

THE FRAGMENTED POLITICS



OF URBAN PRESERVATION



BEIJING, CHICAGO, AND PARIS



— YUE ZHANG —

# The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation

BEIJING, CHICAGO, AND PARIS



**Yue Zhang**

*Globalization and Community, Volume 22*

*University of Minnesota Press*

*Minneapolis*

*London*



Portions of chapter 2 were originally published as “Steering toward Growth: Symbolic Urban Preservation in Beijing, 1990–2005,” *Town Planning Review* 79 (2–3): 187–208; reprinted with permission of Liverpool University Press. Portions of chapter 3 were originally published as “Boundaries of Power: Politics of Urban Preservation in Two Chicago Neighborhoods,” *Urban Affairs Review* 47 (4): 511–40; reprinted with permission from Sage Publications, Ltd. <http://online.sagepub.com>.

Maps created by the Urban Data Visualization Lab, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Unless otherwise credited, all photographs were taken by the author.

Copyright 2013 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by the University of Minnesota Press  
111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290  
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520  
<http://www.upress.umn.edu>

A Cataloging-in-Publication record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-0-8166-8368-0 (hc)  
ISBN 978-0-8166-8369-7 (pb)

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

The University of Minnesota is an equal-opportunity educator and employer.

THE FRAGMENTED POLITICS OF URBAN PRESERVATION

沈志华

李丹慧 龙师 雅正

张珏

2015年11月2日

于华盛顿

## **Globalization and Community**

*Susan E. Clarke, Series Editor*

*Dennis R. Judd, Founding Editor*

- 22 *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago, and Paris*  
Yue Zhang
- 21 *Turkish Berlin: Integration Policy and Urban Space*  
Annika Marlen Hinze
- 20 *Struggling Giants: City-Region Governance in London, New York, Paris, and Tokyo*  
Paul Kantor, Christian Lefèvre, Asato Saito, H. V. Savitch, and  
Andy Thornley
- 19 *Does Local Government Matter? How Urban Policies Shape Civic Engagement*  
Elaine B. Sharp
- 18 *Justice and the American Metropolis*  
Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom, editors
- 17 *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in the Global Age*  
Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, editors
- 16 *Seeking Spatial Justice*  
Edward W. Soja
- 15 *Shanghai Rising: State Power and Local Transformations in a Global Megacity*  
Xiangming Chen, editor
- 14 *A World of Gangs: Armed Young Men and Gangsta Culture*  
John M. Hagedorn
- 13 *El Paso: Local Frontiers at a Global Crossroads*  
Victor M. Ortiz-González
- 12 *Remaking New York: Primitive Globalization and the Politics of Urban Community*  
William Sites

*(continued on page 203)*

For my parents

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My initial interest in the topic of urban preservation was kindled by the drastic urban transformation of my hometown, Beijing. Since the late 1990s, Beijing has gone through rapid urban renewal, and a large proportion of the historic city has vanished under the wrecking ball. I was sad to see that many places from my memory were gone and that the city had become increasingly unfamiliar. So I decided to write this book. By looking at other cities in the world and exploring how they have handled their architectural legacies, I hope to better understand what happened in my city.

In the course of researching and writing this book, I accumulated enormous personal debts of gratitude to many people and institutions.

This book had its origins as a doctoral dissertation in politics at Princeton University, and I would like to express my profound gratitude to my dissertation committee members—Lynn T. White, Stanley N. Katz, Paul J. DiMaggio, Jessica L. Trounstein, and Michael N. Danielson—for their advice, sustained interest in my project, and unflagging academic and personal support throughout the years. Lynn has been an incredible advisor and mentor. He set a high standard for scholarship and provided constant encouragement and guidance during my graduate study at Princeton. Stan has been an inspirational guide during every stage of this project and taught me to embrace a humanistic vision in social science research. Paul was always able to steer my project in a much better direction by raising questions that alerted me to unseen political and social dynamics. Jessica encouraged me to think big and tie urban preservation to larger questions of democracy. Mike walked me into the world of urban politics research and guided me to crystallize my interest in urban preservation into concrete research questions and projects.

In addition to my dissertation committee, I was fortunate to be surrounded by wise and supportive faculty and peers at Princeton. Special

thanks go to Ezra N. Suleiman, Gilbert Rozman, Steven J. Tepper, Susan Naquin, and the participants in the Comparative Politics Research Seminar in the Politics Department for their encouragement and helpful feedback at various stages of the project.

I must also thank Princeton University for its institutional support. The generous financial assistance provided by Princeton enabled fieldwork for this project. My preliminary study of the three cities was made possible by a research grant from the Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies. The center quickly became a home and, under the efficient yet gregarious leadership of Stanley N. Katz and Paul J. DiMaggio, occupies truly cherished place in my heart. The workshops at the center were an invaluable source of inspiration for my research and provided good venues for me to present my work in progress. I also received crucial financial support throughout my dissertation writing from the Princeton University Institute for International and Regional Studies, the Program in East Asian Studies, and the Princeton–Harvard China and the World Program. I thank all these institutions and agencies for their generous support.

This project is based on extensive fieldwork in Beijing, Paris, and Chicago from 2003 to 2010. I am deeply indebted to the many people who generously took the time to share with me their knowledge, stories, and views on cities. In Beijing, Wang Changsheng, Wang Jianping, Ge Xun, and Wang Youquan offered me the rare access to many preservation projects in the field. Wang Jun and Xu Yong inspired me to dig harder and deeper into the spatial transformation in urban China. In Paris, Patrick Terrior connected me to many key figures in French local and national government and took me to see some of the urban gems of Paris. Bernard Franjou allowed me to bother him frequently and showed me how preservation projects were implemented in Paris. Claire Monod, Dominique Masson, and Elsa Martayan helped me draw a better picture of intergovernmental relations in France. Francesco Bandarin, former director of the UNESCO World Heritage Center, lent me a global vision to investigate the issue of cultural heritage preservation. In Chicago, Tim Samuelson offered me the first and best introduction to the city's history of urban preservation. Brian Goeken and Phyllis M. Ellin greatly enhanced my understanding of how local politics works. Blair Kamin told me why architecture matters and kindled my interest in exploring the stories behind every great building in the city. Paula Robinson, Harold Lucas, Johnnie Blair, and Jonathan Fine showed me the strength of local communities. My exploration of the urban world would have been very different without the many people I got



to know during my fieldwork. Collectively, their valuable inputs greatly informed the analyses presented here and made my journey in the three cities a much enjoyable one. I am fortunate to be unable to distinguish who helped with research from who brightened my life with friendship.

This book was completed in Chicago after I started my first job in the Department of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). My colleagues in different departments at UIC provided good vibes and collegial support. I appreciate several long conversations with Dennis Judd, which were crucial in framing some of the key theoretical questions in the final version of the book. Anthony Orum provided sustained support to my research and has been a reliable source of intellectual companionship. Robert Bruegmann's insightful comments and suggestions have challenged me and greatly improved this manuscript. I also received extremely helpful feedback on research design, data analysis, drafts of chapters, and the publishing process from Dick Simpson, Andrew McFarland, Karen Mossberger, Doris A. Graber, Evan McKenzie, Stephen Engelmann, and Yoram Haftel. Patricia Hajek, Armel Yver, Leslie Price, and Abe Singer are excellent research assistants who helped update some of the data used in the book and proofread part of the manuscript. Nina Savar helped make the maps in the book. A fellowship granted from the Great Cities Institute at UIC provided crucial funding to enable concentrated writing in 2009 and 2010.

Many of the ideas in the book were inspired by conversations and e-mail exchanges with colleagues around the world. I would like to thank specially Françoise Choay, Vincent L. Michael, Larry Bennett, Terry N. Clark, D. Carroll Joyner, Roberta Garner, Martin Horak, Liu Jian, Bian Lanchun, Fulong Wu, Xuefei Ren, Shen Zhihua, Li Danhui, Patrick Le Galè, and Yankel Fijalkow. My undergraduate advisor at Peking University, Xu Zhenzhou, was among the first people who nurtured my initial interest in historic cities. Vincent Renard generously kept his office door open for me when I was conducting fieldwork in Paris, and without hesitation he shared with me his research resources, his enthusiasm for academia, and his love for cities. Luca Zan kindly read the whole manuscript at the final revision stage and provided insightful feedback for revision.

I am also grateful to Pieter Martin, my editor at the University of Minnesota Press, who has been exceptionally supportive and patient in guiding me through the production process. Kristian Tvedten provided very helpful and friendly editorial assistance. Susan Clarke and two anonymous reviewers offered perceptive comments and invaluable recommendations. I thank them all.

The journey of making this book would have been unimaginable without friends and family. I will always be grateful to Sida Liu, who read and edited every chapter of this manuscript more than once and offered incredible support to my research with his heart and mind. I am indebted to my friends for their precious presence in moments of need, above all Ying Liu, Dongning Guo, Jing Chen, Jesse Menefee, Wei Zhang, Elaine Yuan, Sergio López-Piñeiro, Quinton Mayne, Alan Lepp, Anthony V. Pulido, and Stephen Stults. Finally, the love and support from my parents over the years made it possible for me to study and travel the world. Their life philosophy always inspires me and gives me strength while I am continuing my urban journey. To you all, I offer my most heartfelt thanks.

## INTRODUCTION

# The Paradox of Urban Preservation

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand.

—ITALO CALVINO, *Invisible Cities*

In the summer of 2005, two large preservation projects were taking place in Beijing. The first one was the restoration of Yongdingmen, the central gate of the Outer City located at the southern end of the Central Axis. Originally built in 1553, Yongdingmen was demolished in the 1950s, along with the city walls and thirteen other city gates, in the construction of the socialist capital. The restoration began in 2003 after Beijing was selected as the Host City of the 2008 Olympics Games, and the project was part of the city's "Cultural Heritage Preservation Plan for an Olympiad of Humanity." Experts involved in the project did a thorough examination of the archives to ensure that the new Yongdingmen looked exactly like the old one. The project took two years to complete and cost more than 19 million RMB (3 million USD). The restored Yongdingmen was celebrated by local officials and the news media. They believed it enhanced the cultural significance of Beijing by completing the configuration of the Central Axis, the longest in the world. And because the Olympic Park was located at the northern extension of the Central Axis, the restored Yongdingmen was considered especially meaningful for the status of Beijing as the host city of the Olympics. A local newspaper wrote, "The restored city gate provides a new starting point for Old Beijing to embrace the future."

Further north on the Central Axis, not far from the restored city gate, another preservation project was carried out in a historic district named Qianmen, which was the downtown of imperial Beijing. Qianmen Street,

the main thoroughfare of the area, occupies a prominent position in the city, with a large number of established shops and restaurants catering to the demands of a diverse group of customers. Although some of the shops and restaurants were more than a century old and nationally known, the district remained affordable for working-class customers. Using the old photos of Qianmen Street in the early twentieth century as a blueprint, the preservation project remodeled the façade of the buildings along the street, integrating late Qing and early Republican style motifs into the final design. Many old shops and restaurants left Qianmen Street after the preservation project because of the rise in rent. But local officials were not concerned by this loss of tenants, because their goal was to attract outlets of world-renowned luxury brands and “turn Qianmen Street into another Champs-Élysées,” to use the words of a local official. A dense residential area made up of centuries-old courtyard houses and surrounding Qianmen Street was demolished in the preservation project. Developers replaced the one-story historic courtyard houses with two- to six-story buildings in antique style for high-end residential and commercial uses. The original residents who lived in the area before were not allowed to move back after the preservation project was completed.

These stories of Beijing provide us a complicated vision of urban preservation at the beginning of the new millennium. Facing the rebuilt city gate, the remodeled shopping street, and the brand new housing stock with historical appearance, all created through preservation projects, we cannot help but wonder, What is preservation?

In any book on the history or theory of urban preservation, the very word *preservation* carries a strict meaning. It is defined as the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or a site (Murtagh 2006). The basic dictum of the professional preservationist is to keep as much of the original fabric as possible. Furthermore, history shows that urban preservation is by nature a humanistic endeavor. The earliest preservation efforts date back to the days of the Roman Empire, when historic monuments were carefully maintained for future generations, in order to provide them a tangible form of connection to the past (Riegl 1982 [1903]). In the age of industrialization, when the existence of historic cities was threatened by urban renewal, the subject of preservation expanded from individual monuments to urban residences and entire city blocks, the so-called urban fabric. This development in preservation practice protects residents from dislocation and thus mediates the devastating social impact of modernization.

It seems self-evident that urban preservation's essence is to protect the architectural integrity and social sustainability of cities. In reality, however,

*preservation* has become an umbrella term encompassing a variety of activities. Some of them are in conflict with the original meaning of *preservation* and present challenges to the humanistic concerns historically associated with the term. Beijing is not alone in creating a picture of urban preservation fraught with controversies. In cities from West to East, the practice of urban preservation has become increasingly problematic. This book seeks to explain the complexities and controversies in the practice of urban preservation in modern cities, investigating the politics of urban preservation by answering two specific sets of questions. First, why do governments in different cities have different understandings of what urban preservation is and make distinct decisions about what to preserve and how to preserve it? Second, how are the various preservation initiatives being implemented by the government, and why are some of them more likely to be carried out than others?

In this book, the politics of urban preservation is explored through a comparison of preservation practices in Beijing, Chicago, and Paris from the 1980s to the present. As three great cities of the world, they have prominent positions in the history of architecture and planning, yet their urban landscapes are under constant challenges of creative destruction. Although urban preservation is considered an important policy issue in all three cities, their preservation practices vary significantly. To explain the various preservation practices in the three cities, the book argues that urban preservation has become a strategic device used by different political and social actors to fulfill their distinct and occasionally contradictory goals. Whereas the content of the preservation initiatives is defined by the interests and preferences of different actors, implementation of the initiatives is constrained by the fragmented power structure in cities. Political fragmentation serves as a filter, facilitating the implementation of preservation initiatives within single jurisdictions while prohibiting the implementation across jurisdictional boundaries. For cross-boundary issues, different types of political fragmentation are associated with predictable patterns of policy processes and settlements, thus creating different patterns of urban preservation.

The experiences of the three cities demonstrate how political institutions are intertwined with interests and inclinations, fundamentally shaping the policy process of urban preservation. In Beijing, urban preservation is a tool for the local government to promote economic growth and create a better image for the city. While many historic monuments were restored as cultural icons in preparation for the Olympics, the functional fragmentation between municipal bureaus prevented historic districts from being effectively protected. With the demolition of old neighborhoods and the

construction of historic-looking pastiche, urban preservation has become increasingly symbolic. In Chicago, urban preservation serves the goals of increasing property values and revitalizing neighborhoods, which are often entangled with issues of racial inequality and gentrification. The territorial fragmentation along ward boundaries has turned urban preservation into a privilege of aldermen and blocked the initiatives to preserve neighborhoods across multiple wards. With historic districts largely confined within single wards, urban preservation shows a mosaic pattern. And in Paris, urban preservation provides a channel for national and municipal governments to compete for control over urban space. Whereas the former symbolizes cultural heritage as a source of the French national identity and has long monopolized the power of urban preservation, the latter is empowered by decentralization and has begun to propose a new agenda of balancing preservation and development. The intergovernmental fragmentation has generated a contested yet shared control between the central and local authorities, thus generating a pattern of joint preservation.

Urban preservation is a critical policy issue for cities. The intrinsic historic and artistic value of architectural heritage is a sufficient justification for anyone to devote time and attention to this topic, but urban preservation is a valuable window into much broader issues of economic and social changes in cities, beyond the specific battles to save individual buildings and places. Since the work of Lewis Mumford (1961) and Jane Jacobs (1961), urban scholars have noted that urban preservation has a significant impact on the character of urban development and the quality of life of citizens. Today, when cities are undergoing unprecedented economic restructuring and spatial reorganization in the context of globalization, urban preservation has become increasingly important for shaping a healthier urban environment and strengthening the cultural roots of our society. It deserves greater attention if we have a sincere interest not only in understanding the causes and consequences of changes in cities but also in making our cities better places to live.

The policy process of urban preservation is extremely complex, with various interests and values involved. However, it has received little attention from political scientists. Although a number of urban scholars and preservation practitioners have recognized the significant role of politics in successful or failed preservation efforts, they rarely offer any systematic analysis on how politics influences preservation.<sup>1</sup> By wedding political science theory and method to the study of urban preservation, this book is one of the first efforts to reveal the political underpinnings of urban preservation. It contributes to our understanding of urban preservation in three major ways. First, it challenges many existing conclusions on urban

preservation by asking why there are multiple understandings of what urban preservation is, how these understandings are created, and how they are manipulated as part of the political strategy. Answers to those questions reveal the political origins of government efforts. Second, the theory of political fragmentation provides an institutional approach to explain why some preservation initiatives are more likely to be implemented than others. By showing how different types of political fragmentation have affected the policy process of urban preservation in predictable ways, the theory can be applied to other cities beyond the three cases, and it permits comparisons across urban settings. Third, the study is based on extensive fieldwork in three cities on three continents that are embedded in very different cultural and political contexts. The comparative approach not only is critical to test the theoretical framework presented but also depicts a richer picture of the modes of spatial and social governance in cities.

This is a book about urban preservation, but it is also about the inter-layered processes by which political actors attempt to transform urban space and govern people's lives through large-scale public policies. The primary theoretical objective of the book is to build the linkages between policy discourse, political institutions, and policy processes. It demonstrates that in order to understand a policy process, we must examine both the substantive aspect and the institutional aspect of the policy initiative. Whereas the former articulates the content of the policy initiative and explains why the policy initiative is proposed as it is, the latter answers how the initiative is processed and why or why not it can be implemented in reality. Any policy analysis is incomplete if either of the two aspects is missing from the discussion. The institutional aspect of the policy initiative of urban preservation is examined in chapter 1 through a detailed analysis of the fragmented power structure in cities. The remainder of this chapter discusses the substantive aspect of preservation initiative by introducing the major motivations behind urban preservation across time and space. It is followed by a brief overview of preservation practices in Beijing, Chicago, and Paris. I also detail the design of the research and provide an overview of the remainder of the book.

### **Urban Preservation: One Policy, Many Purposes**

The essence of any kind of public policy is political reasoning, which offers policymakers a language to form their argument and fulfill their goals (Stone 2002; Rochefort and Cobb 1994; Fischer and Forester 1993). Urban preservation is no exception. It provides a discourse with which political and social actors deliberately and consciously frame their propositions,

justify their choices, and promote their favored course of action. The multiple motivations lead to different preservation practices, some of which have challenged the original goals of urban preservation by undermining the architectural integrity and social sustainability of cities. The paradox of urban preservation demonstrates the controversial relationship between history and its instrumental use in human societies. The following section discusses four major purposes that have motivated the practice of urban preservation, through which we can observe the inconsistency between the preservation practice and the original goals of urban preservation.

### ***Preservation for Urban Planning***

The relationships between urban preservation and urban development have been the subject of great debates since the post-World War II era. Facing the devastating effects of urban renewal, policymakers began to use urban preservation as a planning device to control development. In 1962, with the passage of the Malraux Act in France and the creation of a master plan for Rome, entire city blocks and streetscapes could be secured behind the fortified boundary lines of historic districts. These preservation ordinances, still in effect today, not only prevent historic structures from being demolished but also regulate any alterations or additions in historic districts. In an attempt to control new development, preservation ordinances are usually associated with zoning policies. In some cities, preservation and zoning ordinances require that new buildings are not taller than historic structures, so that they remove the incentive of the market to demolish and rebuild (Tung 2001).

When used as a strategy to control urban development, urban preservation saves historic cities from the wrecking ball and consequently prevents residents from being displaced by urban renewal. However, it raises the possibility that when little space is allowed for new development, cities might slowly evolve into museums. This type of regulation constrains the space for architectural or economic innovation, thus diminishing the diversity and vigor of urban life—something many European historic centers have already experienced. Some cities have lost between 30 and 90 percent of their residential population, especially those in the lower-income groups, to areas outside the city because living space in the city is scarce and expensive (Choay 2001; Boyer 1994). Besides accommodating a small number of wealthy inhabitants, those cities have increasingly become outdoor museums for tourists, leaving residents to feel that there is no future in their cities.



### ***Preservation for Urban Development***

In contrast to its usage as a planning device to control development, urban preservation can be used to attract investment and promote urban revitalization. This goal is achieved by linking urban preservation with tax benefits. In postwar America, the federal government got involved under the nationwide pressure for urban preservation. However, instead of abandoning the agenda of urban renewal, the government tied preservation to urban renewal and changed the latter's bulldozer mentality to one of community rehabilitation through a series of tax ordinances (Boyer 1994). In the Tax Reform Acts of 1976 and 1986, and the Economic Recovery Act of 1981, tax credits are offered to private developers and property owners who rehabilitate and renovate historic structures (Frank 2002; Fitch 1982; Reichl 1997; Newman 2001). These tax ordinances were intended to promote preservation-based urban revitalization in American cities and became a tool for private property owners to obtain tax benefits. It facilitates, rather than inhibits, the government's agenda of urban development.

Although preservation-based redevelopment prevents historic structures from being demolished and gives them a new life through rehabilitation, it largely ignores the welfare of the local residents. As revitalization activity accelerated, real estate values began to rise in inner-city neighborhoods, taxes were reassessed, rents started to climb, and gentrification took place, in which the working class, minorities, and renters were replaced by newcomers who tended to be middle class, white, and property owners (Zukin 1987). Many newcomers were attracted to working-class ethnic neighborhoods by the unique culture and lifestyle, which is ironic, as Sharon Zukin (2010) notes, because it was the newcomers' demands for authenticity that drove out those who first lent the neighborhood its authentic aura. It is evident from the experiences of many cities that when used as a strategy of urban revitalization, urban preservation often caters to the tastes of educated, economically better-off urbanites, reinforcing the entrenched social and economic inequality in cities (Freeman 2006; Smith 1996). Although the concept of social preservation was coined in urban studies literature to emphasize the importance government should assign to protecting the interests of the indigenous, officials have yet to master the actual practice of doing so.

### ***Preservation for International Recognition***

The concept of urban preservation is largely an invention of the West, and it was exported and progressively disseminated beyond Europe beginning