest that the local actor adopts and localises global resources, standards and experiences to meet its own

economic and cultural needs and nourish its own new culture and values. In this context, the local is not passive and submissive but active and dominant. The reversible local-global interaction provides a critique and an alternative to the unidirectional local-global dualism. As well as reversibility, the mobility of the local-global relationship – change and shift of global power centre(s) profoundly affecting strategic priorities and political direction of the local – was exemplified by the alteration from Beijing's red signs with strong political resonance to two sets of wayfinding signage systems respectively assigned with internationalism and authentic local culture. In this chapter, the role played by Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems was to assist the reconstruction and regeneration of Beijing between 1978 and 2001. In the next chapter, the wayfinding signage systems of Beijing become a crucial part of Beijing's urban branding scheme after 2001. The analysis of the function and appearance of the 2001-present Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems will be the focus of Chapter 10.

Chapter 10 Sixth Phase 2001 to the Present – City Branding

10.1 Introduction

From 1912 to the present day, the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and China's other big cities have become increasingly necessary, comprehensive, legible and universally understandable. Their categories have been significantly extended, from the original doorplates, road signs and alley signs to several different graphic signage systems containing underground signs, bus information signs, primary road signs, highway signs, tourist signs and so on (see Figure 10.1). Particularly since China joined the WTO (World Trade Organisation), won its Olympics bid in 2001 and successfully hosted the Summer Olympic Games in 2008, Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were injected with multiple cultural meanings, commercial values and even brand awareness to achieve its goal of being a significant cultural, commercial, tourist destination. Hence, the function of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems is no longer limited to the redefinition of urban space and the erasing of local people's collective memories about the Cultural Revolution, but it is also to systematically and purposefully support and create a definite urban identity or brand for Beijing.

The content of Beijing's city brand and how this is created by its new spatial configuration and graphic wayfinding systems will be explained in the first section of this chapter. It will be argued that the production and promotion of the new function, the branding of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems, demonstrate that the local is beginning to brand or market itself to the rest of the world and highlight national identity and urban distinctiveness rather than a simple globalised universality. The effect of the systems is to create a culture that is both local and contemporary. In this sense, the independence and initiative of the local are further respected, reinforced and expanded. The reversible relation between the local and the global will also be made clear. In the second section, the reversibility and mobility of the local-global

relationships will be identified and explained through an analysis of the graphic components of Beijing’s wayfinding sign systems between 2001 and the present. The third section will present a preliminary evaluation of the effect of Beijing’s current graphic wayfinding systems on its city brand using interviews with local inhabitants and foreigners.



Figure 10.1 Parts of Beijing’s current wayfinding systems including underground signage, road signage, bus stop signage and alley signage.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

10.2 Urban Branding System – Beijing’s 2001- Current Graphic Wayfinding Systems

One of the chief aims of this section is to develop a better sense of the interrelationships between China (especially Beijing) and the West, between the local and the global since 2001 by depicting and analysing the branding function of Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems. The concrete analysis of graphic visual

elements of the 2001-current systems will be carried out in the next section. Before coming directly to the branding function, it is necessary to explain and clarify the principal features and content of the Beijing's city brand.

Today, many cities, regions, and countries actively market themselves to the rest of the world in the interest of economic growth, employment, trade, tourism, and generating a positive city image. Beijing has achieved a substantial transformation from a mere imperial administrative space, in which people were controlled, organised and had their personal freedoms restricted, to a 21st-century multifunctional and multicultural user-oriented public space where priorities were given to the welfare of its people and social and economic benefits. As was mentioned in Section 3.3.2 *Graphic Design in Urban design*, graphic wayfinding design and urban design are often applied in response to ever-changing political, economic and cultural situations, increasingly changing technology and environment, and the interaction between the local and the global. In the case of Beijing, urban design that combined with graphic wayfinding systems has played a key role in this transformation. Beijing has strived to create a positive city image through urban design and graphic design, to its residents and to global tourists and investors it hopes to attract. The concept of operating and branding Beijing was first proposed at the Ninth Beijing Municipal Party Congress in 2002 and was formally presented in the report on the work of the Beijing government at the Twelfth People's Congress of Beijing Municipality in 2003 (Beijing Evening News 2003). The government report contained some specific implementation programmes of constructing and branding Beijing. The mayor of Beijing, Liu Qi, emphasised that the best ways to manage and operate Beijing are to make efforts to open a new way for city development under the market economy conditions; carefully design, propagandise and maintain Beijing's brand; strengthen the exploration, optimal allocation, integration, and utilisation of its existing visible and invisible assets; and push forward sustainable and benign development of urban construction (ibid.). According to the report from the Beijing government (Beijing News 2003), the municipal government had drawn up a blueprint for urban development in the next

five years (2003-2008) and formulated specific strategies including:

- continuing to expand domestic demand and consumption, improving the investment environment and reducing investment costs particularly for modern manufacturing industry;
- vigorously developing new and high technology industry, modern manufacturing, service and agriculture industries;
- speeding up the construction of central business and finance districts of Beijing to attract overseas and domestic investment in the financial sector;
- developing new tourism hotspots, upgrading the tourism industry and building Beijing's tourism brand;
- alleviating traffic congestion of the central areas of Beijing and improving traffic efficiency by adding more underground lines, implementing a rapid transit bus system and accelerating the construction of public transportation hubs;
- improving the ambient air quality in Beijing via expanding the use of clean energy, introducing European emission standards II for new motor vehicles, enhancing the prevention of dust of construction sites and roads, and completing the first green belt of Beijing covering 112 square kilometres and starting the construction of the second green belt;
- augmenting propaganda of the 2008 Olympic Games as a stimulus to the economic development of the host city Beijing, seizing the special market opportunities offered by the global sporting event, attracting foreign and domestic enterprises to participate in the design and construction of Beijing and the 29th Olympic Games through open bidding;

- launching new modern architectural projects, such as the national stadium, the national aquatics centre, the national grand theatre and so on; meanwhile taking into consideration the relationship between urban development and historical heritage protection, strictly implementing the overall conservation of the imperial city, restoring the existing cultural relics and setting up specific historical and cultural protection areas. Finally, exploring and enriching Beijing's unique characteristics and selling points, cultivating a sophisticated, vibrant and strong city brand, shaping the city image of Beijing as a modern international metropolis.

It is clear from the above that the concept of managing and branding Beijing has been gradually put into practice. It is easy to see that the Beijing government has been active in turning Beijing into a place that provides circumstances favouring overseas and domestic investment, stable market conditions, convenient public transportation, ecological and agreeable living and tourist environments, a rich history and vibrant modern culture. The development of Beijing as a national capital, world city, historical and cultural city and liveable city is officially proposed in the Beijing City Master Plan (2004-2020). The report has expressly demonstrated that Beijing will be built into a city which is able to adjust to the cultural system of global cities, but also highlight its distinctive cultural identity, cultural image, and cultural spirit (BMICPD 2004). After the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympics, the three concepts – ‘Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics and People’s Olympics’ adopted for the Beijing Olympic Games had been adopted in the concepts for building a prosperous, modernised and sustainable Beijing: ‘Humanistic Beijing, High-tech Beijing, and Green Beijing’ (Liu, 2008). The three themes directly reflect the directions, focuses and tactics in a new stage of urban development in Beijing. In the report on the work of the Beijing government of the Thirteenth People’s Congress of Beijing Municipality (2009), the Beijing government reaffirmed its commitment to make Beijing into a world city in the future. According to the annual report on social development of Beijing (2010-2011), Dai explains that building Beijing into a world

city does not refer to the simple imitation of well-developed and mature world cities such as London, New York and Tokyo, or to one-sided pursuit of GDP growth, but in the light of its own interests, conditions, and advantages, to becoming a gathering place of business activities, global firms' headquarters and excellent talents, and raising its global presence in economy, politics and culture (2010: 9). He also notes that a comparative study between Beijing and other successful world cities using measurable indices carried out by the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences in 2010 indicates that Beijing is still at a preliminary stage in its development as a world city (2010: 10). On November 2nd, 2011, the Beijing municipal government launched Beijing Spirit: patriotism, innovation, inclusiveness, and virtue. Patriotism is the core of Beijing Spirit; innovation is its motivation and quintessence; inclusiveness is the main feature of Beijing and its people; virtue is the spiritual quality of Beijing (Beijing Morning News 2011).

To sum up, since the notion of operating and branding Beijing was mentioned in the report on the work of the Beijing government in 2003, a variety of local municipal authorities were committed to design, cultivate, publicise and sustain an innovative and exceptional brand for Beijing. Probing a variety of government reports, the Beijing City Master Plan, the three urban development concepts based on the spirit of the Beijing Olympic Games, and the new Beijing Spirit allows us to capture the most accurate picture of the city brand or meaning the government is trying to create. In a nutshell, the primary components of the image or brand of contemporary Beijing embrace: inclusiveness, openness, cultural uniqueness, scientific but people-oriented and sustainable development principles, liveable environment, and an enabling policy and institutional environment for investment. These things (values) are what inform the city brand of Beijing; they are what the city is and what the city means.

Let us now turn to the cultural dimension of Beijing's city brand – one of the central concerns of this thesis. In 2011, the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences published the *Bluebook of Beijing – Annual Report on Cultural Development of Beijing (2010-2011)*

in which many specialists and researchers summarised and described the strategy of cultural development and construction of Beijing, cultural and creative industries of Beijing and its cultural economics, and cultural preservation and dissemination. In the report, Li and Xu (2011: 008) point out that academics and policymakers in Beijing have reached a consensus on the following points:

- (1) As a time-honoured historic and cultural city, Beijing is facing unprecedented challenges resulting from urbanisation and cultural homogenisation. Consequently, Beijing needs to increase its cultural power by introducing particularly Chinese characteristics, and more specifically, Beijing's individuality, which is attractive to others, instead of directly imitating and copying the existing models of world cities;
- (2) The cultural construction of Beijing into a world city that still possesses its own characteristics must adhere to the basic principle that the municipal government must forge a more global perspective on the current cultural strategy and base itself on the historical and cultural tradition of Beijing. Not only does this enable Beijing to show modern properties that a contemporary world city possesses, but it also needs to fully respect Beijing's traditional culture and utilise these traditional cultural resources to develop a unique diversity of its own that takes different forms.

This consensus and the consequent development principles reveal that the traditional and the modern, the local and the global are expected to be culturally linked in Beijing. Skyscrapers of the Central Business District (CBD), avant-garde urban sculptures, high-tech transportation and public infrastructure constitute the modern image of Beijing. In the meantime, the city remains the traditional cultural centre of the ancient Oriental country, having preserved many historical relics and traditional values and ideologies. The report underscores that Beijing's cultural features and idiosyncrasy can be refined and intensified through finding out the cultural differences and gaps between Beijing and other world cities; thus the strategic orientation and targets of

cultural construction of Beijing can be clearly established (Li 2011: 021). The mutual relationship between cosmopolitanism and ‘Chineseness’ is one of the primary concerns of this government report, it states briefly that inclusiveness can endow Beijing or other Chinese cities with cultural qualities of world cities; on the other hand, differentiation can make Beijing full of a distinctive multiplicity of its own. As the annual report points out, the strategic targets and orientation of Beijing’s cultural development are to build Beijing into a national cultural centre playing an exemplary role: a Chinese cultural centre with global influence, eventually a well-known world city with a modern landscape and ideas as well as an ancient capital city featuring traditional culture, art, memory and traditional cityscape (Li 2011: 022-023). To some extent, the 2001-current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing are beneficial to the realisation of the cultural strategic targets and the formation of the anticipated brand of the city. They have been considered a useful means of contributing to the establishment of a positive meaning of Beijing. It should be noted that the 1978-2001 wayfinding signs discussed in Chapter 9 were principally used to facilitate the regeneration of Beijing and change people’s memory and understanding of Beijing after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and decades of self-isolation. In comparison, following decades of rapid economic growth and political stability in China, Beijing increasingly became a magnet for global investors, traders and tourists, as well as a venue for a diverse range of domestic and international exhibitions, conferences and events. Furthermore, Beijing’s new cityscape is characterised by a mixture of modern multi-storey buildings and traditional single-storey dwellings (see Section 4.3.3). Against this background, the 2001-current Beijing’s graphic wayfinding systems are systematically organised and improved to increase urban circulation and transportation efficiency, enhance cultural experience, actualise city brand individuality and boost urban competitiveness. So, it is apparent that these graphic wayfinding systems are to support an explicit city brand and the wayfinding needs of Beijing. This can clearly be seen from the following two aspects.

On the one hand, since 2001, bilingual or even trilingual traffic signs have been

widely used in Beijing. International standard compliant traffic signs, safety signs and information signs can be seen everywhere in the city. The bilingual signs in Western settlements and legation districts of Beijing were once regarded as a mark of national humiliation and a loss of national sovereignty during the late of Qing dynasty. However, the talk of a loss of national sovereignty is now outmoded. Subsequently, the bilingual (Chinese and English) traffic signs of Beijing's public space are repositioned as a way of improving Beijing's city image, stimulating urban development and attracting potential foreign visitors and investors. On the other hand, a vast number of red-white or blue-white doorplates and red-white alley signs have been protected by the local authorities. They have been preserved and repaired in situ, exhibited in local museums, or installed together with new signs in some renovated streets as records of Beijing's history and local people's collective memory. Indeed, the two design schemes have exerted a subtle influence on the process in which a definite identity or brand of Beijing is progressively taking shape. The design schemes also reflect goals of cultural construction as well as being expected to meet the needs of developing Beijing into a world city with uniqueness and diversity of its own. The detailed analysis is set out below.

As explained in the previous chapter, integrating Beijing into the network of world cities has been one of the top priorities for the Beijing government since 1978. This urban development strategy has been continued and implemented at an even faster and more intense pace since 2001. For the purpose of creating global barrier-free communication, trade, and easy travel, the extensive usage of modern English and universal sign or symbol languages based on various international conventions in urban space is regarded as one of the qualities a world or global city would possess. Certainly, owing to the colonial expansion of the British Empire and subsequently the unparalleled impact of American economic, cultural and military power, modern English has been considered as a global language, the first global *lingua franca* and a major international auxiliary language or vehicular language in conjunction with other languages (Crystal 1997; Graddol 1997). The potential threat of English to other

languages and even other cultures, and its qualification as an global auxiliary language are argued and challenged by scholars such as Smith, who believes that ‘English is a poor lingua franca’ (Smith 2005: 61). However, Crystal (1997) argues that, as one of six official languages of the United Nation, 85% of international organisations choose English as one of their official languages and 99% of European organisation use English as a working language. Graddol (1997: 9) describes how in the early 1990s in excess of 60 countries published titles in English and the publication total in English accounted for 28% of the total number of publications of the world, which made English the most popular language of publication. In terms of Crystal’s investigation in 1997, more than 30 territories and around 337 million people spoke English as a first language; and about one-third of the world’s population are second-language speakers of English (Crystal 1997). The number of speakers of English as a foreign language has rapidly increased and there is a strong tendency of lowering the age of learning English in schools (Graddol 1997: 11). As we have seen, there is no doubt that English is a global language or a vehicle which has been used for international communication or communication with people who are not native speakers of English.

Modern English and universal information signs or symbols in accordance with international standards, such as ISO, the *Protocol on Road Signs and Signals* (Geneva, 1949) and the *Convention on Road Signs and Signals* (Vienna, 1968) have come to be used as a means of providing accurate information for local residents and overseas tourists and controlling transportation in most world cities, such as London, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Singapore. To build a world city, the use of bilingual or multilingual traffics signs, internationally standardised pictograms or signals and high-tech infrastructure are further reinforced in Beijing, especially during the 2008 Olympic Games (see Figure 10.2). These graphic wayfinding systems facilitate a better understanding of the city’s fabric and pattern and traffic systems, creating a communicable, safe and legible urban environment. In the meantime, such an urban environment can play a major part in facilitating better integration of visitors

including foreigners and visitors from other areas of China into Beijing. In this regard, the Beijing municipal government and local business people have brought forward a range of measures on various bilingual guiding signs and information boards in the Underground, motorways, railways, airports and tourist spots, shop windows, restaurant menus and more, which are likely to help visitors successfully integrate themselves into the communities of Beijing. Therefore, the one aspect of the city brand of Beijing, as a world city having inclusiveness, openness and safeness, has been cultivated by gradually and partially adopting Chinese-English bilingual traffic, safety, prohibition and information signs, as well as other internationally standardised pictograms and symbols (see Figure 10.3).



Figure 10.2 Multilingual pedestrian signs (Chinese, English, French, Japanese, and Korean) at the Beijing Olympic Park, the main venue for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the Paralympics.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.3 (1) Bilingual road signs of CBD in Beijing; (2) Bilingual directional signs of Beijing Capital International Airport; (3) Chinese-English directional signs of Beijing's Underground; (4) Internationally standardised traffic pictogram erected in a Beijing alley.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

In addition, Beijing's municipal authorities promoted the other aspect of Beijing's brand, as a historical and cultural Chinese capital city, an attractive tourist destination, with a sense of history, 'Chineseness', and uniqueness through different approaches including the continuous use of the red-white doorplates and alley signs regarded as a legacy of the past century. Beijing's modern doorplates have undergone a change from red-white oval metal plates to blue-white rectangular ones and then to red-white rectangular enamel plates (see Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). Likewise, Beijing's road and

alley signs vary across different historical periods, for instance, the alley signs changed from blue-white rectangular metal plates to red-white rectangular enamel ones. In short, from 1908 onwards, new-style doorplates, road and alley signs began to appear in Beijing; after more than a century of development, they have been further simplified and became a common element of Beijing's cityscape. The red-white doorplates and alley signs that were associated with communist and proletarian ideologies in the 1960s and 1970s had particularly been increasingly well-blended into Beijing's distinctive traditional urban scenery – *Siheyuan* (Chinese single-story dwelling) and *Hutong* (alley) in the 1980s and 1990s. The association between the red-white doorplates and alley signs and Beijing's local culture and traditional urban space has been further reinforced nowadays. In fact, few local people know that Beijing's original metal doorplates and road signs are inspired by the sign systems of Western legation districts and concessions in China. For most local policymakers, local residents, and domestic and overseas tourists today, red-white doorplates and alley signs have almost become an emblem of *Siheyuan* and *Hutong*, as well an integral part of Beijing's folk culture (see Figure 10.4).



Figure 10.4 (1) The main gate of *Siheyuan*; (2) *Hutong* (alley); (3) Residential doorplates mounted on the main gate of *Siheyuan*; (4) Alley signs mounted on the wall of *Hutong*.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

More specifically, the red-white alley signs and doorplates have survived the test of time and provide a unique blend of old and new significance of the colour red for its residents and tourists to experience. As noted in previous chapters, during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the colour red symbolised the proletarian revolution, Maoist thought, the great power of the communist party, and justice. The colour red was employed to express the national identity and political belief. At the present time, red is utilised to highlight the identity of Beijing apart from that of the country. In other words, the meanings of red have been transformed from national visual identification into the visual language peculiar to Beijing, since only Beijing uses red in its alley signs and doorplates. Culturally speaking, the long-standing symbolic significance of red has in some measure been changed back to its original— prosperity,

happiness and joy. This change was in the main attributable to the profoundly negative impacts of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The implications and meanings of the colour red during the Cultural Revolution were increasingly weakened and diluted in the 1980s and the 1990s. At the same time, the traditional meanings – prosperity, happiness, fortune and auspiciousness, were gradually added to the association with red. Nowadays, bright red has been endowed with some new meanings – confidence, enthusiasm, vitality and ancient civilisation and represents the rebirth and renaissance of the ancient local culture in the new century.

Beijing has deliberately planned for the protection and revival of its traditional culture and has already taken many practical steps to deliver this plan. The maintenance, restoration and refinement of unique red-white doorplates and alley signs can be interpreted as the continuation of Beijing's conventional folk culture; and the exhibition of the blue-white signs in museums and streets can be thought of as the evocation and commemoration of the local people's collective memory regarding the city (see Figures 10.5 and 10.6). It is evident that, unlike the bilingual traffic signs and universally acknowledged traffic symbols, the doorplates and alley signs of Beijing with over a century of history serve as part of Beijing's historical and cultural heritage. In view of that, to achieve the above goal of building a distinct Beijing city brand and highlighting its exclusive local culture, the red-white doorplates and alley signs have become the most broadly used signs in Beijing's traditional residential complexes – *Siheyuan* and *Hutong*.



Figure 10.5 A blue-white doorplate is displayed in the exhibition hall called Stories of the Capital City – Old Beijing’s Folk Customs, in the Capital Museum, Beijing.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.6 (1) Qianmen Street, a traditional business street located at the central axis of Beijing. It was renovated in 2004 and reopened in 2008. Now the refurbished street contains many of Beijing's well-known old shops and a variety of international brands. (2) Blue-white doorplates of the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949) and

historical photos are fixed to the walls of the Qianmen Street, showing pieces of the city's forgotten memories; new and old doorplates coexist in the street.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

As the capital of China, Beijing is currently seeking world city status with distinctive meanings grounded in and enhanced by its own indigenous cultures and customs. It recognises that raising its cultural power will be an essential step towards achieving that goal. Raising cultural power can be read simply as actively integrating Beijing into the cultural system of world cities, while at the same time boosting Beijing's urban cultural individuality and increasing its global influence. As seen from the above analysis, Beijing's current graphic wayfinding systems have become a part of Beijing's city brand strategies. However, from a strong and consistent urban graphic visual identity (VI) design point of view, these graphic wayfinding systems have many unsolved problems in originality and consistency of typeface, colour, and typography, etc. For example, the English typefaces (mix of lowercase and uppercase English) on the signposts are inconsistent and some have been obviously and intentionally elongated or compressed to match the length of the Chinese characters. In which case, English letters seem to have been deemed necessary, but their typeface, size and typography have not been designed consistently and thoughtfully. This is not fully in alignment with the fundamental principles of a successful brand, i.e. integrity and consistency. This issue will be discussed in the third section of this chapter. Nevertheless, it may be worth saying that Beijing's graphic wayfinding signs are not conscious branding nor a mature branding paradigm but they have the effect of creating an identity for the city, which is precisely what a brand does. In other words, the current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing have a role to play in the construction of a clear city brand of Beijing and have met different users' and consumers' needs.

Beijing's municipal government has changed its attitude towards graphic wayfinding systems: from mechanically imitating Western urban signage systems to maximising

from the European-style signage system to consolidate the new national and urban identity (the republic); to using wayfinding signs to propagandise dominating political ideologies (communism and proletarian revolution); and then to exploiting graphic wayfinding systems to reimage Beijing and ultimately brand Beijing. This serves to demonstrate that the municipal government (local) is actively making an effort to appropriate these Western (global) resources (signs, symbols, English, etc.) and maximising its own diversity as enriched by various Chinese cultures in order to generate a well-branded city and achieve its economic, political and cultural goals. So, instead of saying that Beijing is dominated by prominent global powers in the Western cultural system of world cities, it would be more accurate to say that Beijing (local) has been appropriating and reshaping global resources to promote the formation of its identity at different times. One might argue that Beijing has been tailored and commercialised to cater to Western tastes and needs. Even so, it seems to me that Beijing is a city that is making considerable economic and cultural profit from offering a ‘mysterious’ and ‘exotic’ Eastern culture at the same time as it provides a safe, convenient and above all ‘familiar’ transportation environment for Western visitors and investors. It has become more self-confident in dealing with Western forces than it was a hundred years ago. Building on this, the Beijing government has stayed alert to the challenge of cultural globalisation and homogenisation and it has keenly sought countermeasures to extend the advantages and benefits of the local. For example, even in these bilingual or multilingual signs in Beijing, Chinese characters are always put in more prominent position than English or other languages. In a sense, what the Beijing municipal government does is more than just active resistance to cultural homogenisation and conformity arising from globalisation. The gradually increasing demand for a strategy of development for its own sake and Beijing’s growing influence at both domestic and international levels have endowed Beijing with new characteristics – appropriation and a degree of dominance. It could be argued that with the premise of not denying the global powers’ enormous influence and penetration, in some cases the decline of global power means the growth of the local power at the local level; meanwhile, the local is more than capable of making its

own choices, singling out favourable global resources, reshaping them and striving to maximise its own interests. The dynamic and reversible relationship between the local and the global, which was put forward in Chapter 3, is clearly embodied in the branding function of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems. Having explained this between 2001 and the present, the next section will be able to analyse these specific visual elements including shape, colour, symbol and typeface, and the interpenetration between local visual elements and global visual elements. Specifically, how the local appropriates global visual elements and combines them with local visual elements to form an integrated whole and a new meaning will be explained in the next section. The reversible and mutable interaction between the local and the global will be exemplified further through an analysis and comparison between local visual elements and global visual elements.

10.3 Visual Analysis of the Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing from 2001 to the Present

Chapter 9 examined the reversibility and mobility of the interaction between the local and the global by analysing graphic visual elements of internationally standardised traffic signs and symbols, and visual elements of road signs, alley signs and doorplates closely associated with local traditional culture in Beijing between 1978 and 2001. Likewise, the two aspects of the relationships between the local and the global can be identified and illustrated by means of visual analysis of the 2001-present Beijing's wayfinding sign systems. In the context of developing an iconic city brand to maximise the economic benefits to Beijing and consolidate its core cultural values, two prominent features are added to the 2001-present Beijing's wayfinding signs. They are: (1) while more and more international symbols and signs are adopted in Beijing, parts of them are locally adapted and tailored to local habits and needs; (2) the red-white doorplates and alley signs are well-maintained. I will begin by analysing the graphic elements of these wayfinding signs with strong global attributes, and then move to the red-white doorplates and alley signs that are replete with local and traditional values.

(1) Wayfinding signs and other public symbols with strong global attributes

Since the 1990s, Beijing has experienced a high rate of economic growth, population increase, and urban sprawl. In terms of *The Beijing City Master Plan (2004-2020)* and the Blue Book of China's Society series: *Annual Report on Social Development of Beijing (2007-2008)*, *(2009-2010)*, *Annual Report on Economic Development of Beijing (2010.2011)* and *Annual Report on Public Service of Beijing (2010.2011)*, Beijing's population, size of urban districts and public traffic systems continue to grow, the concrete statistical data are as follow:

- Beijing consists of six central urban districts, eight suburban districts and two counties, its total area is around 16,410.54 square km, and the central urban space of Beijing is about 1,368.32 square km (2011);
- Beijing's population has been on a steady increase during the period 1986-2010; population figures are 10 million in 1986, 10.86 million in 1990, 13.64 million in 2000, 15.36 million in 2005, 17.55 million in 2009 and by the end of 2010 the total population of Beijing reached 19.61 million; a more significant rise is predicted between 2015 and 2045 (19.40 million in 2015, 20 million in 2016 and 30 million in 2045 respectively);
- The number of foreign tourists has increased from about 1.6652 million in 1995 to 3.8261 million in 2007;
- By the end of 2010, the number of regional headquarters of transnational corporations settled in Beijing had reached sixty-eight and international Twin cities of Beijing totalled forty-five;
- During the time of the eleventh five-year plan of China (2006-2010), Beijing's municipal government had invested over 640 billion RMB in the construction of

urban infrastructure; towards the end of 2009, Beijing had 6247 km of urban roads, 884 km of highways, nearly 692 public bus lines and 21,716 buses with nearly 5,165 billion rides in 2009; the Beijing Underground had 14 lines and 336 km of track in 2010 (the annual number of passengers in 2009 was 1.423 billion).

Moreover, Beijing is the top-ranked city in many authoritative global cities indexes, rankings or assessments. For example, the A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index (GCI) was first released in 2008 and examined cities along five dimensions: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement. In the Global Cities Index, Beijing continues to remain in the top 20; it ranked 12th in 2008, 15th in 2010, 14th in 2012, and entered the top 10, in 8th position, in 2014 (ATKearney 2014). In the 2012 ranking of the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC), formed in the Geography Department at Loughborough University, Beijing was classified as an alpha+ city, which means that it was closely integrated with the global economy (GaWC 2014). It can thus be seen that Beijing has been transformed into an acknowledged modernised and globalised city-region, having a large and densely populated urban area, intricate road networks as well as modern public traffic systems. Due to the increasingly large and complex spatial structure and infrastructure of Beijing, the graphic wayfinding systems are currently performing a fundamental and central part of the urban planning and local people's daily lives. Additionally, as fostering tourism industry, attracting overseas tourists and creating a positive image of Beijing have become priorities of the Beijing government, some new changes have taken place in the function of the 2001 to current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing. As discussed in the previous section, they are deliberately designed to highlight urban surroundings and organise spatial order, offering a convenient and legible environment for its residents and overseas tourists, and assisting in the building of a unique city brand. Accordingly, the existing wayfinding sign systems of Beijing have displayed many new features, one of which is to keep in line with international conventions and standards.

In Chapter 9, it was shown that a series of national standards and conventions on traffic signs, symbols and signals by reference to the relevant international standards was published in the 1980s and 1990s. With the advent of the 21st century, an increasing number of international symbols and signs were added to the national standards of China. Especially after Beijing entered the WTO and in 2001 was elected host city for the 2008 Summer Olympics, international standards were further addressed and valued by the Chinese government and all sectors of society. They realised that only by the extensive use of international standards in Chinese industries, particularly in manufacturing, could Chinese products enter into the global market and participate in international marketing competition. In the current intensely competitive international tourism marketplace, destinations (cities) are treated and operated as a range of tourism ‘products’ or ‘services’ purchased by tourists. For competing with both long-established and emerging destinations, comprehensive investigation into the demands and expectations of visitors, financing public infrastructure, and well-executed advertising and promotional campaigns have become inevitable requirements. Most overseas visitors to Beijing or other Chinese cities expect well-organised and integrated transportation systems, and understandable public wayfinding signs, which in turn has served as a stimulus for the Chinese government to attempt to bring domestic standards into line with international symbol and signs standards.

Because of the increase in traffic volume in every town and city in the world, and the frequent international exchanges, communication and cooperation, universal public information symbols and traffic signs have become more important than ever. Today, almost every country in the world has begun to adopt international pictorial symbols and signs into its graphic wayfinding systems for providing safe and convenient urban conditions and generating a well-functioning communication with people of different cultures, especially at airports, motorways, and tourist attractions. Many national and international organisations have designed symbols and signs with different colours and shapes to guide passengers, pedestrians and motorists and given them a safe way

to negotiate all kinds of roads, pavements, walkways, underpasses and other urban areas. As an example, the ISO standards, the international technical committee – ISO/TC 145 has developed a range of standards of colours and shapes, for instance, public information symbols, the safety identification, signs, shapes, symbols and colours, and the graphic symbols for use on equipment, to universalise symbols used in public spaces and establish principles for the application of graphic symbols. These standards provide a rich source of universal symbols, which many countries usually use to build their own national standards. China is no exception; it is one of the participating countries of the two sets of symbols standards—ISO/TC 145/SC 1 *Public information symbols* and ISO/TC 145/SC 2 *Safety identification, signs, shapes, symbols and colours*. Basically, the universalised pictograms contain the freeze-framed gestures or motions and a variety of simple, geometric and abstract shapes. In the national standards of China: *the Public Information Graphical Symbols – Part 1: General Symbols (GB/T 10001.1-2006)* and *the Public Information Graphical Symbols for Use on Sign – Part 2: Symbols for Tourism and Entertainment (GB/T 10001.2-2006)*, a total of 192 symbols have been devised for use in public places, tourist attractions and related facilities. Most of them are designed according to ISO. For example, the GB/T 10001 series are produced by reference to ISO 7001:1990 and ISO 7001AMD1:1993. As shown in Figure 10.7, with slight differences, parts of the Chinese national standards are consistent with the international standards – ISO 7001 *Graphical symbols – Public information symbols*. This clearly indicates that the internationally standardised public information symbols are regarded by the Chinese government as a global ‘language’ traversing cultural barriers in communication and as a necessary condition of being a world city.

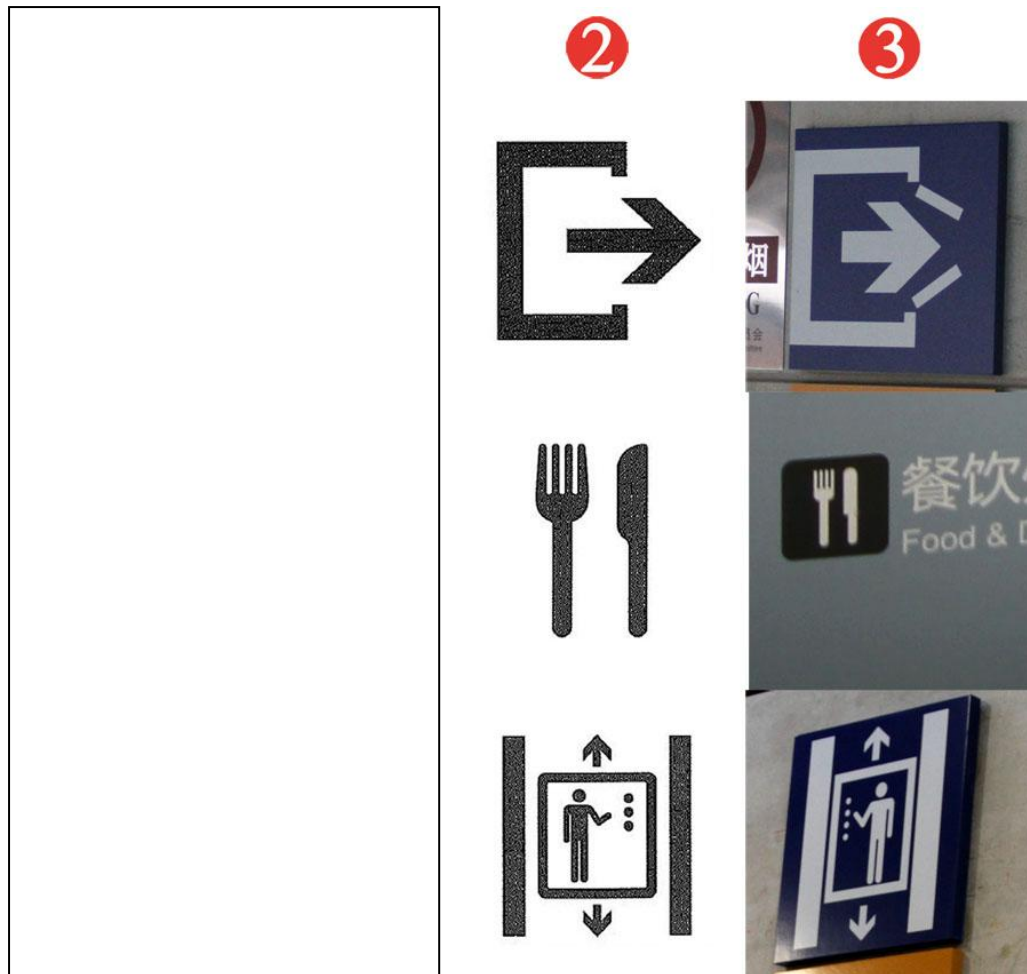


Figure 10.7 (1) ISO; (2) GB/T 10001.1-2012; (3) graphic symbols of Beijing.

Source: ISO 1990; SAC 2012; photographed by the author, 2011.

Moreover, some outstanding design forms and solutions in graphic symbols systems that contribute to creating unified and effective graphic wayfinding guidelines are imitated and adapted by the relevant Chinese governmental bodies and local authorities, such as transportation and urban planning departments. For example, Beijing's Underground maps and wayfinding guides are similar to the design scheme of London (see Figures 10.8 and 10.9). The graphic map of London Underground is one of Britain's top three design icons (the other two are the Supermarine Spitfire and Concorde). It was designed by Henry (Harry) Charles Beck in 1931 and was issued in 1932 (Ovenden 2013: 152-153, 168-169). The most iconic pocket map of London underground based upon an electrical circuit had no background geographic details and was characterised by the use of straight horizontal and vertical lines, or 45 degree

diagonal lines (ibid.). The expansion of central London and the alteration of actual geographical locations allowed ordinary stations and interchange stations to be displayed more clearly and allowed sufficient space for the station names (Ovenden 2013: 153). This design solution has persisted to the present day and has been employed by a number of countries all over the world, including China.

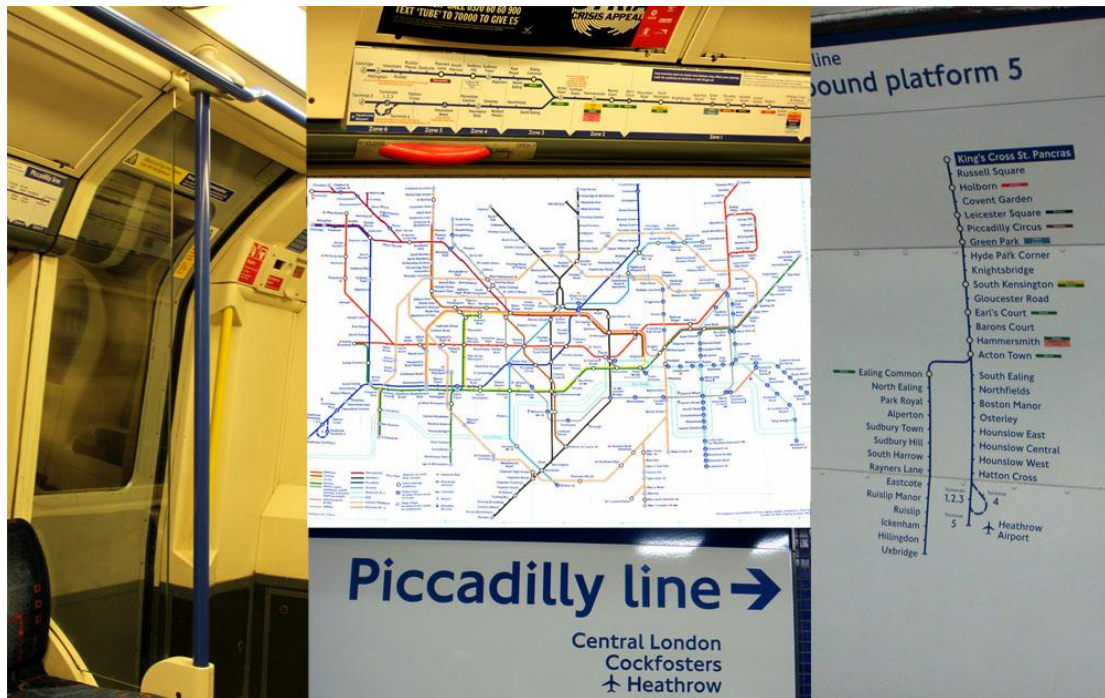


Figure 10.8 London's Underground maps and wayfinding signs.

Source: Photographed by the author, 2013.



Figure 10.9 Beijing's Underground maps and wayfinding signs.

Source: Photographed by the author, 2011.

Similarly, the local government continues to bring the design of Beijing's wayfinding and information signs up to international and regional standards. Most warning signs and regulatory signs in mainland China are similar to the signs from the *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals* and *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (UK), except for some slight differences (Figure 10.10). Regarding the information signs, the traffic information signs including advance direction signs, direction signs, road or place identification signs, and confirmatory signs are usually rectangular on a blue background with white symbols or inscriptions. In the UK, motorway signs use blue signs with white text; primary routes use green signs with white text and brown signs are used to specify tourist attraction. In the USA, information signs are green with white lettering; signs for parks, forests and historical sites consist of names in white letters or white symbols on a brown background. In short, the colour blue and green are the most commonly used colours on information signs in all the above examples, with brown most often used to indicate recreational and culturally interesting areas. There are some minor differences in lightness and

saturation of colours and shapes of symbols between China's traffic information signs and these international and regional standards, but with the exception of these differences, informational signs of China closely relate to global signage systems. From Figures 10.11, 10.12 and 10.13 below, we can see that the colour brown, like the Vienna Convention and UK's traffic signs, is reserved for tourist attractions in China, as well as the stylised light coloured arrows and/or other symbols and/or inscriptions on a blue or green rectangular board being the most common form of China's traffic information signs. As can be expected, China has adopted most Western conventions in traffic symbols and signs.

In addition to the widespread application of internationally standardised wayfinding symbols and signs in Beijing, we are also seeing a rapid growth in the use of English in the signs. From Figure 10.14 below we can see that in 1999 Beijing primary roads were identified by signs with their names in Chinese characters and Pinyin, whereas the 2011 primary road signs were made up of Chinese characters, Pinyin and English. It seems that in order to develop various service industries, the international standards and language took precedence over local needs and standards. In reality, these bilingual road signs are where the local meets the global and the local cooperates with the global. These local factors (Chinese character – *Hei* typeface) and global factors (shape, colour, Latin letter and English) coexist side by side on Beijing's road signs to meet the different needs of local town-dwellers and foreign tourists. In the previous chapter, it was argued that parts of the 1980's and 1990's wayfinding signs and symbols that were designed according to international standards displayed the Chinese government's great intention and determination to modernise China's main cities and a proactive attitude to the global cultural and economic involvement of Beijing. As well, these internationally standardised 2001-current wayfinding signs manifested the local's active exploration and appropriation rather than passive acceptance of these international standards and language. Besides, the initiative and flexibility of the local is most evidently expressed in the modification and localisation of these existing international pictograms. This will be explained in more detail in the

following paragraphs.

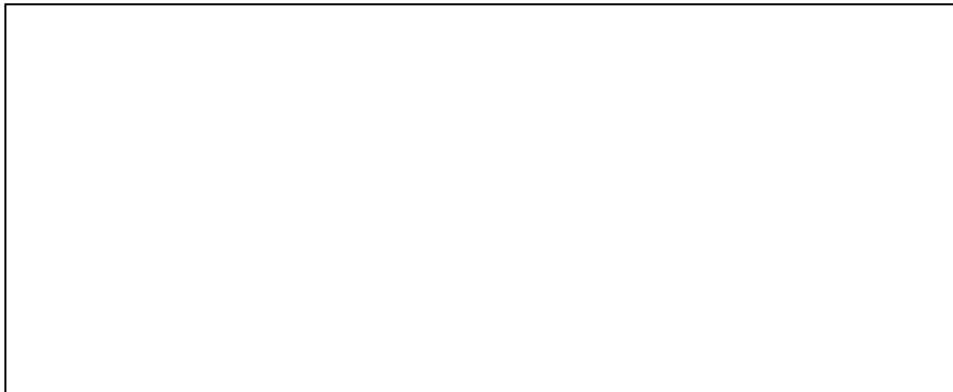
STOP

GIVE AWAY

PARKING PROHIBITED



Regulatory signs of Beijing



Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (UK)

Figure 10.10 Regulatory signs of Beijing basically conform to the international and European traffic signs standards.

Sources: (From top to bottom) photographed by author, 2011; *the Convention on Road Signs and Signals* done at Vienna on 8 November 1968 (Consolidated version including the amendments to the convention in 1995 and 2006); *the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (Crown Copyright, UK) 2002.



Figure 10.11 (1) tourist destination signs of UK; (2) tourist destination sign in Beijing.

Sources: *the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (Crown Copyright, UK) 2002; Photographed by the author, 2011.

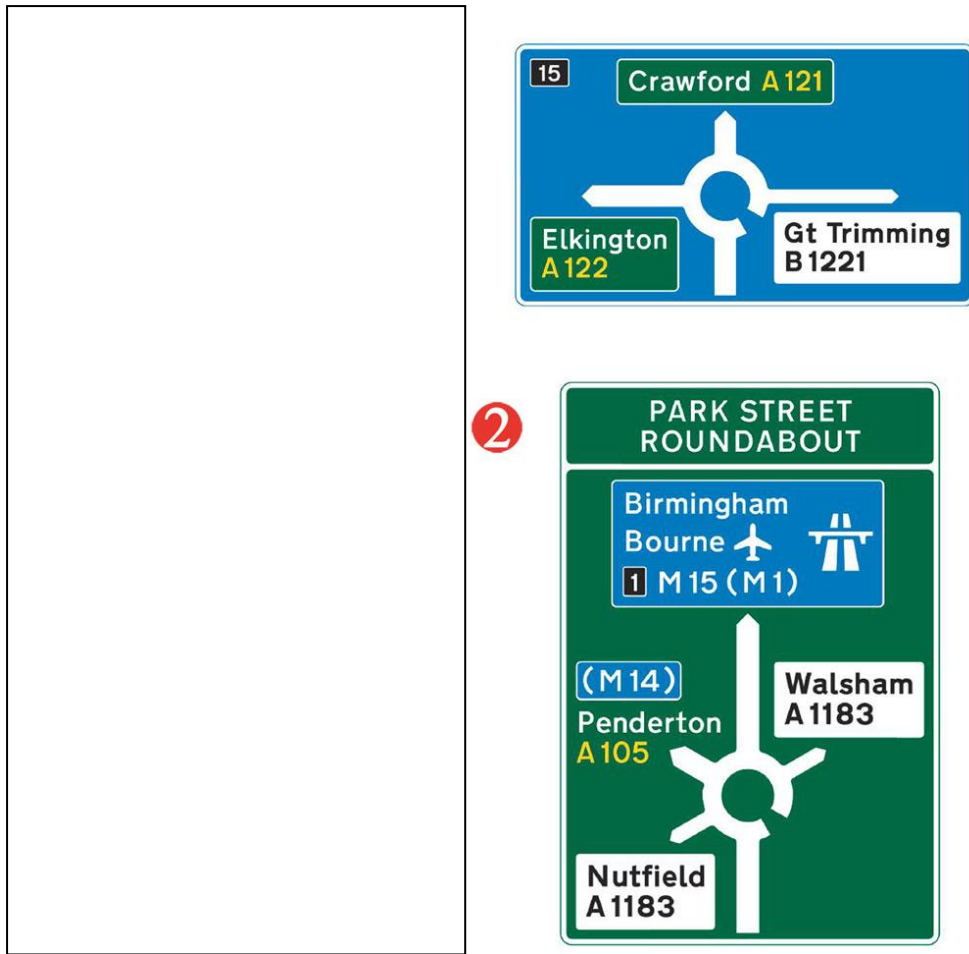


Figure 10.12 (1) international directional signs and sign of bicycle route; (2) directional signs of motorway and primary routes in UK.

Sources: *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals* (Consolidated version including the amendments to the convention in 1995 and 2006); *the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (Crown Copyright, UK), 2002.



Figure 10.13 Directional signs and identification signs of primary routes in Beijing.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



1999



2011

Figure 10.14 Comparison between a 1999 primary road sign and a 2011 primary road sign in Beijing.

Source: made by the author.

In fact, the Chinese government has not fully complied with international standards to devise its urban information symbols and wayfinding signs, but rather to localise parts of the symbols within the framework of international standards. In *the Standardisation Law of the People's Republic of China* issued by the State Council in 1990, the state was committed to encouraging and supporting the adoption of international standards including ISO, IEC and KWIC Index of International Standards, as well as some advanced foreign standards containing influential regional standards, standards of developed industrial countries and internationally recognised standards of overseas organisations and enterprises. The adoption such standards refers to the conversion and adjustment of these existing international or regional standards into Chinese national standards to varying degrees through study and

analysis, and the practical implementation of these remodelled standards (ChinaGB.org 2009). The employment of international standards in Chinese national standards can be divided into three types: identical (IDT), equivalent (EQV) and non-equivalent (NEQ)⁸ (ibid.). One of the Chinese national standards, The *GB 2893-2008 Safety colours*, for instance, is equivalent to *ISO 3864-1:2002 Graphical symbols–Safety colours and safety signs–Part 1: Design principles for safety signs in workplaces and public areas*. The *GB/T 10001.1-2006 Public information graphical symbols–Part 1: General symbols* is non-equivalent to *ISO 7001: 1990/Amd 1:1993, Public information symbols*. Hence, it is safe to say that in view of the practical needs and actual circumstances of the society and state, a variety of imported standards were intentionally revised or redesigned.

This is evident in the comparison of two museum symbols, as presented in Figures 10.15, 10.16 and 10.17. It is clear from Figure 10.15 that the museum symbol used in the UK has two essential components: the stylised Greek architectural shape and the capital letter M. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. First of all, the silhouette of Greek architecture is a pictogram used to express the idea of the museum, mostly because for Westerners, it might evoke the image of the British Museum – the first national public museum in the world – or other similar Western museums. The principle part of the British Museum, a quadrangle with four wings, was designed by the architect Sir Robert Smirke in 1823 and was completed in 1852 (The British Museum 2014). It was an example of typical pillared, majestic Greek Revival architecture, which reflected classical Greek architectural features, such as columns and pediment (ibid.). The simplified and graphic image of a set of Greek-style temple columns, base and pediment at the top of the south entrance of one of London’s iconic landmarks, was strongly associated with the concept of museum in the UK and other countries with similar cultures, even in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO Figure 10.16). Second, the capital letter M is the initial for

⁸ The identical (IDT) application indicates two standards are exactly the same ; the equivalent (EQV) application means two standards are technically equivalent but may (or may not) have some minor deviations; non-equivalent (NEQ) means major technical deviations exist, for reference only.

museum. As a result, when the symbol, the letter M sitting in the middle of a Greek building, appears on an urban map or information board at an Underground station, native English speakers or speakers of similar language families, such as German, French, Spanish, etc., can easily understand what this symbol represents. This shows that the museum symbol is based on the Western way of thinking, writing and speaking.



Figure 10.15 (1) the British Museum; (2) the museum symbol in the ‘you are here map’ of London; (3) the museum symbol in *London Pass*; (4) the museum symbol in a UK tourist destination sign.

Sources: photographed by the author, 2013; *the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (Crown Copyright, UK), 2002.

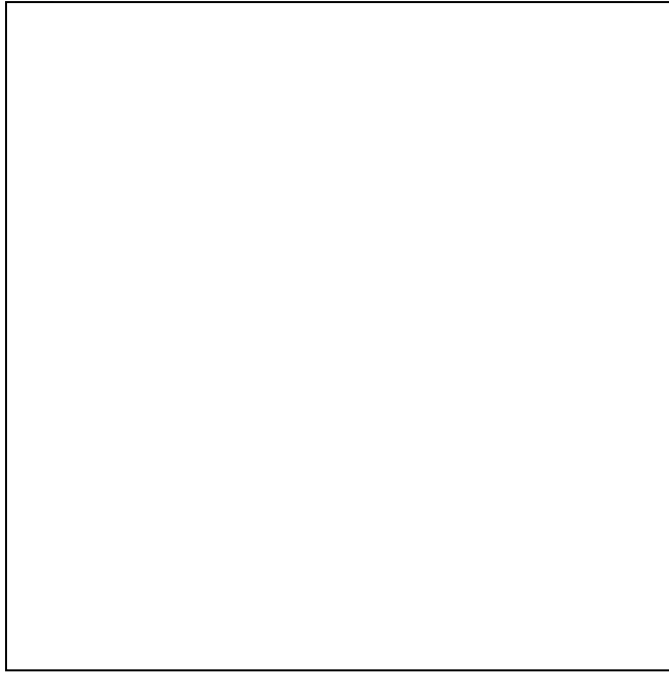


Figure10.16 Museum symbol of ISO.

Source: ISO 7001:2007/Amd 1: 2013–Graphical symbols – Public information symbols–Amendment 1

https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/?_escaped_fragment_=iso:grs:7001:3:PI_PF_054

This pictogram clearly indicates the idea of museum in many Western cultures, but not in Chinese culture. Public information symbols, especially the internationally standardised icons, are supposed to be self-evident and to transcend cultural boundaries. Yet, the Western-style museum symbol that needs Western awareness is not entirely applicable to Beijing or other Chinese cities. One of the major reasons is that in China this antique Greek architecture is not as pervasive as it is in Europe and the US. This Greek architectural style was thriving in the Western world in the 1750s after Greek civilisation and its ancient ruins were brought to light through excavations by Western Europeans (The British Museum 2014). Nevertheless, Chinese people are not very familiar with this architectural form and its function. Thus, even if they see this museum symbol in the street, they will get confused by the symbolic meaning associated with it. In addition, English is neither an official language nor frequently used daily language in mainland China. Although Chinese characters have been

phonetically transcribed into Latin alphabets, the initial of counterpart of museum in Chinese (*Bowuguan* 博物馆) is B not M. For many Chinese people, the meaning of the capital letter M, therefore, is not obvious but produces doubt.

On the basis of referencing and using international standards for national standards, the Chinese government has spared no effort to localise current international symbols and signs to guarantee the effectiveness of dissemination of the intended messages to most Chinese people. From Figure 10.17 below, we can see that in the museum icon of China that was added to the *Public information graphical symbols for use on sign – Part 1: Common symbols* in 2006, partial elements of the museum symbol of ISO were still retained, but new distinctive local elements were added. These original design elements (although with slight changes in shape), the Greek-style columns, base and pediment, form the basic frame of this symbol. A pictogram of round *Ding* (see Figure 10.17:2) replaces two middle Greek columns as the core component. This round *Ding* (鼎) was a type of ancient Chinese bronzeware with three legs and two handles, and was decorated with detailed patterns and emblematic motifs. *Ding* was initially used as an essential food vessel and cooking utensil and was later used for sacrificial offerings to ancestors and as a symbol of power and high social standing. As the image of *Ding* commonly occurs in textbooks, television programmes, and museum exhibitions, it is well known by the Chinese people. It is almost certain that this symbol designer tried to incorporate one of China's popular local visual elements into the design of this public icon, so as to make it have more sense in the cultural context of China. In addition to the redesign of international symbols, the Western visual factors and design principles, such as the application of graphical fundamental elements: point, line, plane, cone, cylinder, square, etc., were borrowed by Chinese designers to design public symbols that are imbued with strong Chinese characteristics. For example some complex images of objects, particularly traditional Chinese architecture, were broken down into a few simple geometrical shapes (see Figure 10.18). These symbols were added to the *Public information graphic symbols for use on signs – Part 2: Symbols for tourism and entertainment* in 2006. Clearly,

these simple tourism symbols with strong local features can better help local people and foreign tourists to locate themselves.



Figure 10.17 (1) Museum symbol of China, GB/T 10001.1-2006; (2) Da Ke Ding (food container).

Source: SAC 2006; Shanghai Museum

<http://www.shanghaimuseum.net/en/collection/details.jsp?id=10011&fl=21>

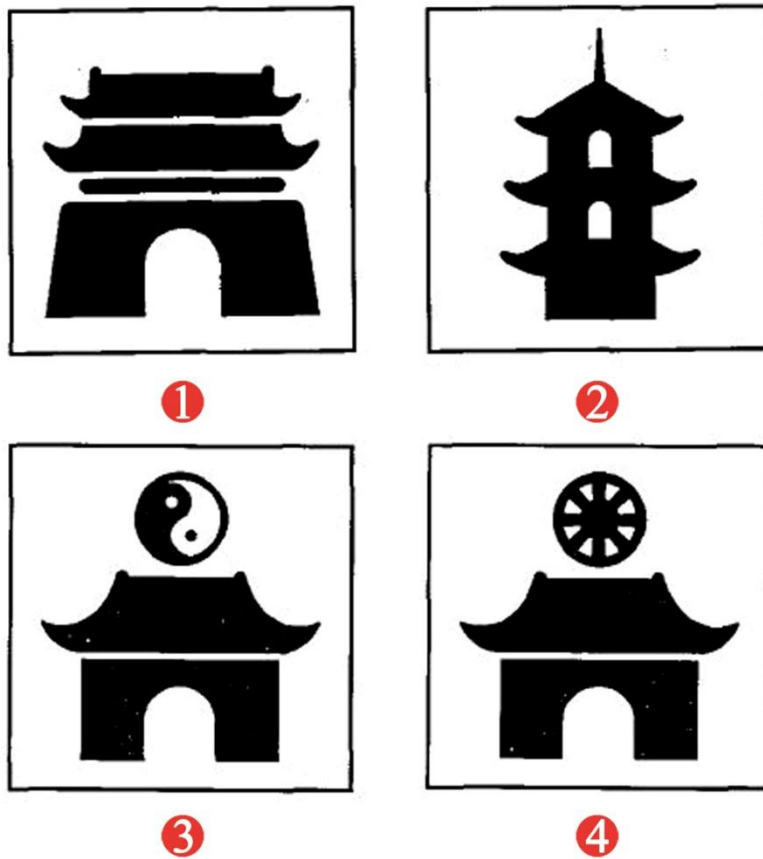


Figure 10.18 (1) Historic Sites; (2) Ancient Pagoda; (3) Taoist Temple; (4) Buddhist Temple (GB/T 10001.1-2006).

Source: SAC 2006.

This modification and adaption of international standards can also be seen in the traffic signs of Beijing. Driven by the motive for making these traffic signs more readily understood by local road users, a number of international signs were modified and some new symbols were created. The sign of local tricycle prohibition, shown in Figure 10.19, is a useful example. The tricycle is a local means of transportation, which is often used to transport passengers and goods in China. Actually, the tricycle is not peculiar to China, because it is a very common vehicle throughout Asia. China's tricycle has its own characteristics, though. There are two kinds of tricycle shown in the local tricycle prohibition sign (Figure 10.19): one has a canopy and a seating area, exclusively for the carriage of tourists for hire (top); the other has a trailer, designed to deliver cargo (bottom). In general, they are traditionally pedal-powered and modern

ones are motor-driven. At present, in many Chinese tourist cities including Beijing, most tricycles are typically used for sightseeing and have become one of the most appealing vehicles at tourist attractions. A row of human-powered vehicles with red canopies and seats displayed in Figure 10.19, is representative of the sightseeing tricycles of Beijing and these serve as the prototype of the symbol applied to urban public signs. This stylised tricycle shape possesses some global qualities – the pictogram, the universal visual language – while simultaneously being instilled with Chinese cultural references and the Chinese way of thinking.



Figure 10.19 Prohibition of local tricycles sign in Beijing.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

In these examples, it can be seen that, on the one hand, China made efforts to harmonise its national standards with international standards for enhancing connectivity to global markets and urban networks, while on the other hand, China has given full play to the initiative and competitive advantages by localising and reinterpreting parts of international symbols or designing brand new symbols to meet their own needs and interests. Apart from modifying international symbols and designing its own symbols and signs, China has been actively changing its role and responsibility in making international standards from participant to contributor or builder. While actively participating in international and regional organisations of

standardisation and obtaining a great deal of relevant information, China has taken an active part in drafting international standards and in striving to propose new standards to international bodies (ChinaGB 2009). Overall, these cases of public symbols and signs support the view that by adopting or redesigning global visual elements and design principles, and participating in the development of international standards, the local is very capable of avoiding unnecessary conflicts with global powers, facilitating more effective cooperation with global organisations and ultimately turning passivity into initiative.

(2) Wayfinding signs with a distinctive local flavour

As seen in (1), compliance with international and some regional Western standards, a number of dramatic changes have been made to the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing since 2001; nevertheless, some public signs imbued with exclusively local idiosyncrasies remain and have been preserved in Beijing. Departing from the extensive use of international symbols and traffic signs in Beijing, many distinctive and old-fashioned road, street or alley signs, doorplates along with their old names were retained or renovated to fit in with the traditional architecture complex in the 1980s and 1990s. This policy has been continued and is strictly enforced nowadays. In the interests of protecting the traditional grid layout of Beijing's old city, and preserving the features of the old streets and alleys and facilitating a distinctive city brand, the city authorities regarded the red-white alley signs and doorplates as a part of the historical landscape and should retain their own regional standards and differences (see Figure 10.20). Their special historical importance and value raise these signs outside the regular standards and regulations. Beijing's traditional architecture complex and its existing graphic wayfinding systems are seen as special and in need of protection from the infiltration of global power. In contrast with the more globalised traffic signs and symbols analysed above, the red-white signs are distinctive to a specific place (Beijing).

There is not much change in the existing red-white doorplate (Figure 10.20, right); the

local cultural factors (colour, Chinese characters and traditional Chinese sequence system – Heavenly Stems) combine with the global cultural factors (shape and Arabic numerals). A new alley sign system made from reflective material was introduced in Beijing around 2000-2001 (People 2000) (Figure 10.20, left). As shown in Figure 10.21, in contrast to the old alley sign, *Pinyin* was added to these new alley signs. In addition, the new sign is much bigger and a brighter red than the old one. A kind of reflective material replaced the enamel but the design still followed the original design. On the new alley signs, the simplified Chinese characters, which are different from the typefaces of Chinese characters on the doorplates (*Song* or Imitation *Song*) and road signs (*Hei*), are a typical *Xinwei* style of calligraphy (新魏体) (Figures 10.20 and 10.21). The use of this kind of typeface makes alley signs distinct from the road signs and doorplates, so that the specific traits of alley signs are successfully strengthened. In a similar vein, the local factors containing the bright red saturated with new and old meanings and the graceful calligraphy typeface almost entirely dominate this alley sign. Thus, in the example of both alley signs and doorplates, the local is in the global and the global is in the local, but the local is more prominent than the global. That is the reason why these distinctive red and white alley signs and doorplates can contribute to highlighting the uniqueness of Beijing and enriching the travel experience, especially for foreign tourists. It is hardly surprising, then, that these signs integrated with *Hutong* as a whole have become one of the best-known traditional visual symbols constituting the Beijing's city brand. Moreover, since *Pinyin* was added to the red-white alley signs as a complement to the Chinese characters, locals and visitors can recognise and understand the red-white signage system spreading over the deep and quiet alleys of Beijing without difficulty and readily associate these signs with Beijing's vintage dwellings.



Figure 10.20 Alley sign (left); doorplate (right).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.21 Comparison between the old alley sign (top) and the new alley sign (bottom).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Not only did these signs and traditional building complexes make Beijing a place where visitors can get a sense of what the local people might experience, but they were also used by local people and organisations to identify themselves and their city. For instance, a non-governmental organisation, the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre (CHP), which aims to help communities protect their cultural legacy from the direct challenges posed by modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation, made use of the new red-white alley sign to publicise its ideas, promote its projects and recruit new volunteers (Figure 10.22). Additionally, as one of the

best-known icons of Beijing, the alley signs are made into souvenirs (Figure 10.23) and sold in local gift shops. It appears that tourists like to buy these alley signs as a significant reminder of their visit and experience of the city. The local alley sign becomes the memory (the meaning or brand) of the city and is taken away by tourists from all over the world in the context of global economic and cultural tourism. This serves to show that Beijing's graphic wayfinding system is a distinguished local element with tangible and intangible values that typifies the community and its way of life. Beijing's municipal government realises the cultural value of these red-white signs and has taken steps to ensure consistency in the use of shape, colour, and typeface on doorplates and alley signs. Local government has been trying to motivate local people to have a better appreciation of their native culture by means of preserving local cultural heritage and revitalising traditional values. Above all, under such cultural heritage preservation policies, Beijing remains the most significant centre for traditional Chinese culture and its own cultural uniqueness lies in the lives of local residents, making it more competitive in the global tourist market.



Figure 10.22 Publicity sticker of the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre (CHP).

Source: collected and photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.23 Alley sign key chain.

Source: collected and photographed by the author, 2011.

Based on the above analysis, it is clear that there are two sets of graphic wayfinding systems that have a significant influence on constructing a coherent brand for Beijing. One system is in conformity with international criteria and these signs hang above the motorways and primary roads used mainly by motor vehicles. The other system that reflects local culture is set up along the primary and non-primary roads and alleys, mostly targeting pedestrians. Whether in the internationally standardised system or the local system, the initiative, participation, and adjustability of the local are vividly displayed. Particularly at the challenges and opportunities posed by the ‘one-size-fits all global standard’, did China nor Beijing indiscriminately and entirely follow international standards related to public wayfinding symbols and signs but rather tailored and redesigned them to meet the needs of local people. Meanwhile, Beijing has been trying to strengthen the symbolic meanings of these red-white signs and associate these visual icons with its traditional architecture, aiming at maintaining cultural cohesion and social unity, and realising economic benefits. It can, therefore, be said that in this case the local is the participant and beneficiary of globalisation, not merely a victim or recipient of it. What is more, the adaption, modification, and redesign of international standards emphasise that in many cases the local is capable of resisting the homogenising powers and appropriating/dominating global resources to pander to the local’s needs. Consequently, the simple one-sided dualism of the local and the global hides more than it reveals. Their relationship should be reversible and dynamic.

With regard to the mobility of the local-global relationship, from the previous discussion in Chapter 9, it was argued that the 1978-2001 graphic wayfinding signs of Beijing can display China’s neutral and non-aligned foreign policy and a more active and practical attitude toward international cooperation. In the same way, the 2001-current Beijing’s wayfinding signs can show some new features with respect to the mobility of the local-global interaction. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US became the sole global superpower. In fact, in the middle of

the 1980s, the US has had the world's largest economy and retains its status to the present day (Zakaria 2011: 197). However, the dramatic 2008 global financial crisis devastated the economies of most Western countries and created conditions for the rise of the rest of the world and the emergence of multi-centred networks. As Zakaria (2011) notes in the preface to his book, *The Post-American World*:

The conventional wisdom was that when the West sneezed, the rest would catch pneumonia – that had been the experience in the past. But this time, the emerging nations of the world had achieved a critical mass and were now able to withstand the dramatic decline in growth in the Western world (Zakaria xi).

Zakaria stresses that the global financial crisis in 2008 brought a heavy blow to Western countries, especially to America and it accelerated the rise of the post-American world, in which power was transferred from the West to the rest of the world (Zakaria xii). He also mentions that before the financial crisis, the United States remained the undisputed world leader – its cultural, economic, technological and military power was uncontested, its culture 'reigned supreme everywhere from Latin America to China' (Zakaria xii). However, after the 2008 crisis, 'the geopolitical challenge of living in a world without a central, dominant power is one that will be actually felt everywhere... This is creating an international system in which countries in all parts of the world are no longer objects or observers but players in their own right' (Zakaria xiii, 4). In this context, China has been constantly readjusting its position (from an isolated country to a member of the world network) based on its different strategic priorities and has been taking an active part in the reshaping the global order. Zhang points out that 'In the process of the historical evolution of its relations with the (international) system, China has changed its role from being a revolutionary, an active partaker and an outsider to a participant and finally, a builder' (Zhang 2014: 66). In other words, apart from strengthening its resilience to the new global power shifts, China has also been striving to contribute to the transition to a

new world order – the emergence of the multi-centred networks.

The changing role of the local (China) from a participant to a potential builder and the response of the local to the new power shift in the 21st century is reflected in the design of the 2001-present graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing. The Chinese government has been adopting more and more international standards and other advanced foreign design schemes in Beijing with the obvious intention that these symbols and signs be used to support the secure and efficient movement of people of different cultures in Beijing and promote the reconstruction of Beijing as a renowned world city and a potential global centre. While China has been working to speed up the process of bringing Chinese national wayfinding sign standards closer to international conventions and standards, a series of local red-white signs are related to the traditional architecture of Beijing and are being used to enrich and fortify the city brand of Beijing as a world city with its exclusive culture and way of life. More importantly, the modification and redesign of some international symbols and signs and the design of some brand-new traffic symbols demonstrate the local's determination and potential to change its role from an active member or participant to a builder or contributor in the international system. It also shows that the local (Beijing) is energetically responding to the increasingly emerging global networks with multiple power centres by combining its different urban space with different wayfinding signs to nurture a memorable city brand and increase its urban competitiveness in the world city system. Therefore, the 2001-current wayfinding design can reflect the new features of the interaction between the local and the global, as well as show their relationship to be ever-changing and mutable.

10.4 The image of Beijing and its graphic wayfinding systems

The cultural policies, city planning, marketing and campaign activity being made by the local government are to promote Beijing as a tourism, business and living destination in the world. More specifically, according to the Beijing City Master Plan (2004-2020), Beijing will be built into a national capital, world city, historical and

cultural city and liveable city. These different identities, images or ambitions embody different qualities and peculiarities. Above all, the difference between the status as a world city and as a historical and cultural city, both of which the government is sparing no effort to achieve, make very different demands of Beijing. On one hand, being a world city requires Beijing to have remarkable potential and competitiveness for being a more solid nucleus in the global, financial and economic networks and a cultural centre on which Chinese culture and other cultures converge. On the other hand, a historical and cultural city needs Beijing to motivate, rediscover and market the distinctiveness, historical continuity, diversity and innovation of its own local culture. In other words, Beijing's indigenous culture and essence must still thrive and be carried forward, giving rise to a harmonious, majestic and ancient feel to Beijing. The overall image of Beijing and the cultural policies that the local government is keen to create have been explained earlier. In brief, the present official image or brand of Beijing refers to inclusiveness, openness, cultural uniqueness, along with a convenient and liveable environment; it is also presented as one of the world's leading financial, business, tourism, media and sports centres as well as a suitable destination for hosting domestic and international large-scale events.

Nevertheless, Beijing's image must be varied for different audiences or consumers who interpret and 'consume' the same city in different ways, giving it different meanings. Audiences or consumers can be divided roughly into three types: local residents, visitors from other areas of China, and foreign visitors. In the framework of Beijing's overall brand designed and popularised by the government, these three types of consumers have various expectations and requirements of Beijing and the city may be said to have three main or broad-brush images. For local residents, Beijing is a place where they grow up, live and where they call home. They often identify themselves with the city or with some neighbourhoods within the city. For domestic visitors from outside Beijing, it is the capital city, the political, cultural and economic centre, and the home of the previous China's empire, Great Qing, which is full of imperial heritage sites and ancient monuments, as well as a modern city filled with

employment and business opportunities. For most overseas visitors, Beijing is the capital of China, even a representation of the whole country, possibly a mysterious oriental city which is where they can experience an unfamiliar culture; it is also an emerging global market for investments. With many interwoven aspirations, demands, and contradictions, this section must ask whether and how Beijing's current graphic wayfinding systems meet these different consumers' or markets' needs and accelerate a subtle change towards a more positive image? Is it possible that these graphic systems are unique to Beijing yet hospitable and understandable to visitors? The following section will preliminarily explore the interplay between Beijing's different identities or images and its graphic wayfinding systems. The aim is to identify their defining properties, present initial research findings and initially discover whether Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems have had a positive impact on the brand of Beijing.

10.4.1 World City and International Signs

Firstly, those parts of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing that are grounded on international standards are beneficial to the formation of the anticipated city image of a world city. These internationally accepted traffic signs and public symbols were extensively used in Beijing prior to the 2008 Olympic Games in order to enable rapid recognition for international visitors. These universal public symbols (Figure 10.7), which are readily understood by both locals and overseas tourists are ubiquitous and are commonly used in conjunction with traffic or information signs. In most cases, these traffic signs for motorists, Underground signs, city maps and tourist signs are in simplified Chinese characters, Pinyin and English. The road or alley signs primarily for pedestrians are in simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin. There are exceptions, Chinese-English bilingual wayfinding signs are used in the Beijing Capital International Airport and direction signs can be found in several languages (Chinese, English, French, Japanese and Korean) in Beijing Olympic Park (see Figure 10.2).

These combinations of different writing systems on signs are fully capable of

satisfying the needs of diverse groups of people. There is no doubt that the graphic wayfinding systems dominated by Chinese and Pinyin have been very convenient for those who are Chinese native speakers (the locals and domestic visitors). While the growing use of English and internationally standardised pictograms on signs in Beijing means that international travellers can easily follow the routes and find their destinations. Even in the traditional residential areas where red and white Chinese-Pinyin signs are the only signs, foreign tourists still can get around and generally locate or orient themselves. This is because Pinyin is made up of Latin alphabets and is the form of transliteration of Chinese characters. Thus, it is very easy for most overseas visitors who can speak and spell English or other European languages to remember names in Latin letters. Another benefit of using Pinyin on signs is that it helps foreigners to pronounce Chinese names relatively accurately, as Pinyin's articulation rules are fairly similar to English. As a result, not only can foreign tourists use a map tagged with Pinyin to find their way around Beijing, but they can also ask for directions from locals. These wayfinding signs are compatible with Beijing's future development trend and the pace of modern city life, and contribute to making Beijing a safe and understandable urban space. This view could be further supported by some comments in the semi-structured interviews that I undertook as part of my research in Beijing.

Chiara⁹, who is from Italy and is a student at the Beijing Language and Culture University, said the current road signs and paper maps had effectively prevented her from getting lost in Beijing and she could recognise the difference between the blue and white signs designed for motorists and the red and white signs mainly set up in the *Hutong* (pedestrian areas). She also emphasised that Pinyin is more effective than English, as her major means of navigating in Beijing is to check a city map and ask locals for directions.

⁹ Interview with Chiara on 16 th December 2011, Beijing

Roger¹⁰, who is from Spain and also a student at the Beijing Language and Culture University, sees Beijing as a very big and modern city that offers many job and business opportunities, and has some modern parts that are similar to Barcelona. He presumed that because of the irresistible trend of globalisation and an increasing number of Westerners travelling to Beijing, Beijing is going to become more ‘occidental’. He said that the Underground is his main source of transportation in Beijing and the current Underground-related wayfinding system can help him in finding his way in and out of this public transit system. Although he can read Pinyin, he still thinks English is more helpful, especially for these Western tourists visiting Beijing for the first time; and in this he disagreed with Chiara.

Andrew¹¹ is an American student whose areas of study are American history, Chinese history and urban planning, and he is involved in a one-year (2011-2012) cultural programme in Beijing. He described Beijing as a huge square with roads radiating east, west, north and south. He felt that such a grid pattern made it very easy for visitors to easily get around in Beijing. In addition, he emphasised that the urban signs with Pinyin or English, as well as the square urban spatial configuration, together with the bilingual traffic signs and maps all help him to generate a clear cognitive map of Beijing. ‘I think Beijing is really easy for me, because everything is north and south, all straight, grid... I have a map of Beijing in my head’, he stated.

Another interviewee, Zhang¹², who is a Chinese lecturer in urban planning at the Tsinghua University in Beijing and has lived in Beijing since 2004, stated:

In terms of Beijing’s immense size, the most common landmarks of Beijing are overpasses and Underground stations, coupled with numerous blue and white road signs. So if you do know the names of overpasses in Beijing very well, you can readily locate yourself in a city map. Perhaps for tourists, it is

¹⁰ Interview with Roger on 16th December 2011, Beijing

¹¹ Interview with Andrew on 2nd December 2011, Beijing

¹² Interview with Zhang on 28th September 2011, Beijing

impossible to remember the names of all these overpasses in a short time, however, unmistakable and comprehensible blue traffic signs and the traffic police assistants at each main crossroad of Beijing can help them find their way around.

These comments suggest that the transport infrastructure (overpasses and Underground stations) have served as the most common and recognisable urban landmarks that provide wayfinding tools for locals and visitors. These blue and white primary road signs and Underground signs effectively mark and identify these landmarks based on the urban transportation system and allow travellers and residents to locate themselves using consecutive landmarks, for example, the successive Underground stations. Meanwhile, the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau deployed thousands of traffic police assistants at main intersections with heavy congestion around central Beijing; beyond their primary role of ensuring safe and orderly flow of traffic in Beijing, the traffic police assistants play an important role in helping pedestrians to find their way. It can be therefore said that domestic and foreign tourists and local residents could benefit from the urban orientation system which incorporate the transport system, the landmark system, the graphic wayfinding system and the traffic control system (the traffic police assistants). All in all, I would argue that the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing are fundamentally sufficient to meet the travel needs of most local people and visitors. Moreover, increased usage of English or Pinyin and other universal symbols on the public signs has strengthened Beijing's ties with its overseas tourists, so that the image of Beijing as a world city is being slowly but steadily established.

10.4.2 Traditional City and Exclusive Signs

For European tourists or visitors from other provinces of China, many of whom are visiting Beijing for the first time, it must feel as though they are in another world and age. A mysterious city where people speak a different language and eat different food can seem comfortingly familiar (with the most common Chinese cuisine being spring

roll and Peking crispy duck) and strangely unfamiliar (because of entirely different habits) to tourists from the West. Likewise, for domestic visitors from other regions with their own cultural identities that are distinct from Beijing's imperial culture, they most probably want to get a sense of what the emperors and their families might have experienced when they owned this city. Some tourists will have had vague mental images of what to expect before travelling to Beijing, while others will have no preconceptions about the city. In either case, tourists want to immerse themselves in Beijing's authentic cultural and civic life and want to have an experience and memory they cannot have at home.

Since the advent of modernisation and urbanisation, Beijing has been confronted with the dilemma of whether to demolish large numbers of traditional, old and slum-like residential areas, which usually lack basic sanitation, are difficult to transform and seriously hinder urban reconstruction. Fortunately, standing side by side with modern architecture, the imperial palace complexes, traditional residential communities, and particularly the layout of old Beijing as a typical model of ancient Chinese urban planning have all been well preserved. Because traditional habits and customs did not fit into this modern society, many of them had gone into noticeable decline. Yet when a large number of tourists poured into Beijing and locals gradually became aware in recent years that they should save these long-standing traditional customs and crafts, they rediscovered the treasures of traditional lifestyles of Beijing. Despite dramatic changes in politics and culture during the 20th and 21st centuries, Beijing's conventional customs, foods, languages, arts and music have been basically maintained and retained. Accordingly, a tour by local tricycle through the narrow alleyways or seeking snacks on the go could give both domestic and overseas visitors the chance to breathe in the sights, smells, sounds, touch and tastes of Beijing.

Red and white alley signs (Chinese characters and Pinyin) and doorplates (Chinese characters and Arabic numerals) can help all travellers plan their trips and locate themselves in the mazes of narrow alleyways. Most importantly, in a cultural sense,

these signs, as the carriers of Beijing's folk culture, can represent the characteristic living environment and greatly enrich tourists' travel experience. Tourists who are eager for distinctive cultural experience are impressed by both the red-white signs dominating traditional Beijing's residential space as well as blue-white signs exhibited in museums and streets. One interviewee, Andrew¹¹, felt that the modern part of Beijing, Central Business District, for instance, is nothing special, some famous tourist attractions, such as the Forbidden City are too commercialised; in contrast, he felt that the folk culture which still exists in *Hutong* (alley) is more real and authentic, moreover, these red signs are like a symbol for *Hutong*, stating:

I think it's like, these red signs are kind of becoming a symbol for *Hutong*... You know like signs in different other cities, like New York, like the subways signs, kind of becoming a symbol for New York, like London Tube... kind of the identity of the city... I don't like this one (the blue signs, see Figure 10.24), because this one makes me think of road signs like in US, makes me think of like highway signs. I don't feel like I am in *Hutong*. It doesn't feel very welcoming.



Figure 10.24 New blue *Hutong* signs are set up at entrances of some *Hutong*. The design scheme is somewhat analogous to the signs of primary routes (Figure 10.13). This type of blue sign is not used to substitute the red *Hutong* signs, but rather to guide drivers around because they are much bigger than the red ones.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

For another participant, Zhangyang¹³, a Beijing native, who founded a small museum with a collection of metal toys and other metalwork including red-white doorplates and alley signs (see Figure 10.25), feels that the red doorplates and alley signs are strongly linked to his life and memory and are a sign of his home. He stressed that the red sign is more like a part of his memory rather than a common wayfinding tool.

¹³ Interview with Zhangyang on 25th November 2011, Beijing



Figure 10.25 Zhangyang explores, understands and articulates his own cultural identity as a Beijing native by collecting the red and white doorplates and alley signs. *Source:* photographed by the author, 2011.

However, there were differences among the interviewees opinions about the association between Beijing's *Hutong* and red alley signs and doorplates; they believed that the link is very weak. This viewpoint can be exemplified by the opinions of respondents, Xing¹⁴, Tan¹⁵ and Zheng¹⁶, who are all from other provinces, and

¹⁴ Interview with Xing on 30th September 2011, Beijing

have lived in Beijing for approximately three years. They thought that the number, setting, size, height and information of these blue and white road signs satisfy their basic needs for wayfinding and navigation, but their façade surfaces are featureless and do not underline Beijing's local culture. They felt that the city is making an attempt to preserve historical buildings and continue local tradition, yet it does not make enough effort with the design and management of wayfinding signage. With regard to the red and white alley signs and doorplates, they said that they can distinguish these red signs from the most common blue road signs, yet they feel like there is nothing special about the design of the alley signs and doorplates.

Evidence from the interviews reveals the three representative types of consumers' different attitudes towards the symbolic meaning of the doorplates and alley signs as an icon of Beijing's folk culture. The representational qualities and symbolism of these red signs have been questioned by several interviewees. However, there is no denying that this set of red wayfinding signs has the potential to impress tourists with its special connection with this city's heritage – *Hutong*. For this reason, the prosperous local tourist industry has increasingly turned the symbolic value of these red alley signs and doorplates into a commercial value and transformed the local culture into commodities. As has been mentioned in the previous section 10.3, Beijing's alley signs are made into key rings, postcards, mugs, t-shirts and other home accessories or souvenirs (Figure 10.23) and are sold in local souvenir stores that have flourished in *Hutong*. In order to remember their time in Beijing or bring back gifts for friends and families, tourists often pick several of the most representative souvenirs as a slice of their memory to take home with them. Almost imperceptibly, the red and white wayfinding system with its refined aesthetic and relevant souvenir items has become a symbol of Beijing's traditional architecture and community, which contributes positively to consolidate Beijing as a historical and cultural city. Beijing is not the first city to implement a retail marketing strategy and cultural

¹⁵ Interview with Tan on 2nd October 2011, Beijing

¹⁶ Interview with Zheng on 9th October 2011, Beijing

strategy; travel (especially heritage themed) souvenirs can feature local tradition and culture and, in turn, cultural connotations bestow commercial values on tourist souvenirs (a special cultural meaning is imposed on a specific object, bringing profits to manufacturers and retailers). Many world renowned historical and cultural cities have long since associated road or other traffic signs with particular historic sites, urban districts, events, organisations and celebrities, so as to achieve the expected commercial and cultural benefits, for example, London (Figures 10.26, 10.27 and 10.28), Berlin (Figure 10.29) and Prague (Figure 10.30).

Especially in the case of London, these consistent, uniform and *sui generis* primary road signs and transport logo have been very important to the success of London's city brand on the world scene. So far, London consistently comes out on top in many rankings of the world city or city branding; it was ranked second out of 82 global cities in the A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index (GCI) in 2014, 2012, 2010, and 2008, and was ranked third out of 57 in a global listing of the Guardian's world cities with the most powerful brands in 2014. It can therefore be seen that London has a great reputation as a world city with a successful city brand based on its dominant features. Conceivably, London might have become a model for other cities or nations trying to create their own brands. Like all buildings, streets, parks, these urban details are vital visual components of the image of London as a whole. Today, the bar-and-circle London Transport logo, rectangular road signs or Underground map, based on electrical circuit diagrams, their own house styles or the classic London transport typeface – Johnston Sans – are London's most recognisable symbols. They were applied to almost all aspects of the graphic wayfinding system of London and were intermingled with London's transport system, architecture, and streets to build a strong independent London identity and brand. In addition, these public logo and signs are strongly linked with special places and people of London. From Figures 10.26, 10.27 and 10.28 below we can see that the transport logo and road signs are utilised to indicate these particular places – the Arsenal football club and the London Transport Museum as well as the address of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

Here, the signs and symbols are the directional tools and the reminders of particular urban culture, history and charm at the same time. This combination between public signs and London's specific sites make the brand of London more concrete, vivid, engaging and memorable for consumers. Although the marketing and branding functions of the Beijing's red-white signs are not as mature as the well-crafted city brand system of London and leave much to be desired, this graphic wayfinding system has been used successfully to represent and identify the traditional residential districts of Beijing.



Figure 10.26 Underground signs and road signs are closely linked with the Arsenal football club and culture :(1) Arsenal stadium; (2) Arsenal tube station; (3) An Arsenal metal Tube sign in the souvenir shop of the Arsenal stadium; (4) Several Arsenal metal road signs.

Source: photographed by the author, 2013.



Figure 10.27 Tube sign key rings, Tube map mugs, and mini metal street signs are the most representative souvenirs in the gift shop of the London Transport Museum:

(1) The facade of the London Transport Museum; (2) A variety of traffic sign-related souvenirs.

Source: photographed by the author, 2013.



Figure 10.28 221B Baker Street is the home of the famed fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes. Therefore, this street became one of world's most famous addresses As a matter of course, the sign of Baker street is associated with the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes. (1) The Sherlock Holmes Museum; (2)The Baker Street sign; (3)(4) Souvenirs of the Sherlock Holmes Museum – Baker Street signs with the silhouette portrait of Sherlock Holmes on it.

Source: photographed by the author, 2012.



Figure 10.29 Traffic signal symbols—a solid male figure wearing a hat (*Ampelmännchen*), which were designed by a former East German traffic psychologist, Karl Peglau in 1961 and are still used in Berlin, became a popular souvenir item and featured Berlin's traffic lights. (1) Two kinds of symbols (the green *Ampelmännchen* means go, the red means stop) displayed on pedestrian traffic lights

in Berlin; (2) Ampelmännchen mugs and t-shirts.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.30 The red-white-blue road signs can be seen everywhere in Prague and their colours are the same as the colours of the Czech Republic flag. These signs are popular mementos and are sold to tourists. (1) A set of road signs coupled with door numbers are installed on a wall of a historic building in Prague; (2) the Czech Republic national flag; (3) (4) Prague road signs exhibited in local shops.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

10.4.3 The Defects in the Existing Graphic Wayfinding Systems of Beijing

From the above analysis, it is quite apparent that Beijing's current graphic wayfinding systems can have a positive and significant impact on the way tourists from around the world perceive Beijing. The bilingual wayfinding signs and universal symbols make the city appear more readable, convenient and friendly; the local red and white signs make it appear more traditional, distinct and memorable. Although these wayfinding systems have the effect of creating an identity or brand for Beijing, and can be compared with the signs of London or other European countries, they are not yet a complete, mature and comprehensive graphic visual identity design. This limits

the help they can provide to a vibrant and successful brand for Beijing. It also potentially restricts the economic benefits derived from the exclusivity of the brand, and the global cultural influence derived from consistency and quality, which are the key dimensions of corporate identity work e.g. Mobil, BMW, Harrods, Paul Smith etc. or longevity e.g. the Johnston Sans font, designed a century ago. The limitation of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems takes the form of a lack of uniformity – inconsistent typefaces and forms, for example. Given the lack of a rigorous and thoughtful design strategy, the urban wayfinding signs could be to some extent counterproductive and even unfavourable for the construction of a comprehensive and consistent city brand of Beijing. Therefore, the inconsistency and disorganisation of typefaces, colours, layout and materials is one of the most serious defects to be found in Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems.

10.4.3.1 The inconsistent use of typefaces on road signage

According to the visual analysis of Beijing's wayfinding signs and relevant national standards and guidelines, typefaces applied to different signs can be summed up in three main categories: English alphabets and Chinese gothic typeface (a kind of Chinese sans serif style, *Hei* 黑体) for motorways, primary roads and Underground; English alphabets and Chinese *Xinwei* (新魏体) style for the red alley signs; And Arabic numbers and Chinese Regular Script (*Kaiti* 楷体), *Song* (宋体) or Imitation *Song* style (akin to Western serif fonts, 仿宋体) for the red doorplates. Thus it can be seen that there are certain rules when it comes to the use of Chinese typefaces on public signs, whereas the guideline for the use of English alphabets is equivocal and vague. But, in reality, the incoherent use of Chinese and English typefaces on signs is common in Beijing and it leads to visual confusion and spoils any aesthetic consistency.

As can be seen from Figure 10.31, (for the moment, let us put aside the issue of inconsistency in sizes, colours, materials, and layout of wayfinding signs) the typefaces used on the doorplates of the same street (*Yonghegong* Street) are extremely

confusing and inconsistent. The Chinese typeface shown in 1, 2, 4 and 6 is the *Hei* typeface, but the one displayed in 3 is more like the Regular Script (*Kaiti*) and the one shown in 5 is the Imitation *Song* style. With respect to the English letters, the one displayed in 3 is a kind of serif font, while the ones in 1 and 2 are two different sans serif font styles. Furthermore, the numerals' typefaces are even more inconsistent and illogical. Clearly, the strokes of 5 are the narrowest and the 6's strokes are thicker than the others and its lines have more squared ends and sharper corners. Undoubtedly, the random, thoughtless and tasteless use of various typefaces is seriously damaging to a holistic, clear and consistent city brand of Beijing. Their importance in the construction of a complete and striking city brand had been simply underestimated and neglected.



Figure 10.31 Various doorplates with discordant size, colour, material, typeface, and layout in the same street (*Yonghegong Street*).

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Moreover, the same typeface but in different variations has been indiscriminately

adopted for a number of public signs. As shown in Figure 10.32, in this same street , *Yonghegong* Street, Chinese *Hei* typeface is the main typeface employed on the primary road signs (1, 2 and 4) and bus stops (3), however, subtle differences between them can be spotted. Although they all look similar, the differences of stroke weight and length are very pronounced. For instance, in 1 and 2, the graphic component ‘口’ of the Character ‘和’ is characterised in that the left vertical stroke is slightly longer than the right. Somewhat differently from 1 and 2, the Chinese radical ‘口’ exhibited in 3 and 4 is typified by two vertical strokes of equal length. Furthermore, it can be observed that the strokes of characters in 1 and 4 are thicker than 2 and 3; and the auxiliary Latin alphabets are not the same in size or style.



Figure 10.32 Primary road signs and bus stop signs in the *Yonghegong* Street.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

Rex Chen, the founder of a London-based design and typography website – *Type is Beautiful*, posted two articles regarding the typeface of Chinese road signs in 2007 and 2009. The articles point out that in most cases, two kinds of sans serif English typeface – Helvetica and Arial were randomly used for road signs in China; in 2009, the national motorway signs were redesigned and the typeface used on motorway signs was replaced with a new one similar to the American traditional highway typeface – FHWA (Chen 2007 , 2009). Chen (2009) stresses that even though the motorway signs of China have been unified and regulated, problems such as stretching and distorting letters, and compressing and expanding letter spacing without adjustment still remain. Chen (2007) also argues that the deficiency of China’s road signs lies in the lack of a general design specification providing useful standards for the final evaluation of letter spacing, text proportion, and typeface used on road signs or in the unsuccessful nationwide implementation of official design standards.

10.4.3.2 The inconsistent form of wayfinding signage

In addition to these visibly inconsistent typefaces, Beijing is littered with diverse and incoherent wayfinding signs that are different in size, colour, shape and material. To make matters worse, the inconsistency not only exists in different wayfinding systems, such as road sign system, alley sign system and the Underground sign system but also within the same system. From Figure 10.31 above, we can see that these doorplates in *Yonghegong* Street look different and are not strictly controlled, despite the fact that they are found in the same street. As mentioned in preceding sections, Beijing’s typical doorplates, located in the traditional residential area, are a small red rectangular enamel plate with an Arabic number and alley or street name. Yet, what is surprising is that in *Yonghegong* Street, these doorplates do not only differ in size, but in other features, such as colour, layout and material. As shown in Figure 10.31, the signs exhibited in 1, 2, 3, and 6 are almost four times bigger than the ones in 4 and 5. Further, there are some slight differences in saturation of the colour red and obvious differences in the materials (1, 2, and 5 are enamelled; 3 is aluminium; 4 is made from

a material resembling plastic; 6 is a plastic sticker).

Likewise, the primary road signs and alley signs face the same problem – a lack of consistency in their external form. For example, two extremely different styles of road sign post have been installed side by side on the same road (Figure 10.33). In the case of alley signs, three or four different types of sign can appear in the same alley (Figure 10.34). One possible reason is that the road or alley signs of different periods coexist in certain old areas of Beijing since they were placed in close proximity to each other, that is to say, previous wayfinding signs had not been removed, but new signs had been set up to replace some of the old ones. Whatever the explanation may be, this chaotic situation of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems might cause a visual distraction and be visually confusing, which could weaken and dilute the image of Beijing as a whole.

Apart from these inherent problems of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems, road and alley signs are surrounded by a wide variety of commercial signs, which is another reason for the visual chaos. A number of commercial signs in particular, which are incredibly similar to the official road signs, could even lead to greater harm to the long-term vision of Beijing becoming a unique cultural and historical city (Figure 10.35). It is likely that the commercial signs are trying to emulate the official road or alley signs by trying to not look like vulgar commercial signs but like official city signs. When motorists or pedestrians are finding their way around, they are inevitably drawn to these advertising signs that are placed side by side with official wayfinding signage. Thus, these kinds of commercial signs grab more potential customers' attention with less effort, but they can cause visual damage and confuse passers-by. Thus, information and direction signs may get lost in the visual clutter of commercial signs, which could result in the reduction of the effectiveness of street signs in indicating direction and identifying location.



Figure 10.33 Two primary road sign posts with different styles, typeface and materials standing on the same side of the street in Beijing and in close proximity to one another.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.34 Along with the most representative red alley signs in Chinese and Pinyin (see Number 1), there are several other types of alley signs that can be seen in Beijing. *Source:* photographed by the author, 2011.



Figure 10.35 Commercial signs are attached to the alley signs on the streets of Beijing and their appearances are very similar to the road and alley signs.

Source: photographed by the author, 2011.

To some extent, current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing are beneficial to the formation of an anticipated city brand. However, due to the confusion in the usage of English and Pinyin, a disordered mixture between the Chinese characters and English letters, and the incoherence between wayfinding signs, it has not achieved the anticipated effect. In spite of this, it still serves to demonstrate that designing graphic wayfinding systems for the specific purpose of enhancing a sense of place does not necessarily mean to remove global factors entirely but rather to use global factors effectively to express local features.

10.5 Summary

This chapter has explained the new function of branding of the 2001- current graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing and identified their fundamental external features: some parts of wayfinding signs and public symbols are designed on the basis of international standards; some parts have distinctive local characteristics and are properly conserved and preserved. As was mentioned in previous chapters, the local has the transformative potential to create different identities that might resist a global power or might revitalise its own culture and tradition. The comprehensive analysis of the new branding function and these visual evidences extracted from Beijing's 2001- current wayfinding signs can support this argument. For example, despite the Chinese government sparing no effort to promote the international standards on its traffic signs and symbols, it does not blindly follow international norms that are more aligned with Westerners' thinking patterns, but rather modifies them somewhat to conform to local culture and tastes. This process, in which global factors are remodelled and tailored to meet local demands places an emphasis on initiative, priority and dominance of the local rather than passivity, weakness and fragility. Drawing on this point of view, it has been argued that the relationship between the local and the global is far more complex than a simple and one-way binary opposition. Moreover, there is great potential and possibility for the local to cope with the global challenge with ease, to appropriate global resources, and even to dominate the global to some degree. Therefore, the relationship between the local and the global is reversible and ever-changing, which corresponds to the two key concepts I presented in Chapter 3: reversibility and mobility. The previous section offered a preliminary evaluation of the effects of Beijing's current graphic wayfinding systems on the construction of Beijing's city brand. The finding suggests that although Beijing's systems are not yet a mature and comprehensive Visual Identity design, they can meet the wayfinding needs of different people and play a significant role in keeping Beijing's traditional culture alive, while allowing the city to connect with the rest of the world.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Key findings

This research has investigated and explained the reversible and mutable local-global relationship by analysing the evolution of the functions and graphic components of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems since 1840. Four key research questions about Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems were identified:

- Why and how are the local and global connected in the urban graphic wayfinding systems?
- How have the meaning, function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems changed since 1840?
- What role did Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems play in shaping Beijing's identities at different periods?
- What is the complex and manifold relationship between the local and the global as reflected in the changes in the functions and appearances of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems?

This investigation was an attempt to attain answers to these questions, so as to produce useful results and findings. In this section, I will present some of the findings of my empirical research by summarising the answers to these research questions.

The first research question, which was explored in Chapter 3, is why and how the local and global can be connected in the urban graphic wayfinding systems or how the interaction between local values and global values is linked to graphic wayfinding design. This question has benefitted from Barnard's work. For Barnard (2005),

graphic design can perform cultural and social functions in the context of the local and the global. He emphasises that graphic design is one of the ways by means of which political power, cultural belief and social order are propagated and duplicated or challenged and resisted. The notion of graphic design is more than simply conveying information but rather the construction of meaning and identity. He also notes that the meaning of graphics is the outcome of the interaction between cultural values and the graphic elements, and because different cultures have different values and beliefs, different values and beliefs will construct different meanings. I have, therefore, argued that graphic design could be used to build, defend and disseminate local cultural values or global cultural values or a compromise reached by the two significantly different values. In turn, since graphic design is where the local and the global meet, the interaction between local values and global values could be reflected in graphic design and could be revealed by means of analysing the visual elements of graphic products. Building on Barnard's ideas, we can establish connections between the issue of the local and the global and graphic wayfinding signage. In other words, the wayfinding sign system can be applied to promote and reproduce cultural values and political beliefs of the ruling class or resist and defy these dominant values. These leading values and ideologies are, in a way, the prominent outcome of local-global intercommunication. Thus, graphic wayfinding design can be regarded as the product of a mixture of local and global elements.

My research has revealed that as one of the forms of graphic design, urban graphic wayfinding design can be interpreted as a kind of visual creation, the reproduction of cultural values and beliefs, and a form of communication in which political relations and social structures are constructed and communicated. As a result, the urban graphic wayfinding system is able to reflect the close interlacing and interaction between the local and the global, including local values and global values. The interpretation and examination of the relationship between the local and the global are made possible by unscrambling and analysing graphic wayfinding systems. My particular perspective on the mobility and reversibility of the relationship between the local and the global

proposed in Section 3.1 could be examined and exemplified by comparing and decoding the changes in the functions and external appearance of the graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing from different periods.

The second and third questions have been explored and answered in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The key finding is that the significance, function and appearance of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems have changed dramatically from the turn of the 19th century, throughout the 20th century and up to the present day. They were initially established as an imperial household registration and population management tool (this refers mainly to doorplates) (Chapter 5). After a time of profound social change in the 19th and 20th centuries, they were redefined and gradually applied as urban orientation and direction signage systems (Chapters 6 and 7). Subsequently, they were used as an effective political propagandist tool that reached the peak of its popularity during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Chapter 8) and as an instrument of reshaping Beijing's image and the people's collective memory after 1978 (Chapter 9). Currently, besides the functions of direction, navigation, postal addressing and household registration, Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems serve as the identification and eventually the branding of a thoroughly modern, globalised city with its own cultural diversity and uniqueness (Chapter 10). During this time, the appearance and design (material, size, shape, colour, layout, typeface, etc.) of the wayfinding systems were significantly altered, along with the changes in their functions. The variations of appearance can be roughly divided into four phases: 1) portrait-orientation, rectangular, paper doorplates with details of the householder's personal information and red oval doorplates ; 2) blue enamel square doorplates written in traditional Chinese and Arabic numbers and blue enamel rectangular road signs; 3) red enamel doorplates and road signs with specific names with strong socialist and communist symbolism; 4) part of wayfinding sign systems with strong local features (red enamel signs with traditional alley or road names); a large part of them being broadly consistent with international standards.

Concerning the role played by Beijing's wayfinding signs in the transformations of Beijing's identity, I have argued that Beijing's wayfinding signs, along with their spatial design and arrangement, were utilised to construct and consolidate the city's identities in different eras and maintain a distinct and consistent visual identity of Beijing as a whole. Therefore, Beijing's wayfinding sign systems and urban spaces were designed in accordance with the regime changes and the evolution of Beijing's cultural and political identities. There have been five phases in Beijing's manifestations: a well-planned imperial city; a metropolis with a republican spirit; a totally industrialised but relatively isolated capital of a socialist country; an open and modernised Chinese-style socialist city; and a cosmopolitan city. Urban design accompanied by graphic wayfinding design has had a significant role to play in achieving these identity transformations.

The final core research question of this thesis – the relationship between the local and the global – was also addressed in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. In the case of Beijing, the local and the global are connected in the graphic wayfinding systems in the forms of the intermingling of local graphic visual elements (such as Chinese characters, colour and traditional numeral systems) and global graphic visual elements (such as English or universal graphic symbols). The relationship between the local and the global can be comprehended and described by way of extracting and describing these graphic visual elements of urban wayfinding systems in terms of cultural study. Through analysis of a range of functions and graphic elements of the wayfinding systems over different periods against a background of the radical transmutation of Beijing's urban space since 1912, two features of the relationship between the local and the global – mobility and reversibility – are exemplified and highlighted. Mobility refers to the alteration, increasing or decreasing of the global centre(s) or superpower(s) that generally project power through their global network, and affect the local cultural, economic and political conditions, which shape its own local identity. The notion of reversibility aims to challenge the global-local dichotomy and emphasise that the interactive process between the local and the global is reversible

and exchangeable; that is to say, they could both be dominating and dominated (see Figure 11.1). This attribute of reversibility of the local-global relationship is one of the primary arguments and findings of this thesis. It has highlighted that in many cases, the local is fully capable of appropriating or modifying global resources to support its own priorities for development and to meet its own cultural, economic and political needs. The local values, resistance, initiative, adaptability and resilience were continually underscored as a source of difference and power to the permeation of global values, throughout the thesis

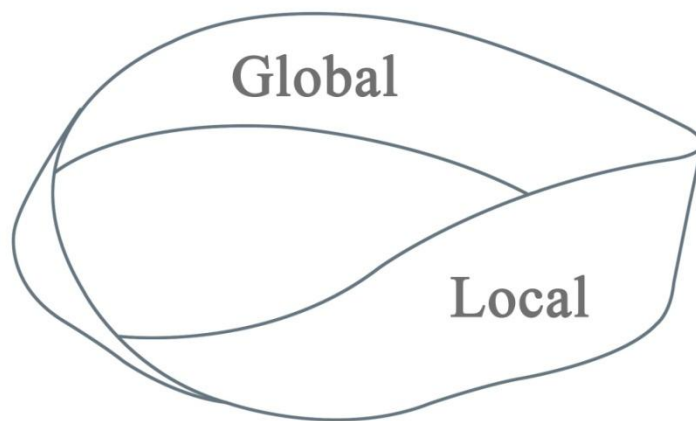


Figure 11.1 The Möbius strip represents the reversible relationship between the local and the global (presented in Chapter 3).

Source: drawn by the author.

In summary, the major concern of this research has been the relationship between the local and the global, and this has been approached by probing and analysing the function and visual elements of Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems of different time periods. Consequently, the one-way local-global dualism has been challenged and replaced with a bi-directional, mutable and reversible local-global relationship.

11.2 The Contribution to Knowledge

When I collected visual data on Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems and conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in Beijing, one of my targeted interviewees, a Chinese professor in the field of public art, questioned the rationale of my research and suggested that I should make a few alterations to my research subject. He pointed out that the history of Beijing's wayfinding signs is relatively short and that they have not changed significantly over time. More importantly, and compared with the current disorganised wayfinding signage, Beijing's complex and ever-changing architecture, graphic outdoor advertisings, and public arts with their rich and distinctive evolutionary histories would be more suitable for the analysis of the interaction between the local and the global. It seemed to him that visual analysis and research into Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems would be fruitless and valueless, and might only produce some ineffectual evidence and weak arguments. However, it could also be argued that the design of architecture and other large-scale artefacts is significantly influenced by society, and that they exert a subtle influence on the formation of the characteristics of a society. In contrast, the design, development and function of urban graphic wayfinding systems have received only a little attention to date, especially for many non-motorists and people who are not experienced or seasoned travellers and who do not spend much time travelling. Consequently, the relevant studies in the social, political and cultural functions of urban graphic wayfinding systems are scarce. However, for me, this is exactly where I have been able to make a contribution to knowledge.

I argue that the cultural penetration of global powers and the compliance, cooperation or resistance of a local society can be directly or indirectly reflected in nearly all man-made artifacts, which range from a splendid architectural complex to everyday products. Likewise, the most common (but often overlooked) artifact – the urban graphic wayfinding system – is where the particular local meets the systematic global. Beyond their basic functions of orientation and direction, different wayfinding sign

systems (e.g., road signs, doorplates, Underground signs) of different urban areas, cities, or countries serve cultural, social and political functions in varying degrees in terms of supporting prevailing cultural and political values and maintaining social order. So they can be regarded as one of the external, visual manifestations of how local authorities apprehend and respond to the challenge of global forces. This theory is directly applicable to the analysis of Beijing's wayfinding sign systems. In fact, contrary to what the professor of public art argued, Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems have a long and complex history. The metal doorplates and road signs can be traced back to 1908 and, more surprisingly, the paper doorplates can be dated back to around 1068. Furthermore, the graphic wayfinding systems have shown highly dissimilar features and played multiple roles at different times and for different purposes. Therefore, the greatest contribution of my thesis is to bring a new angle to the observation of the evolution of Chinese metropolitan culture and to explore the interaction between the local and the global by analysing functions and graphic components of urban wayfinding systems of different periods, using Beijing as an example. More importantly, the research provides a reasonable alternative to the one-sided and one-way local-global dualism. I argue and show that the relationship between local and global is bi-directional, reversible and changeable. In short, the original contributions of this thesis include: (1) the development and application of two key concepts concerning the local-global relationship – reversibility and mobility; (2) the identification and analysis of the political, social and cultural functions of Beijing's graphic wayfinding system within six key historical periods; (3) the explanations of why and how the local and the global are connected to Beijing's wayfinding signs and how the reversibility and mobility of local-global interaction are reflected in the systems.

In addition, these contributions have some consequences for the field of wayfinding design strategy and urban design in the context of globalisation. There seems to be a consensus that internationally standardised wayfinding sign systems can make people's lives more convenient and safe. Thus, many experts and scholars have paid

more attention to the function of orientation in graphic wayfinding design, but have undervalued and overlooked its other functions, that is, building and enhancing a sense of place and its special roles in cultural policy and social development. This issue is supported by searching online academic journals, such as JATOR and SAGE, with key words – wayfinding design, road sign or door number. There are only a few research papers that focus on the cultural and political functions of wayfinding design and its association with urban history, memory and identity. The outcome of the present research will make up for the drawbacks of the existing research literature by highlighting urban graphic wayfinding design's social, cultural and political functions as essential factors of urban development in Beijing. This might help city planners, architects and environmental graphic designers rethink and re-evaluate contemporary graphic wayfinding design and its relationship with environment, history, culture and society.

11.3 New Questions and Recommendations for Future Research

There is much scope for further research into urban graphic wayfinding systems in the context of globalisation. As the capital city of a developing country, Beijing provides an excellent case study for the examination of the effects of global power on a non-Western city. This research might bring us to an understanding of an intricate local-global issue and provide an attempt to approach the same problems that other cities, such as Kyoto and Seoul may encounter. It is clear that the challenges and problems faced by East Asian cities and Western cities are not the same. Hence, a global wayfinding solution that can functionally and emotionally satisfy different users' demands may be produced via a detailed comparative research between East Asian cities' and Western cities' graphic wayfinding systems and their evolution processes. There is also an obvious need for supplementary research into research methods, particularly methods of data collection and data analysis. Some new research questions for future research work are listed below.

- The present research is largely concerned with the interaction between Beijing's

official image and its graphic wayfinding systems, that is, how wayfinding design is used to construct and reproduce the official dominant values and ideas; future research could be concerned with how Beijing residents perceive the official urban brand and if they feel that Beijing's graphic wayfinding systems can effectively support this brand.

- The graphic wayfinding systems of Beijing performed a variety of cultural, political and social functions; by contrast, future research could ask: how are these functions embodied in the graphic wayfinding system of Western cities, such as London?

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interview questions

Personal status:

How long have you lived in Beijing or other places of China? What do you do?

The first group:

How do you feel about living in Beijing by comparison to other places you have visited or lived? Do you think that Beijing is a globalized metropolitan city? Is being local culture in Beijing homogenized by dominant Euramerican culture? Which western country(s) has a huge influence on Beijing? What do you expect of Beijing in aspects of culture and economy (city planning and architecture) in the future? What role you hope Beijing will play in the world? How do you travel through the city? What helps you?

The second group:

What are the roles of wayfinding systems in a city? Are they simply functional? Do they have cultural, economic, or social values?

The third group:

What you think are the strengths of the wayfinding systems in Beijing? Can they represent the local characteristics? Are they clearly recognisable for foreigners? What are the weaknesses and problems? Where do the problems come from? People (cultural difference? illiteracy? Foreignness?) or the graphics (Poorly thought out? wrong colour? monotony? Featurelessness?) Have you seen the other city's (country) or old wayfinding systems, compare with the new one, which do you prefer?

How to connect the global priority and the local priority in wayfinding system of Beijing? In other words, what kind of wayfinding systems or connection form between the global and the local would you like to see?

采访问题 (Chinese)

个人身份问题:

生活在北京多久了? 大学的专业是什么? 现在从事什么工作? 研究领域是什么? (如果是专家)

第一组:

比起你已经游览过或者生活过的其他城市而言，你是如何看待生活在北京的呢？你认为北京全球化的程度是如何，主要是哪些方面？受西方哪个国家的影响最多？在文化和经济方面，你对北京的愿景是什么？你希望北京在世界舞台上扮演一个什么样的角色？你认为北京当代建筑（城市规划）的走向是什么呢（在建筑风格以及建筑材料，以及北京市的总体规划方面）？你是通过什么方式在这座城市中寻路的呢？

第二组：

你认为在一个城市中，平面识路系统（路标，地图，门牌 等）在一座城市中的作用是什么？它与建筑以及城市规划之间的关系是什么？它们仅仅起到功能性（如指路的）作用吗？你认为它是否还具有文化，经济和社会价值？如果有，请您具体指出？

第三组：

你认为北京识路系统（路标，地图 等）的优点是什么？你认为它能表达出北京的特色吗？如果不能，那么它自身的特色是什么？你认为外国人能够清楚地识别北京的这些地图和路标吗？你认为北京的识路系统能够和建筑融为一体吗？你认为北京识路系统的缺点和问题是什么？这些问题是来自哪里？是人为因素吗？（例如文化背景的差异？文化程度？还是外来性（外地人外国人）的障碍）还是平面设计本身的问题？（例如不明显的颜色搭配，设计单调无特色）。北京的识路系统并不统一，哪一个区域是你相对比较喜欢的？你是否见过更加早期的北京路标和地图，与新的相比，你更加喜欢哪一个？你认为北京的识路系统是否能够或者如何能够把北京地方特色和全球特色结合起来？换句话说，你希望北京的识路系统在将来变成什么样子的？

如果是专业的平面设计师：如果说城市的识路系统可以定义一个地方以及加强一个地方的地方感，城市识路系统中的平面要素（平面设计）在这一过程中的所扮演的角色是什么？

第四组：

对此研究的评价和建议

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet



An Evaluation of Local–Global Cultural Factors in Wayfinding Design Participant Information Sheet

评估识路设计中本地—全球文化因素 参与者信息表

Lingqi Kong, School of the Arts, Loughborough University, L.Kong@lboro.ac.uk or Konglingqi88@live.cn , 07723698899 (UK)

孔令旗, 艺术学院, 拉夫堡大学 L.Kong@lboro.ac.uk or Konglingqi88@live.cn , 0044-07723698899 (UK)

Supervisors:

Robert Harland, School of the Arts, Loughborough University, R.G.Harland@lboro.ac.uk

Malcolm Barnard, School of the Arts, Loughborough University, M.Barnard@lboro.ac.uk

导师:

Robert Harland, 艺术学院, 拉夫堡大学, R.G.Harland@lboro.ac.uk

Malcolm Barnard, 艺术学院, 拉夫堡大学, M.Barnard@lboro.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

此研究的目的是什么？

The aims of this research are to investigate the relation of the local and the global in the wayfinding systems of Beijing, explore the possibility of connecting the local and the global in urban wayfinding system and the role of graphic design in defining a place through its wayfinding system.

此研究的目的是调查北京识路系统中当地和全球的关系并探索城市识路系统中连接本地和全球元素的可能性以及通过识路系统定义一个地方时平面设计的角色。

Who is doing this research and why?

谁在执行此研究以及为什么？

Lingqi Kong (investigator) will be doing this interview. This study is part of a student research project supported by Loughborough University.

孔令旗（调查者）将会进行此采访。此研究属于拉夫堡大学支持的学生研究项目部分。

Are there any exclusion criteria?

有没有排除标准？

My target interviewee: (No special exclusion criteria)

主要采访的对象：(没有特别的排除标准)

Beijing residents: they have lived in Beijing more than 20 years

北京居民：在北京居住 20 年以上。

Experts from universities: they are specialist in urban planning, architecture, environmental graphic design, history of Beijing and urban image.

大学的专家：他们是城市设计，建筑，环境设计和北京历史以及城市意象专家。

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

参与之后，能否退出？

Yes! After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

可以！在您阅读完此信息后，可以提出任何问题，我们还会给您一个许可表，但是任何时候，在活动之前，当中或者之后您希望退出，请联系主要调查者即可。您可以在任何时候因为任何原因退出，您退出的理由也无需解释。

Will I be required to attend any sessions and where will these be?

我会被要求去参加活动吗？活动地点是什么？

You will be asked to attend an interview in a quite and safe place where you can listen and answer questions without any interruption.

您将会被邀请在安静并安全的地方参与一个采访，在那儿您会在没有任何打扰的情况下回答研究问题。

How long will it take?

采访持续时间？

The interview will take 40-60 minutes.

采访将持续 40-60 分钟。

Is there anything I need to do before the sessions?

活动之前我需要做什么？

No
不需要。

Is there anything I need to bring with me?
采访时我需要携带什么？

No
不需要

What type of clothing should I wear?
有没有着装要求？

No special requirement
没有特别要求。

What will I be asked to do?
我将会被问什么？

Investigator (Lingqi Kong) will ask a few questions, the only thing you need to do is to answer these questions.
调查者（孔令旗）将会问您一些问题，您要做的唯一一件事就是回答问题。

What personal information will be required from me?
我会提供哪些私人信息？

Your age (with your permission) and how long have you been lived or stayed in Beijing?
您的年纪（如果您许可）以及您在北京居住的时间。

Are there any risks in participating?
参与中是否有风险？

There are not any risks
不会有任何风险。

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
我在此研究中的参与是否保密？

The investigator will record the whole process of interview with interviewees' consent, and store these audio recordings with number/code in the investigator's computer. Except supervisors and the investigator (me), no one has right to check these data. Audio recordings will be destroyed within six years of the completion of the investigation. In the resulting thesis, interviewees may be identified by name, subject to their consent. If they choose to remain anonymous, the interview will be identified

using a pseudonym.

调查者将会在被采访人的许可下记录采访全过程，并将录音编号保存在调查者的电脑中。除了导师和调查者，没有人有权利查看这些数据。在调查完成之后的六年间，这些录音将被销毁。在论文中，被采访人可能会在他们同意之下用真实姓名区分。如果他们选择匿名，采访者将用化名区分。

What will happen to the results of the study?

此研究的结果是什么？

A report will be produced by analyzing these interview data
通过分析这些采访数据完成研究报表。

I have some more questions who should I contact?

如果有问题应该联系谁？

You can contact investigator (Lingqi Kong)
您可以联系调查者（孔令旗）

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

如果我对此研究执行的方式不满意怎么办？

The Loughborough University has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing\(2\).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm).

拉夫堡大学对研究不当以及举报有相关政策，详情请见 [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing\(2\).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm).

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form



**An Evaluation of Local–Global Cultural Factors
in Wayfinding Design**
评估识路系统设计中的本土----环球文化因素

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

许可表
(参与者信息表格阅后填写)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee.

此研究的目的以及细节已告知本人。我知道此研究是为了获取更多科学知识并且所有程序都已通过拉夫堡大学人种学指导处审核。

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

我已阅读并了解信息表格和此许可表。

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

我有机会询问有关本人参与研究的问题。

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

我了解我并无义务参与此研究。

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

我了解我有权利在任何阶段以任何理由退出此研究，并且我不需要解释退出原因。

I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others.

我了解本人所提供的信息将被严格保密并以匿名以及保密形式提供给其他研究者，除非（在研究者工作机构所规定的法定义务下）考虑到参与者或其他人的安全，不得不违反保密条款。

I agree to participate in this study.

我同意参与此研究。

Your name
您的名字

Your signature
您的签名

Signature of investigator
调查者签名

Date
日期
