

**PUBLIC PLACES:
THE RETAIL-ORIENTED PUBLIC
REALM IN BEIJING**

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing development of economy and society in China, uses of public urban places have been changed by an incredible pace, especially in Beijing, the capital of China. The public space in local urban environment plays a significant role for catering to people's functional, social and leisure needs. The focus of this research is to explore the relationship between the retail-oriented public places and people's use within three selected study sites in Beijing, Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place, and to examine the retail public spaces which can satisfy the physical and psychological needs of people when they take activity in such places. Through literature review to analyse the theoretical issues on different factors, such as culture, urban design, physical setting, historical context, and contemporary use, and especially the retail public places developed in Chinese context, etc. and to establish the awareness of what the research subject refer to and what such places people like to use. And then focus on the public life in the city of Beijing in practice with the aim of finding out how these retail-oriented public places are understood, managed and used, including the use and quality of design amenities for sitting, circulation, and related activities by local people in urban environment. To address this research, a qualitative research methodology is adopted mainly involves observation, interview, and small number of questionnaire. The mixed-methods approach is undertaken by using behaviour mapping and user perception to understand the public environment as a combination of patterns of behaviour and patterns of the physical environment.

Keywords:

Beijing, Public Realm, Retail-oriented, People's Behavior

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

LIST OF TABLES xiii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... 1

 1.1 Research Topic and Purpose 1

 1.2 Potential Significance 2

 1.3 Framework and General Research Questions..... 3

PART ONE LITERATURE REVIEW 7

CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PLACES 8

 2.1 Introduction 8

 2.1.1 Defining public space 8

 2.1.2 The purpose of this chapter..... 10

 2.2 The Nature of Public Space 11

 2.2.1 The value of public space 12

 2.2.2 Basic concepts of urban public places 15

2.2.3 The importance of public space qualities	24
2.3 The Historic Context for Urban Public Space	27
2.3.1 The Evolution of Public Space from Antiquity	28
2.3.2 Modernism and Beyond: Positive and Negative Urban Space	38
2.4 Contemporary Use of Urban Public Spaces	43
2.4.1 Types of People Activities	44
2.4.2 Activity in Public Spaces	48
2.4.3 People's Activities and the Quality of public space	54
2.5 Summary	58
CHAPTER THREE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE USE IN CHINA	60
3.1 Introduction	60
3.2 Exploring Public Spaces in China	61
3.2.1 A brief historical overview of public space in Chinese context	61
3.2.2 Typology of public space in contemporary Chinese cities	66
3.3 Retail-oriented Spaces in a Mixed-use City Centre.....	71
3.3.1 Meaningful retail urban environment	72
3.3.2 Retail places as behaviour settings	74
3.4 Summary	75
PART TWO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	76

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS 77

4.1 Introduction 77

4.2 The Qualitative Method..... 78

 4.2.1 Defining qualitative research method..... 80

 4.2.2 What is quantitative method 82

 4.2.3 Comparison of qualitative and quantitative..... 83

4.3 The Qualitative Types and Overall Strategy..... 86

 4.3.1 Overall Approach..... 86

 4.3.2 Site or Population Selection 88

4.4 The Sampling Methods..... 90

 4.4.1 Criteria for choosing public places for this research 90

 4.4.2 Criteria for selecting interview participants 92

4.5 Data Collection Methods 95

 4.5.1 Primary Methods and Comparisons 95

 4.5.2 A Pilot Study 101

 4.5.3 Data gathering implemented in the study 102

4.6 Research Methodology Summary 111

PART THREE CASE STUDIES 112

**CHAPTER FIVE: INVESTIGATING RETAIL-ORIENTED PUBLIC
PLACES IN BEIJING..... 113**

5.1 Introduction 113

5.2 Background to Case Studies	115
5.2.1 Key Characteristics of the city of Beijing	116
5.2.2 Introducing the Study Location	121
5.2.3 Research strategies	132
5.3 Accessibility to Retail Public Spaces.....	138
5.3.1 Land use of the study sites surrounding	139
5.3.2 Accessibility and mobility to study sites	143
5.4 Image of Places.....	151
5.4.1 Good dimension and scale	155
5.4.2 Sitting places.....	162
5.4.3 Other urban amenities.....	172
5.5 Uses and Behaviors	177
5.5.1 Function and utility.....	178
5.5.2 Duration and frequency	183
5.5.3 People uses and capacity to places	184
5.5.4 Pedestrian activity.....	194
5.6 Safety and Management	200
5.7 Summary.....	207
 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS: THE WAY TO BETTER PLACES – LESSONS LEARNED FROM 3 CASE STUDIES.....	 211
6.1 Introduction	211
6.2 From Analysis to Practice in Retail-Oriented Urban Environment..	212

6.3 The Way Forward	216
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	218
APPENDICES.....	233
APPENDIX A: List of Question to Interview	233
APPENDIX B: A Sample of Response to Interview	235

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Place of The Sanlitun Village	16
Figure 2.2 Place of Tiananmen Square	16
Figure 2.3 Place of Wangfujing and Nanluogu Lane	18
Figure 2.4 Camillo Sitte's principles	19
Figure 2.5 Zucker's typology of urban squares	21
Figure 2.6 The Acropolis	29
Figure 2.7 The Plan of Agora	30
Figure 2.8 The Agora	31
Figure 2.9 The Forum	32
Figure 2.10 The Plan of Basilica	32
Figure 2.11 The Medieval Market Square	34
Figure 2.12 Covent Garden	36
Figure 2.13 Necessary activities	44
Figure 2.14 Optional activities	45
Figure 2.15 Social activities	46
Figure 2.15 The outline of various contact forms	49
Figure 2.16 Children play	52
Figure 3.1 Plan of Beijing 'Cheng' in old time	61
Figure 3.2 An overview of Forbidden City in early twentieth century	62
Figure 3.3 Perspective of Tian'anmen Square	64
Figure 3.4 Perspective of Chang'an Street	65
Figure 3.5 A commercial and cultural public space in the city of Beijing...	67
Figure 3.6 A memorial public space in the city of Beijing	68
Figure 3.7 A civic public space in the city of Dalian	68
Figure 3.8 Wangfujing shopping street in the city of Beijing	69

Figure 3.9 The Seasons shopping centre in the city of Beijing	69
Figure 5.1 Most need improving in the local urban environment	114
Figure 5.2 Location of Beijing in China	115
Figure 5.3 Location of 3 study areas in the city of Beijing	122
Figure 5.4 Space 1: Wangfujing Street Study Area	123
Figure 5.5 Wangfujing Street overview	123
Figure 5.6 Traditional food vending in Wangfujing Street	125
Figure 5.7 Perspective in Wangfujing Book Store	125
Figure 5.8 Open space in Wangfujing Street	125
Figure 5.9 Space 2: Sanlitun Village	127
Figure 5.10 Open-air courtyard in Sanlitun Village North	128
Figure 5.11 Walkway in Sanlitun Village North	128
Figure 5.12 Main entry of Sanlitun Village South	128
Figure 5.13 Open square in Sanlitun Village South	129
Figure 5.14 Space 3: The Place	130
Figure 5.15 The Entry of The Place	131
Figure 5.16 The Steps in The Place	131
Figure 5.17 People under the screen roof in The Place	131
Figure 5.18 Focal study areas of Wangfujing	135
Figure 5.19 Focal study areas of Sanlitun Village	136
Figure 5.20 Focal study areas of The Place	137
Figure 5.21 Land use of Wangfujing Street surrounding environment	140
Figure 5.22 Land use of Sanlitun Village surrounding environment	141
Figure 5.23 Land use of The Place surrounding environment	142
Figure 5.24 Key issues of transportation on Wangfujing Street	145
Figure 5.25 Key issues of transportation in Sanlitun Village North	146
Figure 5.26 Key issues of transportation in Sanlitun Village South	146
Figure 5.27 Key issues of transportation in The Place	147
Figure 5.28 Proportion to users in different transportation ways for	

getting the study sites	148
Figure 5.29 The proportion of the most satisfied elements in Wangfujing Street	150
Figure 5.30 The proportion of the most satisfied elements in Sanlitun Village	150
Figure 5.31 The proportion of the most satisfied elements in The Place ...	151
Figure 5.32 The proportion of the most dissatisfied elements in Wangfujing Street	151
Figure 5.33 The proportion of the most dissatisfied elements in Sanlitun Village	152
Figure 5.34 The proportion of the most dissatisfied elements in The Place	152
Figure 5.35 Height-to-width ratios for street enclosure in Wangfujing Street	154
Figure 5.36 Height-to-width ratios for space enclosure in Sanlitun Village	155
Figure 5.37 Height-to-width ratios for space enclosure in The Place	155
Figure 5.38 Overview of space dimension in Wangfujing Street	156
Figure 5.39 Overview of the street elevations in Wangfujing Street	157
Figure 5.40 A public space surrounded by buildings in Sanlitun Village North	158
Figure 5.41 The performance of buildings in Sanlitun Village South	158
Figure 5.42 The space dimension in The Place	159
Figure 5.43 Distribution of Sitting places in Wangfujing Street	160
Figure 5.44 Distribution of Sitting places in Sanlitun Village North	161
Figure 5.45 Distribution of Sitting places in Sanlitun Village South	161
Figure 5.46 Distribution of Sitting places in The Place	162
Figure 5.47 Fixed benches in Wangfujing Street	163
Figure 5.48 Steps occupied by people for sheltering in summer days	164
Figure 5.49 Cafe chairs under the shade in summer days	164

Figure 5.50 Vacant seats in Sanlitun Village North	165
Figure 5.51 Cafe chairs in Sanlitun Village North	165
Figure 5.52 Fixed benched occupied by crowd people	166
Figure 5.53 Fixed Benched in Sanlitun Village South	166
Figure 5.54 Floor lamp used to sit due to the absence of sitting places	167
Figure 5.55 People sit on steps for resting in Sanlitun Village South	167
Figure 5.56 Flower pot pedestal used to sit in The Place	168
Figure 5.57 People take seats by themselves in The Place	168
Figure 5.58 Distribution of landscaping in Wangfujing Street	170
Figure 5.59 Distribution of landscaping in Sanlitun Village North	171
Figure 5.60 Distribution of landscaping in Sanlitun Village South	171
Figure 5.61 Distribution of landscaping in The Place	172
Figure 5.62 Children play in fountains in Sanlitun Village South	173
Figure 5.63 People take pictures with sculpture in Wangfujing Street	173
Figure 5.64 Sculpture designed to reduce temperature in summer days ...	174
Figure 5.65 Function use in Wangfujing Street	176
Figure 5.66 Function use in Sanlitun Village North	177
Figure 5.67 Function use in Sanlitun Village South	177
Figure 5.68 Function use in The Place	178
Figure 5.69 Distribution of individual uses in Wangfujing Street	187
Figure 5.70 Distribution of individual uses in Sanlitun Village	188
Figure 5.71 Distribution of individual uses in The Place	189
Figure 5.72 Compared Individual use between weekdays and weekend in Wangfujing Street	191
Figure 5.73 Compared Individual use between weekdays and weekend in The Place	192
Figure 5.74 Compared Individual use between weekdays and weekend in Sanlitun	193
Figure 5. 75 Pedestrian activities in Wangfujing Street (1)	195

Figure 5.76 Pedestrian activities in Wangfujing Street (2)	196
Figure 5.77 Pedestrian activities in Sanlitun Village North	197
Figure 5.78 Pedestrian activities in Sanlitun Village South	198
Figure 5.79 Pedestrian activities in the Place	199
Figure 5.80 Distribution of lighting in Wangfujing Street	203
Figure 5.81 Infrastructure facilities in Wangfujing Street	204
Figure 5.82 Distribution of lighting in Sanlitun Village North	205
Figure 5.83 Distribution of lighting in Sanlitun Village South	205
Figure 5.84 Infrastructure facilities in Sanlitun Village North	206
Figure 5.85 Infrastructure facilities in Sanlitun Village South	206
Figure 5.86 Distribution of lighting in The Place	207
Figure 5.87 Infrastructure facilities in The Place	207

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Explanation of research framework	6
Table 2.1 The relationship between the quality of outdoor spaces and the rate of occurrence of outdoor activities	47
Table 2.2 Key attributes of successful places	55
Table 3.1 Classification of Urban Public Open Space	66
Table 3.2 Types of public space in contemporary China	70
Table 3.3 Retail public sectors opening in large cities of China	73
Table 4.1 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research approaches	83
Table 4.2 Qualitative Genre and Overall Strategy	86
Table 4.3 Complexity of Design and Interaction	87
Table 4.4 Typology of Sampling strategies in Qualitative inquiry	89
Table 4.5 Summary Characteristics of Case Study Sites	91
Table 4.6 Strengths and Limitations of Data Collection Methods	100
Table 4.7 The System of Symbols	103
Table 4.8 The variables and factors to be explored through the case studies	109
Table 5.1 Description and Comparison of Commercial Centre in Beijing..	119
Table 5.2 Symbols used in recording observations	133
Table 5.3 Frequency of items on transportation within or closed to studied retail public places	148
Table 5.4 Purpose of people's visits to each study site	179
Table 5.5 Duration of stay in each study site.....	180
Table 5.6 Frequency of visit to each study site	181
Table 5.7 Evaluation of capacity to public spaces in three case study sites	186
Table 5.8 The amount of infrastructure facilities in each study site	197
Table Appendix A: A list of question to interview	225
Table Appendix B: A sample of response to interview	227

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Topic and Purpose

Public spaces have played central roles in the urban environment that is of great importance in daily life for people who live in urban areas. The importance of urban public spaces always lies in the many different benefits and opportunities that they can provide. As Levine and Upton (1994) stated that many urban theorists state their significant roles as one of the principal components of a healthy urban setting. This is in addition to their functional role, when they increase a sense of community when intensive social interaction takes place in these areas. This is confirmed by the large numbers of people who use urban public spaces and the value that people attribute to them.

After a few decades of urban renewal with the rapid growth of economy and society in China, urban place making has been changed by an incredible pace, thus, public spaces used by local people have been improved dramatically. Especially the retail public place, it represents a significant part of the public space in urban areas and cater to our functional, social and leisure needs. This study aims to identify the relationship between the retail-oriented public places and people's use within three selected case study sites in Beijing – Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place – to examine the retail public spaces which can satisfy the physical and psychological needs of people when they take activity in such places. By focusing on the physical features, the uses, and their operation and management, this thesis attempts to discover what makes the experience comfortable, interesting, and meaningful for its users for sustained stationary activities and social interaction. Specifically, the objective

for this research is to determine what urban design characteristics of these retail public places support people's activities, especially those activities that are social in nature.

This research summarizes a half-year observational study undertaken in the 2011 of how these retail-oriented public places are understood, managed and used, including the use and quality of design amenities for sitting, circulation, and related activities by people. The primary aims and objectives of this research were:

- to examine reasons make people spend their time on retail public places;
- to identify reasons people like to use certain places, not others;
- to identify things people think most need improving in their local environment
- to examine how different activities taken place in key public spaces of public retail sector;
- to analyse whether interactions differ with age or with place; and whether the presence of particular people or groups affects the use of public space by other people or groups;
- to relate analysis of social interactions to the safety and security in public areas; management and maintenance of public space;
- to analyse how those places can bring people together for a positive, shared experience of urban living.

1.2 Potential Significance

According to Sepe (2009), based on the existing literatures (such as Marcus & Francis, 1998; Whyte, 1980; Miles et al., 1978; Banerjee, 2001, etc.), only a few empirical studies address the stationary and social behaviour of people in urban commercial public spaces, especially in China, most urban design studies on public space emphasize an approach to design that incorporates the

elements of the physical urban environment, or stress on elements of the behavioural environment which include its uses, activities and management. This study attempts to integrate these approaches to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the retail-oriented area as a setting comprising behaviour patterns and the elements of the physical setting. Through this integrated approach, this research aims to explore new ways to address the understanding, design, and management of this common retail public place. In addition, the mixed-methods approach, using behaviour mapping and user perception through interviews, to understand the public environment as a combination of patterns of behaviour and patterns of the physical environment, can be used for understanding, design and management across varied environments and space types in different cultures.

1.3 Framework and General Research Questions

This thesis evaluates the significance of retail-oriented public places in urban environment by analysing the physical elements and people's activities in such places within six chapters. This thesis first states the introduction which demonstrates the research topic and purpose, potential research significance and limitations, and the research structure provided in the last of this chapter.

Following the introduction, Chapter 2 aims to set up a general understanding of the definition of the concept of 'public space' and explores issues surrounding its inherent complexity and the complexity of its use which consists of five sections, include in the background knowledge relates to the research field, the historic context for using urban public realm and the contemporary use of public realm, it will discuss that how people behave in public space from the theoretical perspective.

Chapter 3 aims to provide an understanding of the development of public space in China, based on two main sections. The first section discusses a brief

overview of public space in Chinese context. Following the historical overview of public space, typology of public spaces in Beijing will be focused on this section. The second addresses the retail-oriented public place as the focal typology of public urban environment in this research in Chinese context as well, which focus on the use of retail urban places in mixed-use built environment and the signification of such retail-oriented public realm as behaviour settings in the contemporary city.

In Chapter 4, it attempts to discuss the application of research methods by analysing the theoretical issues on two particular types – qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as types, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of these two methods. Through the comparison of qualitative and quantitative methods – to establish the identification of what research methodologies are applicable to the research question – how people behave in retail public places. The methodology provides an understanding of how the research was conducted and organized in order to obtain information that could be helpful for developing design implications for public place settings in Beijing. This chapter has been divided into six sections which involves in the analyses relate to the definition of qualitative research and quantitative method, types of qualitative method and overall strategy, the characteristics of the research developed that explain the case study methods used to obtain information, and a brief discussion of the primary and the secondary methods for data collecting in case studies that purpose is to stipulate the methods of choice for the research and describe how the data will inform research questions.

Chapter 5 attempts to understand the relationship between the temporal and spatial forms of the physical setting and people's behaviors – to examine how people used the places – in three selected study areas. It divided into seven sections in this chapter, included in the introduction, background to case

studies, and assessment of focal qualities of public space in urban setting by people's activities in practice through the way of observation and interview, etc. which involve in the elements of access and linkage to public space, image of place, use of behaviors, and the safety and management in study areas.

In the last, the way to practice better retail public places and an overall summary of some finding and the future practice to such sort of places will compose the conclusion chapter as the end of this thesis.

The research framework stated above for this thesis is provided in Table 1.1.

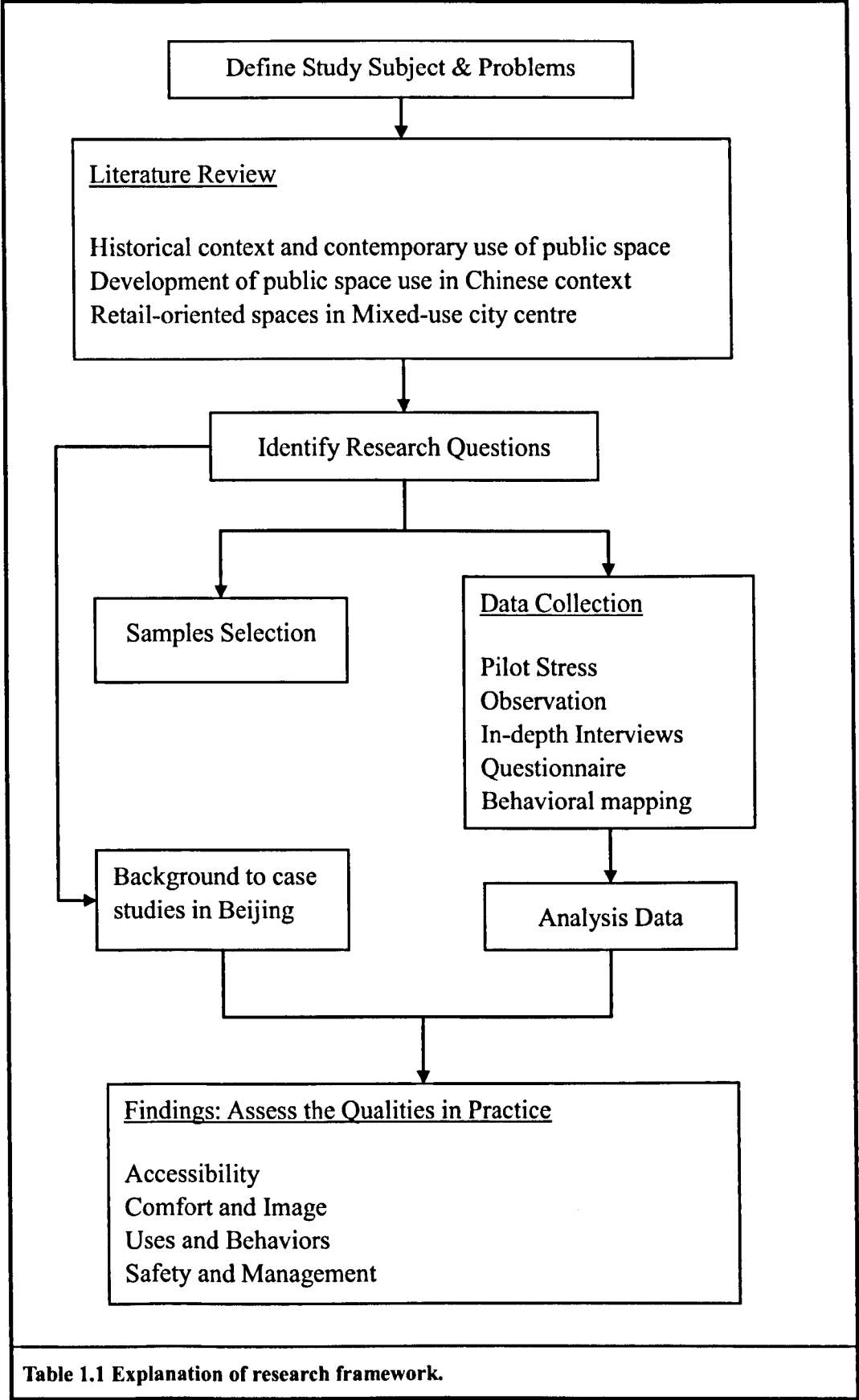


Table 1.1 Explanation of research framework.

PART ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PLACES

2.1 Introduction

The importance of cities has increased significantly over the centuries, and the current dramatic growth of urban populations is a critical issue for the future of urban environments. The development from village and rural life to urban 'civilization' has had both social and environmental impacts; the growth of urban populations and associated industrialisation has resulted in a range of detrimental and often dehumanizing outcomes (Wooley, 2003). Thus the city and the urban environment will become extremely important in the daily lives of increasing numbers of people across the world. According to CABE (2003), the quality of that urban environment will have an impact on a wide range of elements of daily life including housing, education, health, crime, employment and leisure, both for individuals and communities or populations as a whole. According to the recent research by Carmona, et al. (2008), it has demonstrated that people have started to realize the awareness of the importance of the quality of their local environment and place it high on the agenda of issues that concern them and most need improving. By people using the street outside their housing, their local neighborhood and the environment around their workplace on a daily basis, and as a result, the fact reflects that the quality of streets, squares and other public spaces have play an important role in everyone's daily life, and directly contributes to their sense of wellbeing.

2.1.1 Defining public space

According to Carmona, et al. (2008, p.26), debates about public space are

situated within a literature characterised by a host of overlapping and poorly defined terms: livability, quality of place, quality of life, local environmental quality, physical capital, well-being, and even urban design and sustainability. Broadly, the different concepts owe their origins to different policymaking traditions, each being multi-dimensional and multi-objective. Thus, according to Madanipour (2003, cited in Rybczynski, 1986, p.19), "It appears simple on the outside, but it's deceptive, for it has many layers. If it is cut apart there are just onion-skins left and the original form has disappeared. If each layer is described separately, we lose sight of the whole". To add to the complexity, some aspects are clearly subjective, related to the way places are perceived and to how individual memories and meanings attach to and inform perception of particular places. Others are objective, and concerned with the physical and indisputable realities of place (Massam, 2002, p.143; Myers, 1987, p.110). Van Kamp et al. (2003) usually usefully distinguish between the various concepts by arguing that some are primarily related to the environment, whilst others are primarily related to the person (livability and quality of place being in the former camp, and quality of life and well-being in the latter). Moreover, some concepts are clearly future-oriented, such as sustainability, whilst others are about the here and now, i.e. livability and environmental equity. Thus, based on these discussions, Carmona, et al. (2008, p.21) constructed a broad definition of public space as: "public space relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment, public and private, internal and external, urban and rural, where the public have free, although not necessarily unrestricted, access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; the open countryside; the 'public/private' spaces both internal and external where public access is welcomed – if controlled – such as private shopping centres or rail and bus stations; and the interiors of key public and civic buildings such as libraries, churches, or town halls."

This wide definition, encompasses a broad range of contexts that can be considered public, from the everyday street, to covered shopping centres, to the open countryside. However, the latter two examples are likely to be privately owned and subject to private property right, and the shopping centre is internal rather than external and likely to be closed at certain times of the day and night time. For these reasons, a narrower definition of public space is provided by Carmona, et al. (2008, p.23) as well: “public space relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public has free access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the ‘public/private’ spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and external and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.” This narrow definition does not mean that the former broad one is invalid. It is possible to interpret a term such as public space in many different ways. For the purpose of this work, the narrow definition helps to focus attention on the areas where many have formed free access outdoor environment for people’s commercial activities, and this will be in-depth discussed in the latter chapters.

2.1.2 The purpose of this chapter

This chapter aims to set up a general understanding of the definition of the concept of ‘public space’ and explores issues surrounding its inherent complexity and the complexity of its use. It has been divided into five sections. Following the introduction, the background knowledge relates to the research field will be stated in second part. Beginning with the identification of the value of public space and a list of key concepts on urban space which will need to define or explain to set research will then be presented. Meanwhile, the importance of the quality of urban public environment will be pointed out in

this part and this will be discussed in depth in the last section of this chapter. The next section is to present the historic context for using urban public realm, which is composed by two parts. The first is to state the evolution of public space from antiquity. Uses of urban space in modern cities will be discussed in second part. Before the summary as the last section of this work, the contemporary use of public realm will be discussed based on the literature theory as previous sections, which constitutes the main body of this chapter. It will discuss that how people behave in public space from the theoretical perspective. And this part will also cover questions such as:

- What types of people's activities take place in public spaces?
- What reasons can make people spend their time on public spaces?
- Why people like to use certain public spaces, not others?
- What places people like to use?
- What things can influence the activity patterns in public spaces?
- How to deal more effectively with the quality of urban public spaces?
- How those places can bring people together for a positive, shared experience of urban living?

2.2 The Nature of Public Space

Public space is all around us, a vital part of everyday urban life. The city has always been identifies in its public spaces. As Garvin and Berens (1997) say that public space has always constituted the fulcrum of a city, or the city itself. Public spaces have played a fundamental role throughout history. From the time that humans first defined private spaces, public spaces have served as places where people have come together to exchange ideas. Public spaces are places where people can enjoy the city, for instance, the squares, the shopping streets and the shopping centres, the public gardens, the main boulevards with their pavements, the railway stations, lawns and parks, these have always been

public places where people could meet in order to build up social, cultural and political contacts, to take part in common events, and to benefit from community life (Garvin and Berens, 1997). As Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004, p.69) pointed that, successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by public spaces that are clean, safe, and attractive – areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time.

2.2.1 The value of public space

Public space is one aspect of the urban environment that is of great importance in daily life for people who live in their local urban environments. The importance of urban public space lies in the many different benefits and opportunities that they can provide. This is confirmed by the large numbers of people who use urban public realm and the value that people attribute to them. People become attached to squares, streets, parks, and other public places, and appreciate them for what they offer culturally, socially and personally. In research carried out by Woolley (2004), 85 per cent of people surveyed felt that the quality of public space and the built environment has a direct impact on their lives and on the way they feel. Thus, according to the suggestion pointed out by CABI (2005), public space has a wide range of values:

- Socially: perhaps the most obvious benefits and opportunities that urban open spaces provide for city living are social benefits-that is opportunities for people to do things, take part in events and activities or just to be. Sometimes these opportunities are undertaken in a solitary capacity and sometimes as part of a familiar or friendship group. On other occasions such opportunities will be as part of a neighbourhood, community or interest group under the heading of passive recreation, active recreation, community focus, cultural focus and educational opportunities. Good quality public spaces can nurture social and cognitive skills (Carmona, et

al., 2008), and provide a venue for social events. These places also can provide a venue for social interchange and for supporting the social life of communities (Watson, 2006). Besides, according to Wooley (2004), fear of crime and crime itself can deter people, not just vulnerable groups, from using even good-quality public spaces. Physical changes to, and the better management of, public space can help to allay these fears. Such changes can help everyone to make the most of public spaces.

- Economically: a high quality urban public environment can have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres big or small, and is therefore an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy. As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares, streets and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool: companies are attracted to locations that offer well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services.
- For human health: the health of our nation is currently a matter of concern as an aspect of quality of life. Urban public space should play an important part in providing opportunities for the activities suggested. According to Carr (1992, p.39), access to good quality, well maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. Meanwhile, everyday urban life can be very stressful, with elements such as noise, crowding and air pollution even before one begins the daily round of travelling to a job, caring for children or older relatives or coping with the lack of a job or a long-term health problem. Recovery from such stress is important in daily life and has been studied in an increasing number of projects. It can reduce stress and enhance mental health, and influence a longer life (Handberg and Johnson-Freese, 1997, p.22). In other words, public spaces are a powerful weapon in the fight

against obesity and ill-health.

- For children and young people: children have the right to play, recreation and culture. Children's play is a very important activity in urban public spaces. It has been confirmed that taking children to play is one of the main reasons for visiting urban open spaces for many people (Cooper Marcus and Francis, 1993, p.49). Play is crucial for many aspects of children's development, from the acquisition of social skills, experimentation and the confrontation and resolution of emotional crises, to moral understanding, cognitive skills such as language and comprehension, and of course physical skills. But increasing urbanisation has left our children with far fewer opportunities than previous generations to play freely outdoors and experience the natural environment. Good quality public spaces which also include well-designed school grounds can help to fill this gap, providing children with opportunities for fun, exercise and learning (Woolley, 2004). Some of this evidence is significant because it puts children first or seeks to understand the urban environment from the child's perspective, rather than the adult's, and can help children to obtain and keep a healthier approach to life.
- Environmentally: urban public realm has an impact on local environment, with such intervention becoming greater with increased urbanisation (Neischern et al., 1997, p.231). A high quality public space can encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and improves air quality, reduces heat island effects, pollution and water run-off, and creates opportunities for urban wildlife to flourish.

Therefore, as McColl (2002, p.31) pointed that public space has the potential to influence a wide range of benefits: "as a stage to encourage social cohesion and interaction and build social capital; as a venue for economic exchange and element in determining economic competitiveness and investment decisions; as an environmental resource and direct influence on energy use; and as an

important contributor to the livability of urban places and influence on the health and well-being of local populations”.

2.2.2 Basic concepts of urban public places

Streets and squares

The value of public spaces has been discussed previously. The concept of ‘public space’ mentioned in this work refers to the retail public realm in our local environment, including the square surrounding by the shopping malls or the pedestrian-oriented shopping street. Thus, in this section a basic understanding of the definition of both public ‘square’ and ‘street’ will be explained here. The exploration of retail-oriented public places specifically will be discussed in the next section. As one of the most important elements in the heart of the city, the urban public space is a stage and an oasis for our busy city lives. It is possibly the most important way of designing a good setting for public and commercial buildings in cities. The public space is an area framed by buildings and an area designed to exhibit its buildings to the greatest advantage (Wooley, 2004). As Carmona et al. (2003) states that distinction should be made between squares primarily designed for grandeur or to exhibit a particular building and those designed as people places. Those squares which designed as place for public use typically have a more relaxed or commercial character, a wide variety of surrounding architecture, and an irregular layout (Figure 2.1). According to Mitchell (2005), spaces designed to show off a particular building or for certain civic functions typically have a strong sense of enclosure and surrounding buildings that enhance the formality, which maybe unsuccessful as place for public use, but successful in their more formal roles. Great civic compositions such as St Mark’s Square, Venice, St Peter’s Square, and Tiananmen Square in China, Rome are unique in the relationship between space, the surrounding buildings and the dome of the sky; they demand an emotional and cerebral

response and, as such, compare with any other art form (Figure 2.2). Neither is necessarily more appropriate than the other. A definite geometrical discipline to a space is, however, less ambiguous; for example, on sites surrounding such spaces, developers and their designers are more likely to respect, or be required to respect, the boundary.



Figure 2.1 Place: The Sanlitun Village, China.

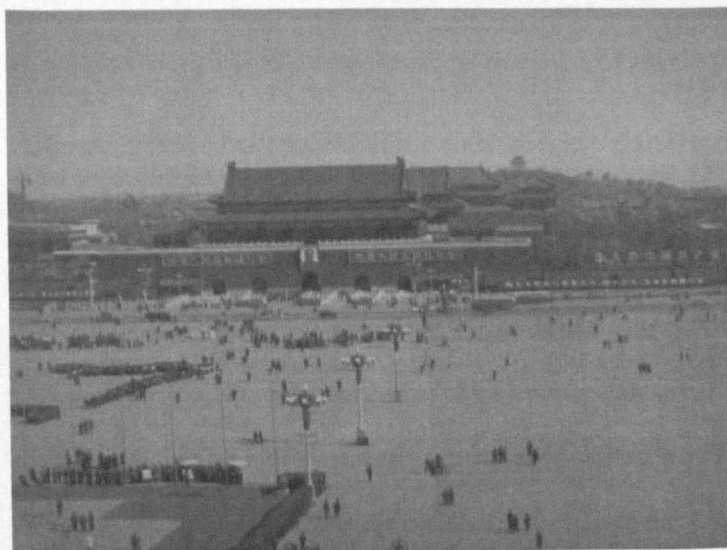


Figure 2.2 Place: Tiananmen Square, China.

(Source: <http://image.baidu.com>, Access: April, 2009).

In relation to the streets, they hold a special place in the literature on public space and are both literally and metaphorically the most fitting symbol of the public realm (Jacobs, 1961). Streets are linear three-dimensional spaces

enclosed on opposite sides by buildings. They may or may not contain roads, but distinct from a 'road' that purpose is being a thoroughfare for vehicular traffic. "Streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces of the city, are its most vital organs. Sidewalks, their bordering uses, and their users, are active participants in the drama of civilization" (Jacobs, 1961, p.55). In urban areas, streets represent a majority of public space and the efforts to revitalize the public realm are often efforts to revitalize streets—to generate activity and to make streets lively (Jacobs, 1993, p.87; Ben-Joseph, 2005, p.121). Streets are a significant part of the informal external public realm. "Accessible to all, these spaces constitute public space in its purest form" (Carmona et al., 2003, p.124). Jacobs suggest that if "...we do right by our streets we can in large measure do right by the city as a whole – and, therefore and most importantly, by its inhabitants" (Jacobs, 1993, p.91). Historically, streets in cities and towns were used as spaces to serve basic needs of survival, communication and entertainment and to perform several political, religious, commercial, civic and social functions (Pushkarev and Zuplan, 1975). In contemporary developed societies, many of these functions have moved to private or virtual realms or to different types of parochial and public spaces (Banerjee, 2001). However, especially in many centre-city and mixed-use neighbourhoods, people still depend on streets for functional, social and leisure activities, for travel, shopping, play, meeting and interaction with other people, and even relaxation (Alexander, 1987). The notion of the street as a space for social interaction that may occur as a result of any of these activities is one of the focus of this research (Figure 2.3).

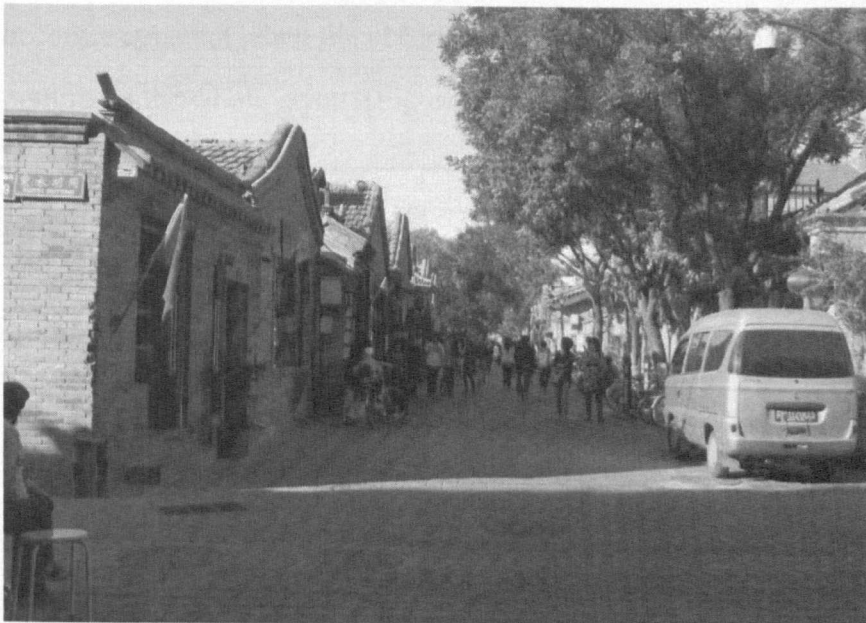
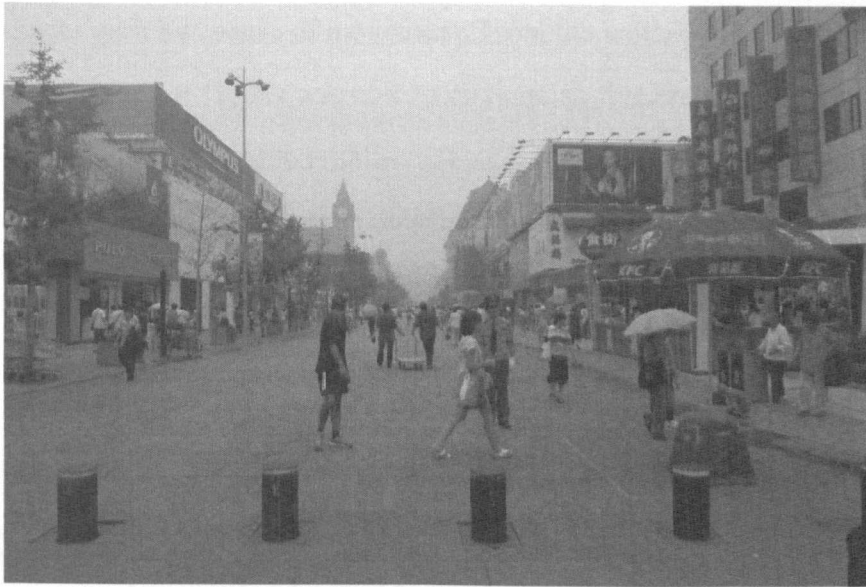
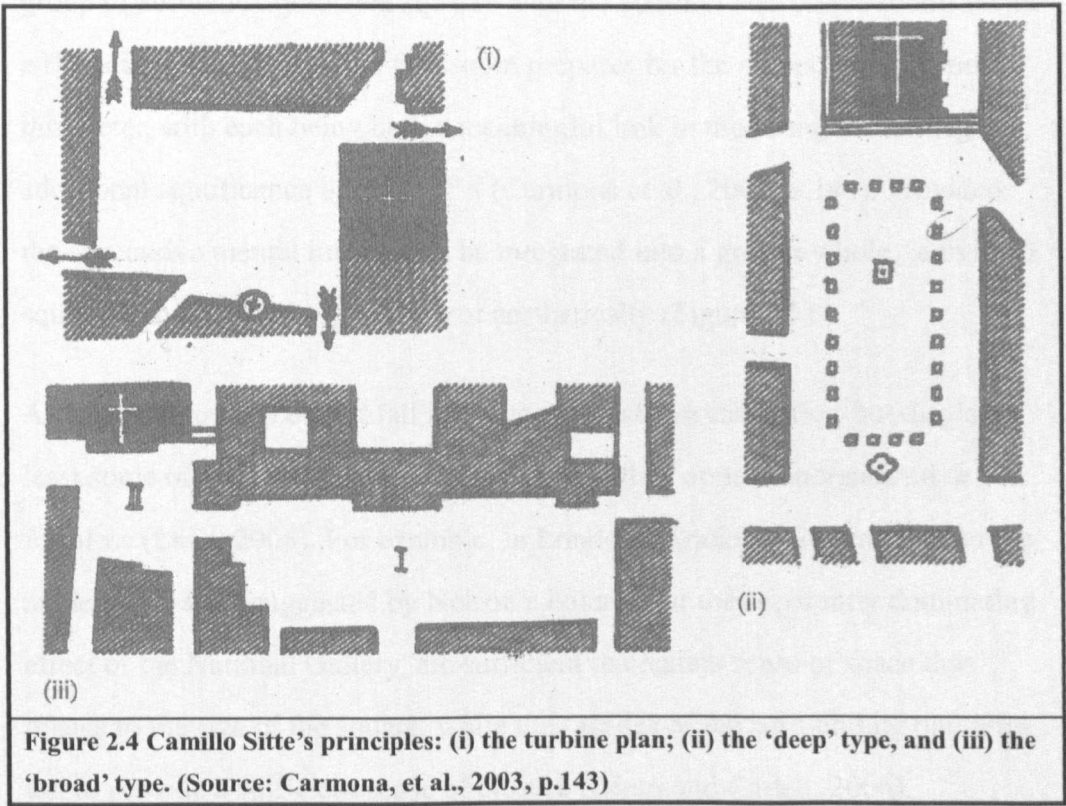


Figure 2.3 Place: Top-Wangfujing Shopping Street, China; Below-Nanluogu Lane, China
(Source: <http://image.baidu.com>, Access: April, 2009).

Forms

Although positive urban public spaces come in a variety of different sizes and shapes, and there have been a number of attempts to classify the form that public spaces may take, according to Moughtin (1992), there are two main types – streets (roads, paths, avenues, lanes, boulevards, alleys, malls, etc.) and squares (places, plazas, circuses, piazzas, courts, and so on.). In principle, streets are dynamic spaces with a sense of movement, while squares are static

spaces with less sense of movement. From the work by LeGates and Stout (2000), Zucker (1959) was able to distinguish five archetypal forms: the closed square where the space is self-contained; the dominated square where the space is directed towards the main building; the nuclear square where space is formed around a centre; grouped squares where spatial units are combined to form larger compositions; and the amorphous square where space is unlimited. Meanwhile, Sitte (1889 in Carmona et al., 2003, p.142) concluded that there were only two types of square in formal terms, the character of either being determined by the nature of the dominant building. The two categories of place were the deep type and the wide type, whether a place is deep or wide usually becomes apparent when the observer stands opposite the major building that dominates the whole layout (Figure 2.4).



As the description by Alexandar (1987), a closed square is a complete enclosure, interrupted only by the streets leading into it and exhibiting regular geometric forms and repetition of architectural elements around the periphery.

This represents the purest and most immediate expression of man's flight against being lost in a gelatinous world, in a disorderly mass of urban dwellings (Lynch, 1981, p.124). According to the work of Moughtin (1992), Zucker (1959) identified the dominated square is characterised by a building or group of buildings towards which the space is directed, and to which all surrounding structures are related. Although typically the dominant feature is a building, it could provide a sufficiently strong sense of space was created (Lynch, 1981, p.124). This space formed around a centre. According to Carmona et al. (2003, p.143), here a centre feature – a vertical nuclear – is sufficiently powerful to create a sense of space around itself, charging the space with a tension that keeps by the nucleus governs the effective size of such spaces. Zucker (1959 in Moughtin, 1992) compared the visual impact of a group of aesthetically related squares with the effect of successive rooms inside a Baroque palace, where the first room prepares for the second; the second for third; etc., with each being both a meaningful link in the chain and having additional significance because of it (Carmona et al., 2003, p.144). Provided the successive mental images can be integrated into a greater whole, individual squares can be linked organically or aesthetically (Figure 2.5).

Amorphous squares do not fall into one of the above categories, but display at least some of their necessary qualities, even if they appear unorganized or formless (Lang, 2005). For example, in London's Trafalgar Square, neither the nuclear character suggested by Nelson's column for the apparently dominating effect of the National Gallery, are sufficient to create a sense of space that relates to the size of the square, while the façades of the surrounding buildings fail to provide a sufficient sense of closure (Dines and Cattell, 2006).



As discussed in previous definition section, streets are linear three-dimensional spaces enclosed on opposite sides by buildings. The form of street can be analysed in terms of polar qualities, the combination of which gives scope for great diversity: visually dynamic or static; enclosed or open; long or short; wide or narrow; straight or curved; and with regard to the formality or informality of the architectural treatment (Carmona et al., 2003). As Jacob (1993) provided by the work of Great Streets, most streets are visually dynamic with strong sense of movement that is very different from other urban public places where the degree and nature of enclosure usually gives a visually static character. In streets with strong physical character, their volume generally takes a positive form and possesses a strong sense of enclosure. The continuity of the street wall and the height-to-width ratio determines how the surrounding architecture is seen (Jacob, 1993, p.107). Based on these discussion, according

to Carmona et al. (2003), the successful design of straight streets generally depends on such factors as good proportions between length and width, the kind of structures of which they are composed, and their visual termination on a building or other feature that brings the eye to rest.

In summarized, these public places rarely represent one pure type, and frequently bear the characteristics of two or more. As Zucker (1959 in Moughtin, 1992) stated that the specific function of a place did not automatically produce a definite spatial form, and that each function could be expressed in many different shapes.

Functions

The physical and psychological function of the urban public spaces does not depend on size or scale, as Ben-Joseph (2005) said that such public realm creates a gathering place for the people, humanizing them by mutual contact, providing them with a shelter against the haphazard traffic, and freeing them from the tension of rushing through the web of street. Thus activity in a public space is important for its vitality and its visual attraction. According to Aymonino and Mosco (2006, p92), 'it should be proportionate to the number of inhabitants, so that it may not be too small a space to be useful, nor look like a desert waste for lack of population'. The public space has an important function in the context of urban design. According to Bentley (1999, p.132), the types of spaces needed in a city are: "the setting for a civic building; the principal meeting places; places for great ceremonial occasions; spaces for entertainment around buildings such as theatres, cinemas, restaurants and cafes; spaces for shopping, shopping street, arcades and markets; spaces around which offices are grouped; spaces of a semi-public nature around which residential accommodation is arranged; and, finally, the spaces associated with urban traffic junctions". Some spaces will take on heightened meaning as the centres or portals for places, while others may serve a number of overlapping

functions. The most successful public spaces of a city, though they may have a dominant function for which each is known and by which they may be classified, are often those that sustain activity through the diversity of uses in the surrounding buildings.

In the work of '*Urban Space for People*', Pushkarev and Zuplan (1975, p.163) pointed out the single most important function of an element in the city is the symbolic meaning attached to it. The great place, like the great building, is linked with world of fantasy, the context of feeling. Acceptance of this principle means the recognition of symbolism as central to the design process and also a willingness to manipulate urban form to achieve meaning (Low and Smith, 2006).

The concept of the centre is probably the single most important idea with which the urban designer works. Without an understanding of its importance to man's perception of the environment only damage can be inflicted upon the city. In the study of the perception of urban structure, *The Image of the City*, Lynch (1976) found the node to be one of the elements by which a city is recognized and understood. In short, the node is an important element which gives the city 'imageability' or a strong image. As he says, "nodes are the conceptual anchor points in our cities. Those are the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling". Alexander (1987, p.91) also stated that, "every whole must be a 'centre' in itself, and must also produce a system of centres around it. He considers that the centre tends towards a symmetrical arrangement". These theories advocate the achievement of identity for the node by the continuous quality of the walls, floor, detail, lighting, topography or skyline as the main prerequisite of perceptual support.

2.2.3 The importance of public space qualities

As discussed previously, activities in urban public space are particularly important in perceptions of urban public environment. They are also particularly sensitive to the physical quality of environment. Based on research by Gehl (1996), the quality is a fundamental issue that impact directly on the way all users perceive, function, and socialize in urban square, and by implication on the viability of public space for different economic activities.

The Project for Public Space (2000, p. 67), based on their analysis of hundreds of public spaces around world, conclude that four key qualities are required for a high-quality urban environment:

- access and linkage – convenient to use, visible, easy to get to and move within;
- uses and activities – providing a reason to be there, vital and unique;
- comfort and image – safe, clean, green, full of character and attractive;
- sociability – fostering neighbourliness, friendship, interaction, diversity, pride.

For them, places without these characteristics are likely to be alienating, uncomfortable or simply unusable, indicating that something is wrong with the design, management or both. Smith et al. (1997), based on an extensive analysis of place-based physical visions, developed a similar list of qualities that urban squares should fulfill: livability, character, connection, mobility, personal freedom and diversity; whilst Carr et al. (1992) conclude that five types of reason account for people's needs in public spaces: comfort, relaxation, passive engagement with the environment, active engagement, and discovery, and that any one encounter with a place may satisfy more than one purpose. They argue,

'It is important to examine needs, not only because they explain the use of places, but also because use is important to success. Places that do not meet people's needs or that serve no important functions for people will be underused and unsuccessful.'

(Carr *et al.* 1992: 91-2)

Numerous physical prescriptions have also been established for what makes a good place. Whyte (1980, p.82) concluded his observations of public spaces in New York with the following requirements:

- public spaces should be in a good location (preferably on a busy route and both physically and visually accessible)
- streets should be part of the 'social' space
- the space should be level or almost level with the pavement (spaces raised significantly above or below the pavement were less used)
- there should be places to sit – both integral, such as steps, and explicit, e.g. seats, benches, etc.
- moveable seats facilitated choice and the opportunity to communicate character and personality.

According to Gehl (1996), all these factors – size, shape, connections, the disposition of elements within space, and their detailed design – are important in determining the quality of public space and therefore the types of human activities that will be sustained. Moreover, all are both measurable and tangible.

Based on the research undertaken by DEMOS (2005), it shows that many of the needs that determine how the urban public environment is perceived are often intangible, reflecting the diverse motivations, needs and resources available to different groups and users. Moreover, they argue the core ideal of public space being free and open to all is increasingly being undermined by a focus on safety, creating bland places with no real ability to draw or retain

people. For the findings, DEMOS (2005, p.101) provided solutions as follow:

- space that enable users to participate in the space, by creating activities of their own
- environments that encourage a diversity of user groups, and avoid domination by one group or use
- creating spaces that were available at any time.

According to the study, Dines and Cattell (2006) concluded that ‘people need a variety of public spaces within a local area to meet a range of everyday needs: spaces to linger as well as spaces of transit; spaces that bring people together as well as spaces of retreat’. As such it has provided (Dines and Cattell, 2006, p.126):

- a strong and enduring element in the area’s identity and peoples’ attachment to it;
- an important local social arena and venue for unexpected encounters;
- a local place where people felt comfortable, safe and able to linger;
- a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual place of interaction between different communities;
- a familiar and uplifting place that contributed directly to a sense of well-being in users.

These qualities were considered fragile, raising concerns that they could easily be damaged by otherwise well-meaning process of regeneration or management that are often unaware and unconcerned about this important social role (Dines and Cattell, 2006).

Relative judgments about the importance of various qualities are matters of individual perception, and different users will value different qualities more or less highly. But, as Carmona, et al. (2008) argued that the component images of place pattern together to create one overall image of place in users’ minds, so

will the qualities pattern together to form an overall experience of public space. Therefore, concentrating on some qualities to the detriment of others may simply undermine attempts to improve the overall quality of space.

2.3 The Historic Context for Urban Public Space

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of how public space has developed historically from antiquity to modern times within cities in various locations around the western world. It aims to set up the context for how public space has been viewed in the past and how it is viewed today. In order to understand the current production and use of public space it is useful to take a historical perspective and look to the origins of its creation. According to Michaud (2007), the contemporary is influenced by the past and modern public spaces often contain elements that are borrowed from previous periods. Public space has been a fundamental part of communities for centuries. It serves as a setting for individuals to rest, meet and exchange ideas. Public space can also act as a staging point for protests and where social movements can express themselves. Space is created and formed by people and it is full of complex relationships. The agenda of those who create a plan, those who commission it, the form of a space and how this form relates to the users or avoiders are all important factors that influence the nature of a public space.

Initially, this section discussed the complex evolution of public spaces in Europe where the origin of the urban public space, from ancients through to the Renaissance and Baroque, and to analyse the main functions of pre-modern European public space. Next, it takes consideration on the use of modernist urban space today in brief. From the discussion, according to Sitte (1889), the complex and variable relationships between spaces and their functions is stated out, whilst the changing balance between public and private in the production, use of urban public environment is drawn out.

2.3.1 The Evolution of Public Space from Antiquity

The form and function of urban space today has its origin in the ancient civilizations. According to the work by Pirenne (2000 [1925]), the Greek polis started to flourish around the fifth century BC while the Roman city began to flourish around the third century BC, the two civilizations overlapping for some centuries. Both the Greeks and the Romans valued urban public space greatly as places for social interaction, and this was epitomised in the aesthetic qualities that these spaces came to possess.

In modern times the result has been a tendency for many planners, architects and historians to approve the way to public life these civilizations took. As Sitte (1889) argued that public squares, plazas, piazzas, or other urban public environment, were then of prime necessity, for they were the theatres for the principal scenes of public life. Thus, any historic context of urban public space should start with the ancients.

The Ancients

It is vital to understand the Greek 'polis' for understanding the function of the public space in ancient Greek society. LeGates and Stout (2000) emphasize the importance of urban public space to public life in the polis, arguing 'Public life was essentially communistic. The polis as a social institution defined the very nature of being human for its citizen', at that time the urban public space has been emphasized by the physical form of polis.

Therefore, public space had played a very important role in the politics of the polis in ancient Greece. According to the description by LeGates and Stout (2000), public space in the ancient Greek polis is often described as democratic space. The Acropolis was the highest point in the city of early Greek (Figure 2.6). As Michaud (2007) said that it was originally used for defense and living

space for the king and the wealthiest citizens. During the democratic period, the popular assembly began a building program under the direction of Pericles on the Acropolis in Athens. Hall (1998) describes that starting as a hilltop fortification, the acropolis evolved into a public space for religious and secular assemblies and commerce. The agora at the base of the Acropolis reached significance during the democratic age of Athens (Figure 2.7 and Figure 2.8). According to the description by Michaud (2007), it was the pulse of city life and the center of human experience and creativity. Same, Mumford (1961) describes the agora as a place where citizens could meet for daily communications and formal and informal assembly, while Hall (1998) describe it as no mere public square, but the living heart of the city. The agora, like the acropolis, had multiple functions, but evolved principally into a marketplace, and in this function was open to all, not just 'citizens', despite the calls of some for greater restrictions (Pirenne, 2000 [1925]).



Figure 2.6 The Acropolis, Athens. (Source: Suite 101.com, Access: October, 2011).

In Athens, the functions of daily life were grouped and centralized. While no real equivalents of the Acropolis, agora, and Pnyx Hill assembly exist in common practice, some similarities survive from historical into current public

places (Michaud, 2007). According to Webb (1990), the earlier Greek polis developed in an organic fashion containing few planned public spaces. Yet as Greek cities began to be developed in a more formal and organized way, public space took on a greater prominence. As organic growth gradually gave way to planned urban form, the conscious design of public space increasingly reflected the notion that its aesthetic quality would impart an experience to the soul of its users (Webb, 1990). Therefore, according to the work of Carmona et al (2008, p.24), discussion of the ancient Greek polis identifies several key themes that still have resonance in debates about public space today:

- the notion of public space having multiple functions
- public space being democratic space, where citizens can interact and discuss issues pertaining to the city
- public space being used for commercial purposes
- public space as an informal meeting place and community space
- the aesthetic qualities of public space giving rise to pleasure
- notions of restricting access to public space, with some people having greater rights than others.

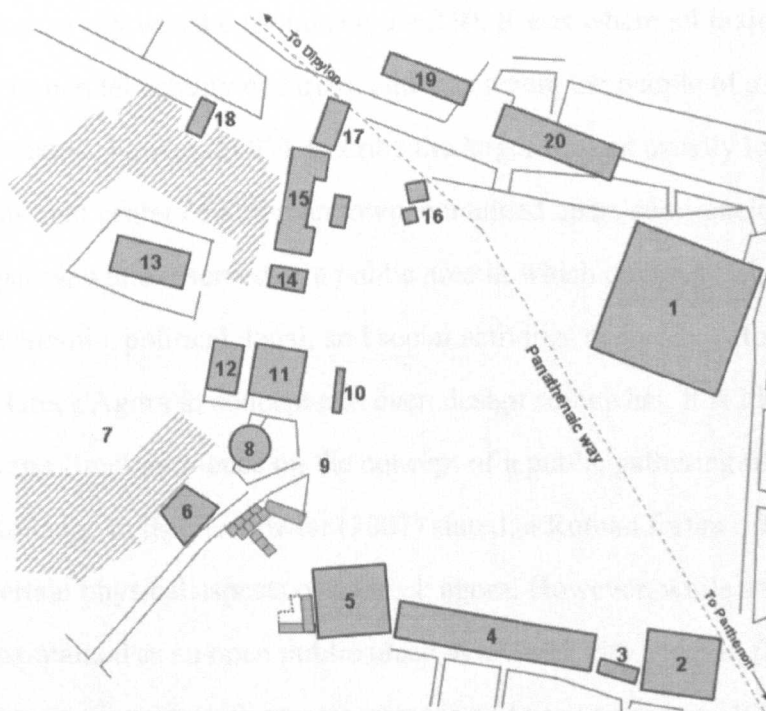


Figure 2.7. The Plan of Agora, Athens. (Source: Suite 101.com, Access: October, 2011)

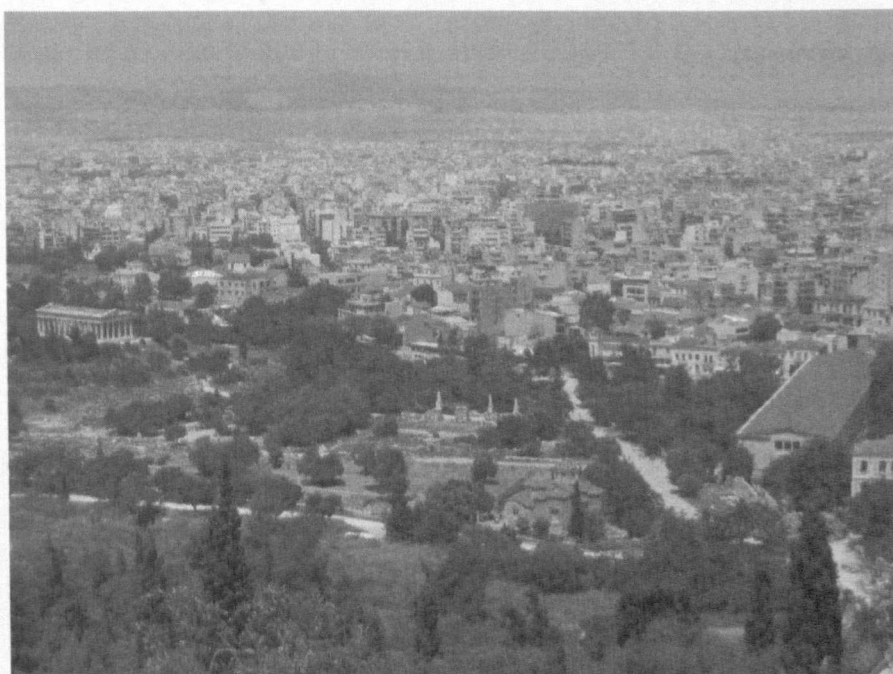


Figure 2.8 The Agora, Athens. (Source: Suite 101.com, Access: October, 2011)

The Roman City

Ancient Roman cities were far larger than the Greeks polis. The heart of the

Roman city was the forum (Figure 2.9). It was where all major political and commercial activity occurred, and was where the people of a Roman town gathered. Fowler (2007) describe the larger forums usually located near the physical center of a Roman town, contained open, semi-enclosed, and enclosed spaces, while it served as a public area in which commercial, religious, economic, political, legal, and social activities occurred. A forum is not unlike a Greek Agora in concept and even design somewhat. It is likely that there was some Greek influence on the concept of a public gathering place for the Romans. In fact, as Fowler (2007) stated, a Roman forum often included certain physical aspects of a Greek agora. However, while an agora was maintained as an open public place in a Greek city, Roman forum developed into much more with greater purpose and use (Anderson, 1997). They contained piazzas, shops, temples, offices, important civic buildings such as basilicas, and triumphal arches. The basilica was an indoor space that could be used for judicial or commercial purposes (Figure 2.10). Temples fulfilled a double role, being used as a meeting place, as well as for religious purposes (Anderson, 1997).

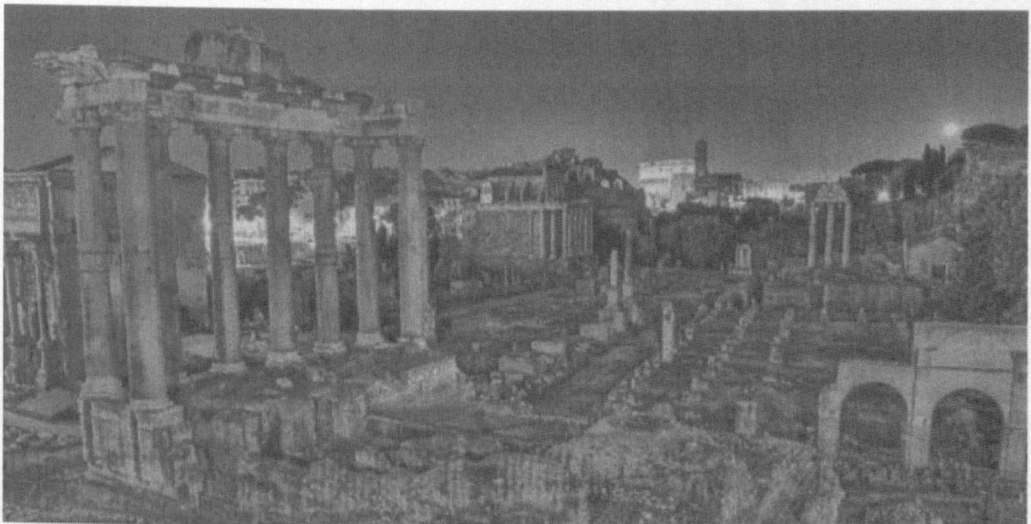


Figure 2.9 The Forum, Rome. (Source: Suite 101.com)

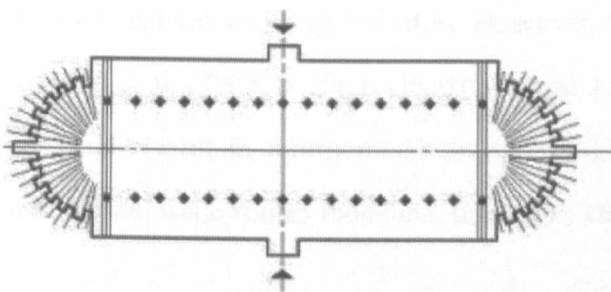


Figure 2.10 The Plan of Basilica, Rome. (Source: Suite 101.com)

The Forum presents a unique insight into the construction of public space in ancient Rome. As statement of the work 'Roman Architecture and Society' by Anderson (1997), this institution perpetuated an established hierarchy that had distinct space allocated to an individual according to their sex, age, and social status. Roman society was common with inequality, but many of the public institutions were open to everyone as long as an individual inhabited their assigned space. The cities of the Roman Empire had pushed forward urban civilization well beyond that of the polis by this time, not least because of the high level of public works. Therefore, Hall (1998) describes, Roman cities had introduced a more planned approach to the production of urban public square. It was carefully integrated into the fabric of the city, creating a downtown area with social spaces, cultural spaces, shopping spaces and spiritual spaces, very similar to Western cities today. According to Fowler (2007), the Romans also understood the semiotic qualities of public space. Examples of this are the strong symbolism of state and religion in Roman, where surrounding buildings contained the senate and temple, accompanied by monuments and statues (Carmona et al., 2008). This is a tradition that has continued in towns and cities through to today.

The Middle Times

Following the fall of the Roman Empire, as Pirenne (2000) stressed that cities suffered in this period from attacks by warring factions throughout Europe.

Insecurity caused shrinkage of cities. However, through the quotation by Carmona et al. (2008, p.25), it clearly showed that these small settlements continued to contain commercial activity through the dark ages, and when international trade routes reopened, urban growth was accelerated.

The streets of the medieval city are an important distinguishing feature for leading into and enclosing public spaces. Based on the work of Mumford (1961), they are narrow and largely unplanned for standing out the irregular form and easier to following natural environment surrounding them. Medieval public space was framed and often controlled by the church. According to Pirenne (2000), often the only planned public space was in front of the church to accommodate the congregation entering and leaving, with markets often sharing the same space, and operating on a weekly cycle. Markets were a major part of medieval towns and cities. Squares were well suited to this type of commercial activity (Figure 2.11). The activities that were carried out sometimes gave places their names and these often remained throughout history up to the present day. The church was the centre of the settlement and public life, with religious festivals, pilgrimages and processions used to bring the community together. This also created public spaces that were independent of the church but still within the narrow confines of the town wall (Mumford, 1961).



Figure 2.11 The Medieval Market Square.

(Source: <http://markethalls.org/page%2002/Page%2002.html>, Access April 2009)

Despite the lack of formal design, the results often had their own innate qualities. Furthermore the medieval city was a more egalitarian place than its ancient predecessors. As Carmona et al. (2008, p.27) cited that, ‘the medieval town had succeeded as no previous urban culture had done. For the first time the majority of inhabitants were free man...city dweller and citizen were synonymous terms’ (Mumford, 1961), and this was reflected in the unrestricted use of public space.

The Renaissance and Baroque

The fifteenth century brought the Renaissance and a rebirth of Greek and Roman thought. Florence was the point of origin for the Renaissance. Public spaces such as the street and new squares became largely regularised. The twisting streets gave way to straightness, while the irregular squares became

symmetrical. The square was coordinated into systems of urban design and construction was on a grand scale. As Girouard (1990) noted that, the idea of a piazza expressing civic dignity and therefore unsuitable for commercial activities had clearly crystallized. The grand piazzas of the renaissance sought to emulate the classical world, aesthetically and politically.

According to Pirenne (2000), these ruling interests sought to 'regenerate' the medieval cities by employing artists and architects to beautify them, as well as their own grand palaces, and in the process to assert and display their own status and wealth (Figure 2.12). As Webb (1990, p.57) observes, 'the link between art and power is as old as civilisation'. With the flourishing of the arts in fifteenth-century Italy, aesthetic principle, particularly scale and proportion, became essential from their medieval structure, or created a fresh by the demolition of part of the town. Commercial traffic and markets were often banned from the centre, while architecture and sculpture reflected the monumental (Broadbent, 1990). And, during this period the square continued as a point for community, as Sitte (1889, p.77) pointed out. "In the Renaissance there still existed a vital and functional use of the town square for community life and also, in connection with this, a rapport between square and surrounding public buildings". Traditionally the surrounding walls of squares had been retained for administrative buildings but houses gradually began to appear. Thus, the importance of these squares has been expressed by Webb (1990, p.57) "In terms of town planning the closed square represents the purest and most immediate expression of man's fight against being lost in a gelatinous world, in a disorderly mass of urban dwellings".

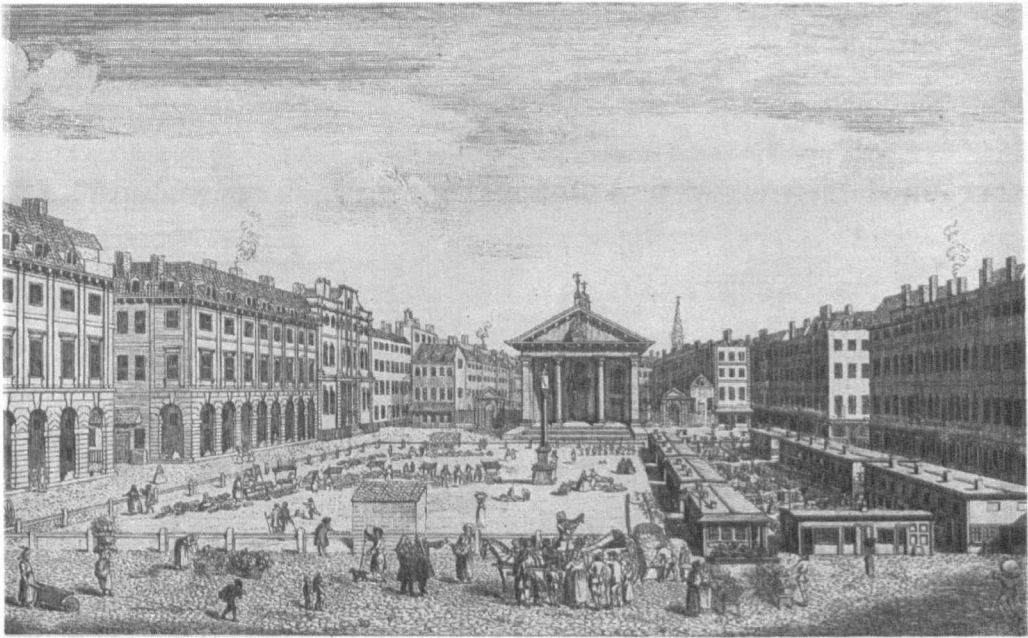


Figure 2.12 Covent Garden, London.

(Source: British History Online, Access: October, 2011)

The baroque city plan appeared simultaneously with the emergence of strong states. The purpose of a baroque layout is to display the city's power and strength, resulting in the construction of monuments. Royal patronage leads to similar developments in some cities, such as Spain and Paris. Increasingly, therefore, as Webb (1990) noted, the spaces that resulted were designed to display as publicly as possible, put people in their place utilizing hierarchy of space and separation of the classes. Again, according to Broadbent (1990), to show off the power and wealth of the corporate sector, the center, usually public and commercial, is the largest and most important section. A radial street network extends from the center and as a section of the city's distance from the focus increases, its importance decreases. This decrease in importance is illustrated by the decreasing accessibility to the center and its important functions. As a result, the government district is usually in the center square or attached to it; elite neighborhoods spring up along the wide avenues, while the poorest residential sections are forced to the edge of the city. Green space and open space are found throughout the city and each section is built around its own square. Squares and parks also display a hierarchy of space: as sections

are pushed farther from the center, the size of the public space decreases (Broadbent,1990).

2.3.2 Modernism and Beyond: Positive and Negative Urban Space

Modernism and public space

Modernism, as a movement emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. Madanipour (2003) states that modernism saw the city as a machine, with form following function, and treated urban public space as an undifferentiated whole, with a concern for light and ventilation uppermost, and seen as decisive benefits for health. Modernism used a number of complex new forms and styles that were to give new meaning to design, to present aspects of the world in a different way, and to create new relationships between elements in the urban design. The power of modernity is apparent in the ways in which it was used in designing and organizing public space. As Hillier and Rooksby (2005) notes, modernists see space as an element to be shaped for social purposes so that it is always making subservient to the construction of a social project. According to the analysis of Hillier and Rooksby (2005), social and psychological needs were generally ignored by the modernists, and therefore the function of public space was never fully considered. As such the large areas of urban public space found in many modernist projects typically had no respected social activity or function. Madanipour (2003, p.156) notes how these spaces were also unconnected: "What resulted was vast expenses of space which could have little or no connection with other spaces of the city and could be left underused, only to be watched from the top of the high rise buildings or from car windows. In this sense such space can be considered 'negative', in that its role is entirely subservient to that of the buildings in which the 'life' of the city is deemed to take place."

By contrast, 'positive' urban space can be seen as a container of public life,

which has been the dominant view of public space throughout history. Sitte (1889 in Carmona et al., 2008, p.47) advocated historic spaces for their random and artistic city aesthetic, and instead attacked the uniformity and 'the artless and prosaic character of modern city planning'. His work was to be an inspiration for future critics of the modular regularity of the modernist city.

With reference to public space, according to Carmona et al. (2008), Sitte criticises the power of the engineer and hygienist in determining design; the tendency of open space to be the unconsidered remainder of a site after a building has been placed upon it, the unenclosed open nature of modern plazas, and the regularity of spaces. The importance of Sitte's work is that many of his criticisms are still relevant to contemporary public space, despite what some have characterised as a highly selective reading of the evident. Sitte observed a convergence in urban public space designs that no longer had any link to the diverse artistic or cultural identity of man (Bentley, 1998).

By contrast, contemporary critics have tended to focus on social critiques for the failure of modernist public space. Sennett (1990) advocates past civilizations, particularly the ancients, in his case with reference to participation in public life. He argues that modern public life is too personalized, and it is modern society's obsession with personalities that has created a social where the majority of people have no real public role.

"The Ancient Greek could use his or her eyes to see the complexities of life. The temples, markets, playing fields, meeting places, walls, public statuary, and paintings of the ancient city represented the cultural values in religion, politics, and family life."

(Sennett, 1990, p.129)

Sennett (1977 in Bentley, 1998, p.53) blames modernism for creating 'dead public space' where squares are isolated and isolating and makes the criticism

of many that modern public space is too often a space to move through rather than a place to be. He recognizes that the city itself is an amalgamation of strangers and alludes to the problems the postmodern city dweller has in taking pleasure from the urban experience, particularly when space is divorced from context and sociability. He observes that the stranger is a necessity of the city, but 'The stranger himself is a threatening figure, and few can take pleasure in that world of strangers' which is the cosmopolitan city (quoted in Bentley, 1998).

In another classic text, according to the examination of the psychological impact of urban space, Hall (1966 in Sennett, 1990) instead argued for public space that embraced the numerous cultural strands. 'One of man's most critical needs', he argued, was 'for principles for designing spaces that will maintain a healthy density, a healthy interaction rate, a proper amount of involvement, and a continuing sense of ethnic identification'.

In summary, critiques of modernist urban public space are numerous and diverse, and argue that the movement led to a homogenization of spatial types, ignoring the social and psychological needs of an increasingly diverse city. As Shane (2005) pointed the imposition of a uniform aesthetic vision produced space that divorced its users from history and culture, and too often rendered urban public space as functionless while disrupting social relationships and creating suspicion of strangers within it. The movement demonstrated both the fundamental impact that design can have on the use and viability of public space, but also, as a consequence, that an aesthetic vision of public space, to the exclusion of other factors, can be a very dangerous thing (Lefebvre, 1991).

The return to positive urban space

In the postmodern world, with the spread of an increasingly universal set of urban design principles, a general return to traditional urban space has been

witness. According to Bentley (1999, p.59), advocates argue that such urban space has the potential to support a range of complimentary social, economic and physical characteristics. To achieve this, however, the modernist experiment has shown that it is first necessary to get the physical container correct, in order that the activities within can thrive. Lefebvre (1991) recognised this is not to make a physically deterministic argument that the shape of the space will determine by itself the quality of the place that emerges and the degree and type of human interaction, but it is to argue that some forms of space make it virtually impossible for meaningful human interaction to occur, and therefore for a strong sense of place to emerge. Conversely, the right physical container will greatly increase the potential for a liveable local environment to be created and sustained (Bentley, 1999).

By contrast, according to Lang (2005), recent urban design has moved away from object architecture, arbitrary zoning and standards and above all from free-flowing space towards buildings as background defining 'positive' object spaces; typically streets punctuated by occasional squares. Carmona et al. (2003, p.205) argue that 'sustainable urban design requires patterns of development able to accommodate and integrate the demands of the various movement systems, while supporting social interaction and exchange'. Therefore, whilst tensions often exist between the use of public space as movement space for cars and other vehicles, and its role as connecting and social space for pedestrians, multi-purpose public space should only separate the two where absolutely necessary (Lang, 2005).

Based on the review of literature, numerous authors accept and support this idea of public space as both connective tissue and social milieu (Girouard 1990; Carr et al. 1992; Lefebvre 1991; etc.). According to the project for Public Space (2001), for example, it suggests that good urban public space should provide good access and linkage alongside a sense of comfort and image,

viable uses and activity, and strong socially.

In summary, urban public spaces have been host to many political, social and economic activities throughout history. From the early days of the agora in Greece to contemporary cities, public space has been at the core of many cities' most important happenings. The core functions of public space have the capacity to radically change with the passing of time. The spaces and streets of cities have historically been closely tied to markets and commerce but worrying trends of serving business instead of community are emerging. Public spaces will need to adopt a balanced approach to accessibility, to sustain both business and community interests and to make it worth the time and expense that is spent developing them. The welcome respite of greenery that a park can provide and the pleasure of being among people, of playing the flaneur in the street, are compatible and indeed desirable to modern urban form. Public space offers elements that embellish a city's character, and if they are made correctly help to vitalise it.

This part has provided a review through the historical evolution of Western public space from antiquity to post-modernity. It has demonstrated how the production and use of public space is shaped by the changing dominant forms of power, wealth and ideology. As Carr et al. (1992) stated that pre-modern urban public space had multiple functions, themes, and meanings, which have been repeated through history and are still relevant today. Pre-modern urban public space was discussed in relation to commerce, democracy, community participation, social hierarchy, access, civic obedience, informal social interaction, individual well-being, the power of the church, the display of status and wealth, and art and aesthetics. All these are salient topics in the current debates surrounding public space, according to Carmona et al. (2008), as are the four primary functions that could be identified in the production and use of urban public environment in pre-modern Europe:

- to facilitate commerce
- to project power, sacred or political
- to display the status and wealth of the ruling class
- to foster civility and community

Besides, as Carr et al. (1992) pointed, contemporary postmodern public spaces are increasingly characterised by links to global commerce and to leisure and entertainment, and by the intensive management required to maximize user satisfaction.

2.4 Contemporary Use of Urban Public Spaces

Based on the literature review in previous sections, a brief overview of the nature and the historical context of urban public places have been discussed already. From the discussion, the complex and shifting relationships between spaces and function is identified. Meanwhile, a basic understanding of the retail sector in urban environment, the research focus typology of public space, has set up in Section 2.4. According to these reviews previously, as Gehl (2011) pointed out by his work on urban spaces, in the entire development process of the human society, urban public places have been the basic elements around which all cities were organized, whatever the squares, plazas, streets, shopping centres, or other types of public spaces. And those public places constitute the very essence of the urban environment which around the most people's daily life. Thus, the simple relationship and the logical use of such public urban environments have been taken more and more attention by local people in recent years again. This part is to discuss the relationship between people – the real user in urban square, and the public space where people take activities in theoretical level only. More detailed analysis of people's behaviors in case study areas will be discussed specifically in the latter chapter. As Carmona, et al. (2003) said that the relationship is best considered as a continuous two-way

process in which people create and modify spaces while at the same time being influenced by them in various ways. This section focuses on three key aspects of contemporary use of urban square, which involve in the types of people activities in public spaces, how people behave in public spaces, and the relationship between people's activity and the quality of public space in local urban environment.

2.4.1 Types of People Activities

It is essential to understand the relationship between people's activities and the places they are. As the debate discussed by Carmona, et al. (2003), human behaviour influence and change then environment where they take activities, whilst the qualities of the places they are also influence and change people's activities. Therefore, while the urban environmental opportunities influence on the behaviour by people, what people do or not to do also affect the contexts and settings in physical factors of the urban environment (Carmona, et al., 2003). In this respect, in the work of 'Life Between Buildings', Gehl (1996) argues that through design of physical urban environment, it is possible to influence the use of people in such public places, and which activity types can develop. Thus, according to the suggestion by Gehl (1996), people's activities in public spaces can be divided into three categories depend on different requirements on the physical urban places – necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities.

Necessary activities are such activities that are more or less compulsory, for example, going to school or work, shopping, waiting for a bus, waiting for a person, and so on, in other words, as Gehl (1996) stated, all activities in which those involved are to a greater or lesser degree required to participate. People who took these activities have no choice. Their incidence is merely not influenced by the physical setting, because the activities are necessary in this

group. These activities will take place throughout the year, under nearly all conditions, and are more or less independent of the exterior environment (Gehl, 1996, Figure 2.13).



Figure 2.13 Necessary activities, Sanlitun Village, China.

Optional activities are participated in a good condition of the time, place, and even the weather, and with the participant's desire (Gehl and Gemzoe, 1996), such as taking a walk to get a breath of fresh air, standing around enjoying life, stopping for a coffee in a street cafe, stopping for a window shopping front of a building in shopping centre, or sitting in a public place for resting or waiting a friend, and so on. These activities take place outdoor environment with the optimal exterior conditions, and both weather and place invite them. As Gehl (1996, p.81) said, 'this relationship is particularly important in connection with physical planning because most of the recreational activities that are especially pleasant to pursue outdoors are found precisely in this category of activities'. In such activities happened, the exterior physical conditions play a very important role in an urban environment (Figure 2.14).



Figure 2.14 Optional activities, Sanlitun Village, China.

The third type of outdoor activities, social activities, depends on the presence of others in urban public places, according the description by Gehl (1996) in his work, which include greetings and conversations, children at play in public spaces, and the most common social activities – passive contacts, such as simply seeing and hearing other people. Gehl (1996) points out different kinds of social activities take place differ in many places, such as in dwellings, in private outdoor spaces, parks, streets, and office buildings, and so on. But in this research, it is to examine those activities only take place in publicly accessible spaces in local urban environment (Figure 2.15).









Figure 2.15 Social activities, Sanlitun Village, China.

These social activities have also been termed ‘resultant’ activities by the work of Gehl (1996), because in nearly all instances they evolve from activities linked to the other two activity categories. They develop in connection with the other activities because people are in the same space, meet, pass by one another, or are merely within view. As Carmona et al. (2003) cited from Gehl (1996), social activities occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same spaces at the same time. This implies that such activities are indirectly supported whenever necessary and optional activities are given better conditions in public urban environment.

The character of social activities is different in the different environment they take place in. As mentioned in previously, the happen of social activities is important in relation to the quality of urban physical environment. Although the physical factors in an urban environment does not have a direct influence on the quality, content, and intensity of social contact, they can affect the opportunities for social contacts in such environment, such as meeting, seeing,

and hearing people, and so on. Base on these statement above, according to Gehl (2010), in poor quality public spaces, only strictly necessary activities occur. When public spaces are of high quality, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency – although people choose to spend longer time doing them because of the better physical conditions. However, more importantly, a wide range of optional activities will also take place because the physical environments, such as the time, the place, the weather conditions, now allow people to stop, sit, eat, and play, and so on. In city spaces with poor quality, only the bare minimum of activity takes place. By contrast, in a good environment, a completely different, broad spectrum of human activities is possible (Table 2.1).

	Quality of the physical environment	
	Poor	Good
Necessary activities		
Optional activities		
Social activities		
Table 2.1 The relationship between the quality of outdoor spaces and the rate of occurrence of outdoor activities. (Source: Gehl, 1996, p.15)		

2.4.2 Activity in Public Spaces

The three categories of outdoor activities have been defined in previous section. Based on the research by Gehl (1996), it clearly shows that how necessary,

optional, and social activities take place in an urban environment, and how the interaction with those activities works. These three categories, functional, recreational, and social activities, always take place together in each circumstance. Therefore, this examination of the subject of people's behavior does not begin with a single, limited type of activities. As Gehl (1996) stresses, activity in urban public spaces is not merely necessary or recreational or social activities, it comprises the entire series of activities, which combine to make public spaces in local urban environment meaningful and attractive.

The need for contact

Before discussing the need for contact, it is necessary to state the five-stage hierarchy of basic human needs identified by Maslow (1968, p.89):

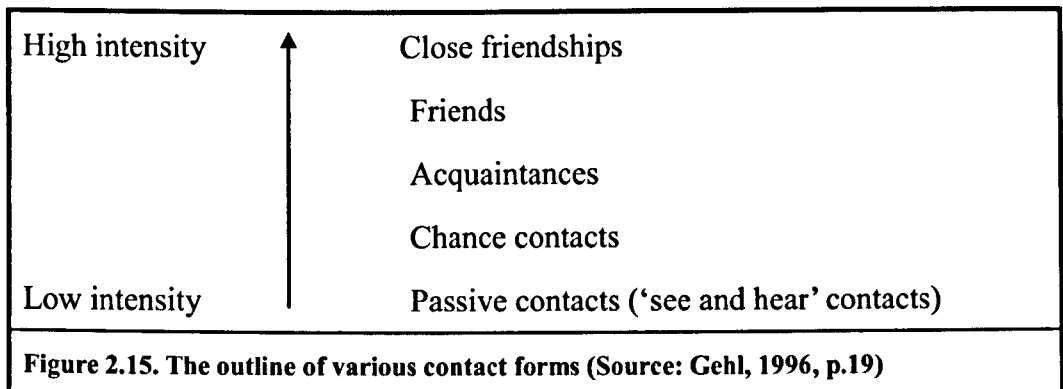
- Physiological needs: for warmth and comfort;
- Safety and security needs: to feel safe from harm;
- Affiliation needs: to belong – to a community, for example;
- Esteem needs: to feel valued by others;
- Self-actualisation needs: for artistic expression and fulfillment.

Based on the identification, as Carmona et al. (2003) stressed the most basic physiological needs must be satisfied before progress can be made to the higher order ones, such as affiliation needs above. However, although there is an order, the five different needs have interact are related in complex series of interlinked relationships. Furthermore, it might be argues that the true test of a 'civilised' society is one that attempts to meet all the human needs concurrently (Carmona et al., 2003).

According to Sennett (1990), opportunities for meetings and daily activities in the public spaces of local urban environment enable one to be among, to see, and to hear others, to experience other people functioning in various setting. These modest 'see and hear contacts' must be considered in relation to other

forms of contact and as part of the whole range of social activities, from very simple and noncommittal contacts to complex and emotionally involved connections (Sennett, 1990).

Gehl (1996) stated that the concept of varying degrees of contact intensity is the basis of the following simplified outline of various contact forms (Figure 2.15).



In terms of this outline above activity in public spaces represents primarily the low-intensity contacts located at the bottom of the scale. Compared with the other contact forms, these contacts appear insignificant, yet they are valuable both as independent contact forms and as prerequisites for other, more complex interactions (Gehl, 1996).

As Dines and Cattell (2006) state, Gehl (1996) considers opportunities related to merely being able to meet, see, and hear others include:

- contact at a modest level
- a possible starting point for contact at other levels
- a possibility for maintaining already established contacts
- a source of information about the social world outside
- a source of inspiration, an offer of stimulating experience a possible beginning for contacts at other levels

The possibilities related to the low-intensity contact forms offered in public

spaces perhaps can best be described by the situation that exists if they are lacking (Dines and Cattell, 2006). As Gehl (1996) pointed that activity in public spaces offers an opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way. Being among others, seeing and hearing others, receiving impulses from others, imply positive experiences, alternatives to being alone. As opposed to being a passive observer of other people's experiences on TV or film, in urban public spaces the individual himself is present, participating in a modest way, but most definitely participating.

According to the research carried out by Gemzøe (1998,p.24), low-intensity contact is also a situation from which other forms of contact can grow. It is a medium for the unpredictable, the spontaneous, and the unplanned. Contacts that develop spontaneously in connection with merely being where there are others are usually very fleeting – a short exchange of words, a brief discussion with the next man on the bench, chatting with a child, watching somebody playing and asking a few questions, and so forth. From this simple level, contacts can grow to other levels, as the participants wish (Gemzøe, 1998).

The possibility of meeting neighbors and co-workers often in connection with daily comings and goings implied a valuable opportunity to establish and later maintain acquaintances in a relaxed and undemanding way (Dines and Cattell, 2006). As the fact noted in many surveys, frequent meetings in connection with daily activities increase chances of developing contacts with neighbors. Dines and Cattell (2006) explained that, this is the underlying reason why nearly all children and a considerable proportion of other age groups maintain closer and more frequent contact with friends and acquaintances who live or work near them – it is the simplest way to stay 'in touch'.

Mccoll (2002) pointed that the opportunity to see and hear other people in a city or public space also implies an offer of valuable information, about the surrounding social environment in general and about the people one lives or

works with in particular. This is especially true in connection with the social development of children, as Sennett (1990) states, which is largely based on observations of the surrounding social environment, but all of us need to be kept up to date about the surrounding world in order to function in a social context. In addition to imparting information about the social world outside, the opportunity to see and hear other people in public spaces can also provide ideas and inspiration for action (Gehl, 1996).

Activity as attraction

As Gehl (1996) quoted, Jacobs (1961) and Whyte (1980) considered that the value of the many large and small possibilities that are attached to the opportunity of being in the same space as and seeing and hearing other people is pointed out by a series of observations investigating people's reaction to the presence of other people in local public spaces. It is definitely confirm that people and human activities attract other people, Gehl (1996) stresses, wherever there are people in city centres, in public squares, in shopping streets, in neighborhoods, or other public spaces. People are attracted to other people. They gather with and move about with others and seek to place themselves near others. New activities begin in the vicinity of events that are already in progress (Whyte, 1980). According to the example stated by Whyte (1980), in commercial areas or in other public places, if given a choice between sitting in a private backyard or in a bench with a view of the street, people will often choose the latter where there is more to see.

According to Madanipour (2003), a series of investigations explains that in more detail the interest in being in contact with others. Investigations of children's play habits in local public spaces show that children stay and play primarily where the most activity is occurring or in places where there is the greatest chance of something happening, or in places where there are many other children play (Figure 2.16). Both in areas with public spaces in urban

environment and small places surrounding residential areas, children tend to play more on the streets, in busy areas, and small public places near the crowd of people than in the play areas designed for that purpose but located in corners of outdoor places or on the sunny side of multi-story buildings, where there are neither traffic nor people to look at (Hass-Klau, et al., 1999).



Figure 2.16 Children play, The Place, China.

Corresponding trends can be found regarding where people choose to sit in public places of local environment. Benches that provide a good view of surrounding activities are used more than benches with less or no view of others. According to Mccoll (2002), several investigations of people's behaviours in public spaces explained that the most used benches are along the main path of public space, where there is a good view of the particularly active areas, while the least used benched are arranged back to back, so that one of the benches faces a path while the other 'turn its back'. As the analysis by Mccoll (2002), comparable results have been found in investigations of seating in a number of urban public places. People use those benches the most because there is a good view of the most pedestrian routes, while benches oriented toward the planted areas of the places or faced to paths opposite to the main streets are used less frequently.

According to the analysis by Gehl (1980), people and human activity is the greatest object of attention and interest in the local urban environment. Even the modest form of contact of merely seeing and hearing or being near to others is apparently more rewarding and more in demand than the majority of other attractions offered in the public spaces of cities and urban settings. As Whyte (1980) emphasized that life in public spaces seems in nearly all situations to rank as more essential and more relevant than the spaces themselves. The opportunity to see, hear, and meet others can also be shown to be one of the most important attractions in public spaces. This might be more detailed illustrated by an attraction analysis carried out on the main retail-oriented public realm in central Beijing of China in the case study chapter.

2.4.3 People's Activities and the Quality of public space

The types of activities and people's behavior in public spaces have been discussed above. This section will focus on the relationship between people's activities and the quality of physical setting. As Woolley (2004) points out, the extent and character of people's activities in public urban places are greatly influenced by the design of physical setting, whilst the quality of an urban public environment is also influenced by people's behaviours take place in such places. According to the analysis by Van Kamp et al. (2003), the poor quality of design is the city with multi-story buildings, underground parking facilities, extensive automobile traffic, and long distances between buildings and functions. Because of the poor conditions of public spaces in local urban environment, in such cities people can see buildings and cars, but few people. Public spaces are large and impersonal. With great distances in the urban plan, there is nothing much to experience outdoors and the few activities that do take place are spread out in time and space. Under these conditions most people prefer to remain indoors in front of television or on their balcony or in other comparably private outdoor spaces (Van Kamp et al., 2003). Conversely, a

lively city is the city with reasonably height and closely spaced buildings, accommodation for pedestrian, and good areas for people stays along the streets and in direct relation to public buildings, places of work, residences, and so on, as Whyte (1980) described that, here it is possible to see buildings, people coming and going, and people stopping in outdoor areas near the buildings because the public spaces are easy access and inviting to use.

These two descriptions above have explained that through the physical design to create a better and lively places and cities, such as the choice of materials and colors, etc., which might be influence the pattern of people's activities in these places, and what people do also make decisions to the physical design in such urban settings at the same time. Successful places typically have animation and vitality, as Jacobs (1961, p.126) argued that bringing people onto the street created animation and vitality: "we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to a dance – not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce one another and compose an orderly whole". Successful public spaces are characterised by the presence of people, in an often self-reinforcing process. Public spaces are essentially discretionary environments: people have to use them and conceivable could choose to go elsewhere. If they are to become peopled and animated, they must offer what people want, in an attractive and safe environment. Four key attributes of good qualities of successful places identified by The Project for Public Space (1999), comfort and image, access and linkage, uses and activity, and sociability, have been had a brief overview in previous section, the following table has stated more details on these (Table 2.2).

Key Attributes	Intangibles		Measurements
Comfort and Image	safety charm history attractiveness spirituality	sittability walkability greenness cleanliness	crime statistics sanitation rating building conditions environmental data
Access and Linkage	readability walkability reliability continuity	proximity connectedness convenience accessibility	Traffic data mode split transit usage pedestrian activity parking usage patterns
Uses and Activity	Realness sustainability specialness uniqueness affordability fun	activity usefulness celebration vitality indigenouness 'homegrown' quality	property values rent levels land-use patterns retail sales local business ownership
Sociability	Co-operation neighbourliness stewardship pride welcoming	gossip diversity storytelling friendliness interactivity	street life social networks evening use volunteerism number of women children and elderly

Table 2.2. Key attributes of successful places (Source: adapted from Project for Public Space (1999) by Carmona, et al., 2003, p.100)

Similarly, according to the research on the use and design of public space, Carr et al. (1992) argued that those public spaces where people take activities should be designed and managed to meet the needs of their users in a local urban environment. They identify five primary needs that people seek to satisfy in public space: comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement, and discovery. In their work, Carr et al. (1992, p132) argues that the dimensions of a sense of comfort include environmental factors, and social and psychological comfort. They pointed out the comfort is ‘a deep and pervasive need that

extends to people's experiences in public spaces. It is a sense of security, a feeling that one's person and possessions are not vulnerable.' The sense of comfort may also be enhanced by the physical design of the space and by its management strategies (cited in Carmona et al., 2003). While a sense of psychological comfort may be a primary requirement of relaxation, relaxation is a more developed state with the 'body and mind at ease' (Carr et al., 1992). As Carr et al. (1992) stated that passive engagement with the environment can lead to a sense of relaxation, and also involves 'the need for an encounter with the setting, albeit without becoming actively involved'. Opportunities for passive engagement are also provided by fountains, view, public art, performances, and so on (Carmona et al., 2003). Active engagement involves a more direct experience with a place and the people within it. As both of the discussions from the research carried out by Carr et al. (1992) and Gehl (1996), although some people find satisfaction enough in people-watching, others desire more direct contact between friends, family, or strangers. Thus, Gehl (1996) pointed out successful public spaces in urban environment should provide opportunities for varying degree of engagement, and also for disengagement from contact. Finally, representing desire for new spectacles and pleasurable experiences, according to Carmona et al. (2003), discovery depends on variety and change. While these may simply come with the 'march of time' and the cycle of the seasons, they may also result from the management and animation of public space. Involving a break from the routine and the expected, discovery may require some sense of unpredictability, and even danger (Carr et al., 1992).

As Gastil (2004) pointed out the work of Whyte (1980) is particular to discuss how people use public spaces. In his work, Whyte (1980) pointed that many urban spaces appeared little used, whilst other places presented crowded. However, according to Carmona et al. (2003), in a crowded place, people sat where they could rather than where they most wanted to. It is accepted that

off-peak use of a place only can provided the best clues to people's preferences. Based on these, good features of the most social spaces have been suggested by Whyte (1980, p.175):

- A good location, preferably on a busy route and both physically and visually accessible.
- Street being part of the social space – fencing off a space from the street isolated it and reduced its use.
- Being level or almost level with the pavement (spaces significantly above or below this were less used).
- Places to sit – both integral (e.g. steps, low walls, and so on), and explicit (e.g. benches, seats, etc.).
- Moveable seats, enabling choice, and the communication of character and personality.

From here, the analysis above has already been illuminated that the outdoor activities of people that are particularly dependent on the quality of the public spaces are the optional, recreational activities, and by implication, a considerable part of the social activities. It is these especially attractive activities that disappear when conditions are poor and that flourish where conditions are positive. The significance of quality improvement to daily and social activities in public spaces can be observed where pedestrian streets or places have been built in existing local urban areas. CABE (2004) states that improved physical conditions have resulted in a doubling of the number of pedestrians, a lengthening of the average time spent such places, and a considerably broader choice of outdoor activities.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the basic understanding of the nature and historical context of public space and illustrated the relationship between people's

behaviours and the quality of public spaces in local urban environment based on the literature perspective. As discussed in this chapter, Woolley (2004) stressed that it appears possible through the design of the physical environment, to influence the activity patterns in public spaces in cities. Within certain limits, such as location, movement, and place to sit, and so on, it is possible to influence how many people and events use the public spaces, how long the individual activities last, and which activity types can develop. As Whyte (1980, p.81) described in his book '*The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*', it is obviously that the close connection between qualities of urban public space and people's activities can improve the use of the public spaces.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE USE IN CHINA

3.1 Introduction

Background to the complexity of public places has been addressed in Chapter 2 based on the theoretical level, with regard to the nature of public space, the historical context, and the relationship between people's behaviours and public spaces in urban setting. This chapter aims to provide an understanding of the development of public space in China. According to Wu (2007), since the beginning of the "Policy of the Open Door", initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, China has the fastest growing national economy worldwide. After a few decades of urban renewal with the rapid growth of economy and society in China, urban place making has been changed by an incredible pace, thus, public spaces used by local people have been improved dramatically. This chapter provides the context of public space use in China, based on two main sections. The first section discusses a brief overview of public space in Chinese context. Following the historical overview of public space, typology of public spaces in Beijing will be focused on this section. The second addresses the retail-oriented public place as the focal typology of public urban environment in this research in Chinese context as well, which focus on the use of retail urban places in mixed-use built environment and the significance of such retail-oriented public realm as behaviour settings in the contemporary city.

3.2 Exploring Public Spaces in China

China is a country with an interesting and different culture and history from Europe, America, or other countries. Because of more than two-thirds of the country covered by mountains or deserts, large concentration of population are live in the towns and cities along the east coast. According to Xue (2006), among the thirty-one cities with a population of over one million, thirty are in the eastern part. During the last 20 years, China has experienced a period of extraordinary growth and change. The country has nowadays become one of the major economic powers in the world and the expansion is most visible in large cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai. As Pu (2011) pointed out, the Chinese Communist government formally adopted market-oriented economic policies in 1978. Since 1991 when the land market was established nationally, accelerated growth, mostly concentrated in the urban areas, prompted large-scale redevelopment and expansion of existing cities. Sitting dormant from the 1950s to the Reform, old, decaying cities supplied the perfect construction sites and have been largely rebuilt in less than three decades. In this process, the basic urban structure, including public space allocation, street grids and block scale, and so forth, has been fundamentally changed. This section explores the general experiences of public space in Chinese context, including a historical overview and the typology of public space.

3.2.1 A brief historical overview of public space in Chinese context

As Thompson and Travlou (2007, p.23) cited, Sennett (1990) defines the city public space as a place where there are 'large numbers of people living closely packed together, a central market or markets, and the division of labour to a high degree'. Thompson and Travlou (2007, p.24) considered urban public spaces as having performed three basic functions from their very earliest

origins: the creation of sacred space, the provision of security, and the sitting of marketplaces. It is interesting, therefore, that the Chinese term for a city is 'Cheng Shi', 'Cheng' means wall and 'Shi' means marketplace. In old time, Chinese cities were simply referred to by the term 'Cheng', according to Shi (1998), as in Beijing Cheng (Figure 3.1), which while old-fashioned does not sound alien to the Chinese ear. The Chinese, it seems, made little or no distinction between the terms 'wall' and 'city', using them as if they were interchangeable, one denoting the other (Shi, 1998). With the disappearance of city walls from Chinese cities in the twentieth century, the term of 'Cheng' seems to have fallen out of use; it is now more common to refer to cities as 'Shi', as in Shanghai Shi, or Beijing Shi, which means the city of Shanghai, or the city of Beijing (Figure 3.2).

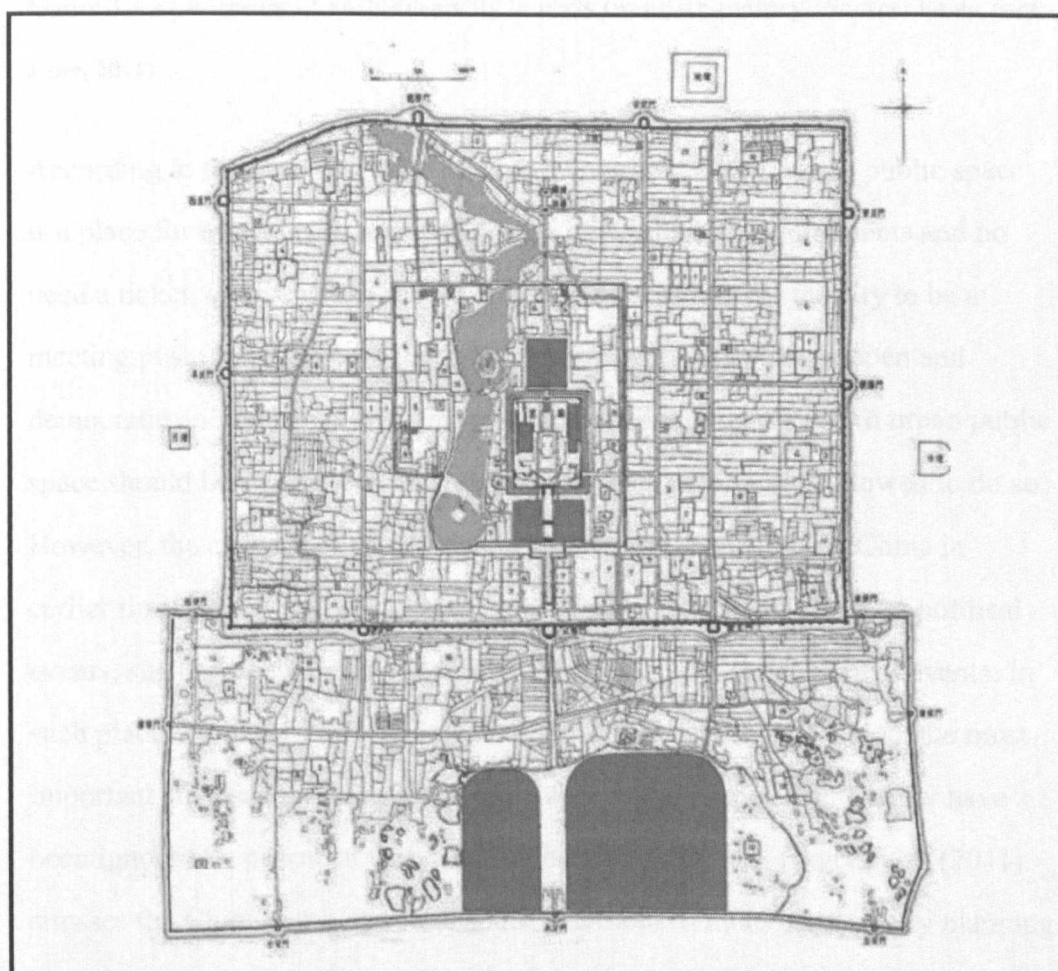


Figure 3.1 Plan of Beijing 'Cheng' in old time. (Source: baidu.com, June 2011)

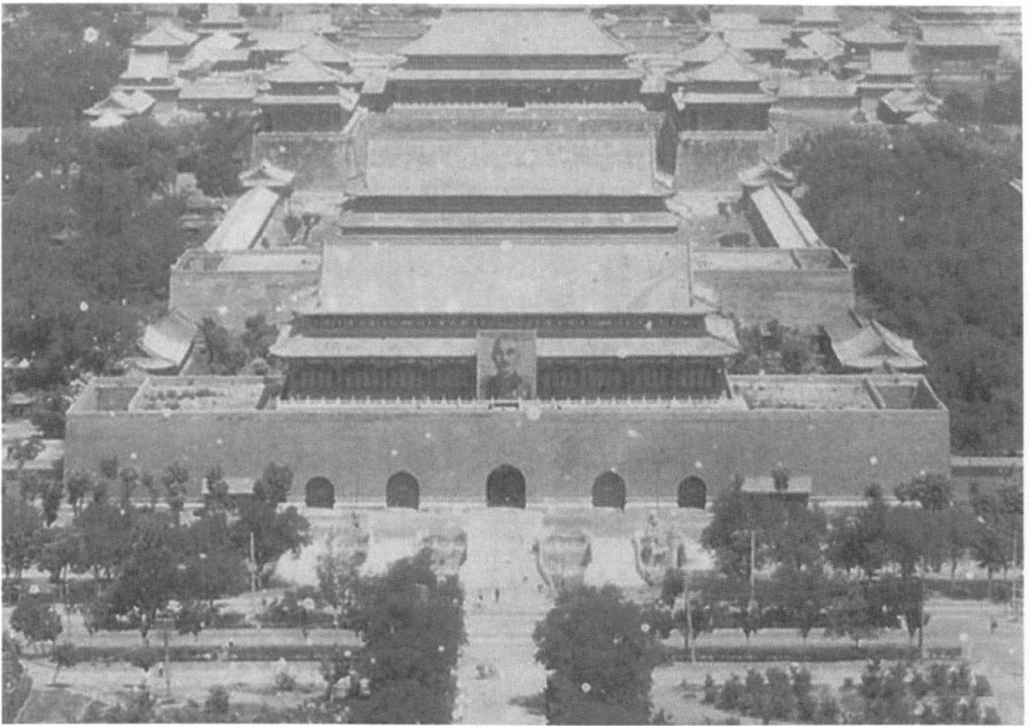


Figure 3.2 An overview of Forbidden City in early twentieth century. (Source: baidu.com, June, 2011)

According to the description by Gehl and Gemzøe (2006), urban public space is a place for everyone to meet. There are no admission requirements and no need a ticket, everyone has access. As important as it is for the city to be a meeting place for everyone, that can only happen if the place is open and democratic and inclusive of society's many different members. An urban public space should be a place where everyone wants to come and is allowed to do so. However, the concept of 'public realm' is an ambiguous field in China in earlier time. For public views, the 'public realm' refers to a place for political events, such as a revolution movement, public affairs, or monument events. In such places, 'square' is obvious the focal point. Obviously, in China, the most important significances of public space, for public's social life, usually have been ignored by people at that time, such as the daily use. Hagenbjörk (2011) stresses the Chinese urban public space is a modern innovation of city planning. The historic traditions from imperial times to today are still influencing present China. Kostof (1992) defines the public space is the area all local people are

‘free to use’, regardless of their income levels and social characteristics. Since ancient Rome, free or low-cost urban public facilities have also served the social and recreational needs of great numbers of local people, whatever they are rich or poor, low or high classes. Only in this way public space can help to reduce tension and promote exchange among different social or economic groups. This is particularly varied to Chinese cities. According to Li (2007), different with Western organic medieval cities, the Chinese late imperial cities are planned emphasizing on hierarchic structure ‘which was derived from the symbolic imagination whose ethos was to reinforce societal order vis-à-vis the control of the physical environment’, for example, the city of Beijing, as the capital of many dynasties, was the physical and material embodiment of imperial power (Shi, 1998). Only the imperial society and the richest class had rights to access to places in old times, e.g. squares, parks and gardens, and so on. In late imperial times, according to Shi (1998), many citizens visited fairs held on the grounds of temples or other places of worship. Here, people would come to shop, exchange goods, meet friends and watch shows and traditional operas.

In early twentieth century, many European cities had started built up broad avenues, parks and public squares opened up for the mass assemblies essential to modern commerce, culture and politics. However, Chinese city still defined by walls, walled-enclosures, and gates in that time (Visser, 2004). The colonial cities are planned by foreign designer with functional principles. The urban public spaces are in a clear hierarchy. Urban street is quite different with the traditional mixed-use one as the functional separation of cars and pedestrians (Li, 2007). Some streets were ornamented by trees, and the boulevard of western style was emerged. Besides, the urban square is not the place for public life then, but only built for a symbolic meaning in front of the government, or built in a crossroads with the traffic function. Most arranged public spaces were reserved for the elite (Shi, 1998). For most people, as Wang

(2003) stated that, the street served as an important neighbourhood community with social and economic activities, but there were also other forms of public life.

The urban public space in Maoist era is mostly affected by the Soviet Union, however, there are some investigating by Chinese urban designers. According to Shi (1998), the urban pattern of 'big block with wide road' still followed the Chinese tradition in the imperial era. The new public spaces provided not only a place for recreation but also places for citizens to gather and express their idea of democracy; most of them were located in the central part of the city, such as Chang'an Street and Tian'anmen Square in Beijing (Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4). Some boulevards are designed by urban planners from Russia, some of which are still the most popular urban green spaces nowadays. Meanwhile, according to Li (2007), public spaces in neighbourhood are becoming the living space in each community, which became a new type of public space in that time.



Figure 3.3 Perspective of Tian'anmen Square, China. (Source: baidu.com, June, 2011)

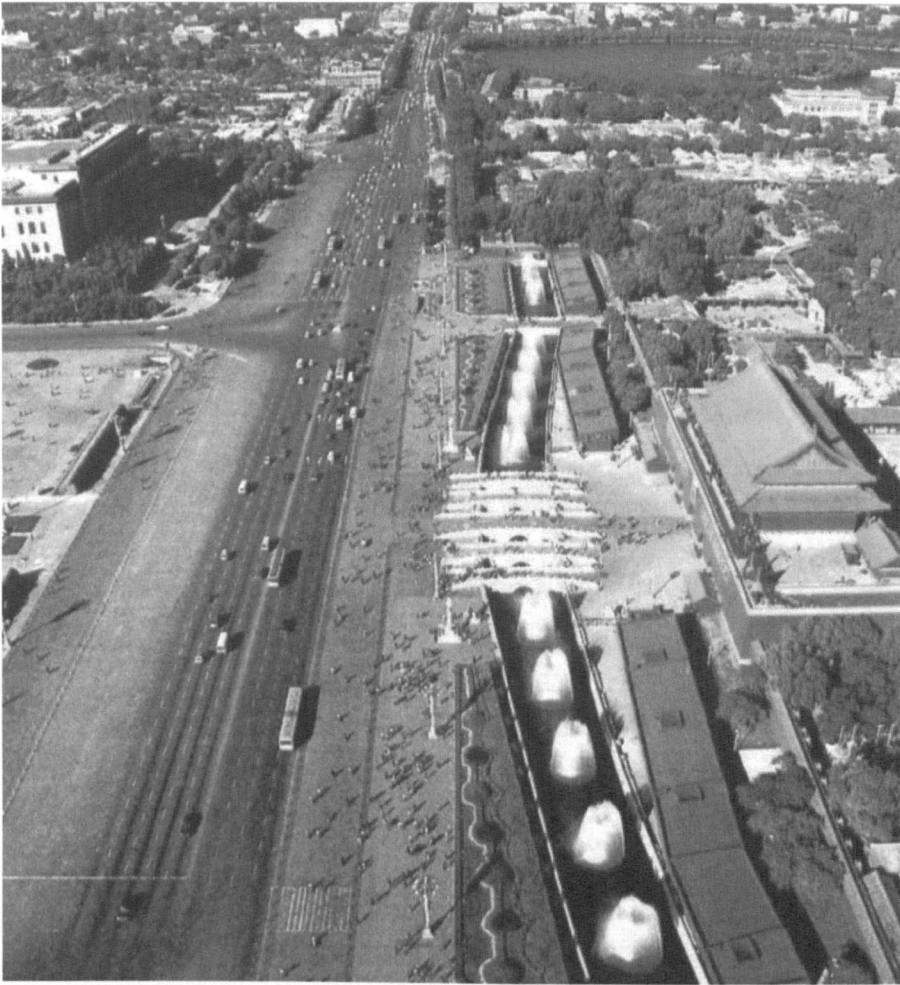


Figure 3.4 Perspective of Chang'an Street, China. (Source: baidu.com, June 2011)

The evolution of public space presents a picture of complexity at the historic point of view. Generally, as Hagenbjörk (2011) provided that, Chinese traditional public space is original and local, which is affected by the colonial public space in the colonial times. It is a passive process of learning from the west. Maoist public space is the active learning, which explore the meaning of public spaces based on Russian and Chinese style. And, Visser (2004) stresses the contemporary public space built after 1978 is influenced by all the types above.

3.2.2 Typology of public space in contemporary Chinese cities

Following the historical view of the public space in China, typology of public

space in contemporary time will be examined. Urban public spaces can be classified according to different criteria. Wang (2002) provided the classification of urban public open spaces according to the criteria based on the theoretical degree (Table 3.1).

Criteria	Category	Examples
Natural/ Man-made	Natural	Scenery Site Protected Area – Waterfall, mountain, forest, etc. Reserved Area – Forest, wetland, etc.
	Manmade	Streets Squares Park and greenbelt Indoor spaces
Function	Residence	Community centre, greenbelt, pleasure ground for kids, etc.
	Transportation	City entrance, crossroads, pedestrian street, etc.
	Recreation	Park, amusement park, shopping centre, etc.
	Work	Greenbelt in factory, municipal squares, etc.
Land Use Pattern	Residential Use	Public service facilities in a community, outdoor space in a community
	Urban Public Facility Use	Cultural, entertainment, commercial, financial, historical, and municipal facilities that open to the public
	Greenbelt	Public greenbelt, urban park, etc.
Location	Municipal Level	Commercial service centre, cultural and entertainment centre, urban square, urban park, etc. All this service serve all the citizens in the city
	District Level	District commercial centre, park, greenbelt, and so on. All this serve people live in the district
	Street Level	Community centre, outdoor facilities, etc. Those facilities serve people live around them
Table 3.1 Classification of Urban Public Open Space (Source: Wang, 2002, p.35)		

Based on the classification stated above, the different criteria have been

realized for identifying the urban public open spaces. The research purpose of this study is to examine the use of retail-oriented public realm in local urban setting, thus, typology of public space discussed in this section will be classified by the functional criteria. As Li (2007) pointed out, after 1980s, the Chinese government began to pay more attentions to built and regenerated many urban public spaces. These public spaces were mostly built to be a symbol of the city and were often surrounded by commercial and cultural facilities (Figure 3.5). Some of these places were built to memorise a person or an important event and they later became tourist attractions (Figure 3.6). Today, according to description by Yu and Padua (2007, p54), there are also a large number of public spaces that have been redesigned and enlarged. New public spaces in cities are built at a monumental scale with very little landscapes and often dominated by paving, and usually have some civic significance situated in front of civic buildings (Figure 3.7). Yu and Padua (2007) express, the design intentions are representation of power and these urban public spaces could be seen as symbols of status for the local government with people being treated as spectators instead of users of the spaces.



Figure 3.5 A commercial and cultural public space in the city of Beijing, China.
(Source: baidu.com, 2011)



Figure 3.6 A memorial public space in the city of Beijing, China.
(Source: baidu.com, 2011)



Figure 3.7 A civic public space in the city of Dalian, China. (Source: baidu.com, 2011)

Besides, with the rapid development of social economy and the realization and use of urban public spaces by public users, public spaces in local urban environment started to refer to more functional utilises. The commercial uses are composed of the chief public space in a city, included a marketplace which flourished in earlier time, a pedestrian shopping street which emerged and became one of the most popular types for commercial centre in very short time, and a shopping mall with comfortable indoor environment and not influenced by poor weather conditions, meanwhile, a public open space can be shared by

the users of the shopping mall with free access (Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9).



Figure 3.8 Wangfujing shopping street in the city of Beijing, China.



Figure 3.9 The Seasons shopping centre in the city of Beijing, China.
(Source: baidu.com, 2011)

According to the description provided above, a summary of major typology of public space in contemporary city of China has been stated in Table 3.2 as following:

Typology	Characteristics	Examples
Civic space	The traditional forms of urban space, free access to all and catering for a wide variety of functions, usually located in the front of civic building	public squares
Commerce space	Public or privately owned, publicly accessible exchange spaces	Shopping street, shopping mall, market
Public open space	Manage open space, typically green and free access to all	Parks, gardens
Monumental space	Space dominated by government, open and available to all and catering for tourist attraction	Memorial
Movement space	Space dominated by movement needs, largely for motorized transportation	Mail roads, railway station
Service space	Space dominated by modern servicing requirements needs	Car parks
Table 3.2 Types of public space in contemporary China. (Source: Adapted format from Carmona, 2008)		

3.3 Retail-oriented Spaces in a Mixed-use City Centre

The identification of types of public space in contemporary city in China has been provided above. This section discusses one specific type in retail public

space. Buying goods for daily life is the most important social activity in a contemporary city, and usually, takes place in the open market, the shopping center or shopping mall, shopping street, or other retail public environment, etc. And the citizens spend more and more time in such places. As Goss (1993, p58) stated, both designers and developers of the retail built environment are looking for the power of place and a natural understanding of the structure of space to attract people come to consume and achieve the retail profits. They intend to present an alternative rationale for the urban retail environment existence, affect the behavior of users through the configuration of space, and consciously design a unique landscape that provokes associative moods and dispositions in the shopper (Goss, 1993). These strategies are examined to obtain an understanding of how the retail built environment works, and how the quality of urban retail environment affected by people's behaviour. This part will discuss the retail-oriented public place as the focal typology of public urban environment in this research. The meaningful retail urban places in mixed-use built environment will be examined initially, where after it is possible to stress the possibility of retail-oriented public places as behavior settings in the contemporary Chinese cities.

3.3.1 Meaningful retail urban environment

With the rapid development of economy and society, the public retail sector has experienced dramatic changes in the past few decades. Retailing has become a very important part to economies and cultures in most of countries and has played a significant role in the shift associated with a move from an industrial to a post-industrial age (Thomas and Bromley, 1993, p57). Not only is it an important sector of employment, it also exerts a considerable influence on the morphology of urban landscapes, represents an increasingly important leisure activity and is central to the construction of personal and group identities.

The definition of the concept of 'retail-oriented public realm' in this work is refer to a form of retail place combining the traditional retail functions of a shopping mall with leisure amenities in a mixed use urban public space, main street setting, or other urban public environment. Such retail-oriented public places have become common for commercial areas and are now one of the most popular retail types in the world. As Whyte (1980) described that this concept of a pedestrian shopping centre or shopping place involved zoning the main public places in the city centre for commercial purposes only, and designing these main public places in such a way as to increase people uses by including commercial sales activities, modern lighting fixtures, concrete planters, benches and activities for different group of users, such as children, old people, and teenage student, and so forth. Many large new department stores were constructed on these areas, and the smaller adjacent streets or spaces were used for delivery.

The development of public spaces in China has been discussed in previous section included retail public space. The urban retail sector and retail environments have experienced radical changes in the last decades. With no doubt, as Wang (2004) pointed out, most of the challenges are due to the changing demographic, social, economic and physical conditions of the world. According to Wang (2004), before the 1980s, because of the issues of social economy and trade policy, there is no urban retail sector basically in the cities of China. Rapid transformations have taken place after 1980s and retail sector has set up in certain large cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai etc., to globalized economic structure and internationalization learning to perform in conditions of competition, economies of scale and technology intensive development. At the same time, Chinese retailing has started to change radically together with the new emerging socio-economic circumstances. A number of multi-purpose shopping centers, with their large freestanding outlets, and various specialty stores have followed the initial developments and have

started to restructure urban retail geography and hierarchy. According to the research by Yu and Padua (2007), Table 3.3 shows the amount of the retail public sectors opening in large cities of China from 1990 to 2007. As Table 3.3 shows, from 2002, the amount of the opening public retail sectors in large cities has dramatic increases in triple than before.

Opening Year	Amount	Opening Year	Amount
1990	1	2001	19
1991	-	2002	43
1992	1	2003	64
1993	2	2004	39
1994	-	2005	59
1995	2	2006	45
1996	7	2007	30
1997	5	2008	26
1998	12	2009	21
1999	11	2010	32
2000	10	Total	350
Table 3.3 Retail public sectors opening in large cities of China from 1990 to 2007. (Source: Yu and Padua, 2007, p.25)			

3.3.2 Retail places as behaviour settings

As Bloch (1994, p.33) defined that mixed-use environments are predominantly commercial settings that also include work, residence, and cultural or even light industrial uses. Typically, mixed-use environments comprise a core area of streets or places that support the greatest mix of uses and are the most public in the local urban setting. According to the studies of Bloch (1994), a lively and diverse commercial centre is one of the important characteristics that people desire in mixed-use environments. People use neighbourhood commercial places for shopping but also for other active and passive engagements,

entertainment, leisure and relaxation, Mehta (2010) also states, research in shopping behaviour shows that besides the primary activity of acquiring goods and services, people go shopping to meet and spend time with their friends, to look around and people-watch, and to walk around. According to Alexandar (1987), sociologists and environmental psychologists have identified social affiliation and interaction, sensory stimulation and other leisurely activities among important and basic motives for shopping behaviour.

As cited by Bloch et al. (1994), Barker's (1968) concept of 'behaviour setting' and the creation of the field of 'Ecological Psychology' focus on the study of everyday human behaviour with relation to physical settings. This concept of 'behaviour setting' examines the relationship between a physical urban setting and the patterns of behaviour that may possibly take place in it (Lang, 1987). Bloch et al. (1994) address, a 'behaviour setting' consists of 'a milieu (a particular layout of the environment), a standing pattern of behaviour (a recurrent activity), and a congruent relationship between the two'. The greater the congruent relationship between the particular layout of the environment and the activity, the better the 'behaviour setting' is able to afford human behaviours and needs.

3.4 Summary

This chapter outlines an understanding of the brief overview of historical evolution and typology of public spaces in Chinese context. And it also addressed the retail-oriented public places as the focal typology of public urban environment from two sides which involve in the use of retail public places in mixed-use urban setting and the significant of such places as behavior setting in the contemporary city. Throughout reviews on public places in China has provided a theoretical fundamental to the future discussions on the people's activities in retail public places in urban environment in practice level.

PART TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The literature review discussed in Part One, which has said about the different topics related to public place comfort, sociability, use, security, and other factors in urban environment, has oriented the methodology of this research. This chapter aims to discuss the application of research methods by analysing the theoretical issues on two particular types – qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as types, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of these two methods. Through the comparison of qualitative and quantitative methods – to establish the identification of what research methodologies are applicable to the research question – how people behave in public spaces. The methodology provides an understanding of how the research was conducted and organized in order to obtain information that could be helpful for developing design implications for public place settings in Beijing. The methodology is based in interviews with both public place users and professionals involved in the renovation processes and observations. This chapter has been divided into six sections. Following the introduction, the analyses relate to the qualitative research and quantitative method will be stated in the second section. Beginning with the definition of qualitative and quantitative methods, benefits and types of these two methods will then be presented. Meanwhile, strengths and weakness of qualitative will be analysed in detail. The next section is to present types of qualitative method and overall strategy, which is composed by second parts. The first is to state overall approach in qualitative research and site and population selection will

be discussed in the following section. The following sections will provide the characteristics of the research developed, explain the case study methods used to obtain information from public space participants, describe how the data was collected and processed, detail how the participants selected and approached, provide some characteristics of the interview scripts and describe how the data obtained will be analysed. In the last section of this report, data collection methods will be discussed based on the analysis as previous sections. This section provides a brief discussion of the primary and the secondary methods to be considered in designing a qualitative study. Its purpose is to stipulate the methods of choice for the research and describe how the data will inform research questions.

4.2 The Qualitative Method

As Gina (2001, p.65) stated that the research methodology is a philosophical approach governing research practices. Achieving a methodological approach which is consonant with one's own values and concerns typically involves the longest struggle in research work and the deepest kinds of engagement.

According to Creswell (2003, p.38), methodology is defined as the analysis of the principles of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline, the systematic study of methods that are applied within a discipline, or a particular procedure or set of procedures. Methodology includes the following concepts as they relate to a particular discipline or field of inquiry: a collection of theories, concepts or ideas; comparative study of different approaches; and critique of the individual methods. Methodology refers to more than a simple set of methods; rather it refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study.

Another key usage for methodology does not refer to research or to the specific analysis techniques, Donald and Theresa (2007) pointed out, this often refers to

anything and everything that can be encapsulated for a discipline or a series of processes, activities and tasks. This use of the term is typified by the outline who, what, where, when, and why. In the documentation of the processes that make up the discipline, which is being supported by "this" methodology, that is where we would find the "methods" or processes. The processes themselves are only part of the methodology along with the identification and usage of the standards, policies, rules, etc. As Groat (2002, p55) cited, "in his classic book *The Conduct of Inquiry*, Abraham Kaplan defines methods as the study of the process, rather than the product, of inquiry. More specially, he argues for using the term methodology for 'mid-range' aspects of the research process that are common to a broad range of disciplines". Following Kaplan's lead, the terms 'method' and 'methodology' are be used to focus on research processes that are common across the entire range of research, including content areas from the technical fields to the humanities, and from the pragmatic to the most theoretical. Hence, in properly conceived methodologies, researchers frequently acknowledge the need for rigour, logic and coherence which must withstand peer review as well as their fundamental approach to reality (Donald and Theresa, 2007).

There are different methods that can be used for research and the researcher should use the best approach for the research problem. According to the work of Ranjit (1996), the social sciences are methodologically diverse using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Qualitative methods include the case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography, among others. Quantitative methods include hypothesis testing, power analysis, met analysis, observational studies, randomized controlled trials, regression analysis, multilevel modeling, and high-dimensional data analysis, among others.

4.2.1 Defining qualitative research method

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.67) pointed that scientific research consists of an investigation that:

- seeks answers to a question
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study

Qualitative research shares these characteristics. Additionally, as Marshall and Rossman (2006, p.49) noted that, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), it provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. When used along with quantitative methods, qualitative research can help us to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Although findings from qualitative data can often be extended to people with characteristics similar to those in the study population, as Mason (2002) stressed that, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon typically takes precedence over eliciting data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations. In this sense, qualitative research differs slightly from scientific research in general.

According to Bernard (1995), qualitative research is a field of inquiry that crosscuts disciplines and subject matters. Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern human behavior. Qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behavior. Simply put, it investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, and when. Hence, as Dawson (2007) stated that, the need is for smaller but focused samples rather than large random samples, which qualitative research categorizes data into patterns as the primary basis for organizing and reporting results. Qualitative researchers, Creswell (2007, p.32) pointed out, typically rely on three methods for gathering information: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. The types of data these three methods generate are field notes, audio (and sometimes video) recordings, and transcripts.

- Participant observation is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts.
- In-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored.
- Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented.

According to the comparison by Donald and Theresa (2007), the term qualitative research is most often used in the social sciences in contrast to quantitative research. It differs from quantitative research in many ways. First, sampling is typically not random but is purposive. That is, cases are chosen based on the way that they typify or do not typify certain characteristics or participate in a certain class. Secondly, the role of the researcher is the key. Researchers must reflect on their role in the research process and make this clear in the analysis. Thirdly, data analysis differs considerably. Researchers must carefully code data and discern themes in a consistent and reliable way (Creswell, 2007).

Ranjit (1996) also analysed that one way of differentiating qualitative research from quantitative research is that largely qualitative research is exploratory (i.e., hypothesis-generating), while quantitative research is more focused and aims to test hypotheses. However, it may be argued that each reflects a particular discourse; neither being definitively more conclusive or 'true' than the other. In addition, Ranjit (1996) argued that qualitative research speaks to content validity -- do measures measure what a researcher thinks they measure? Quantitative data are of the kind that may lead to measurement or other kinds of analysis involving applied mathematics, while qualitative data cannot always be put into a context that can be graphed or displayed as a mathematical term. However, qualitative data may be useful to explain puzzling quantitative results, or may be used to generate additional variables to include in an analysis.

4.2.2 What is quantitative method

According to Groat and Wang (2002), quantitative research is the systematic scientific investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ

mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. As Dawson (2007) pointed out, the process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

Quantitative research is widely used in both the natural sciences and social sciences. In the social sciences particularly, according to Bryman (2008), quantitative research is often contrasted with qualitative research which is the examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships, including classifications of types of phenomena and entities, in a manner that does not involve mathematical models. Bryman (2008) stresses that qualitative research is often used to gain a general sense of phenomena and to form theories that can be tested using further quantitative research. For instance, in the social sciences qualitative research methods are often used to gain better understanding of such things as intentionality and meaning (why did this person/group say something and what did it mean to them?) .

4.2.3 Comparison of qualitative and quantitative

Bernard (1995, p.87) states that quantitative and qualitative research methods differ primarily in (Table 4.1):

- their analytical objectives
- the types of questions they pose
- the types of data collection instruments they use
- the forms of data they produce
- the degree of flexibility built into study design

	Quantitative	Qualitative
General framework	<p>Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation</p>	<p>Seek to explore phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation</p>
Analytical objectives	<p>To quantify variation</p> <p>To predict causal relationships</p> <p>To describe characteristics of a population</p>	<p>To describe variation</p> <p>To describe and explain relationships</p> <p>To describe individual experiences</p> <p>To describe group norms</p>
Question format	Closed-ended	Open-ended
Data format	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
Flexibility in study design	<p>Study design is stable from beginning to end</p> <p>Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions</p>	<p>Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)</p> <p>Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned</p>

Table 4.1 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

(Sources: Bernard, 1995, p.88)

From the table above, it is clearly that the key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is their flexibility. Generally, quantitative methods are fairly inflexible. With quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires, for example, researchers ask all participants identical questions in the same order. The response categories from which participants may choose are “closed-ended” or fixed. The advantage of this inflexibility is that it allows for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study sites. However, it requires a thorough understanding of the important questions to ask, the best way to ask them, and the range of possible responses (Bernard, 1995).

Qualitative methods are typically more flexible – that is, they allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant. For example, as Davies (2007) described that, qualitative methods ask mostly “open-ended” questions that are not necessarily worded in exactly the same way with each participant. With open-ended questions, participants are free to respond in their own words, and these responses tend to be more complex than simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

In addition, with qualitative methods, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is often less formal than in quantitative research. Groat and Wang (2002) state that, participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods. In turn, researchers have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided.

However, as Creswell (2007) noted that there is a range of flexibility among methods used in both quantitative and qualitative research and that flexibility is not an indication of how scientifically rigorous a method is. Rather, the degree of flexibility reflects the kind of understanding of the problem that is being

pursued using the method.

4.3 The Qualitative Types and Overall Strategy

Although acceptance of qualitative inquiry is currently widespread, at times it is necessary to provide a rationale for the particular genre in which a study is situated. Marshall and Rossman (2006) argued that the many nuanced traditions of qualitative research can be categorized into those focusing on individual lived experience, society and culture, and language and communication. The most compelling argument emphasizes the unique strengths of the genre for research that is exploratory or descriptive, that accepts the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under study.

4.3.1 Overall Approach

The richness and diversity of overall design strategies in qualitative research are evident in the literature detailing specific studies. Analysis of this richness carried out by Creswell (2007, p.58) yields three distinct strategies, each associated with the genres mentioned above (Table 4.2). According to Creswell (2007), a study focusing on individual lived experience typically relies on an in-depth interview strategy. Although this may be supplemented with journal writing by the participants or other forms of data, the primary strategy is to capture the deep meaning of experience in the participants' own words. Studies focusing on society and culture in a group, a program, or an organization typically espouse some form of case study as a strategy (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). This entails immersion in the setting and rests on both the researcher's and the participants' worldviews. Research focusing on language and communication typically involves microanalysis or textual analysis through

which speech events, including text, and subtle interactions are recorded and then analysed. Directly linked to the qualitative genre and research questions, each strategy stipulates the focus of the inquiry (individual, group, interactions) and the overall approach to collecting data.

Genre	Main strategy	Focus of inquiry
Individual lived experience	In-depth interviews	Individuals
Society and culture	Case study	Groups or organization
Language and communication	Microanalysis or text analysis	Speech events and interactions
Table 4.2 Qualitative Genre and Overall Strategy. (Source: Creswell, 2007, p.58)		

Marshall and Rossman (2006) address the distinctions among these three broad strategies rest on two continua: the complexity of design and the degree of close interaction between researcher and participants. In-depth interview strategies are elegant in design, relying on a single primary method for gathering data. Microanalyses frequently encompass more of the complexities of context than in-depth interview strategies, relying on some form of observation often complemented by interviews (Dawson, 2007). Case study, the most complex strategy, may entail multiple methods – interviews, observations, document analysis, even surveys. Following the same logic, interview strategies require close, personal interactions between researcher and participants, often over long periods of time. Case studies are less intimate than those involving participant observations, which foster close relationships. With their focus on observation, microanalyses tend to lie somewhere in the middle of this continuum (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). These continua are presented in Table 4.3

In-depth Interviews	Microanalysis	Case Study
Simple	Complex of Design	Complex
Close and Personal	Degree of Interaction	Diffuse

Table 4.3 Complexity of Design and Interaction. (Source: Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.97)

4.3.2 Site or Population Selection

As Bernard (1995) argued that unless a research is quite narrowly construed, researchers cannot study all relevant circumstances, events, or people intensively and in depth. Thus, they select samples. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) points out the first and most global decision – choosing the setting, site, population, or phenomenon of interest – is fundamental to the design of the study and serves as a guide for the researcher. This early, significant decision shapes all subsequent ones and should be clearly described and justified (Davies, 2007).

Once the initial decision has been made to focus on a specific site, a population, or a phenomenon, waves of subsequent sampling decisions are made. Richiards and Morse (2007) point out, the proposal describes the plan, as conceived before the research begins, that will guide sample selection, the researcher being always mindful of the need to retain flexibility. As Denzin (1989, p.81) says, “All sampling activities are theoretically informed”. Thus, the sensitizing concepts from the literature review and the research questions provide the focus for site and sample selection; if you do not, the researcher at the very least makes the procedures and criteria for decision making explicit.

Well-developed sampling decisions are crucial for any study’s soundness.

88

Making logical judgments and presenting a rationale for these decisions go far in building the overall case for a proposed study. As Richiards (2007) stated, decisions about sampling people and events are made concurrently with decisions about the specific data collection methods to be used and should be thought-through in advance. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.112) usefully describe different approaches to sampling in Table 4.4. Although such plans are often subject to change, given the realities of field research, at the proposal stage, they demonstrate that the researcher has thought-through some of the complexities of the setting and has made some initial judgments about how to deploy time. Such plans also indicate that the researcher has considered both the informational adequacy and efficiency of these methods.

<i>Type of Sampling</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Maximum variation	Documents diverse variations and identifies important common patterns
Homogeneous	Focuses, reduces, simplifies, facilitates group interviewing
Critical case	Permits logical generalization and maximum application of information to other cases
Theory based	Finds examples of a theoretical construct and thereby elaborates and examines it
Confirming and disconfirming cases	Elaborates initial analysis, seeks exceptions, looks for variation
Snowball or chain	Identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich
Extreme or deviant case	Learns from highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest
Typical case	Highlights what is normal or average
Intensity	Involves information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely
Politically important cases	Attracts desired attention or avoids attracting undesired attention

Random purposeful	Adds credibility to the sample when the potential purposeful sample is too large
Stratified purposeful	Illustrates subgroups, facilitates comparison
Criterion	Includes all cases that meet some criterion, useful for quality assurance
Opportunistic	Follows new leads, takes advantage of the unexpected
Combination or mixed	Involves triangulation and flexibility, meets multiple interests and needs
Convenience	Saves time, money, and effort but at the expense of information and credibility
Table 4.4 Typology of Sampling strategies in Qualitative inquiry. (Source: Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.112)	

4.4 The Sampling Methods

In previous section, the theoretical basis of the research methodology has been very valuable in orientating the choice of case study methods for this research. In order to provide an understanding of how this research will be conducted and how information were obtained from public space users, the following will explain the case study methods uses and criteria for selecting participants for the research. This section will also present the reasons why public places of Sunlitun Village, The Place and Wangfujing Street were selected and describe some characteristics of the interviews and observations that will be used.

4.4.1 Criteria for choosing public places for this research

In the beginning, according to Stewart et al. (1979, p.65), it was clear that there were certain factors which affected the choice of sites for study:

- The definition of categories of public space is often blurred in reality by the small, though they were thought significant, local variation in provision for people use;
- The comparatively large number of public retail sectors in Beijing and

the effectively complicated choice of sites;

- The difficulty of matching comparable pairs of sites while accounting for variations in urban function occasioned by such variables as size, regional shopping hierarchy and economic and social activities.

Also, according to Sepe (2009), criteria on which the selection of case study sites might be based were developed from the following parameters:

- In order to study the urban identity of sites and identify new elements and places, the areas selected are mostly of commercial importance and at all events highly representative of the city and of its transformations and alterations. The case studies, carried out in the city of Beijing, focused on areas in the commercial centres, with mixed tourist, commercial and business uses;
- Parks, civic plazas and other public spaces in local urban setting were not considered for this study. Those public spaces have a different role in community life; the physical dimensions are bigger and therefore demand that more participants be interviewed. Also those spaces were not perceived as appropriate environments for developing this research.

Based on these considerations, three public places selected, Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village and The Place are retail-oriented public realm, which have similar amenities, uses and maintenance. Some slight differences were found in their physical dimensions, typology and social life structure. Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village and The Place were selected among other places in Beijing because all of them experienced similar activities and amenities, and both were famous attractions, located in the commercial centre, and defined by buildings surround all their sides. Despite their similar conditions, these public places are used differently in the dimensions, use and livability. As the statement of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2007), similarities and differences allow making a comparison among other factors that influence their livability and use.

Factors such as security, surrounding activities, climate comfort and the number of people present in the sector are all factors that therefore need to be explored in order to understand why the difference in livability occur. Site characteristics for the selection of Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village and The Place are matched against selection criteria in Table 4.5. Through this comparison, an understanding of positive and negative factors that affect the livability of these spaces can be reached (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2007). This will also further inform the design implications that could provide possible solution to the research problems being addressed.

Selection Criteria	Wangfujing Street	Sanlitun Village	The Place
Site Location	Central/Alongside Chang'an Street	Northeast/Embassy Area	In CBD
Function of Sites	Commercial/Office	Commercial	Commercial/Office
Extent of Sites	1,500 metres	53,000 m ²	24,000m ²
Shape of Sites	Axial Street	Abnornity Open Space	Rectangle Open Space
Transport Modes	All	All except underground	All except underground
Number of Years Since Built Up	12	3	5
Potential Sources of Interviewers	Tourists, Office buildings, Shops, Local residents	Shops, Tourists, Embassy	Tourists, Shops, Local residents
Table 4.5 Summary Characteristics of Case Study Sites. (Source: adapted formats from Stewart et al., 1979)			

4.4.2 Criteria for selecting interview participants

As Yin (2009) pointed out it is not necessary to collect data from everyone in a community in order to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a small sample of a population is selected for any given study. The research objectives and the characteristics of the study population (such as size and diversity) determine which and how many people to select. According to description by

Richiards and Morse (2007, p.85), three of the most common sampling methods used in qualitative research have been addressed briefly: purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling.

As the definition given by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), purposive sampling, one of the most common sampling strategies, group participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the objectives of research. Purposive sample sizes are often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation. Therefore, purposive sampling is the most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection.

Quota sampling sometimes has been considered a type of purposive sampling. In quota sampling, according to Bergman (2008), we decide while designing the study how many people with which characteristics to include as participants. Characteristics might include age, place of residence, gender, class, profession, marital status, use of a particular contraceptive method, and so on. As Bryman (2008) delivered the criteria selected allow us to focus on people we think would be most likely to experience, know about, or have insights into the research topic.

A third type of sampling, snowballing – also known as chain referral sampling – is considered a type of purposive sampling. In this method, Marshall and Possman (2006, p.121) stresses participants or informants with who contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study.

Based on the identification of sampling techniques above, in order to reduce bias and survey a variety of users engaged in different activities in the public places and assure a representative cross-section of the place population, the

sample chosen from different ages and socio-economic status included:

- Female users: Women play a very important role in the commercial areas. They have a different and special perspective to the other people in the aspects of shopper's needs, safety, and other social activities.
- Elderly people: They are the connection with the past of and give how such places developed during these years, and present their special needs on shopping and social activities.
- Teenagers: Young people will be also interviewed for this study in order to understand their impressions, likes and dislikes, and their needs in the public space.
- Groups of two to three people: Sometimes will be considered to interview (these would usually be couples, families, groups of friends or travelers), which allowed capturing different impressions and information from users at the same time and shortened the interview sessions in these places.
- Security: In such commercial areas, it is useful to investigate the feedback of management and maintenance both from users and staff.

Following the criteria above, and as the method quoted by Mehta (2009), participant seeking in the survey and interview was designed and regularly carried out in the study areas at stores, shops and open spaces that had space for community notices and announcements. Participants were area users which distributed to focus groups, such as women, teenagers, family, older people and security, etc., which passing by in the study areas at several occasions. A total of 255 people were surveyed and interviewed: 18 people of group of women, 15 old people, 9 teenagers, 25 travelers and 12 securities for Wangfujing Street; 23 women, 14 teenagers, 8 elder people and 15 families for The Place; and 21 women, 13 teenagers, and 11 travelers for Sanlitun Village.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

The criteria for choosing samples have been addressed above. This section provides a brief discussion of the primary and the secondary methods to be considered in designing a case study. Its purpose is to identify the methods of choice for the research and describe how the data will inform research questions.

4.5.1 Primary Methods and Comparisons

As Knight and Ruddock (2008, p.31) outlined qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in depth, and analyzing documents and material culture, and the central method of quantitative research is questionnaire. Here briefly outlines the characteristics of the methods adapted in this research probably, and compares with them. After that, the application of data gathering and the data analysis will be discussed in depth.

Observation

Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative research methods. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. Even in studies using in-depth interviews, as Bryman (2008) pointed out, observation plays an important role as the researcher notes the interviewee's body language and affect in addition to the words. Observations involve 'watching from the outside' and, as Bryman (2008) described, they represent a valid form of data collection in that they record what people actually do, that is rather than what they say they do. This form of research methods involves the researcher observing and recording what they see and hear. The purpose of this method is to minimize the effect of the researcher's presence in order to capture an unbiased and accurate reflection of people's

actions and practices. Typically, according to the work by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), information observed is recorded onto a pre-designed form and then analysed at a later time.

In this research, according to Alasuutari et al. (2008), observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study. The observation record is frequently referred to as field notes – detailed, nonjudgmental, concrete descriptions of what has been observed. For studies relying exclusively on observation, Alasuutari et al. (2008) state that, during the process of observing, the researcher makes no special effort to have a particular role in the setting; to be tolerated as an unobtrusive observer is enough.

In-depth interview

Qualitative research relies quite extensively on in-depth interviewing. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p.38) describe interviewing as ‘a conversation with a purpose’. It may be the overall strategy or only one of several methods employed. Interviewing varies in terms of a priori structure and in the latitude the interviewee has in responding to questions. Patton (2002, p.46) puts interviews into three general categories: the informal, conversational interview; the general interview guide approach; and the standardized, open-ended interview. Qualitative, in-depth interviews typically are much more like conversation than formal events with predetermined response categories. This method, as Punch (2005) discussed, in fact, is based on an assumption fundamental to qualitative research: the participant’s perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. The important aspect of the interviewer’s approach is conveying the attitude that the participant’s views are valuable and useful.

Interviews have particular strengths. An interview yield data in quantity

quickly. Ranjit (1996) argues, when more than one person participates, e.g. focus group interview, the process takes in a wider variety of information than if there were fewer participants – the familiar trade-off between breadth and depth. Immediate follow-up and clarification are possible. Combined with observation, interviews allow the researcher to understand the meaning that everyday activities hold for people (Ranjit, 1996). However, interviewing has limitations and weaknesses. As Richiards and Morse (2007) argued that interviews involve personal interaction; cooperation is essential. Interviewees may be unwilling or may be uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore, or they may be unaware of recurring patterns in their lives. The interviewer may not ask questions that evoke long narratives from participants because of a lack of skill (Richiards and Morse, 2007).

Focus groups

The method of interviewing participants in focus groups has been widely adapted to social science research. According to the introduction by Glesne (1999), the groups are generally composed of 7 to 10 people who are unfamiliar with one another and have been selected because they share certain characteristics relevant to the research questions. The interviewer creates a supportive environment, asking focused questions to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view. These interviews may be conducted several times with different individuals so that the researcher can identify trends in the perceptions and opinions expressed, which are revealed through careful, systematic analysis (Glesne, 1999).

According to the argument of Morgan (1997), the advantages of focus-group interviews are that this methods is socially oriented, studying participants in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than a one-to-one interview. When combined with the method of observation, focus groups are especially useful for gaining access, focusing site

selection and sampling, and even for checking tentative conclusions (Morgan, 1997).

Review of documents

For every qualitative study, data on the background and historical context are gathered. According to Mason (2002), the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting. Minutes of meetings, logs, announcements, formal policy statements, letters, and so on are all useful in developing an understanding of the setting or group studied. Research journals and samples of free writing about the topic can also be quite informative.

As Glesne (1999, p53) stated that the use of documents often entails a specialized analytic approach called content analysis. The raw material for content analysis may be any form of communication, usually written materials; other forms of communication – music, pictures, or political speeches – may also be included. Historically, content analysis was viewed as an objective and neutral way of obtaining a quantitative description of the content of various forms of communication; thus, counting the mention of specific items was important (Matthew, 2006). As it has evolved, however, it is viewed more generously as a method for describing and interpreting the artifacts of a society or social group.

Donald and Theresa (2007) discuss that probably the greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and nonreactive: it can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. The researcher determines where the emphasis lies after the data have been gathered. Also, the procedure is relatively clear to reader. Information can therefore be checked, as can the care with which the analysis has been applied (Denzin, 1989). However, a potential weakness is the span of inferential reasoning. That is, the analysis of the

content of written materials or film, for example, entails interpretation by the researcher, just as in the analysis of interactively gathered data: Numbers do not speak for themselves. Care should be taken, therefore, in displaying the logic of interpretation used in inferring meaning from the artifacts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p.79).

Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaire is often considered the most widely used form of data collections in quantitative method. As Neuman (2006, p.67) stated that questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. It typically entails several questions that have structured response categories; some open-ended questions may also be included (Neuman, 2006). The questions are examined for bias, sequence, clarity, and face-validity. Questionnaires are usually tested on small groups to determine their usefulness and, perhaps, reliability.

In sample surveys, data are collected in a standardized format, usually from a probability sample of the population. Patton (1990, p.51) says, the survey is the preferred method if the researcher wishes to obtain a small amount of information from a large number of subjects. Survey research is the appropriate mode to inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people based on data drawn from a relatively small number of individuals in that group (Patton, 1990). Its basic aim is to describe and explain statistically the variability of certain features in a population. Surveys are conducted in three ways: by mail, telephone, and personal interview. Any method of data collection, however, from observation to content analysis, can be used in survey research (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

As Yin (2009) stated that the strengths of surveys include their accuracy,

generalisability, and convenience. Accuracy in measurement is enhanced by quantification, replicability, and control over observer effects. Results can be generalized to a larger population within known limits of error. Surveys are amenable to rapid statistical analysis and are comparatively easy to administer and manage (Yin, 2009).

Although controlling accuracy, Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss, a survey cannot assure without further evident that the sample represents a broader universe. Also, even though surveys are convenient, they are generally a relatively expensive method of data collection. Finally, surveys may result in an invasion of privacy or produce questionable effects in the respondent or the community (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Comparing Data Gathering Methods

The key characteristics of primary data collection methods have been stated above. In fact, multiple data gathering methods could be combined use over the course of the research. Before discussing the detailed data collect methods adapted in this research, according to Brannen (1995), strengths and limitations of each method can be assessed firstly, then decide if that method will work with the questions and in the setting for the study. According to the studies of Beins (2009), Alasuutar et al. (2008), Marshall and Rossman (2006), Table 4.6 displays the strengths and limitations of each method that will be adapted to the research probably, based on how it is generally used in qualitative studies. It will be helpful to select the best combination of methods: limitations in one method can be compensated for by the strengths of a complementary one.

Methods	Strengths	Weaknesses
Observation	Data collected in natural setting; good for obtaining data on nonverbal behavior and communication; obtains	Leads researcher to fixate on details; data more affected by research presence;

	large amounts of data quickly	dependent on 'goodness' of initial research question
Interview	Fosters face-to-face interaction with participants; useful for describing complex interactions; facilitates discovery of nuance in culture	Dependent on cooperation of key individuals; difficult to replicate; too dependent on participant openness/honesty
Focus group	Fosters face-to-face interaction with participants; facilitates immediate follow-up for clarification; useful for describing complex interactions; obtains large amounts of data quickly	difficult to replicate; data more affected by research presence; dependent on 'goodness' of initial research question
Document review	Provides context information; data easy to manipulate and categorize for analysis; easy and efficient to administer and manage	Possible misinterpretations due to cultural differences; dependent on the researcher's interpersonal skills
Questionnaire and surveys	data easy to manipulate and categorize for analysis; easy and efficient to administer and manage; expands access to distant participants	Possible misinterpretations due to cultural differences; requires technical training; dependent on 'goodness' of initial research question
Table 4.6 Strengths and Limitations of Data Collection Methods. (Source: Creswell, 2009)		

4.5.2 A Pilot Study

In the early stages of qualitative inquiry, the researcher typically enters the setting with broad areas of interest but without predetermined categories or strict observational checklists. In this way, Bergman (2008) stresses, the researcher is able to discover the recurring patterns of behavior and relationships. After these patterns are identified and described through early

analysis of field notes, checklists become more appropriate and context-sensitive. Focused observation then is used at later stages of the study.

Matthew (2006, p.69) states that a pilot study was devoted to anticipatory analysis, which prior to carrying out the initial site inspection. The aim is to analyse expectations, once the areas to be investigate have been chosen, the ideas a person already has concerning the site are assembled using whatever tool or means of expression they might wish. This can include information from reading or research or previous knowledge. In the process of pilot study, a map of the various ideas concerning the place will be set up, which showing elements considered as belonging to the place. Also, according to the method adapted from Sepe (2009, p.465), a small amount of interviews and casual observations will be proposed to develop as a priority before applying the case study methods. During this pilot study, each place user will be asked their opinion in relationship to the length and quantity of the questions asked. It is worth to notice that whether they feel comfortable or not with the number of questions. After the test are finished, some questions will probably be modified, such as modify a question to an open question, instead of being specifically oriented toward security issues, or modify a question for translation precision into Chinese.

4.5.3 Data gathering implemented in the study

This research aims to investigate the complex relationships between people's uses and behaviors and the elements of public spaces in their local urban environment, and provides a guideline to create an active place to people. Thus, both physical factors and people's behaviors are research objectives. From here, based on the comparison of data collection methods stated above, the methods in this research for obtaining information from case studies to inform research questions will be analysed as following.

Initially, an observation method will be devised for recording basic data about the characteristics, location and activities of groups and individuals within three study sites. According to the description of sites selected above, it is clear seen that the public spaces selected for observation are too large and complex to observe without further subdivision into small segments. Based on the methods adapted from Mehta (2009), for each segment an observation sheet will be devised that comprise an outline diagram of the key features of the site, which demographic characteristics of people using the site and any interactions between them could be recorded, for example, the fabric of places, open spaces, places of historic and cultural interest, landscape points, people's activities, etc. The specific divisions of study areas will be discussed in depth in the later chapter.























Observations will be taken place for five months, between 8am and 12pm spread out on weekdays and weekends on days and nights and in all weathers. In addition, amount of people from elderly to young people will be taken part in the observations at some point, and a core group will be observed throughout most of the study. According to Knight and Ruddock (2008), the observation strategy will be driven by a desire to get a little closer to 'what really happens' in public spaces as an expansion on more commonly researched aspects of what people think happens, or what people say happens within them.

As Sepe (2009) addressed that the importance of this method lies in obtain an understanding of all those elements in study areas, such as land use of the site, the presence of particular types of buildings, the form of public spaces in sites, the people's activities taken in such places, etc. In this method, observation will be based on a chart, which contains a list of items and conditions to take into account. People's behavior, important spots and highly frequently areas, traces, gender and age of uses, for example, will be obtained through observing the study areas and reported on several base maps for each place. Some important

issues need to be observed in the place are the following:

- User’s spatial behavior
- Observed physical qualities
- Amenities present
- Regular and optional activities
- Presence or absence of natural and organized surveillance
- Sociability

By adapting the method of Stewart et al. (1979, p.21), those data obtained through the observation work of the research will be used to compile a series of basic maps for each site using a common notation (Table 4.7). Thus, a series of symbols need to be created to indicate the elements to which it referred to, and be placed on the map, whose graphic base consisted of the area outline, and they also will be placed at the points where they were noted. The purpose of the map is to represent the identifying elements of the urban public spaces and other social presence observed in a visual dimension.

Symbols	Description	Symbols	Description
	Traffic Light		Main Entrance
	Bicycle Parking		Pedestrian Way
	Taxi Rank		Vehicle Access
	Car Park		Public Attraction
	Bus Stop		Subway Station
	Flower Bed		Steps
	Bench		Café Chair
	Vendor		Café
	Restaurant & Bar		Take Away Food
	Hotel		Sculpture
	Flower Bed		Tree












	Water Feature		Artistic Lighting
	Lamp Post		Street Light
	Flower Lamp		Telephone Booth
	CCTV		ATM
	Litter Bin		Toilet
	Post Box		

Table 4.7 The System of Symbols.

As mentioned previously, the place uses are the main subjects of this research. As Forsyth et al. (2010, p.24) pointed out knowing about their experiences, impressions, opinions and feelings in relationship to the place is very valuable way to understand their preferences, activities, levels of comfort and enjoyment. This is particularly important for understanding what public spaces demanded in order to be more livable and dynamic urban places according to people’s needs in places. Therefore, knowing directly from user their opinions of the space will inform the directions to satisfy people’s needs in public spaces. In order to obtain from them in a systematical way, combining the questionnaire and an interview with both close and open-ended questions are necessary in this study.

Questionnaire will be adopted in this study combined with interviews as mentioned. The duration of questionnaire is between 10 and 30minutes, and it consists of the questions involved in those elements that were felt to be important regard of atmosphere of the place, and the variety uses of people in focus study areas.

Comparing the questionnaire, the interviews will be developed in a very flexible way, and will be made in different focus groups which composed by 5-10 members. The types of questions will be selected according to the research objectives and identify the factors that influenced the vitality of urban spaces. The interviews will face to face, as Yin (2009) suggested, which help to

observe people's feelings and attitudes towards the different topic asked. The interviews will be composed of both open and close questions. According to the suggestion by Martin (2007), close questions will be made according to the pre-established selection of possible answer. On the other hand, Martin (2007) says, open questions allow users to express their reasons and impression according to their attitudes and personal beliefs. The interviews will be conducted through multi visit to these three public places and developed through four or five focus groups which have selected in previous section, including women, old people, teenagers, travelers and management staff. According to Matthew (2006), participants will be interviewed in small groups to discuss their behaviors and attitudes within different physical, social, activities and security conditions at different hours in study areas. This would allow gathering information about why people visit and use the places at certain hours and detect problems or preferences according to existing conditions of places associated with time. As Whyte (1980) argues, the changing physical conditions, the different activities available different hours, as well as will be assumed to influence people's comfort and enjoyment of the public spaces at different hours of the day. Some strategies suggested by Matthew (2006) for making the interviews are to ask similar questions but in different ways in order to verify the information given by participants and therefore assure validity and coherence. This strategy is useful for verifying the reliability of answers given.

Through adapted methods of interviews and questionnaires, some important issues will be obtained as following:

- Nationality, gender and age
- What things do you think most need improving?
- What elements affect their uses most (both persons and physical factors)?
- Are there any one or more elements which produce a particular feeling?

- What kind of quality of public space is the most important to people's activities?
- Do you think it is easy to access to these places?
- Are these places comparable to another area in Beijing? If so, where and why?

Since the interviews will be based on open-ended questions mostly, according to the guidelines given by Yin (2009), the results need to be transcribed, tabulated and codified in order to develop the data analysis. Answer will be sorted out according to the most common responses provide by users, therefore, the information will be classified into answer categories and expressed as percentage frequencies.

Also, as Martin (2007) pointed out, it is important to state that the results that will be further presented are based on the number of answers given by the users in those three study areas. Therefore, percentages give to each answer category are based on the numbers given by the users, not the total numbers of interviews done for each places. Sometimes, Martin (2007) also stresses that the user always has more than one answer to an open-ended question and therefore percentage for answer categories will be calculated upon the frequency in which they are mentioned.

Through data analysis, which is based on data classification, the key elements contained in a message or information given by users or observations are transformed into units that facilitated their description and analysis. This method is very useful to infer objective and reliable statements based on the data provided by the interviews and based on the context in which they were made. The data collected from observation and interviews is proposed to divide into several parts that coincided with the key research issues for analysing. The research variables will be obtained based on both literature reviews (the historical background and theoretical base) and significant factors investigated

from case study sites which enable to influence the livability and use of urban public places in Beijing. It is also considered that, as Whyte (1980) argued, these variables are able to provide important information that could explain what makes these places work as public spaces. The variables are also obtained according to the research questions and objectives of this study. These variables include: accessibility, the participant's profile, user's needs, frequency of use, uses and activities, sociability, and security comfort. The variables and factors studied in this research will be explored in Table 4.8.

Variable	Use definition	Category	Condition to explore	Method
Accessibility	Physical and functional capacity of a place to be used by a diversity of users with no limitations. Accessibility includes adequate transportation system to a place, barrier-free environment for children, the elderly, etc.	Functional and physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How users arrived at the place ● How far away user lives from place ● Perception of barriers in the place 	Interview Observation Place's description
User profile	Personal data from users that will be interviewed: perceived characteristics through observation	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Users profile: age, gender, occupation and highest grade of education completed ● User's perceived attitudes and 	Interview Observation

			behavior	
User's preferences and needs	Needs are related to the requirements or demands that individuals have towards public spaces that will allow fulfillment or satisfaction. Preferences are related to what people like or dislike about the environment. They are subjective and particular to each individual and will depend on the person's own background.	Social and psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● what conditions attract users to the place ● users perception of what can be added or deleted to improve the place ● which other places are also visited and preferred by people ● people's preferences of the place ● people's favorite spots in the place 	Interview
Frequency of use	Numbers of time a person visit the place on a weekly basis / time spent in the place and moment of the day visited	Functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequency of visit ● Time spent in the place ● Time of day place is visited 	Interview Observation
Uses and activities	Functions that encourage people to visit and remain in place. It will depend on spaces configuration, number of	Functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What people do in the place ● Activity location in the place ● Users favorite spots in the 	Interview Observation Place's description

	amenities, location characteristics, etc.		place	
Sociability	Degree of social interaction developed in the public space. It can be also understood by looking at the number of isolated individuals and the number of people engaged in groups. Sociability occurs between know people or strangers.	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of people engaged in groups ● How other users are perceived in the place ● How interaction takes place in the place ● The sensation of threat from others 	Interview Observation
Security comfort	Degree of freedom and control users can experience in the place without feeling any fear or threat from vandalism and assault	Physical, social and psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How secure user feels being in the place ● How users visit the place: alone or in groups ● What conditions influence insecurity in the place ● What hours of the day are perceived as insecure in the place 	Interview

Table 4.8 The variables and factors to be explored through the case studies.

(Source: Knight and Ruddock, 2006)

4.6 Research Methodology Summary

This section provided several methods to measure three commercial public spaces in urban environment of Beijing. It explores how these methods used to obtain data which enable to assess the visual environment and people's uses in such urban setting. The methodology used in this research was based on the research question, the problems to be addressed and also based on the theoretical basis. The case study methods used were interviews, observation, questionnaire as mentioned above which were considered to be useful methods in the theoretical base of this study. With the data collected from this research, information is expected to be obtained that could provide directions for developing design implications for public space design and redesign in Beijing can be developed. Through gathering and processing of different types of data collected, the method allows the identification and use of elements in study areas to recognizable and allowing its representation in a complex map facilitating interpretation. As Sepe (2009) pointed out, the method and the complex maps are intended for use as a support tool in integrated design targeting place identity and as a tool for dynamic and complex place knowledge.

PART THREE

CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER FIVE

INVESTIGATING RETAIL-ORIENTED PUBLIC PLACES IN BEIJING

5.1 Introduction

Through a literature survey of the nature of urban spaces and the context of Chinese public spaces in previous chapters, it is clearly shown that with the growing number of research on urban design, there are an increasing number of characteristics of the built environment that are deemed important in determining the quality and the use of the built environment. These characteristics now include physical and land-use factors, conditions of public transportation and traffic congestion, accessibility to places and aspects of control and management of the environment, and so on. Rapoport (1990, p.145) identifies technology, safety, environmental variables, climate conditions, distance, presence and availability of services, culture and physical and behavioral characteristics as factors affecting the people use of urban environment. Based on these, a further element of the research aimed to obtain a range of responses from different users in their local environment, in order to better define and identify the things people think most need to improve in local urban environment (Figure 5.1). This reflects the fact that people place the quality of their local urban environment high on the agenda of issues that concern them and most need improving, as Carmona (2008, p.2) pointed out, and often higher than the headline public service such as education and health. This chapter in Part 3 explores and investigates the use of selected three commercial public spaces in Beijing. Through focusing on the physical

features, the uses and facilities, and their activities and management, this study attempts to experience these places from a user's perspective and determines what urban design characteristics of commercial places support stationary, sustained, comfortable and lingering activities, especially those activities that are social in nature.

"Thinking about this urban environment, which of these things do you think most need improving? Choose up to 5" response to open-ended question. Data from 255 responses.

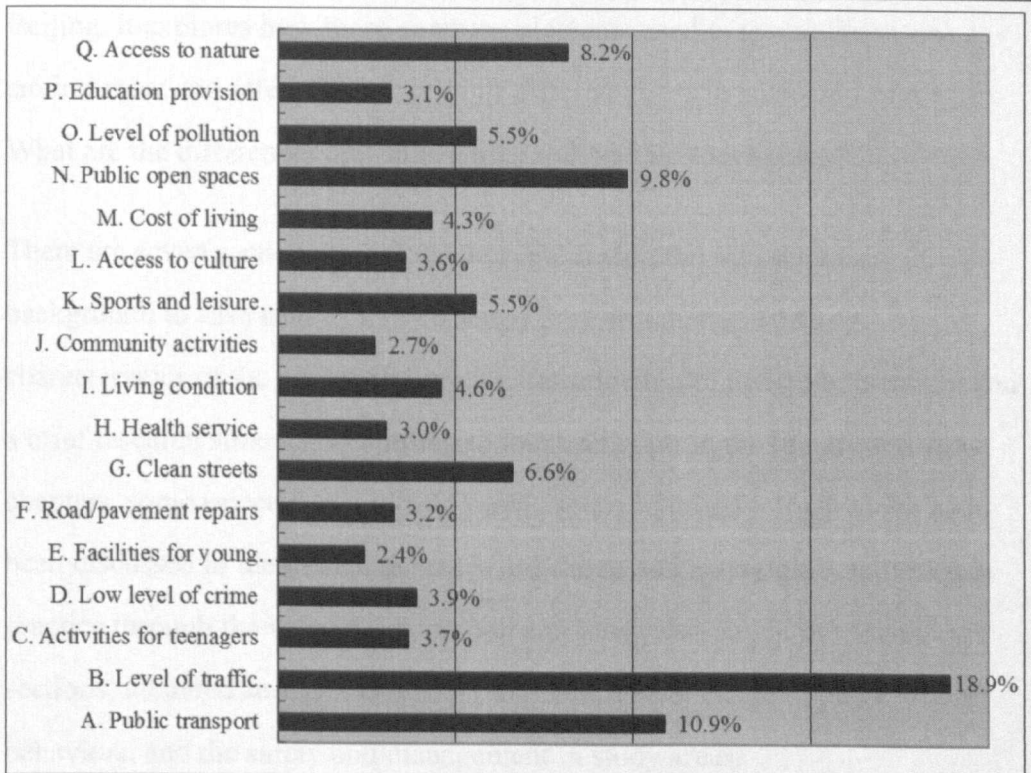


Figure 5.1 Most need improving in the local urban environment.

The purpose of this chapter of the study was to understand the relationship between the temporal and spatial forms of the physical setting and people's behaviors – to examine how people used the places – in three selected study areas: Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place. It provided information on what people did on places and where they walked, sat, stood, took pictures, eat and drink, gathered and socialized, and what facilities they used, either as a part of their daily functional activities, for recreational purposes or both of them. According to Bechtel and Zeisel (1987, p. 121),

behavioral mapping links the design features of the setting or location with behavior in both time and space. This chapter is based on a mixed-methods approach, which involved walk-by observation at three study sites, interviews with a wide range of public spaces users in the city, and place surveys with members of the public at a range of observations sites undertaken by hundreds of members of the general public over five months. This part uses several different elements to measure three retail-oriented place area environments in Beijing. It explores how these common elements used to assess the visual environment and affect the behavior of different users in such environment. What are the differences and similarities and how do they matter?

There are seven sections in this chapter. Following the introduction, background to case studies will be stated first, which involved key characteristics of the city of Beijing, the introduction of the study location, and a brief research strategy. According to the discussion in the literature review chapters, some selected qualities of public space in urban setting which have been discussed in theoretical degree will be assessed by people's activities in practice through the way of observation and interview, etc. in the following sections, included access and linkage to public space, image of place, use of behaviors, and the safety and management in study areas.

5.2 Background to Case Studies

This section explains the rationale for selecting the study location, and the particular public spaces observed. This study aimed to look in depth at three retail-oriented public realms in one city, to explore issues that might relate to other urban places, rather than sampling in less depth across a number of places and cities in differ. This section outlines three issues to discuss. First, key characteristics of Beijing which the location area of selected study sites will be stated in general, which involves the location and general regional

characteristics, the distribution and description of public retail areas in Beijing as the focal research scope. After that, a brief introduction of selected study site will be provided in the following. In the last of this section, the research strategies will be presented brief but in depth based on the discussion in research methodology chapter.

5.2.1 Key Characteristics of the city of Beijing

Beijing, the capital city of China, was selected as the location of the study sites for a number of reasons. Beijing is located in the north east of China and has a total area of 16400 square kilometres, and according to the statistics given by Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2010), there are 19.7 million inhabitants in this city, an estimated 9.6 million lives in the city centre. The composition of this city is compact and comprises a range of types of public places within easy access to each other, ranging from central public squares to shopping streets. It is the kind of location that is often represented in political, economic and cultural centre with the most people from everywhere in China, and has typical features with modest climate and natural environment conditions in the north of China. Thus, the city of Beijing was suggested as the location for the study. Figure 5.2 shows the location of Beijing within China.

During the two past decades, mostly since Beijing was awarded the 2008 Summer Olympics, as Hagenbjörk (2011) pointed out, the city has undergone a construction boom on a massive scale. The number of Beijing Hutongs has dropped dramatically as they are demolished to make way for new roads and buildings for the most profit. As Pu (2011) noticed that, to give an idea of the scale of redevelopment, one third of the old city had been destroyed and rebuilt by 2000. Beijing is rapidly transforming from a low-rise city to an increasingly high-rise metropolis.

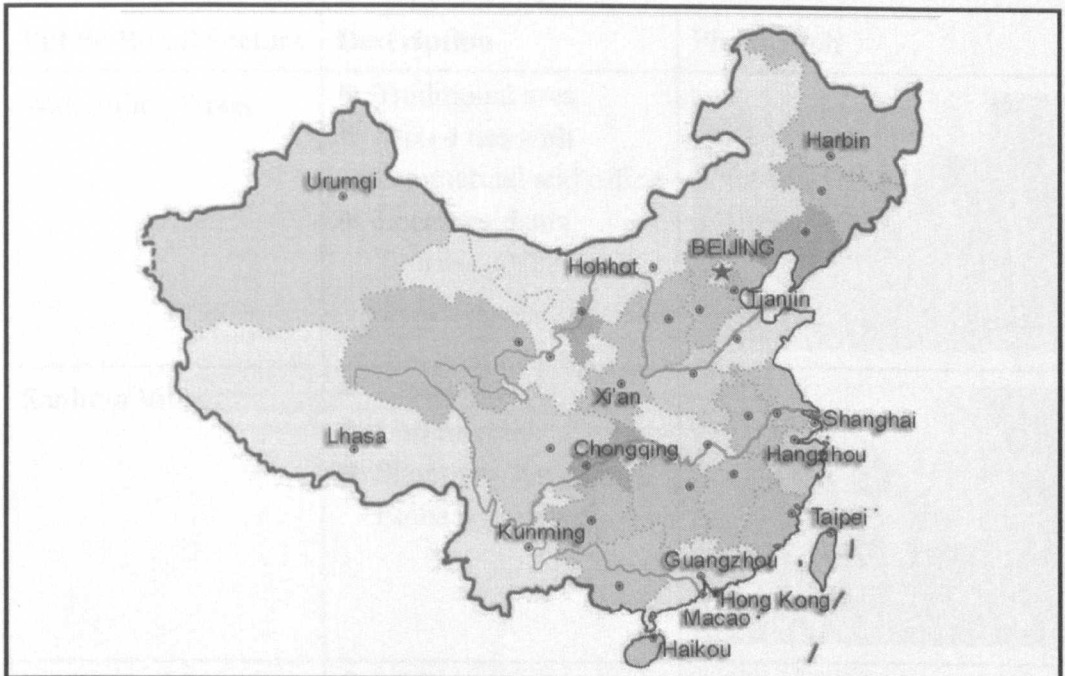


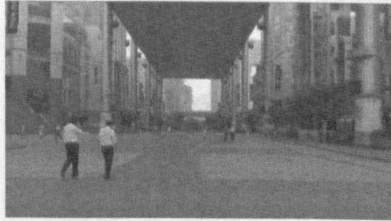



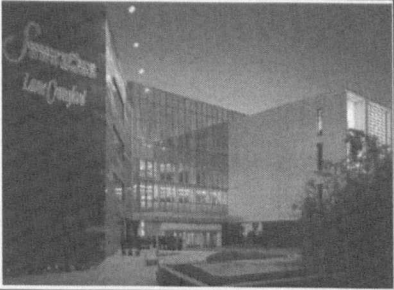

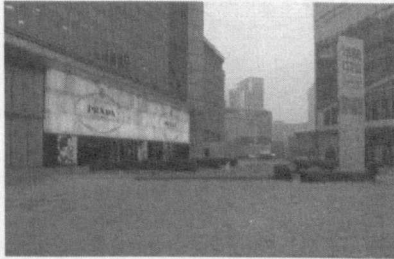
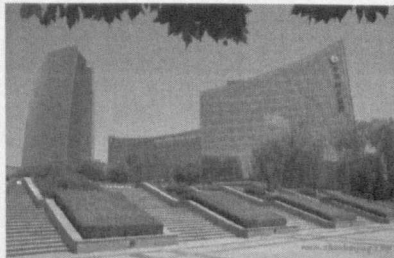


Figure 5.2 Location of Beijing in China.

Meanwhile, with the transformation of city's composition and the rapid development of society, as Visser (2004) stated places in the contemporary city of Beijing have been radically changed by modification in relationships between people, and their attendant needs, technological development and globalization. The city has become the result of complex intersections created by multiple operators that modify the urban system for different reasons. And, as mentioned in Chapter 3, there are a large number of commercial centre emerged in such urban environment. In order to identify the reasons for choosing the study sites, a description and comparison of some commercial centre which play significant roles in the city of Beijing will be discussed in following. These places involved recent regenerated traditional shopping streets, new contemporary shopping mall with great public spaces both indoor and outdoor environments, and certain retail sector served to surrounding offices or areas basically, etc.

Public Retail Sectors	Description	Photograph
Wangfujing Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional area ● Mixed use with commercial and office ● Local residents, Tourists, Officers 	
Sanlitun Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embassy area ● Commercial ● Shoppers, Foreigners, Embassy officers 	
The Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CBD area ● Mixed use with commercial and office ● Local residents, Tourists, Officers 	
Xidan Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business area ● Commercial ● Local residents 	
Qianmen Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional area ● Commercial ● Local residents, Tourists 	
Nanluogu Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional area ● Mixed use with residential and commercial ● Local residents, Foreign tourists 	

Financial Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Financial area● Mixed use with commercial, office and bank● Officers, shoppers	
Solona Shopping Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Commercial area● Mixed use with commercial and recreation● Shoppers	
China Trade Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Commercial centre● Mixed use with commercial, residential and office● Shoppers, officers, residents	
Zhongguancun Business centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● IT business centre● Office● Officers	
Table 5.1 Description and Comparison of Commercial Centre in Beijing, China.		

Based on the comparison stated in Table 5.1, the reasons for selecting three case sites will be discussed in detailed below. Xidan Street is composed by several commercial departments which located in two sides of the crowded street with crowded people and busy traffic. There are almost not any excess places to people for standing, sitting, relaxing or just resting when they tired except for Xidan Culture Square which next to the main entrance to Xidan Street. However, this Xidan Culture Square has very weak links with Xidan Street and poor quality for people’s stay. Nanluogu Lane and Qianmen Street are very famous traditional commercial streets in the historical areas of Beijing.

Both of them are regenerated recently. The commercial area of Qianmen Street is usually used by local people who lived in nearby and tourists. Nanluogu Lane is used by foreign travelers mostly because of the unique traditional culture in there. Both of these two places have typical features of commercial public places in Beijing for fitting the research topic, but it involves in another research area – urban regeneration – at the same time, which does not include in this research. Financial Street, as its name implies, this place located in a commercial area composed by banks, investment corporations, and numbers of offices. Due to the composition of this area and the high price stores distributed in the shopping mall, there are only some people uses there during the workdays, whereas there are very few people go there during weekends, whatever shopping, eating or meeting friends. Solona Shopping Centre has some similarities with those three selected places. However, the layout is too complicated compared with 3 case study areas, whatever the distribution of stores, the architectural styles or the outdoor public spaces there, etc. The area where includes China Trade Centre and Shinkong Place is a commercial area mixed use with department store, residential, offices and hotels, where assemble large number of people from all over the world. This place is filled with numbers of buildings, where is more like a multifunctional community, not merely a commercial public places. There is not enough outdoor public spaces for sharing to people between those buildings, and also lack of public spaces for relaxing inside of the department stores. Public places in such shopping mall just used for connecting several stores and make people walking from one store to another one. The last place in Table 5.1, Zhongguancun Business Centre, is obviously seen from picture surrounded by many tall building which almost used to IT business offices with very limited and only necessary commercial functions. Thus, although this place is very typical and famous in Beijing, it is not suitable for selecting to be the case study area because of its unique functions.

Therefore, according to the considerations on key issues on location, land use and users in these public retail sectors in urban environment, three places have been selected to be the study sites. They are Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place. As discussed in Chapter 4, these three selected places have similar locations, amenities and uses, at the same time, there are still some differences exist between them in physical features, management and social life which issues would be make important influences in people's activities in those places. Their detailed description will be provided in the following.

5.2.2 Introducing the Study Location

Before discussing public space use specifically, it is first important to establish the broader understanding of the context within these three retail-oriented public places in Beijing. As mentioned in previous methodology chapter, Wangfujing Street in the Wangfujing district in the centre of the city of Beijing which located in the north of Changan Street, The Place in the World Trade Central business District of the Beijing City, and Sanlitun Village in the Embassy area of the northeast of city centre of Beijing were studied for this project (Figure 5.3). All three cases are within the third ring road of the city and may be classified as predominantly retail-oriented areas with most of their daily commercial, cultural, entertainment and other needs and amenities catered for by the businesses and other uses on such commercial centers. In addition, the people of the city area consider these destinations for shopping, dining and entertainment. All these three places are major commercial centers in the local urban environment, and some of these places have been promoted as pedestrian-friendly areas.

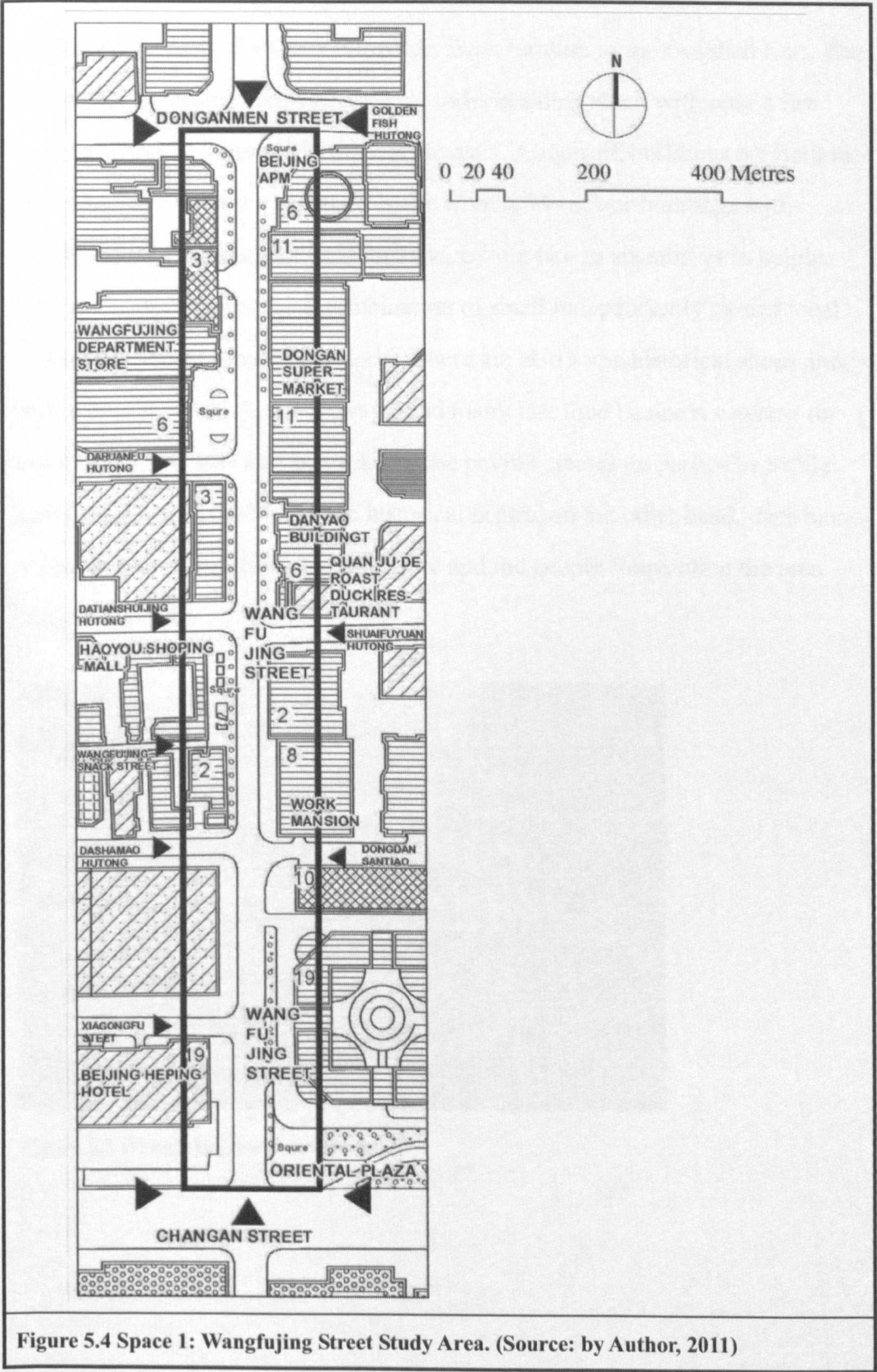


Figure 5.3 Location of 3 study areas in the city of Beijing

Space 1: Wangfujing Street

Wangfujing is a 700-year-old commercial street with a length of 1500 meters which located in Dongcheng District, Beijing, is one of the most famous shopping streets in the capital of China, and also, Wangfujing is considered to be one of the city's most symbolic sites. As Zhang (2007) described that, Wangfujing Street came into being in the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) and got its name in the Ming Dynasty. The commercial history of the Wangfujing Street goes back hundreds of years. It became a popular commercial area in the Qing Dynasty (Zhang, 2007). It has maintained its position as the number one choice for shoppers since the mid-1980s. It starts from Wangfujing Nankou, where the Oriental Plaza and the Beijing Hotel are located. It then heads north, passing the Wangfujing Xinhua Bookstore, the Beijing Department Store as well as the

Beijing Foreign Languages Bookstore before ending at the Xindongan Plaza
(Figure 5.4).



Wangfujing Street is a long broad avenue, with off-traffic along the two sides and a tree-lined walkway in the middle. The Wangfujing is very popular with tourists and full of vendors of souvenirs and local produce. There are more than 200 shops on the 810 meter-Long Street from Nankou to the Goldfish Kou. The traditional street that comprises mostly older building stock with only a few new buildings constructed in the last 10 years. Almost all buildings are built to the sidewalk leaving no setbacks. Aside from a few newer buildings with commercial space, most of buildings range from two to six storeys in height. The commercial street has a combination of small independently owned local businesses and national chain stores. There are also some historical shops and businesses along the two walkways, and many fast food business catering for the tourists. The walkway is level, and the paving creates no particular tactile sensations. The proximity of the historical centre, on the other hand, does have a strong impact, in terms of architecture and the people frequenting the area. (Figure 5.5-5.8).



Figure 5.5 Wangfujing Street overview.



Figure 5.6 Traditional food vending in Wangfujing Street.



Figure 5.7 Perspective in Wangfujing Book Store.



Figure 5.8 Open space in Wangfujing Street.

Space 2: Sanlitun Village

The name 'Sanlitun Village' is taken from the small scale urban communities based around various culture and art scenes that spontaneously develop in cities across the world, as Wang (2010) stated that, the Village was designed to create a community that places emphasis on 'people': people eating, drinking, shopping, performing, discovering, and creating, ending up with an experience that is influenced from everywhere, yet feels like nowhere else.

There were divided in to two parts of the Sanlitun Village: the Village South and Village North. Lead by the Oval partnership and the Tokyo-based architect Kengo Kuma, an international team of architects worked on the Village's architectural design combining the varied use of vibrant colours and irregular lines with Kengo Kuma's trademark emphasis on the use of more natural materials, in effect bringing about a modern design distinct to Beijing (Wang, 2010). The Village stands out from the more traditional designs of shopping malls across the city. The idea of an 'open-plan' development, with the Village consisting of 19 separate buildings, interspersed with gardens, courtyards, and twisting alleys, helps to create an inviting environment, where visitors can mix activities from inside and outside throughout the day (Figure 5.9).

According to Wang (2010), taking inspiration from the hutongs of Beijing, Village South offers the widest collection of stores in the Village, nestled within a colorful and intimate network of lanes and paths. Here there's no set route or pre-determined path to take, but then that is kind of the point. Village North is home to an exclusive selection of creative luxury designers, housing some of the world's most prominent and exciting names as well as leading local designers – all of this held within a thoroughly modern take on the traditional siheyuan, open-air courtyard housing of Beijing. Due to the width of the whole space and walkway there is a good building height:street width ratio. This would be discussed in detailed in the following sections. The presence on the

lateral carriageways of several types of shops with different shop signs causes a chaotic visual perception at some points (Figure 5.10-5.13).

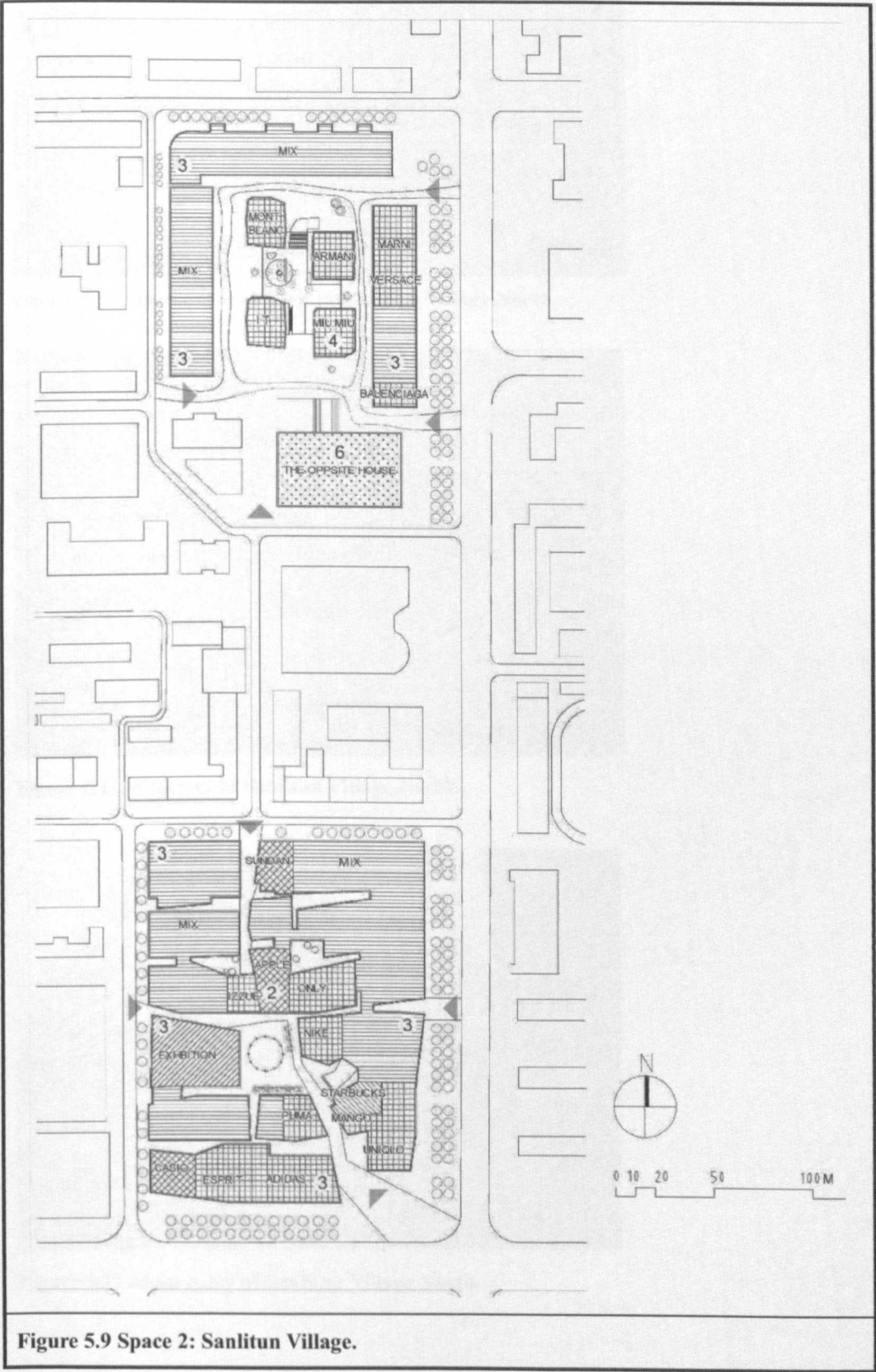


Figure 5.9 Space 2: Sanlitun Village.



Figure 5.10 Open-air courtyard in Sanlitun Village North.



Figure 5.11 Walkway in Sanlitun Village North.



Figure 5.12 Main entry of Sanlitun Village South.



Figure 5.13 Open square in Sanlitun Village South.

Space 3: The Place

The Place in the World Trade Central business District of the Beijing City was built in very recent years, which is very famous for its sky-screen. An iconic and unique creation in Beijing, The Place sky-screen also signifies a forward looking team spirit that aspire to lead a modern, fashionable, creative and pleasurable lifestyle at The Place, with the passion and vision – reaching the sky (Figure 5.14).

The study area, The Place, comprises abroad, empty open space. Running through its centre is a huge space under the sky-screen devoid of public benches except for steps of buildings and surfaces of flower beds. The buildings which located in the north and south sides of The Place are mostly four-storey high and have a continuous façade on to the space. Between the buildings and the central space on each side is sidewalk. The Place combines shopping, dining, leisure, recreation, cultural and special events, all under one roof (Figure 5.15-5.17).

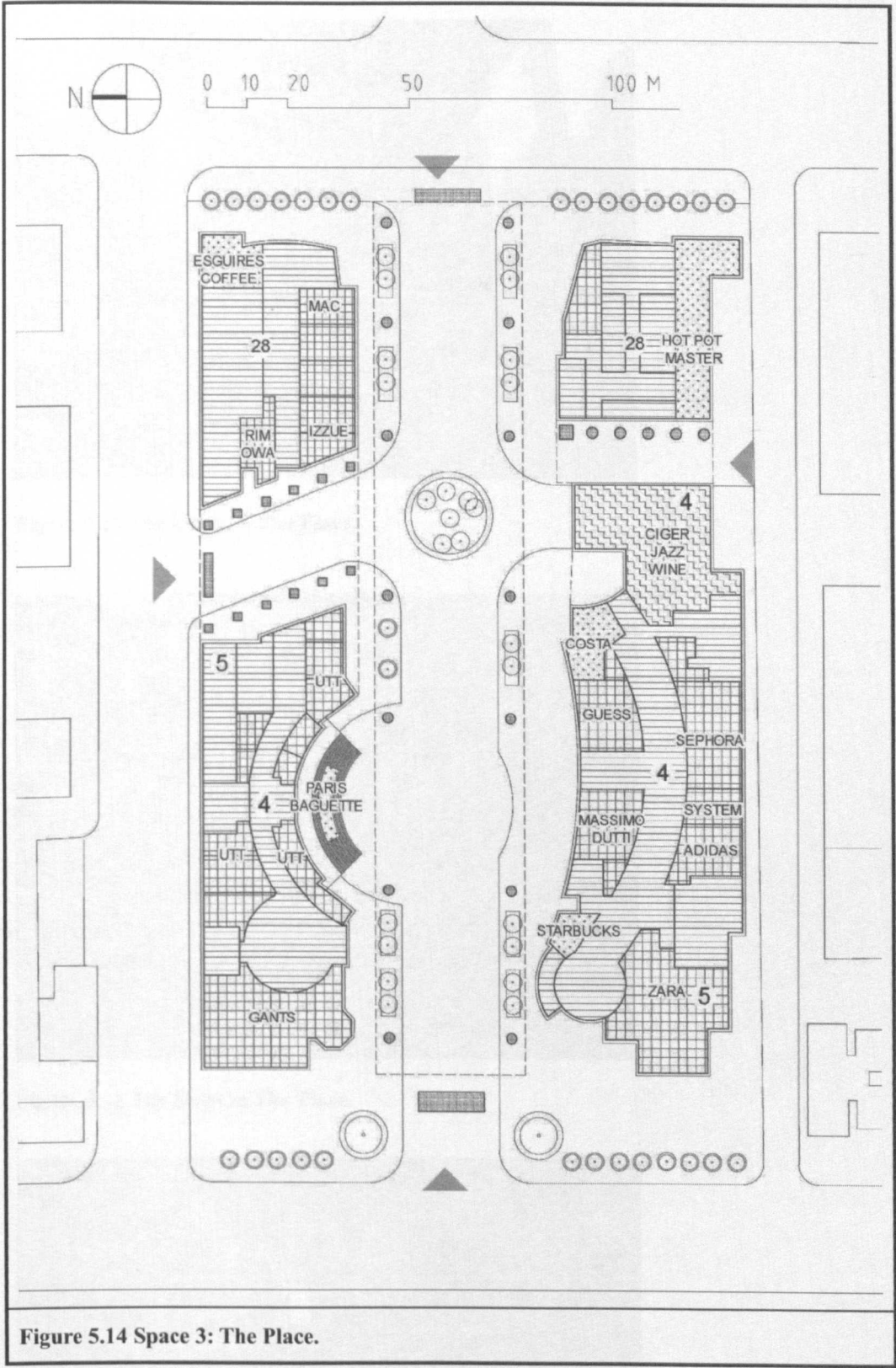


Figure 5.14 Space 3: The Place.



Figure 5.15 The Entry of The Place.



Figure 5.16 The Steps in The Place.

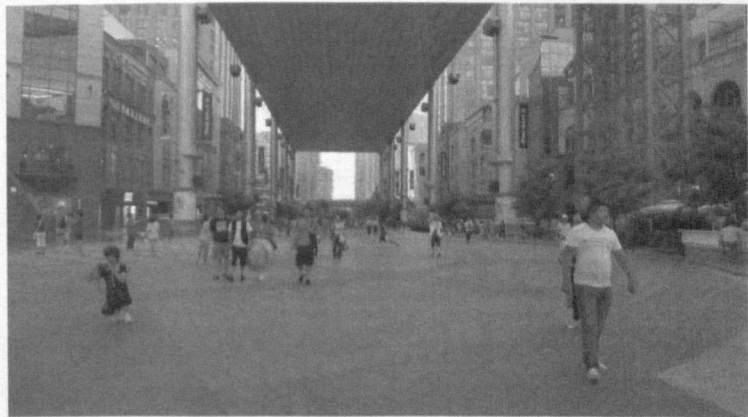


Figure 5.17 People under the screen roof in The Place.

5.2.3 Research strategies

The research methodology adopted in this study has been discussed in Chapter 4, which mainly involves observation, interview, and small number of questionnaire. Among them, the observation was considered the primary method to collect the data and information from those three selected study sites. As Stewart et al. (1979, p.26) summarized that, through observing the specific sites selected in the study, the purpose of information collecting and recording exercise involved as following:

- Obtaining information on the elements of public spaces in physical design affecting people's activities;
- Identifying the key elements and frequency of people uses resulting from urban environment in these study sites;
- Identifying the functional elements and design variables common to the three sites, thus guiding the preparation of a site related interview format;
- Giving some indication as to the intensity of use of areas and facilities in these retail-oriented public realms.

Based on these, and according to the methods provided in previous chapter, data analyzed in this chapter were collected between 8am and 12pm spread out on weekdays and weekends on days and nights with temperatures between 20°C and 35°C from May to September in the city of Beijing. While the cloud cover and wind conditions varied during the observations, observations were also made when it was raining as the special conditions.

Data were collected by slowly walked through the complete length and extent of each area in the study sites, and observers recorded the total number of stationary people encountered, their locations, the activities they were engaged in and their postures. According to the method adapted from Mehta (2009),

these observations were recorded on coding sheets consisting of a detailed plan and elevations of the block. Sitting, standing and lying or sleeping were recorded as variable postures. Activities were recorded under the categories shown in Table 5.2 and were described in detail in later sections.

Symbols	Description
○	Standing
□	Sitting
×	Lying / Sleeping
●	Standing & Talking
■	Sitting & Talking
△	Taking picture
▲	Pushing a stroller
★	Eating / Drinking
☆	Reading / Using a laptop / Working
▼	Shopping
▽	Window-shopping
◇	Playing a game / Performing
◆	Skateboarding / Rollerblading
◐	Smoking
▣	Vending
◆	Cleaning
◑	Blood donor
◎	Homeless

Table 5.2 Symbols used in recording observations.

(Source: adapted format from Mehta, 2009)

As previously noted, each case study area was divided into several small segments to conduct direct observations of behavior. Hence, there were a total of seven block-segments in Wangfujing street: the place which in the front of Wangfujing Book Store, the open space in the front of Gongmei Building, the

open square behind of Haoyou Building, the front gate area in Danyao Building, the leisure place in the front of Wangfujing Shopping Store, and both sides of the end of the Wangfujing Commercial Street which one located in the front of Beijing Foreign Language Book Store and another side in the front of Xindongan Plaza (Figure 5.18). In the study area of Sanlitun Village, there were a total number of eleven block-segments for observing, six for south area and five for north area of the Village: two main entries of the south area of Sanlitun village, all of other four segments are designed as the open space in the south area; meanwhile, the focus study area located in the centre of the north side of Sanlitun Village, other four segments were assigned in the pedestrian route around the central public space (Figure 5.19). Besides, because of the compact open space in The Place, there were divided into fewer segments: one is the place in the front of the mail entry of The Place, one is around the steps behind of the building in the left side, and another one is in the major space under the famous screen in The Place (Figure 5.20).

The observations provided the main body of information on human behavior in the study areas, especially on four of the five questions: what, when or where, who and with whom, and how, leaving only 'why' as the unknown (Mehta, 2009). A face-to-face survey and interview was conducted to provide in-depth information to help understand the users' feelings, perceptions, and attitudes toward the urban environments that were being observed in the three study areas. Further, by selecting the participants for interviews of the research at the study areas, the observer was able to target the local residents, workers, shoppers and visitors who actually used those commercial places on a regular basis. According to Sepe (2009), the survey and interview instrument was used to reinforce and confirm the findings from the observations to get answers to 'why' people did what they were observed doing.

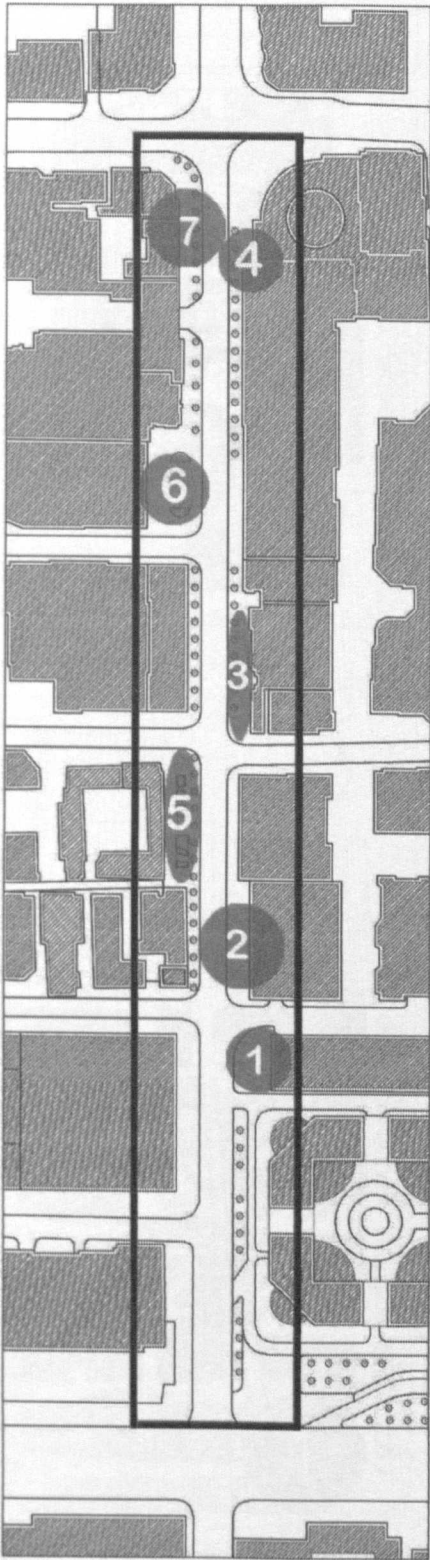


Figure 5.18 Focal study areas of Wangfujing.

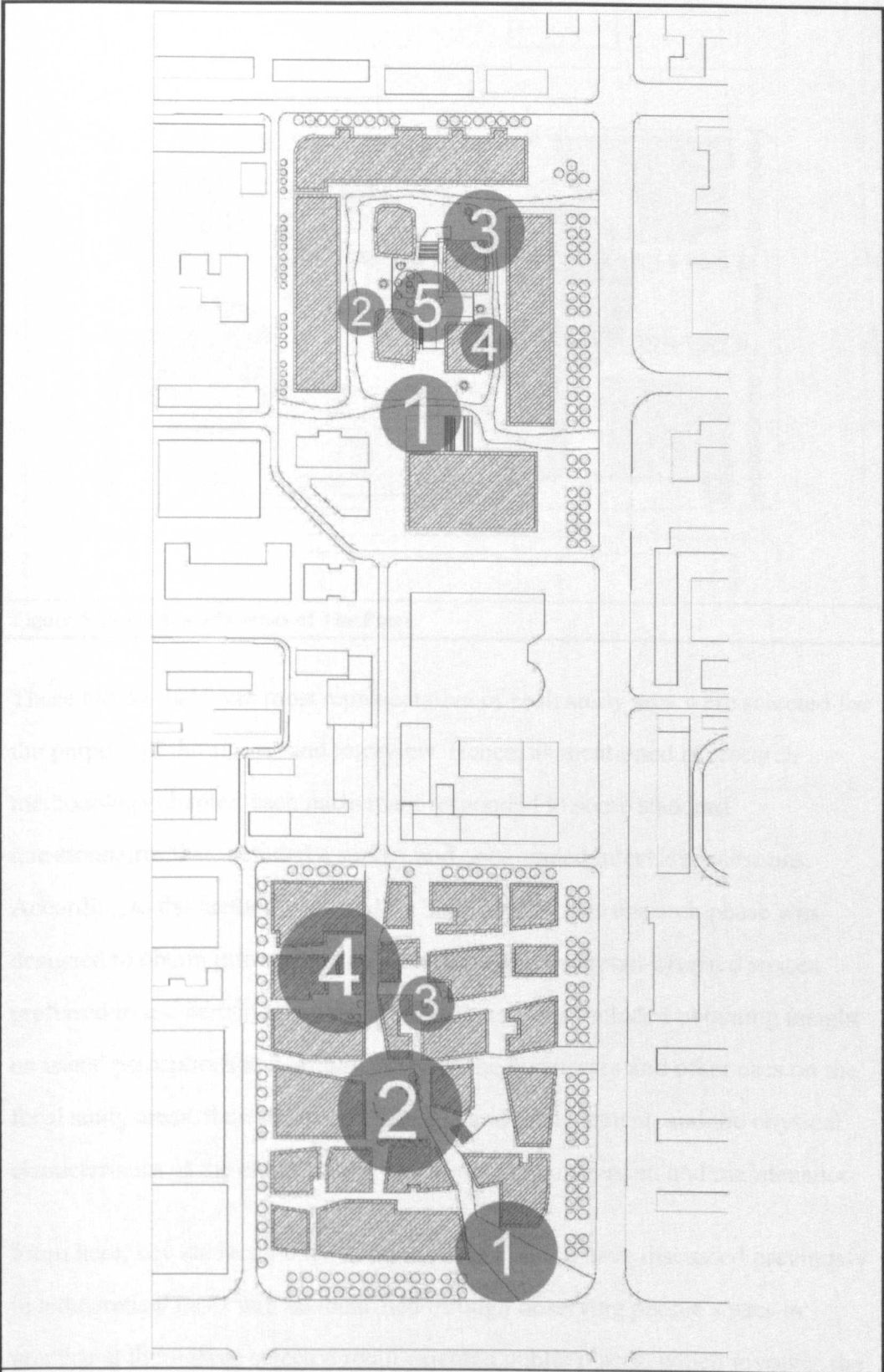


Figure 5.19 Focal study areas of Sanlitun Village.

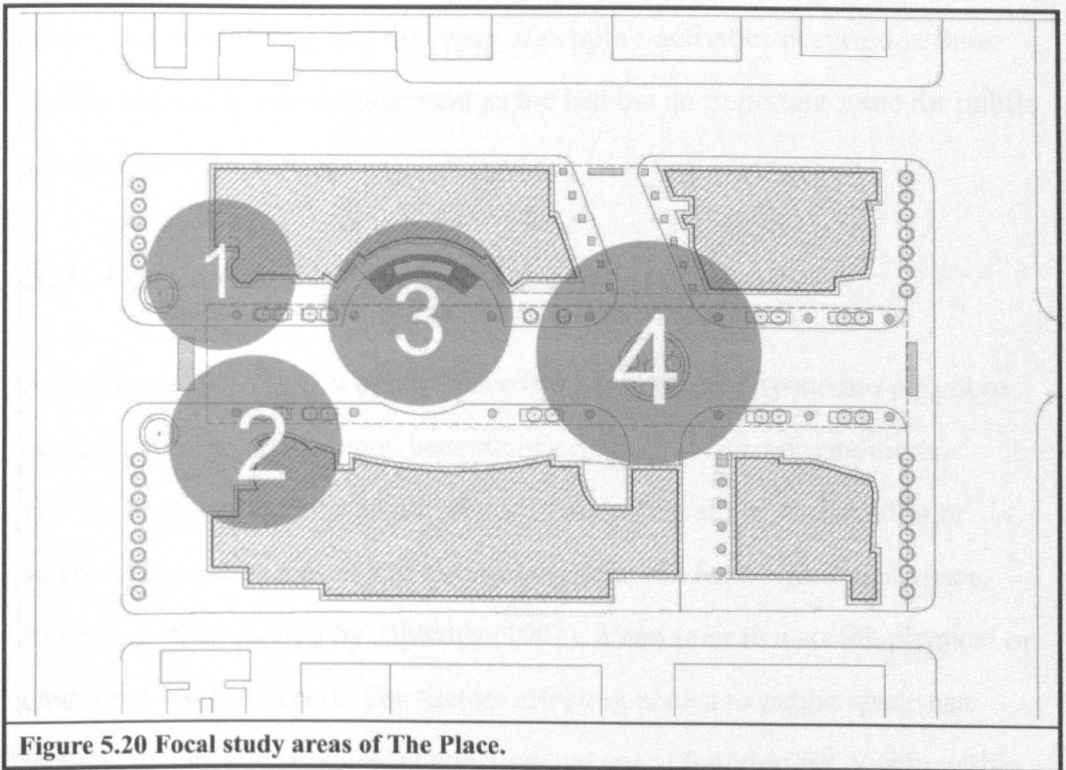


Figure 5.20 Focal study areas of The Place.

These blocks that were most representative of each study area were selected for the purpose of the survey and interview. Hence, as mentioned in research methodology chapter, each participant responded to some standard questionnaires that included a survey and open-ended interview questions. According to the method provided by Sepe (2009), this research phase was designed to obtain information on why users of these retail-oriented spaces preferred to use certain areas more than others. This included obtaining insight on users' perceptions and attitudes toward the businesses and other uses on the focal study areas, their location, operation and management, and the physical characteristics of the environment including its management and maintenance.

From here, key characteristics of public space which have discussed previously in a theoretical basis will be identified through observing people's uses in practice at these three selected retail-oriented public places, which involves the access and linkage to those places, the image of places from the aspects of physical form, good scale, sitting places and other urban amenities in the places, people's behaviors and uses in such places including the purpose and frequency

of use, duration of stay, and the types of people's activities occurred in those places, and safety and management as the last but an important issue for public space in an urban setting.

5.3 Accessibility to Retail Public Spaces

As Malone (2004) said, a public space is an area where anyone has a right to come without being excluded because of economic or social conditions.

Having access to a public space relates to the physical elements within or surround the public space, and also to how a person feels within that space.

Relying on the research by Tibbalds (1992), it can refer to a social, physical or emotional level of access. The factors affecting access to public space can include: distance to services, connection and space function for people within and surround the sites, mobility, transportation options from or to next destination, and so on. According to Slessor (2001, p.59), these elements to consider on access to public space have been summarized in the follow questions:

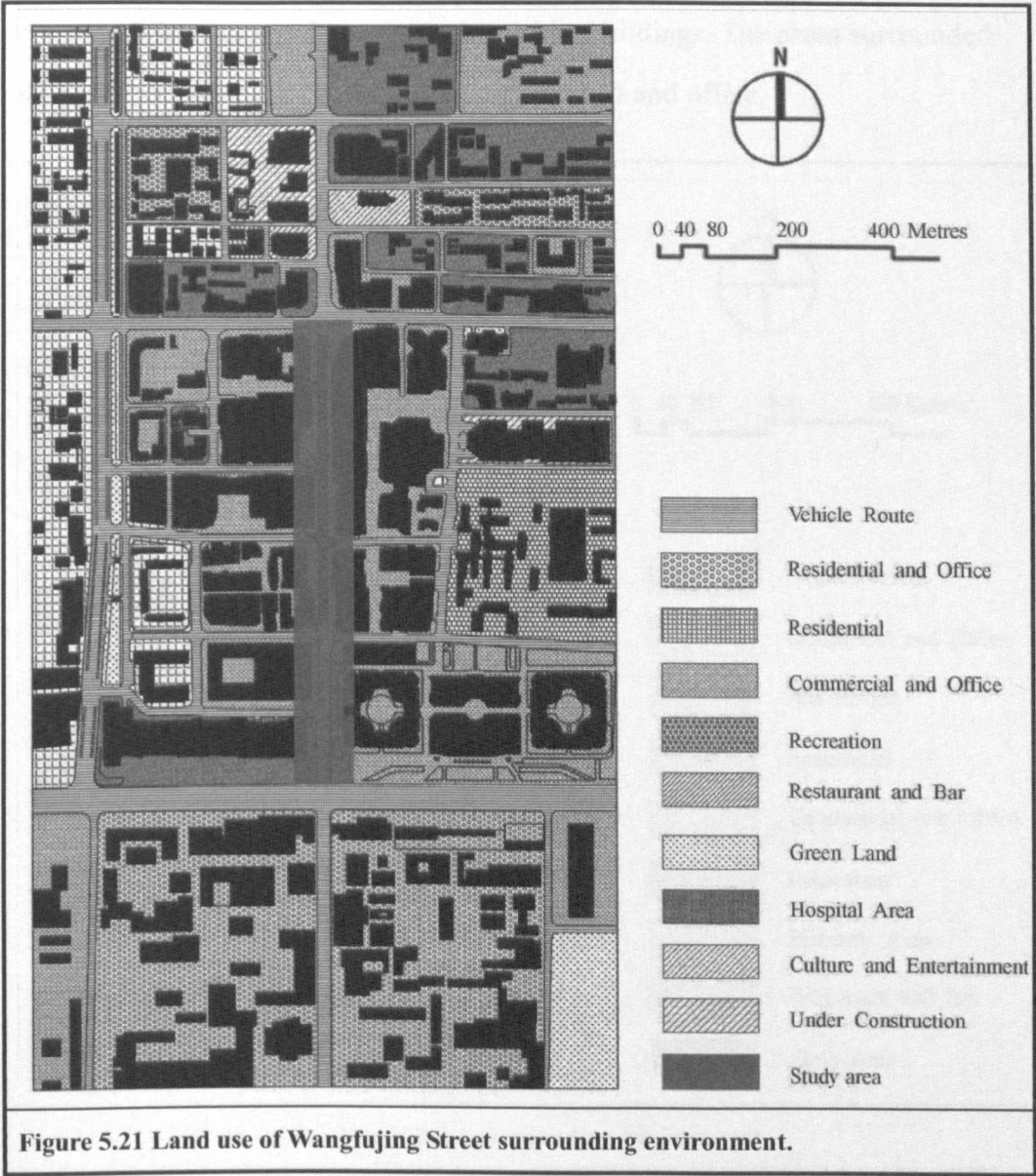
- Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls? Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- Can people easily walk to the place?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- Does the space function for people with special needs?
- Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?
- Can people use a variety of transportation options to reach the place, e.g. bus, car, bicycle, etc.?

- Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations?

According to the consideration of the questions stated above, the concept of ‘accessibility’ in this section prefers to provide an understanding of physical level firstly, such as the distribution of public transportation in the study areas, variety of transportation options to reach these places, and the connection within study areas from one building to another one, etc., which refers to how to people get these places by different ways and from different links. Then, the social level of access and people’s feelings will be indicated as following, which means what people do think about the physical access to these places. Before discuss the accessibility in detailed, the analysis of land use of those study areas surrounding will be stated first. It would be help us to establish a basic framework to understand the functions and links within and around the study sites and the sources of users.

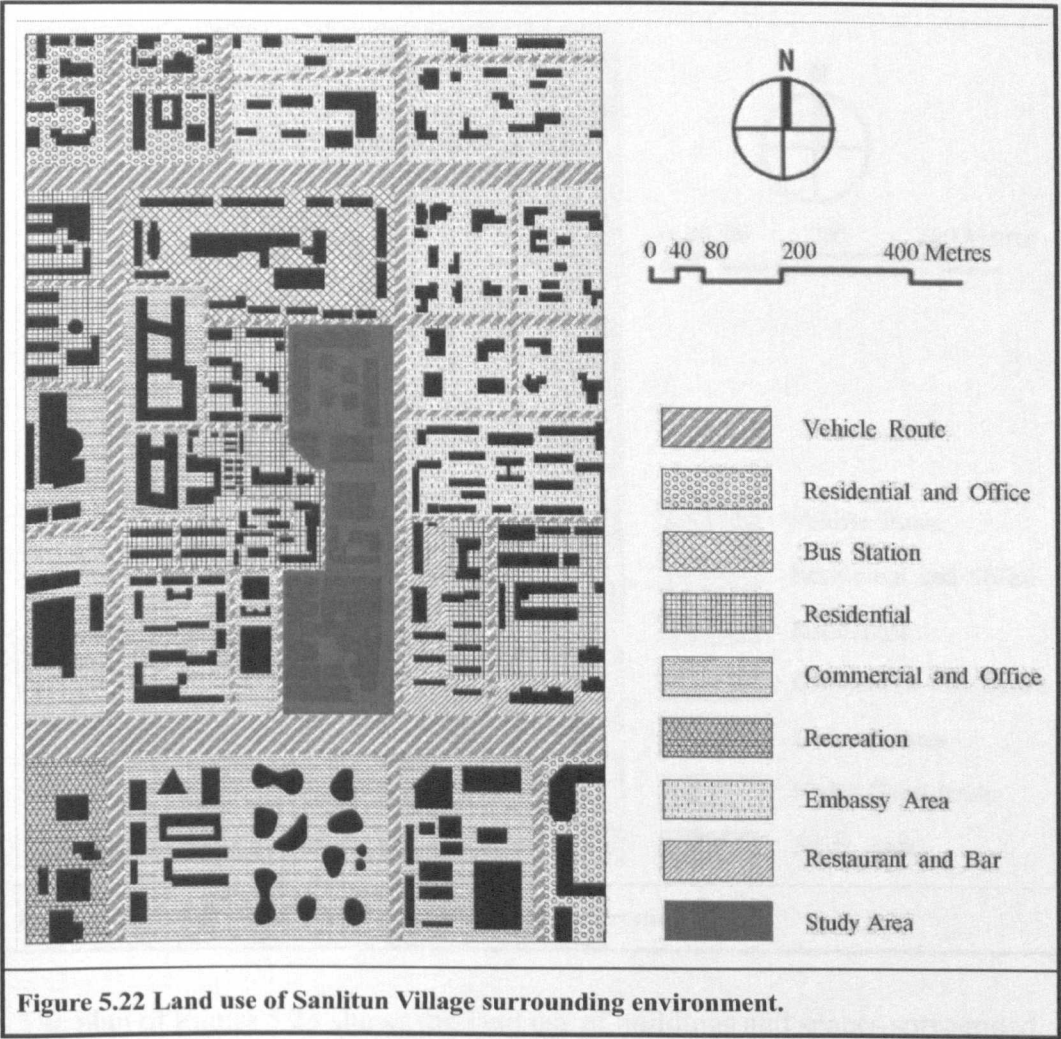
5.3.1 Land use of the study sites surrounding

Based on the statements above, the land use of the study sites surrounding within 500 metres will be identified firstly. Compared with the other key element, as Marcus and Francis (1998) pointed out, land uses are relatively temporary. Incoming uses often lead to redevelopment and the creation of new buildings, to plot amalgamations and, less often, to subdivisions and changes in the place pattern. By contrast, Carmona et al. (2003, p.61) also argues, displaced land uses are more likely to relocate to existing buildings in older areas and, rather than redeveloping them, to adapt and convert them. The diagrams of Figure 5.21 to Figure 5.23 show the different space and building functions of surrounding environments within 500 meters of these three retail public spaces as the study sites.



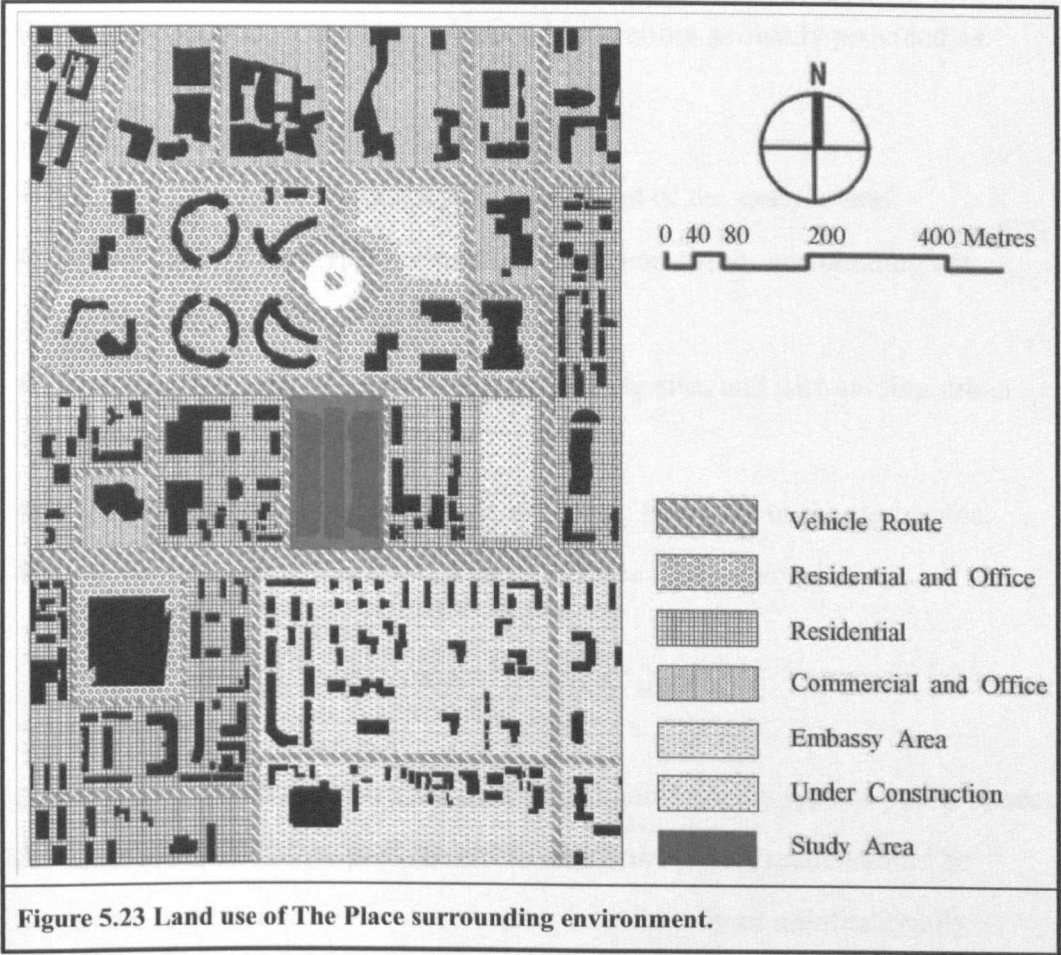
The plan of Figure 5.21 represents the layout of buildings and space functions surrounding them around Wangfujing Street. Buildings as constituent elements in a generalised connected urban public places in a large-scale with both traditional and modern patterns which identify the urban environment and emerge the street grid. The street pattern consists of a grid, the cells of which are relatively regular to other two study areas. Buildings and spaces surrounded by them composed several areas with different functions, which involve in residential areas, mixed use areas with commercial and office, residential and office mixed use areas, recreation, green open spaces, etc. Buildings along the Chang'an Avenue are generally with similar height, and usually have some

civic significance as political or major public buildings. The areas surrounded the study site are most for the use of commercial and office.



The plan of Figure 5.22 shows the layout of buildings and space functions surrounded the area of Sanlitun Village included the South and the North. More modern buildings as separate elements distributed in a more flexible type of spaces with a relatively small-scale which identify the urban environment and emerge the street grid. The functions of buildings and spaces in these areas within the extent of 500 metres of study site include in residential areas, mixed use areas with commercial and office, mixed use areas with residential and office, recreation, embassy area, and central bus station, etc. Buildings in this area are generally low-density with similar height, except of the new buildings in flexible forms laid the bottom of this plan for the mixed-use of commerce

and office. The areas surrounded the study site are most for the use of workplace for embassies and part of local residences.



The plan of Figure 5.23 shows the land use of buildings and spaces surrounded the study site of The Place. Buildings as separate units connected with more regular urban spaces in a large-scale which identify the local urban environment and define the street grid. The street pattern consists of a grid, the cells of which are more regular to the representation of the public spaces which surrounded by those buildings. The different functions around this study site involve in residential areas, mixed use areas with commercial and office, mixed use areas with residential and office, embassy area, and some areas under construction, and so forth. Buildings laid in this area are in the appearances with multiform, and usually have various significances according to the functions of these buildings. The areas surrounded the study site are most

for the use of local residences.

From the representation of land uses in surrounding urban environments of those three study sites above, some useful indications probably provided as following:

- Show the physical dimension in a large extent of the study areas;
- Define the different types of building and urban spaces surrounding the study areas;
- Identify the spatial relationship between study sites and surrounding urban environment;
- Explore the transportation routes and linkage from and to the study sites;
- Provide the potential sources of users of these three study sites.

5.3.2 Accessibility and mobility to study sites

Accessibility is an important element for the quality of any type of public space. As Carmona et al. (2003, p.64) described that, 'the public realm should be accessible to all, some environments are – intentionally or unintentionally – less accessible to certain sections of society'. According to the explanation from the work by Mitchell (2005, p.124), the definition of concept of 'accessibility' refers to a general term used to describe the degree to which an urban environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access" and benefit from some system or entity. Madanipour (1996, p.92) also addresses with the difference from usability which is used to describe the extent to which an urban place can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use, accessibility is strongly related to universal design when the approach involves "direct access". This is about making things accessible to all people, whether they have a disability or not. In generally, therefore, accessibility refers to the ease to arrive to facilities,

activities or goals, which could be appointed in general as opportunities.

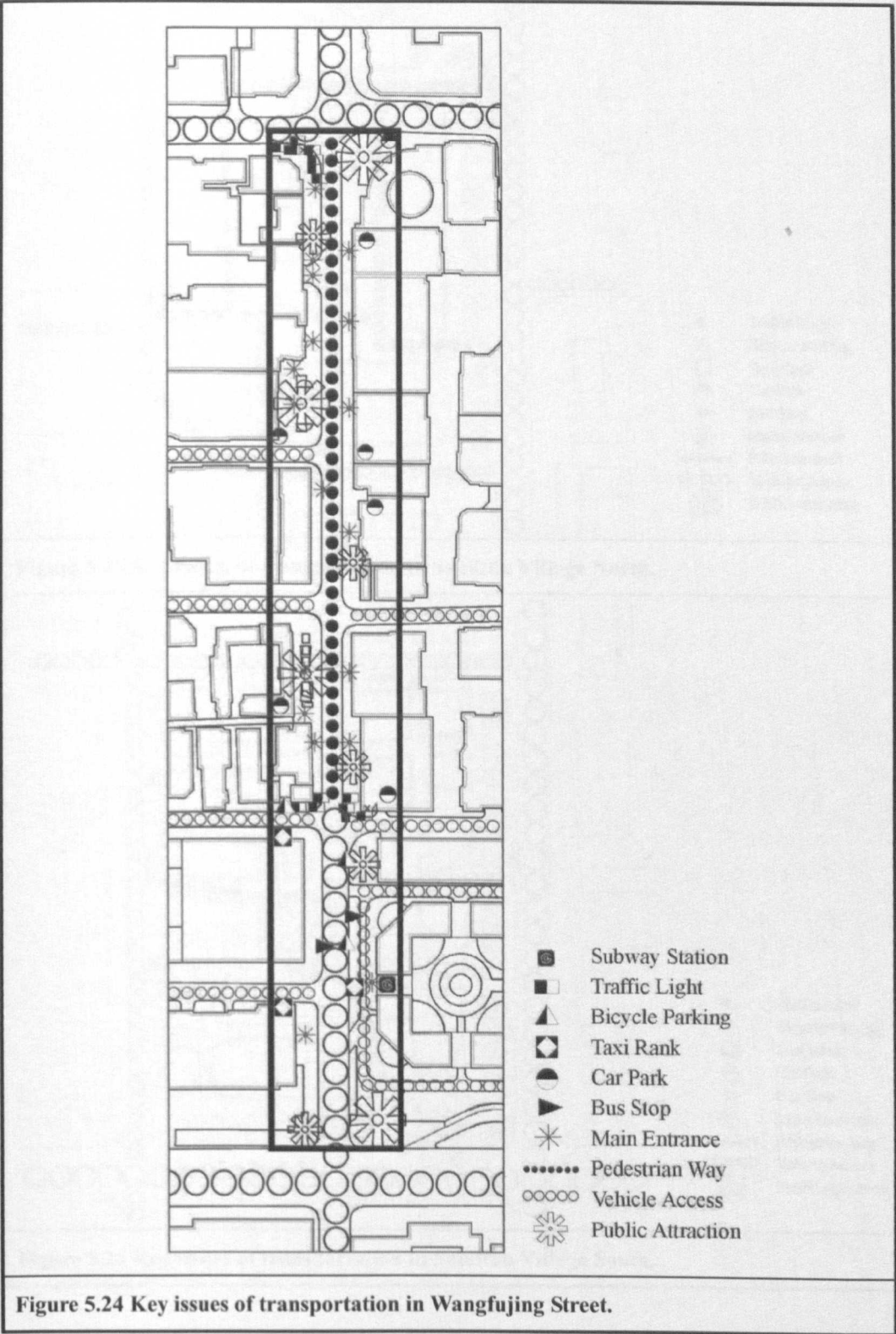
Base on the identification of three form of access by Carr et al. (1992), visual access, symbolic access, physical access, accessibility can be discussed in terms of management of the public realm, which will be discussed in depth with the issue of safety in the later section of this chapter. Besides, as Carmona et al. (2003, p.124) argued, accessibility to public space can also be evaluated in terms of transportation. This is the focus point to discuss in this section.

Figure 5.24 – Figure 5.27 represent the transport network within these three retail-oriented public realms. The transportation system analysis diagrams for these three study areas provide a visual summary of the transportation system in relation to basic traffic routes and some important linkages. Key issues of transportation stated in these maps are used to evaluate the accessibility to those public places in local environment. These characteristics of analyzing access are presented by the movement way, such as vehicle and pedestrian routes in study sites, the most direct factors affecting people access to an environment, involve in the numbers of bus stops, metro stations, taxi ranks, bicycle parking areas, and car parks, etc., the indication of main entrance for some major buildings which impact on the connection between those buildings and the public places outside or surround of them, and the public attractions which can attract more people access to these areas, whatever the people from outside of the study sites or from the buildings within the study sites.

From Figure 5.24, we can see clearly the distribution of different traffic modes in Wangfujing Street. From the bottom to one third part of this study street, both vehicle and people can pass through here, but in the rest of this street, it always used to be pedestrian way during daytime from 7am to 11pm.

Compared with other two study areas, it is easier to reach this place from outside because of variety of public transportations there. However, because of the long distance from the start to end point in this street, there are still some

problems for people who walk through the entire street. Such problems will be discussed continually in later paragraph.



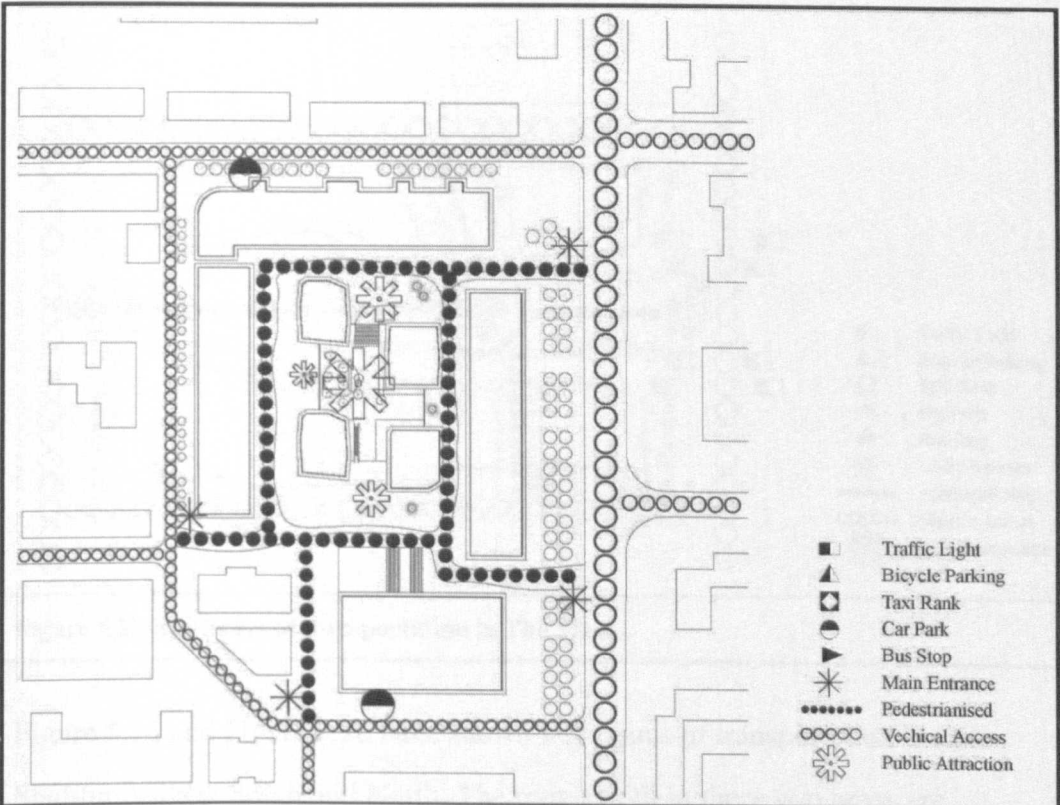


Figure 5.25 Key issues of transportation in Sanlitun Village North.

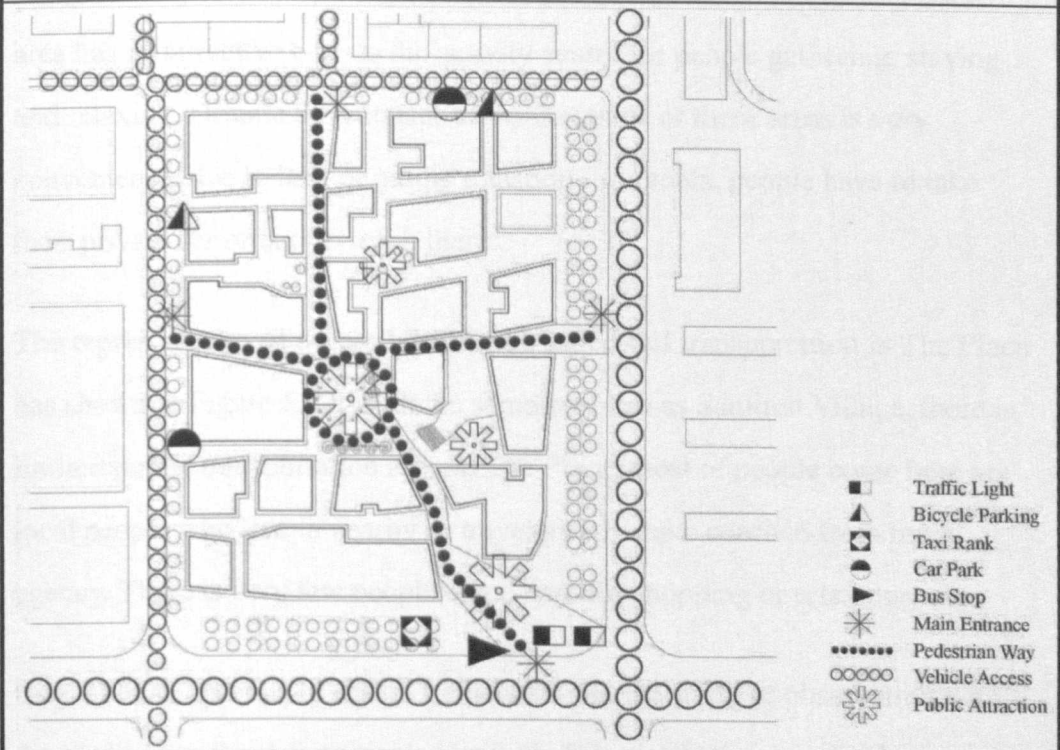


Figure 5.26 Key issues of transportation in Sanlitun Village South.

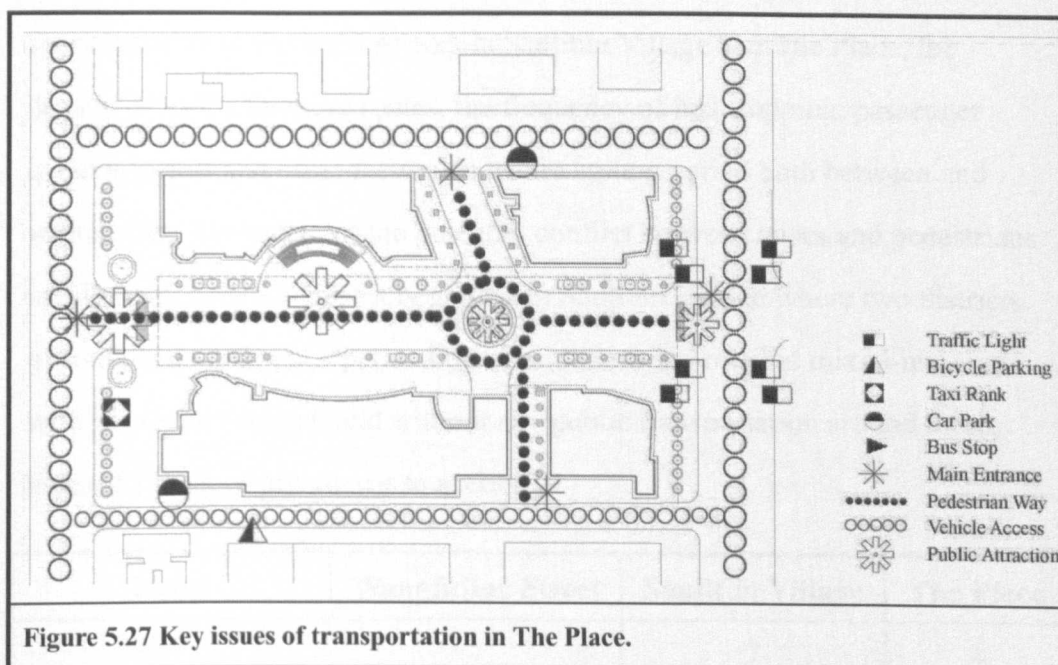


Figure 5.25 and Figure 5.26 have shown key issues of transportation both in Sanlitun Village South and North. The routes both in these two areas are designed for pedestrian, except for the vehicle ways around the areas. Each area has an attractive core as the activity centre for people gathering, staying and relaxing. Despite the connection with outside of these areas is very convenience, due to lack of public transportation tools, people have to take their private car or taxi to reach there.

The representation of accessibility in the aspects of transportation in The Place has shown in Figure 5.27. With the same problem as Sanlitun Village, there is limited public transportation around The Place, most of people come here are local people who live in nearby or travelers who take coached from travel agency. There is very few people come here for shopping or relax purpose.

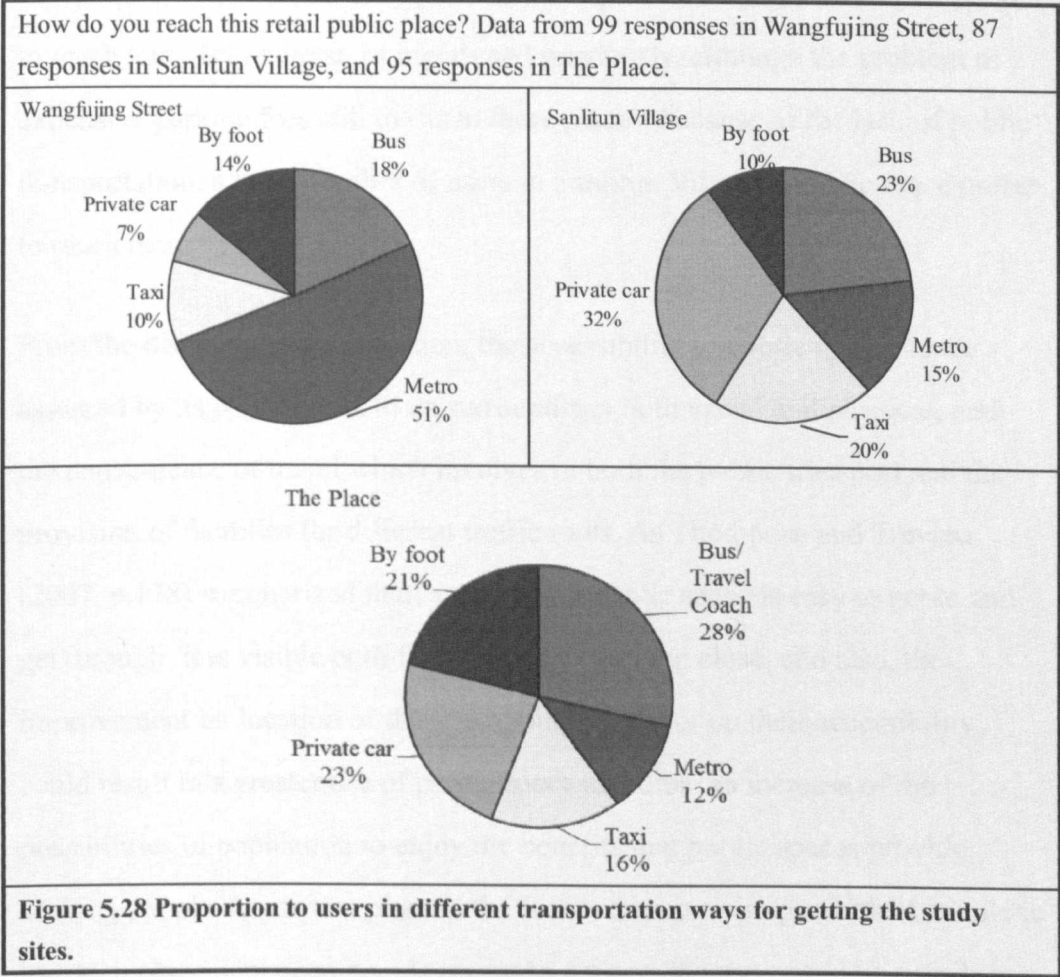
Based on the analysis of traffic framework and the study of observation within the study sites, the data presented in Table 5.3 reveals the complex between pedestrians and traffic, especially buses, in streets adjoining pedestrian shopping streets or places at each case study site. Although in all sites traffic links closed to the pedestrian shopping street in Wangfujing and the public

spaces outside of the retail sectors in Sanlitun Village and The Place, the density of traffic on these routes, the frequency of bus stopping, passenger queuing points and other factors on traffic system varied both between and within sites. The extent of the potential conflict between buses and pedestrians in adjoining streets is probably greater in Sanlitun Village where two districts of south and north are separated by a residential and retailed mixed-use area with poor environment, and without any public transportation around there, unless by walk or private car to access.

Items	Wangfujing Street	Sanlitun Village	The Place
No. of buses	7	7	4
No. of bus stops on the major entrances	2	1	2
No. of traffic lights within or closed to the study site	14	4	8
No. of car parks within or closed to the study site	6	5	2
No. of taxi ranks within or closed to the study site	2	1	1
No. of bicycle parking within or closed to the study site	2	2	2
No. of Metro stations surround the study site	2	0	0
Table 5.3 Frequency of items on transportation within or closed to studied retail public places.			

Regarding another key factor for the use of shopping streets and retail sectors, the amount of public car parking facilities within or near the study areas of these three retail public realms is relatively adequate through evaluating by observation study and the experiences by author. Although space size, function and user travel mode varies between these three study areas, car parking

facilities have been provided adequate car spaces to people, even the most frequently uses during the holiday or certain special days. With regard to the user travel mode during the peak time in these places, it is worthy mention that the number of taxi ranks lacks relatively either within or near the shopping places. It is very difficult to take a taxi from Wangfujing Street wherever you are and you want to go, especially in peak times.



The variation of choices on modes to get these three shopping places is reflected in Figure 5.28 through the questionnaire survey carried out in these different places and obtaining the data from 255 responses. The pie chart for proportion to different ways people chosen in Wangfujing Street shows the absolute dominance of the mode of metro with more than half choices by users. In Wangfujing Street, it is noticed that the least choice of travel modes to get there is the way of driving a private car. Because of the large extent of the

shopping street in Wangfujing, it is very inconvenient to access to other places when you finish shopping or any other activities, unless return to the start point for collecting the car. And the following problem is the very expensive parking fees. Due to the heavily traffic congestion in Beijing, the parking fee has increased greatly. It would be a huge cost for car parking when you finish your shopping or anything you do in several hours. Thus, in Wangfujing Street, public transportation occupied the top one choice for people to reach here. By contrast, as mentioned previously, although the problem of expensive parking fees still exists in these places, because of the lack of public transportation, a large number of users in Sanlitun Village and The Place prefer to reach there by private cars.

From the discussion in this section, the accessibility to public space can be assessed by its connections to its surroundings both visual and physical, and the convenience of travel which involves in both the public transport and the provision of facilities for different traffic tools. As Thompson and Travlou (2007, p.178) summarized that, a successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close, and also, the improvement on location of these shopping places or on their accessibility could result in a greater use of public space and thus, an increase of the possibilities of population to enjoy the benefits that public spaces provide. Making people access to a place is the first and primary step to attract people to use such place. Only can people access to a place, the use would be possible happened. People like to go to a place where can be easily reached by any way they want, whatever by public transportation, taxi, or private cars, etc., such as Wangfujing Street. Besides, location is also an important issue for a successful place, especially for a commercial place. For example, Sanlitun Village North has very few people to access, except the expensive flagship stores, the location with the weak links between itself and outside environment is one of the major reasons. Whereas Sanlitun Village South faced to the busy road with

impressive facades, it is no doubt that a number of people would be attracted to close it.

5.4 Image of Places

Comfort and image of a place is very vital for a successful public space in a local urban environment. According to the work by Smith et al. (1997, p.231), whether a space is comfortable and has a good image is the key to its success, which includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, good scale to stay, the availability of places to sit – the importance of giving people the choice to sit where they want is generally underestimated, and other amenities in places. Some questions to consider on image of places have been stated by Project for Public Spaces (2001, p.47) in following:

- Does the place make a good first impression?
- Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located?
- Do people have choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
- Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?

According to the elements stated above, this section focuses on three major issues to evaluate the presence of comfort and image of these three study areas in local urban environment from the place scale includes both physical and spatial view, the sitting place in such study areas provided to users, and other urban amenities, such as the landscape design, etc. In order to obtain a general understanding of people's impression on these places before observe people's use in practice, some short questionnaires carried out separately in these three study areas. Figure 5.29- Figure 5.31 show the proportion of the most satisfied elements by users in Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The place. The elements evaluated in the surveys involved in the appearance of buildings, sculpture and landscape design, the view of streets, signs and advertisement in the places, life style, access to culture, places for relaxing and resting,

provision of brands and shops, management and maintenance, and the dimension of spaces.

“Thinking about this urban environment, which of these things do you think most satisfied?
Data from 166 responses in Wangfujing Street, 192 responses in Sanlitun Village, and 142 responses in The Place.

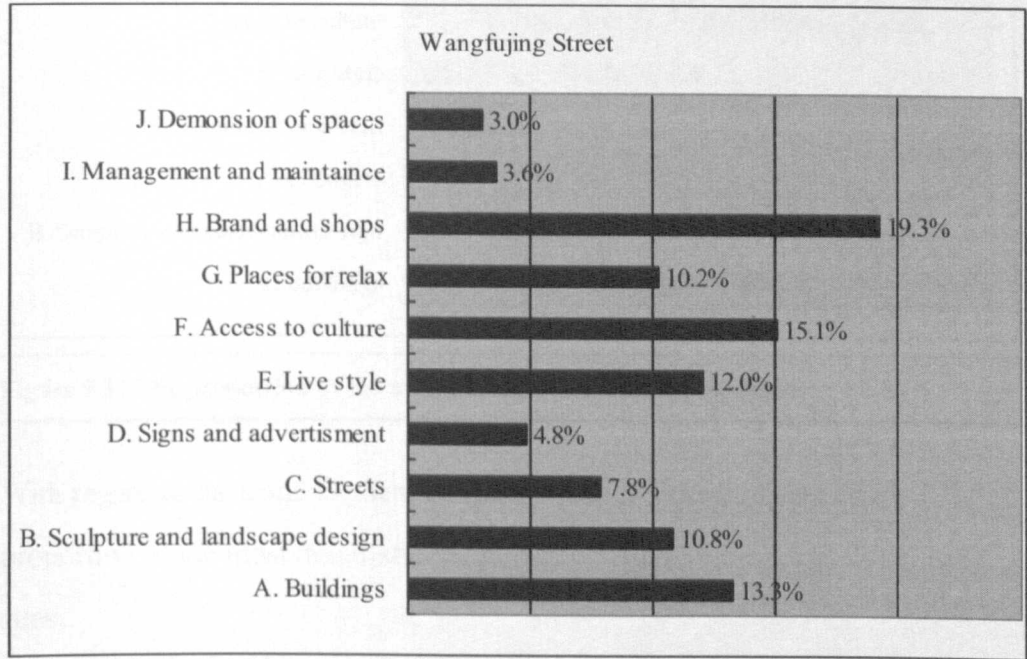


Figure 5.29The proportion of the most satisfied elements in Wangfujing Street.

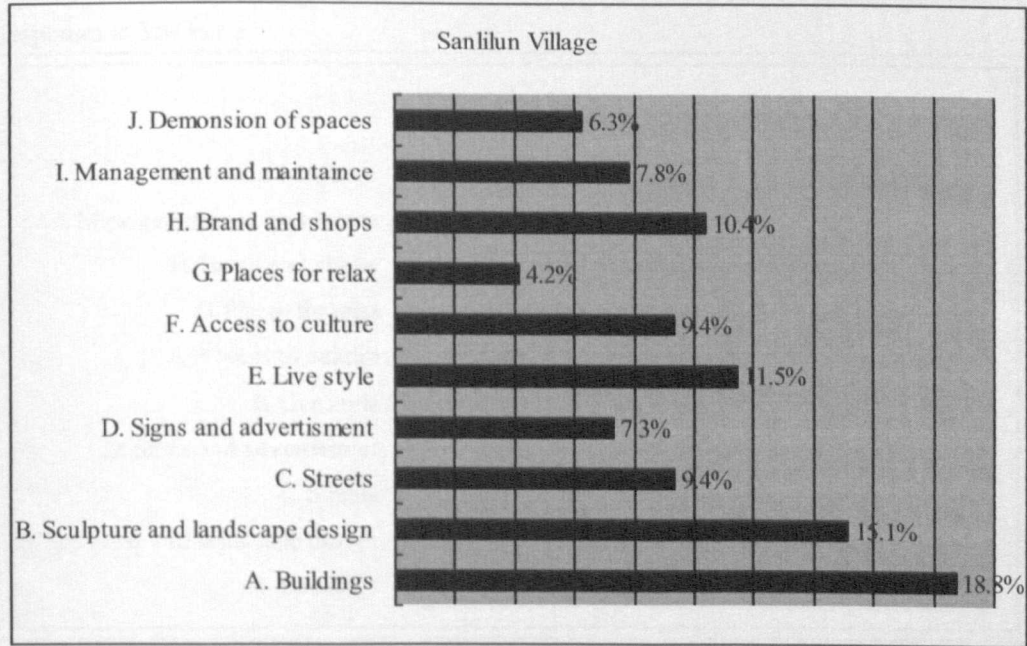
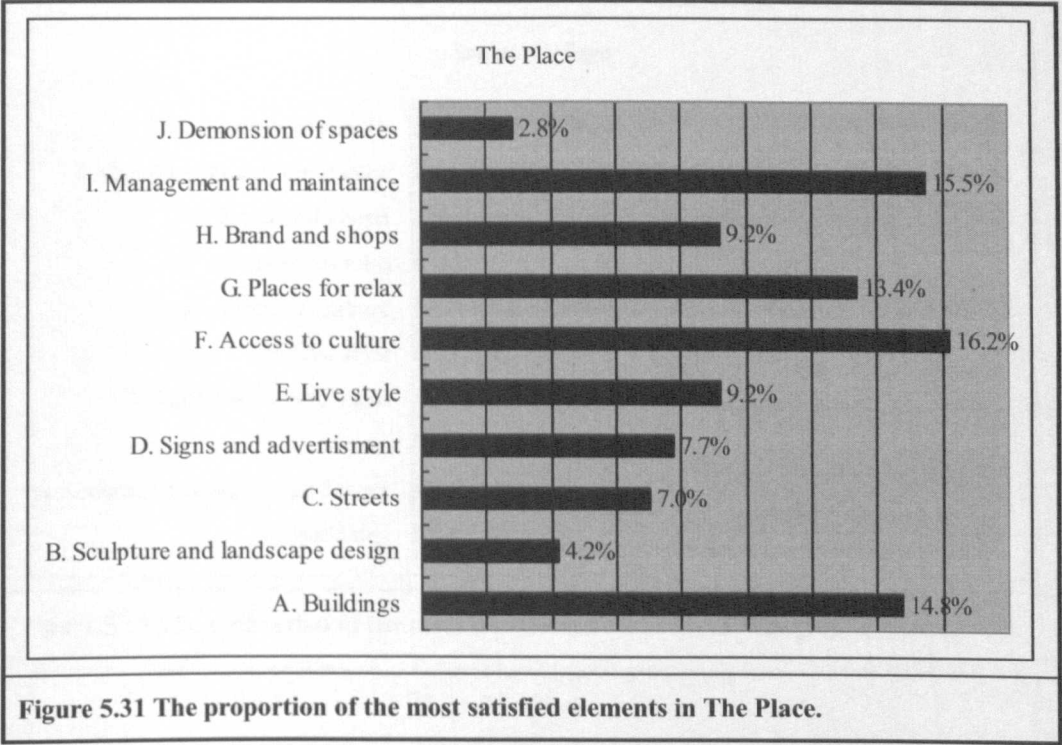
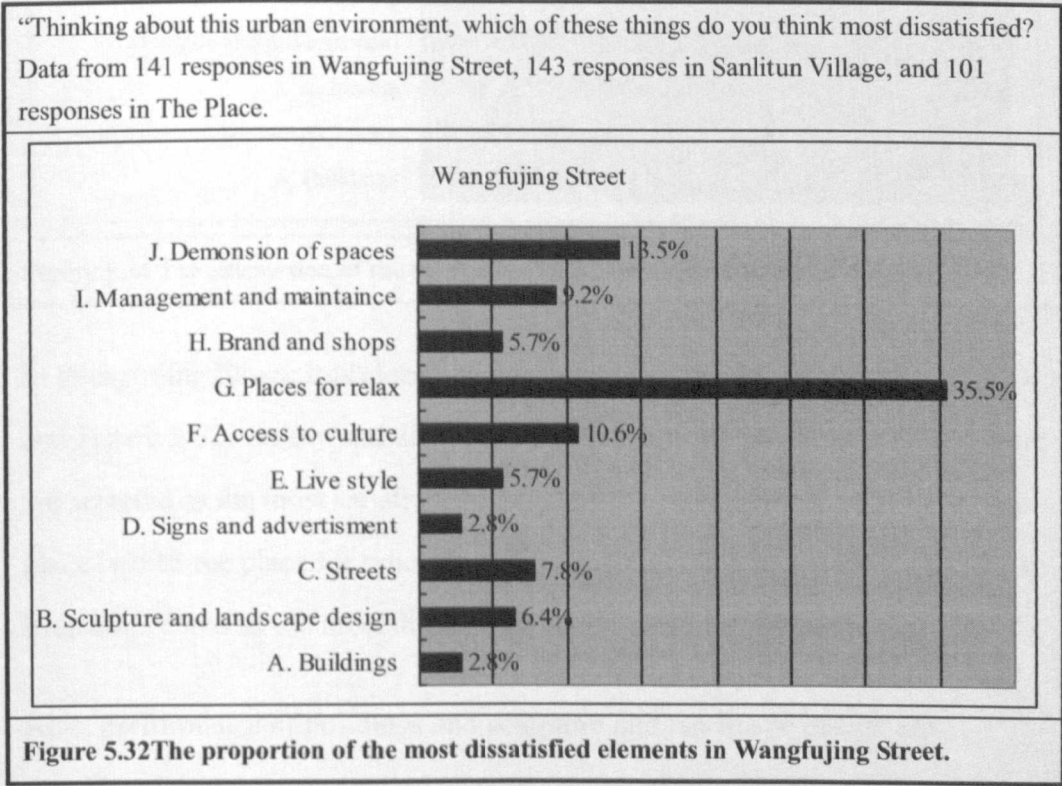


Figure 5.30 The proportion of the most satisfied elements in Sanlitun Village.



With regard to the same elements, Figure 5.32 – Figure 5.34show the proportion of the most dissatisfied elements by users in the same three study sites.



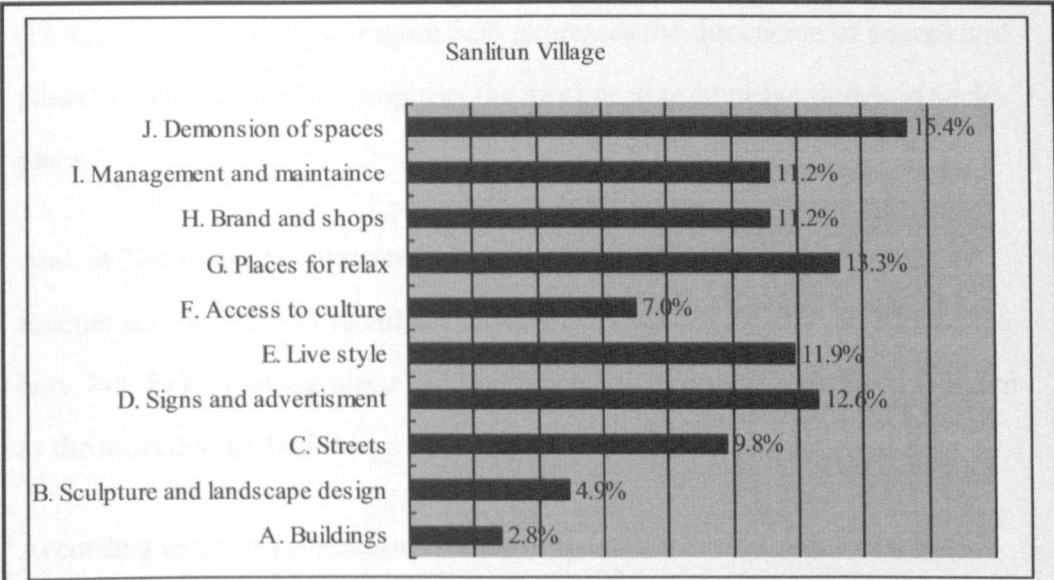


Figure 5.33 The proportion of the most dissatisfied elements in Wangfujing Street.

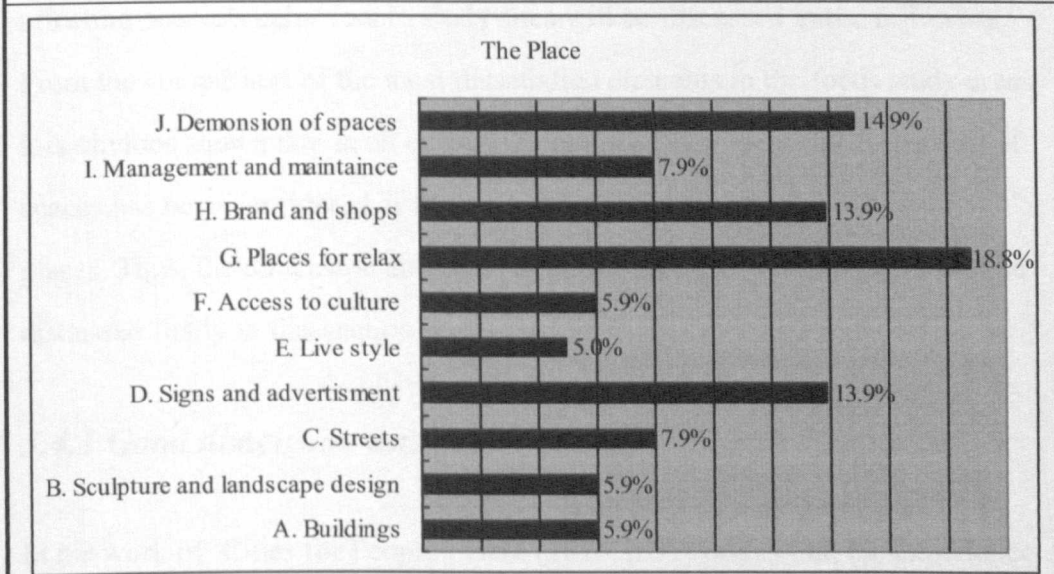


Figure 5.34 The proportion of the most dissatisfied elements in Sanlitun Village.

In Wangfujing Street, it is clearly represented from the diagram of Figure 5.29 and Figure 5.32, variety and diversity of brands and shops and access to culture are selected as the most satisfied elements by the most number of users in this place, whilst the place for relaxing and resting and the dimension of space have been considered as the most dissatisfied in this commercial area.

Also, performance of buildings and sculpture and landscape design are considered as the most satisfied elements in the place of Sanlitun Village

(Figure 5.30), by contrast, Figure 5.35 expresses the dimension of spaces and place to relax selected by people as the most need to improve things in such place.

And, in *The Place*, people consider these two elements of management and maintenance and access to culture as the most satisfied when they experience here, but, lack of sitting place and the dimension of spaces have been selected as the most dissatisfied things in this space.

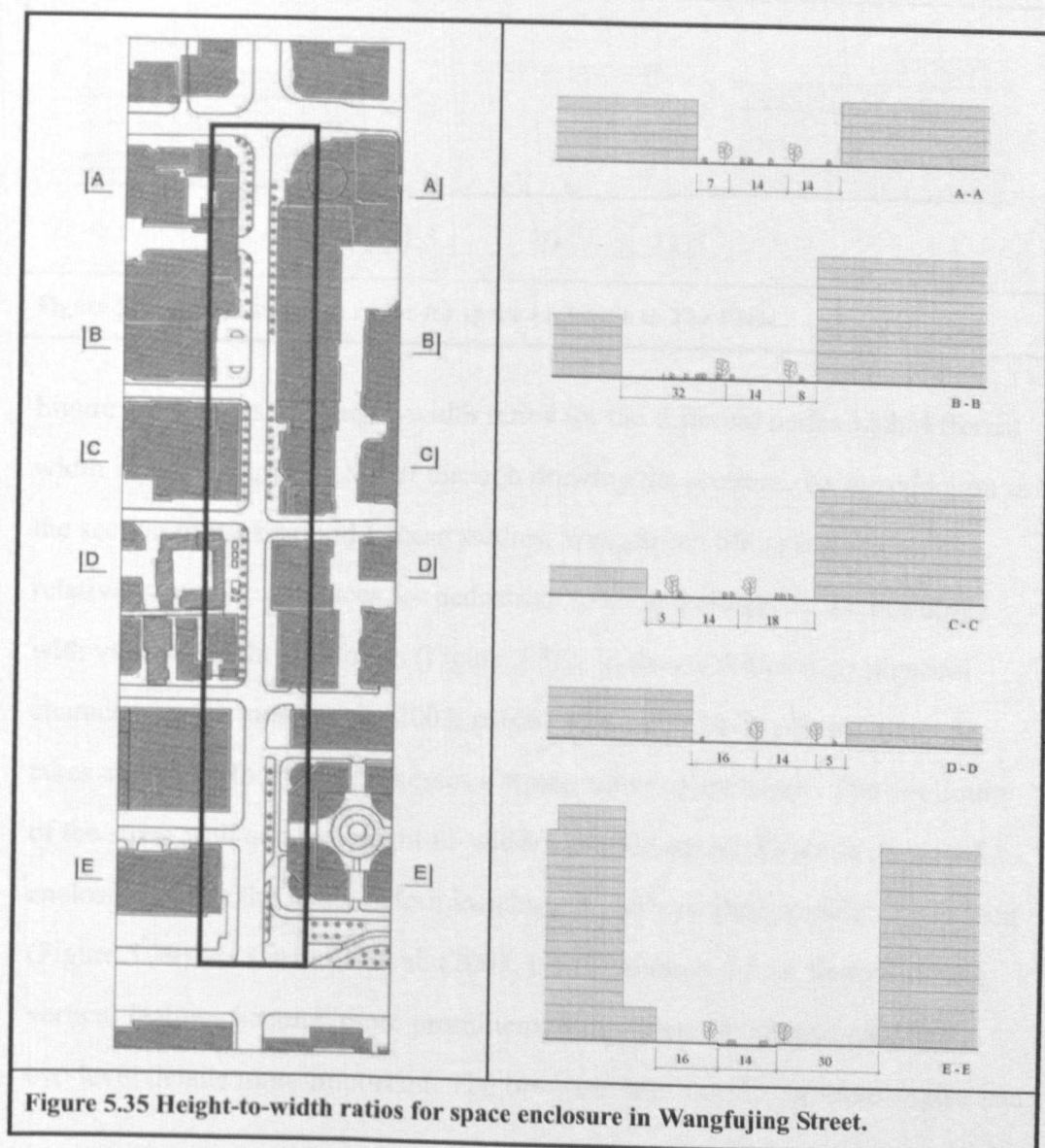
According to the consideration on the comparisons of different elements in different places, an in-depth analysis on the physical factors which may affecting people's behaviors in study sites will be discussed in the following. From the comparison of the most dissatisfied elements in the focus study areas, it is obvious shown that in all of these three case study areas the dimension of spaces has been considered as the major matter to stop people using such places. Thus, the dimension and scale of public space as the start point will be discussed firstly in this section.

5.4.1 Good dimension and scale

In his work of 'Cities for People', Gehl (2010, p.57) points out, the experience of comfort and well-being in urban public spaces is closely tied to how urban space structure and city space harmonize with the human body, human senses and corresponding space dimensions and scale. Unless good places and a good human scale are provided, he also stresses, crucial qualities of urban public spaces will be lacking. The importance of good public places has been discussed in the literature review chapters based on a theoretical degree. Evens, exchanges and conversations take place when there are comfortable, inviting places to stand and sit. It is possible to get a strong sense of harmony in public space in an urban environment physically and through the senses. As Sitte (1889) described that the importance of dimensioning urban space to fit the

people and functions they will serve, as well as having closed space where the line of vision is halted by surrounding facades. The size of the urban space is a crucial factor for well-being and for the function of the space as a framework for people's activities in local urban environments. Thus, the concept of 'dimension' in this section mainly refers to the size and enclosure of these study areas.

Based on the survey stated in the beginning of this section, the dimension of places has been considered as the most dissatisfied elements in all of these three study areas. Figure 5.35 to Figure 5.37 represents the height-to-width ratios for the enclosure of street or spaces in the three case study areas.



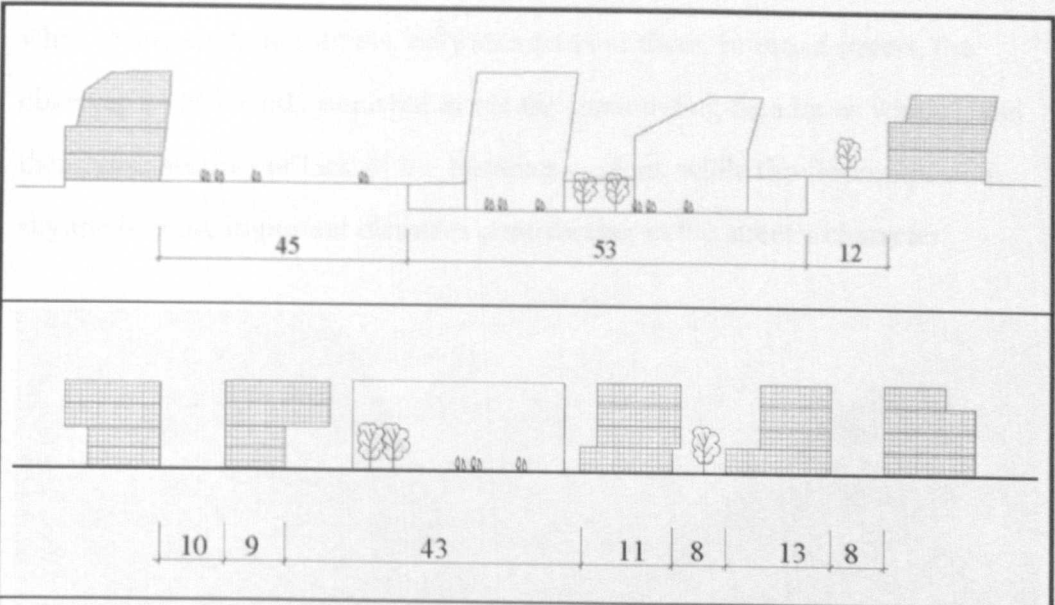


Figure 5.36 Height-to-width ratios for space enclosure in Sanlitun Village.
(Top: North, Below: South)

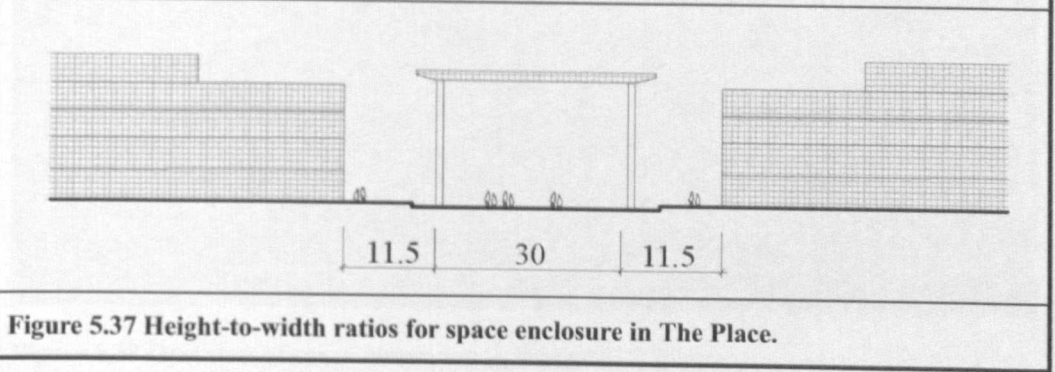


Figure 5.37 Height-to-width ratios for space enclosure in The Place.

Figure 5.35 shows the height-width ratios for the different nodes with different width in the Wangfujing Street through drawing the sections. As introduction in the section of background to case studies, Wangfujing Shopping Street has relatively large-scale spaces for pedestrian route and alongside the buildings with various height and forms (Figure 5.38). In streets with strong physical character, as Carmona et al. (2003, p.146) stated that, their volume generally takes a positive form and possesses a strong sense of enclosure. The continuity of the street wall and the height-to-width ratio determine the sense of spatial enclosure, while the width determines how the surrounding architecture is seen (Figure 5.39). As Carmona et al. (2003, p.147) pointed out, in narrow streets, vertical features become more prominent, projections are exaggerated and eye-level details more important. The observer sees façades at acute angles and,

when facing along the streets, only sees parts of them. In broad streets, the observer is sufficiently removed to see the surrounding façades as wholes, and their relationship – or lack of it – becomes evident, while the floorscape and skyline become important elements contributing to the street's character.



Figure 5.38 Overview of space dimension in Wangfujing Street.

From the section of Figure 5.36, it is clearly seen that the spaces surrounded by buildings and the sense of enclosure in the study area of Sanlitun Village. One of the most significant characteristics of performance of the place of Sanlitun Village is the unique form of buildings in this area (Figure 5.40 and Figure 5.41). As Broadbent (1990, p.96) commented, spaces surrounded by buildings with irregular frontages enhance their sense of enclosure, and provide a constantly changing prospect for the moving observer. Compare with the Wangfujing Street that have regular building and relatively large-scale spaces, Sanlitun Village composed by several small-scale spaces and variety forms of buildings, which represent more enclosure places as shown by the sections above.

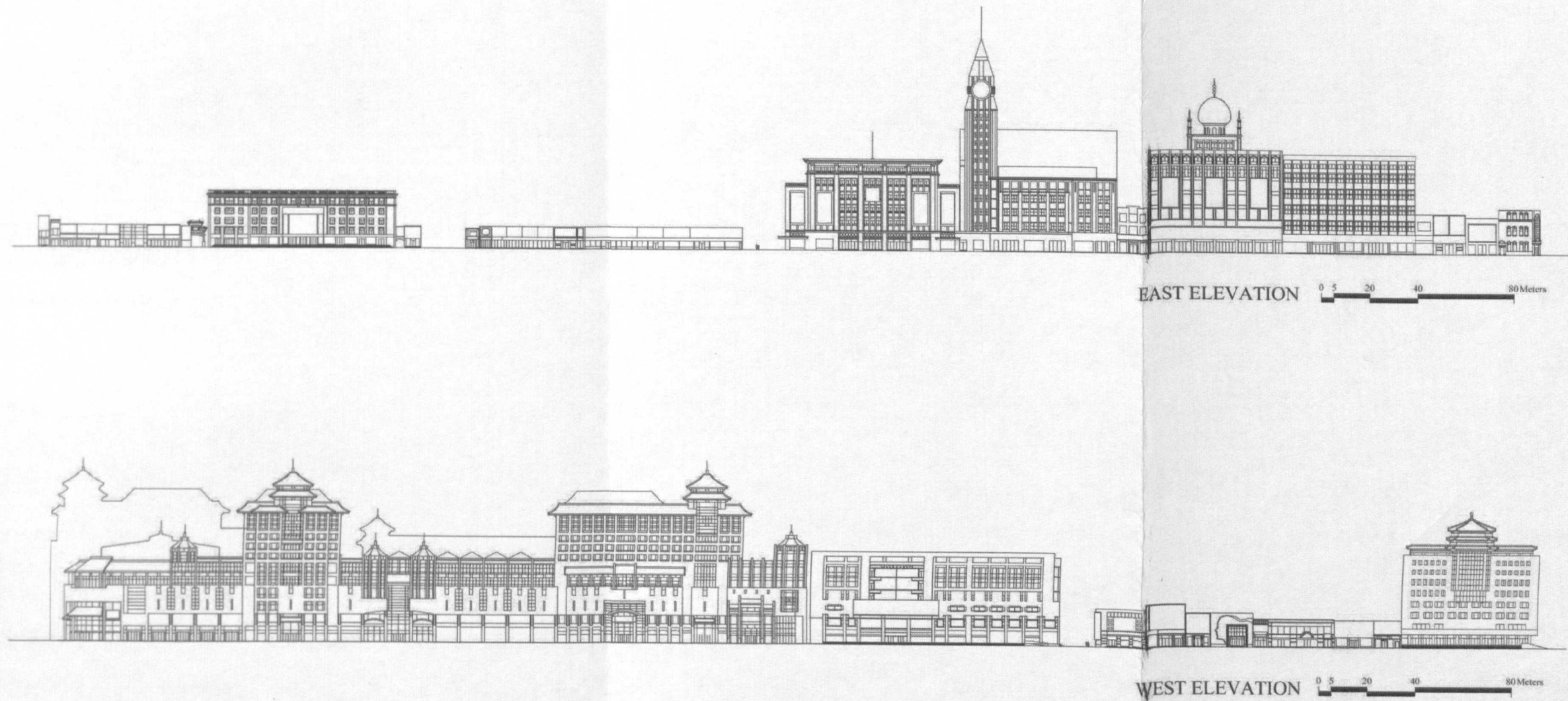


Figure 5. 39 Overview of the street elevations in Wangfujing Street.



Figure 5.40A public space surrounded by buildings in Sanlitun Village North.



Figure 5.41 The performance of buildings in Sanlitun Village South.

The Place, as shown in the Figure 5.37, has relatively dull public space under the large sky-screen and enclosed by uniform buildings laid two sides of this

place (Figure 5.42). Based on the comparison of the straight street in large-scale with several public spaces located in the front of some buildings with different dimensions in Wangfujing Street, and several small-scale public places surrounded by some irregular buildings in Sanlitun Village, The Place presents an inanimate empty space under the famous sky-screen without any other amenities for attracting more people and more activities. Thus, as Carmona et al. (2003, p.147) concluded, the successful design of urban public spaces generally depends on such factors as good proportions between length and width, the kind of structures of which they are composed, and their visual termination on a building or other feature that brings the eye to rest.



Figure 5.42 The space dimension in The Place.

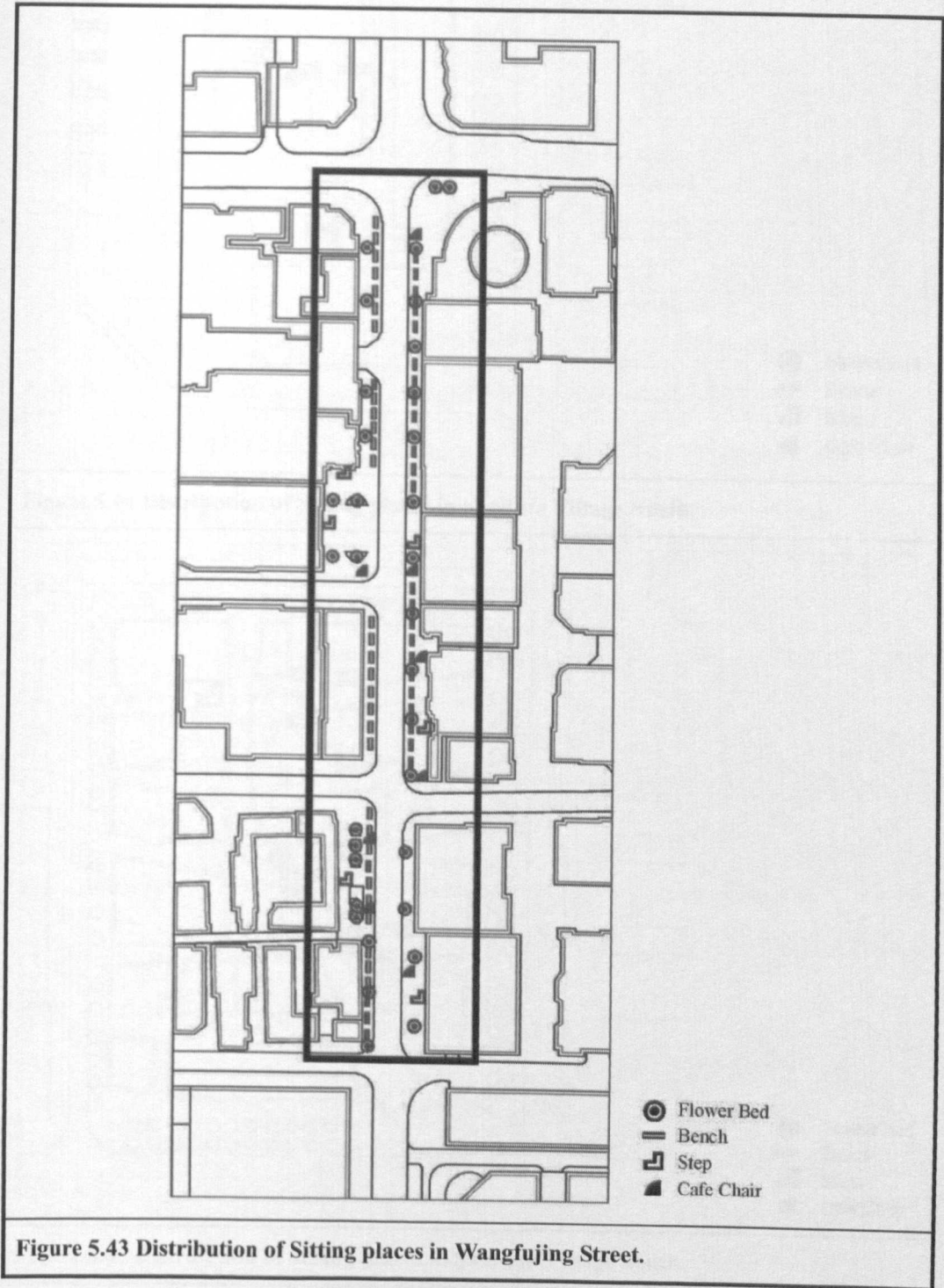
Through the observation and interview carried out in the research, and the discussion stated above, compared with these three case study areas, there are very few people consider The Place is good for staying or relaxing, whatever its size or other issues, except for children, because there are enough empty and big spaces for running and playing. It is also worth to mention that some old people think the atmosphere is suitable for them to do some exercise in the morning and do rest in the evening or any time they want to stay because few people there without noisy. But it usually stops them to come there sometimes

due to lack of sitting places, even no fitted sitting places except for the surface of flower beds, etc. With regard to the area of Wangfujing Street and Sanlitun Village, there are some interesting findings. Most people who live in local environment and never or few go abroad think the large-scale in Wangfujing Street is much better than the narrow paths in Sanlitun Village. Those people think the pedestrian routes in Sanlitun Village too small to take large number of people, they prefer to go shopping, do some activities in Wangfujing Street with the proper width they like. Whereas those people who come from foreign countries, such as officer in Embassy, the student, or some travelers, and some young people, especially those have experiences in abroad, much like places in Sanlitun Village rather than Wangfujing Street. And those people think the places in Sanlitun Village have more enclosure and more interesting with unique design of facade, and several linkages between different spaces surrounded by buildings, and the scale is very similar as that in European countries where they have ever lived. Thus, the dimension and scale is not merely a physical concept, users' experiences should also been considered one of the most important factors when design or regenerate such places. Their experiences even can decide what they like or dislike.

5.4.2 Sitting places

People needing to stay for any length of time in urban public space find it tiring to stand or walk and will look about for somewhere to sit. The longer the envisaged stay, the more carefully the individual will choose the place to sit. Thus, as Whyte (1980, p.57) stressed that, sitting space has been identified as one of the most important characteristics in retaining people in urban public spaces and possibly supporting social behavior. According to the study of city quality, Gehl (2010, p.92) outlines the general requirements for a good place to sit are a pleasant microclimate, good placement preferably at the edge of the space with your back covered, a good view, an appropriately low noise level to

allow conversation, and no pollution. If the place offers special attractions such as water, flowers, fine space, good architecture and art works, and a good view of the life and people, individual prefers to sit there. Figure 5.43 to Figure 5.46 shows the distribution of variety of sitting places in three case study sites, which include benches, chairs, steps, and surfaces of flower beds, etc.



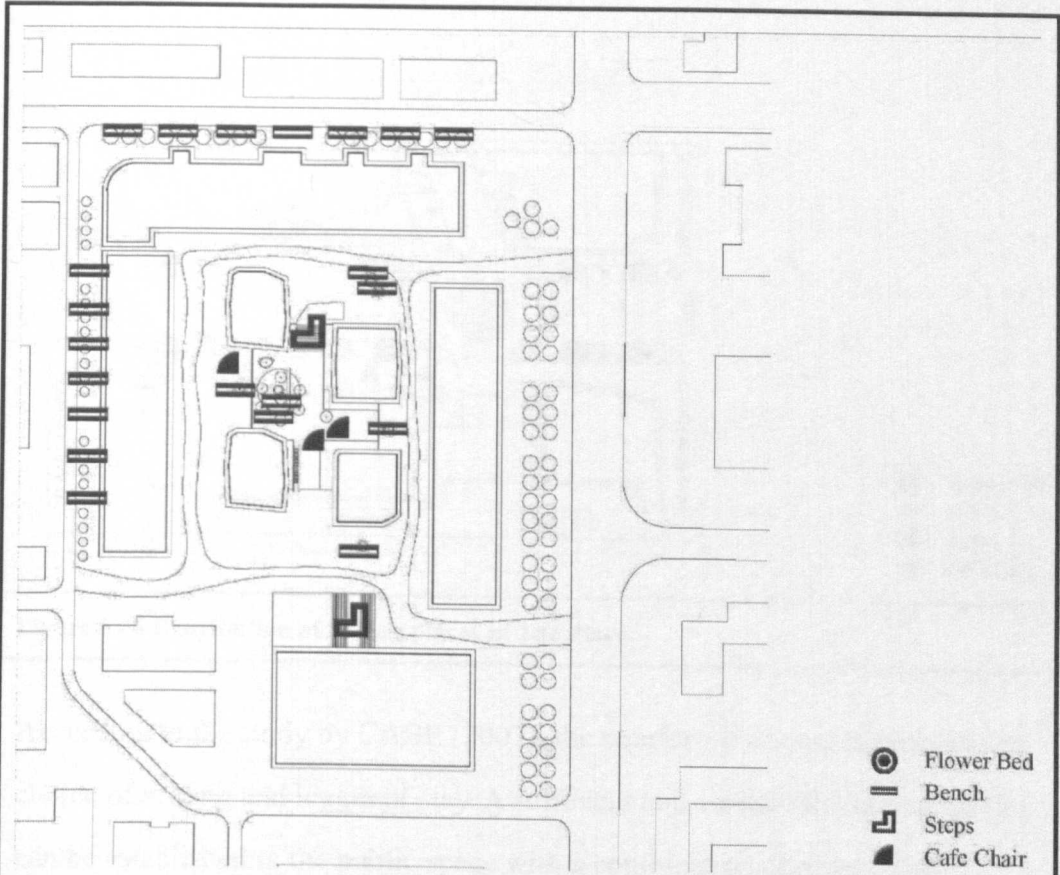


Figure 5.44 Distribution of Sitting places in Sanlitun Village North.

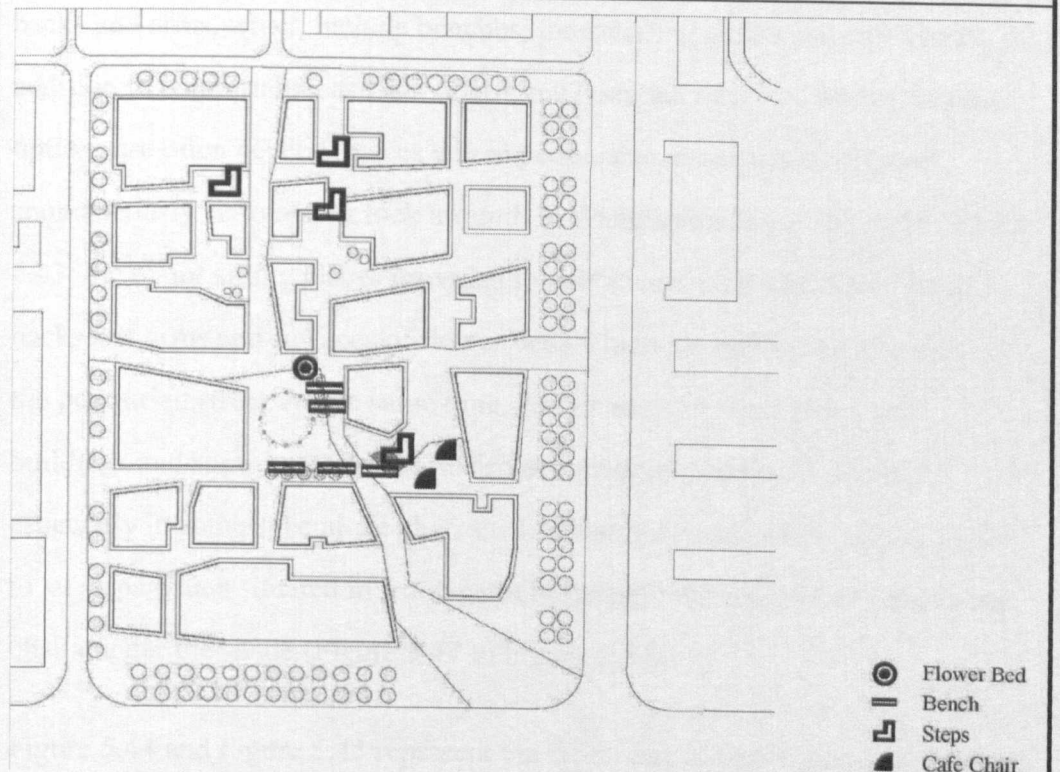
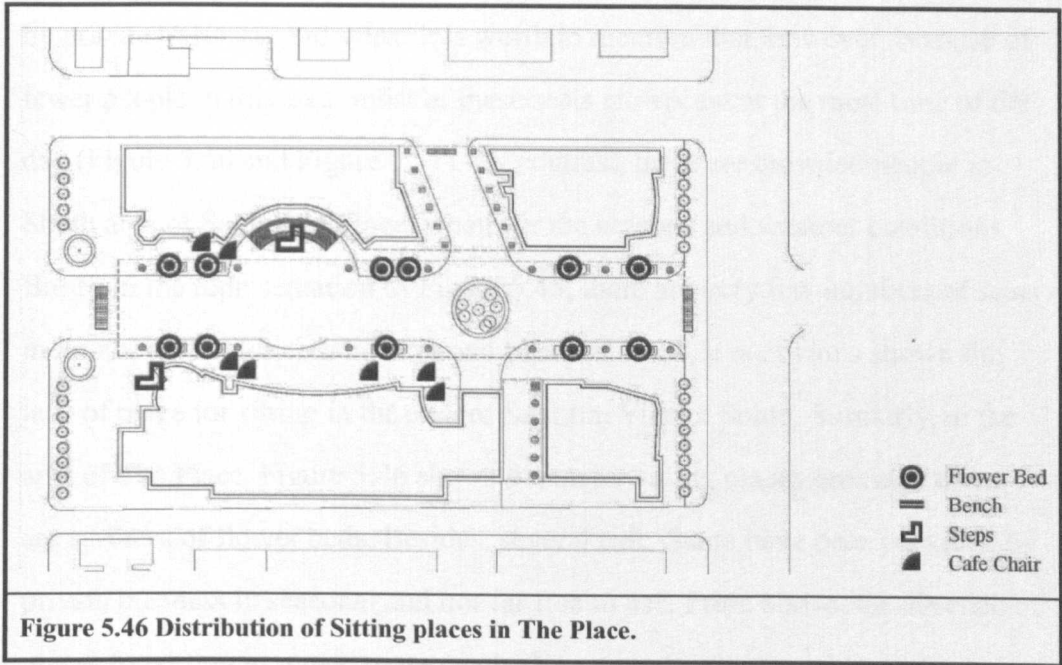


Figure 5.45 Distribution of Sitting places in Sanlitun Village South.



According to the study by CABA (2007), the comfort of seating influences the choice of seating and length of stay. A sufficient and varied selection of seating can be established in the public space with a combination of primary and secondary seating. The primary choice of places to sit is actual furniture with backs and arms, which include benches, freestanding chairs and cafe chairs. In addition to comfortable, as Gehl (2010, p.97) stated, many secondary seating options are often needed, places where people can more informally and spontaneously sit to rest or look around. In Wangfujing Street shown as Figure 5.43, the major sitting places provided to people are fixed benches without backs and arms and surfaces of flower beds which located in the both sides of the pedestrian street. At the same time, certain steps in front gate of the buildings and some cafe chairs are also occupied by people for sitting, especially in some special weather, such as sunny or rainy days, people prefer to sit steps which situated in frontage of buildings with shelters and some cafe chairs under the shade (Figure 5.47 to Figure 5.59).

Figure 5.44 and Figure 5.45 represent the types and layout of seats in Sanlitun Village. In North area, there are flexible choices to sitting with various types of sitting places, such as the benches with interesting design, cafe chairs provided

by private business, and steps. It is worth to mention that, however, because of fewer people in this area, most of these seats are vacant at the most time of the day (Figure 5.50 and Figure 5.51). By contrast, there are crowded people in South area of Sanlitun Village, whatever the seasons and weather conditions. But from the representation of Figure 5.45, there are very few numbers of seats in South, except for certain steps and benches. Thus, it is obvious shown the lack of place for sitting in the area of Sanlitun Village South. Similarly, in the area of The Place, Figure 5.46 shows the major sitting places provided there are surfaces of flower beds. Besides, several cafe chairs have been provided by private business in seasonal and not for free to use. From above, the absence of places for sitting provided to people had become the major problems in Sanlitun Village South and The Place. Especially in the area of Sanlitun South, people can only stand next to or lean on the trees or somewhere for resting when they tired to stand or walk, or they sit anywhere that can be used to sit on, such as flower pot pedestals, and so on (Figure 5.52 to Figure 5.57). At the same time, people can not be retained and attracted in such places.



Figure 5.47 Fixed benches in Wangfujing Street.



Figure 5.48 Steps occupied by people for sheltering in summer days in Wangfujing Street.



Figure 5.49 Cafe chairs under the shade in summer days in Wangfujing Street.



Figure 5.50 Vacant seats in Sanlitun Village North.



Figure 5.51 Cafe chairs in Sanlitun Village North.



Figure 5.52 Fixed benched occupied by crowd people in Sanlitun Village South.



Figure 5.53 Fixed Benched in Sanlitun Village South.



Figure 5.54 Floor lamp used to sit due to the absence of sitting places, Sanlitun South.



Figure 5.55 People sit on steps for resting in Sanlitun Village South.



Figure 5.56 Flower pot pedestal used to sit in The Place.



Figure 5.57 People take seats by themselves because of the absence of sitting places in The Place.

Another issue is that, the provision of sitting places by stores or private business has also played an invisible significant role for the relationship between the stores or commercial business and people or consumers in these places. Through the observation conducted in these places, it is clearly shown that, places which provided more sitting places by commercial stores were usually livelier than other places in the same site. As Mehta (2010) analysed, seating provided by stores was usually near businesses that were public and

where goods could be consumed outdoors. This meant that in most places where there was commercial seating allowed for an extension of the activity between the store and outdoor public spaces. This extension allowed people to engage in more social activities on these places.

5.4.3 Other urban amenities

As Mitchell (2005, p.67) defined, the concept of urban amenities refers to specific goods and services in an urban environment that make some locations particularly attractive for living and working. Urban amenities influence quality of life or social well-being, which involve in a broad series of characteristics in a city, such as variety in private goods and services, aesthetics, physical setting, and climate; availability and quality of public goods, and ease of movement for people and goods (Smith, 1997). Some of them have been discussed in previous sections already. The urban amenities discussed in this section relate to the aspect of urban landscaping in these three study areas. Figure 5.58 to Figure 5.61 show the elements of the street and space scene in an urban setting, such as trees, water, sculpture, and so on.

According to the study conducted by Gehl (2010), and through observing these three areas, it is obviously shown that if the place offers special attractions such as water features, fountains, and any similar amenities, people always prefer to gather there for longer time, especially for some families with their children (Figure 5.62). In addition to contribute to identity and character of public spaces, public art, such as sculpture, is also a vital form of urban amenities. It not only can set physical quality of places, but also attracted people to take place in more social activities on these places, such as take pictures, sit on the pedestals for resting, etc. (Figure 5.63). Also, it is necessary to mention that, the sculpture situated in Sanlitun Village South has additional functions besides its aesthetic use. Because the stores in Sanlitun Village South are located

separately and connected with paths in open-air, the public arts in this area are designed to air-conditioners for reducing the temperature in summer days for a more comfortable transition from one store to another (Figure 5.64).

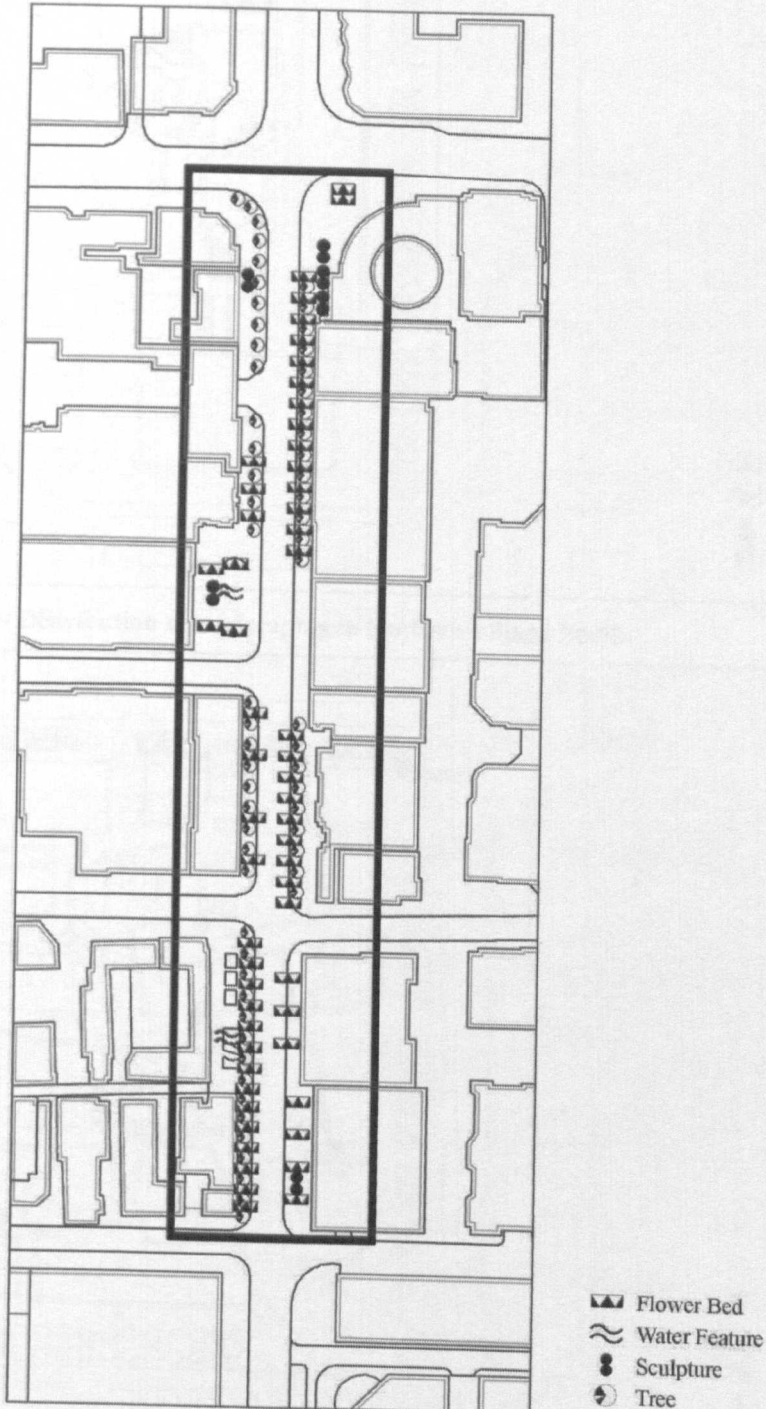


Figure 5.58 Distribution of landscaping in Wangfujing Street.

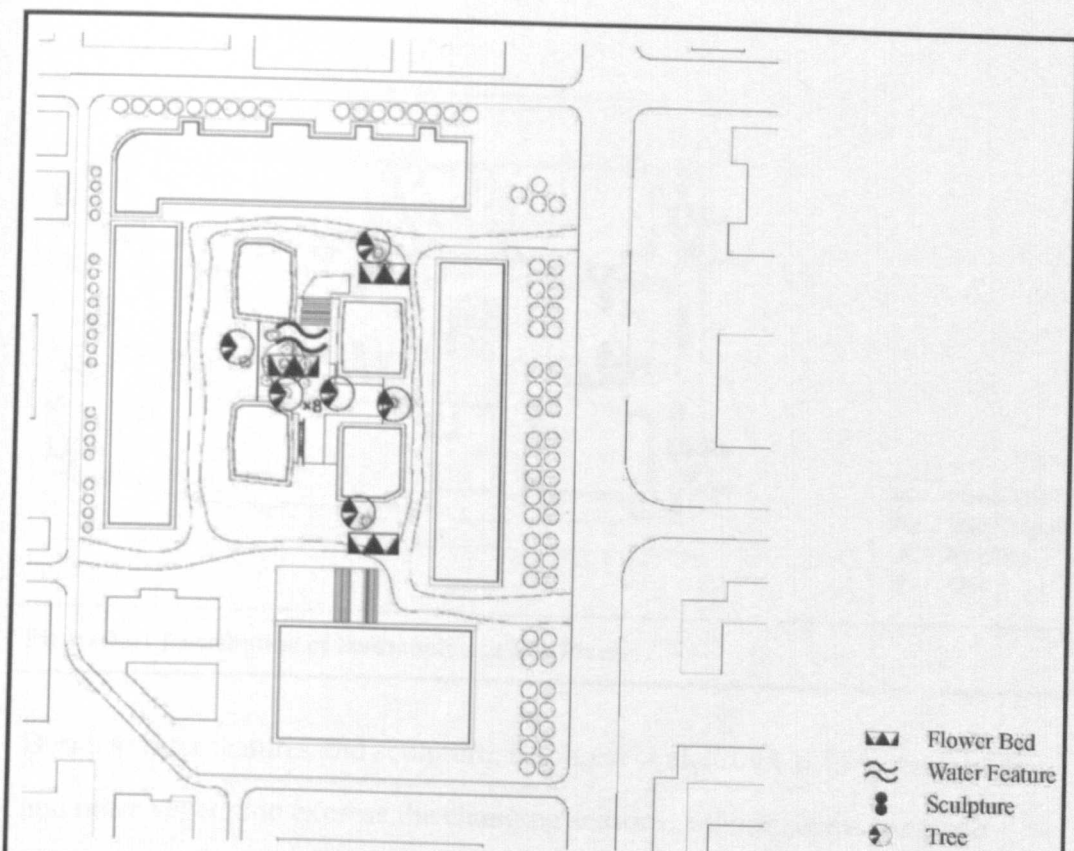


Figure 5.59 Distribution of landscaping in Sanlitun Village North.

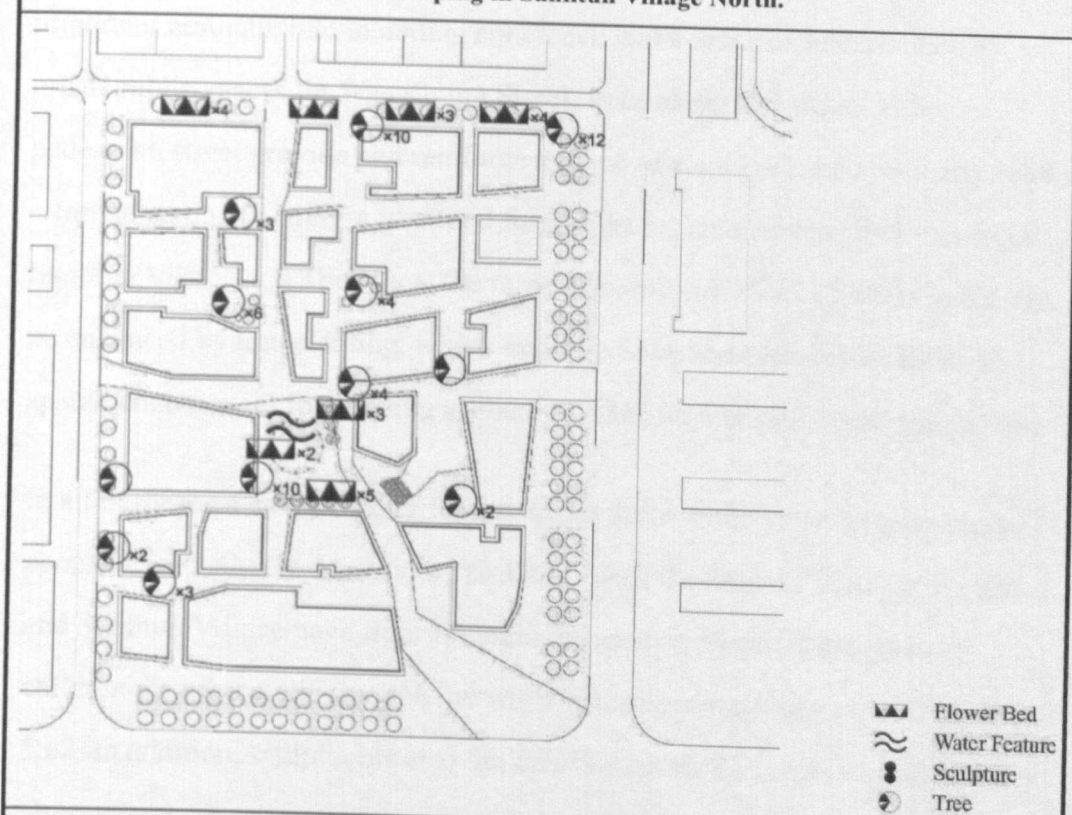


Figure 5.60 Distribution of landscaping in Sanlitun Village South.

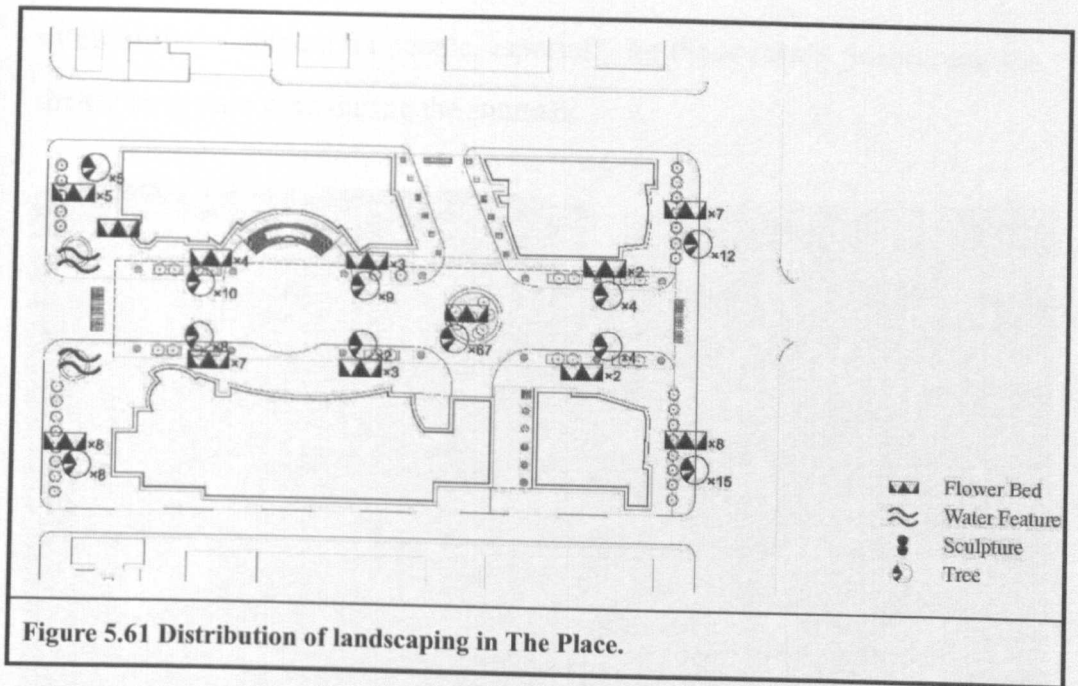


Figure 5.61 Distribution of landscaping in The Place.

Besides water features and sculpture, Carmona et al. (2003, p.159) state, trees and other vegetation express the changing seasons, enhancing the temporal legibility of public spaces in urban environments. These elements also play an important aesthetic role in adding coherence and a sense of human scale to urban public spaces. In Wangfujing Street, trees along two sides of the pedestrian street provide and reinforce a sense of enclosure and continuity with a formal setting in straight lines and formal geometric patterns. In the areas of Sanlitun Village and The Place, the three-dimensional effect of urban space can be enhanced by tree planting, which may reinforce and complete a sense of spatial containment for creating a space with the pattern of picturesque groups.

In all of these amenities, water feature in any form is the most favorite one by people, especially the fountain by children. Both the areas of Wangfujing Street and Sanlitun Village have floor fountain in summer, there are numbers of children play there, run through the water, like the performance from Figure 5.62. In addition, sculpture is also the favorite amenities for most people. They always prefer to take some time to stay for taking pictures with certain unique sculptures or just watch a while. Besides, flower beds and plantings are popular not just for their ornamental functions, but, as discussed in previously, for the

sitting surfaces of them for people, especially for those elderly people, and the shelter by certain trees during the summer.



Figure 5.62 Children play in fountains in Sanlitun Village South.



Figure 5.63 People take pictures with sculpture in Wangfujing Street.

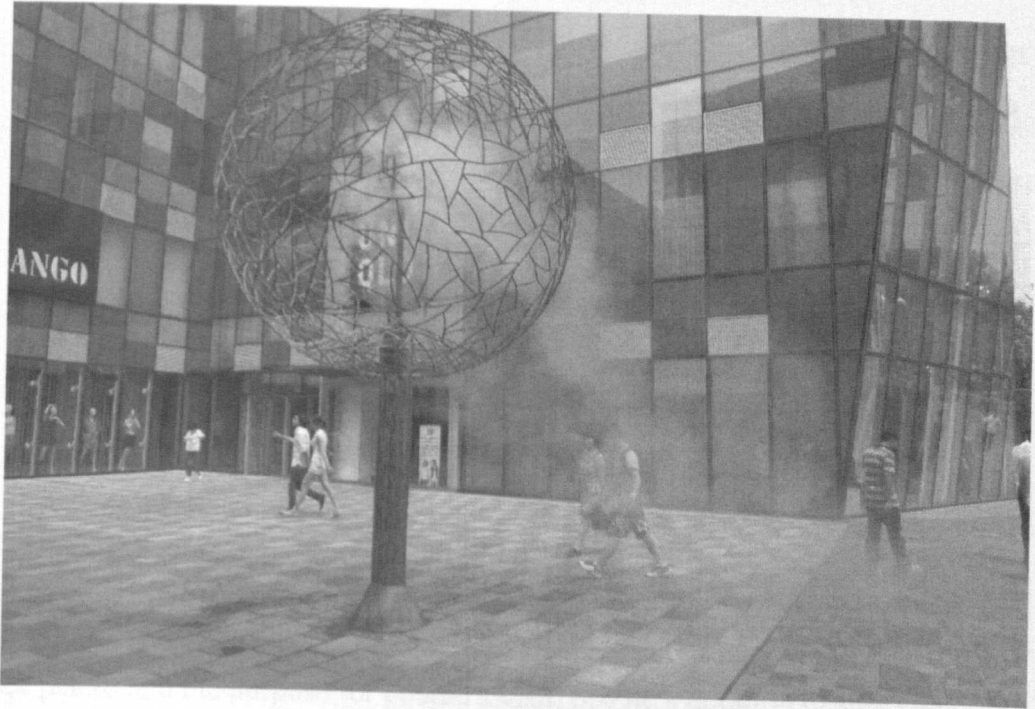


Figure 5.64 Sculpture designed to reduce temperature in summer days.

5.5 Uses and Behaviors

The physical factors affected people's activities have discussed in previous sections in this chapter, which include accessibility to study sites, dimension and scale, quality and quantity of sitting places, and elements on landscaping of these three case study sites. This section has started to discuss people's behaviors and uses in these public spaces which connected with public retail sectors. People's activities are the basic elements of a place. As Mehta (2010, p.38) stated that, "have something to do give people reasons to come and return to a place. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong." According to the study by Project for Public Spaces (2001, p.125), principles need to keep in mind in evaluating the uses and activities of a place stated in following:

- The more activities that are going and that people have an opportunity to participate in, the better.
- There is a good balance between men and women (women are more

particular about the spaces that they use).

- People of different ages are using the space (retired people and people with young children can use a space during the day when others are working).
- The space is used throughout the day.
- A space that is used by both singles and people in groups is better than one that is just used by people alone because it means that there are places for people to sit with friends, there is more socializing, and it is more fun.

Based on these considerations on assessment of people's activities occurred in public spaces, this section investigated the use of these three study sites by analyzing the results of observation in several aspects of the functions of streets or places and the purpose for people's visit, people's duration of stay and frequency of use in each study areas, pedestrian streams and people's activities in each case study sites.

5.5.1 Function and utility

According to the work of 'Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form' by Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee (1998, p.180), defined as the sites and setting of public life, and including some notion of public space, the public realm ideally functions as a forum for political action and representation, as a 'neutral' or common ground for social interaction, intermingling, and communication, and as a stage for social learning, personal development, and information exchange. Similarly, in the case study sites – three retail-oriented public realms, the main function can be defined as a setting of public life for commercial and social interaction. The function use of each case study areas involves in the use of commercial buildings, offices, restaurants and bars, recreation, or areas in mixed use of them (Figure 5.65 to Figure 5.68).

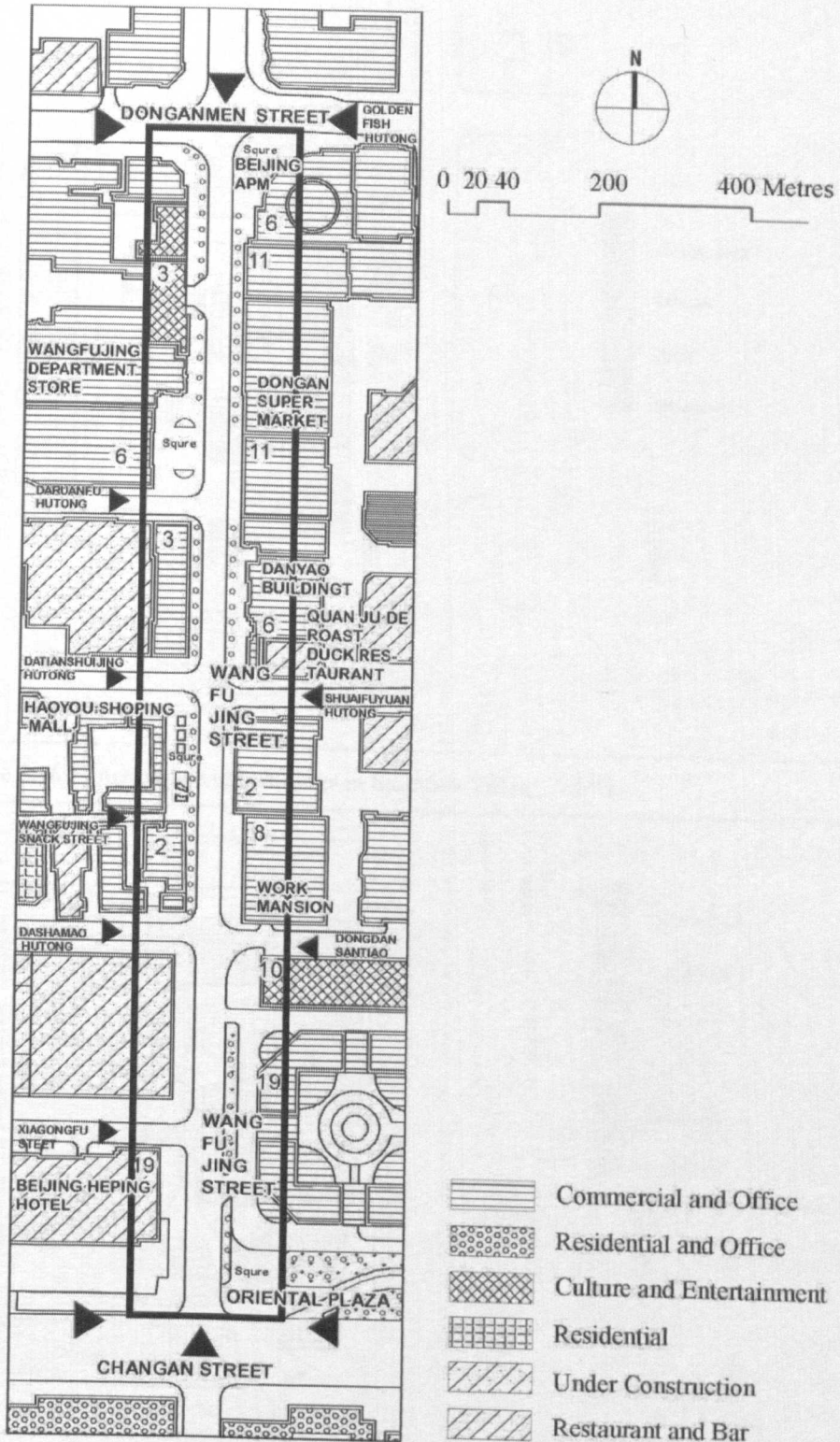


Figure 5.65 Function use of buildings in Wangfujing Street.

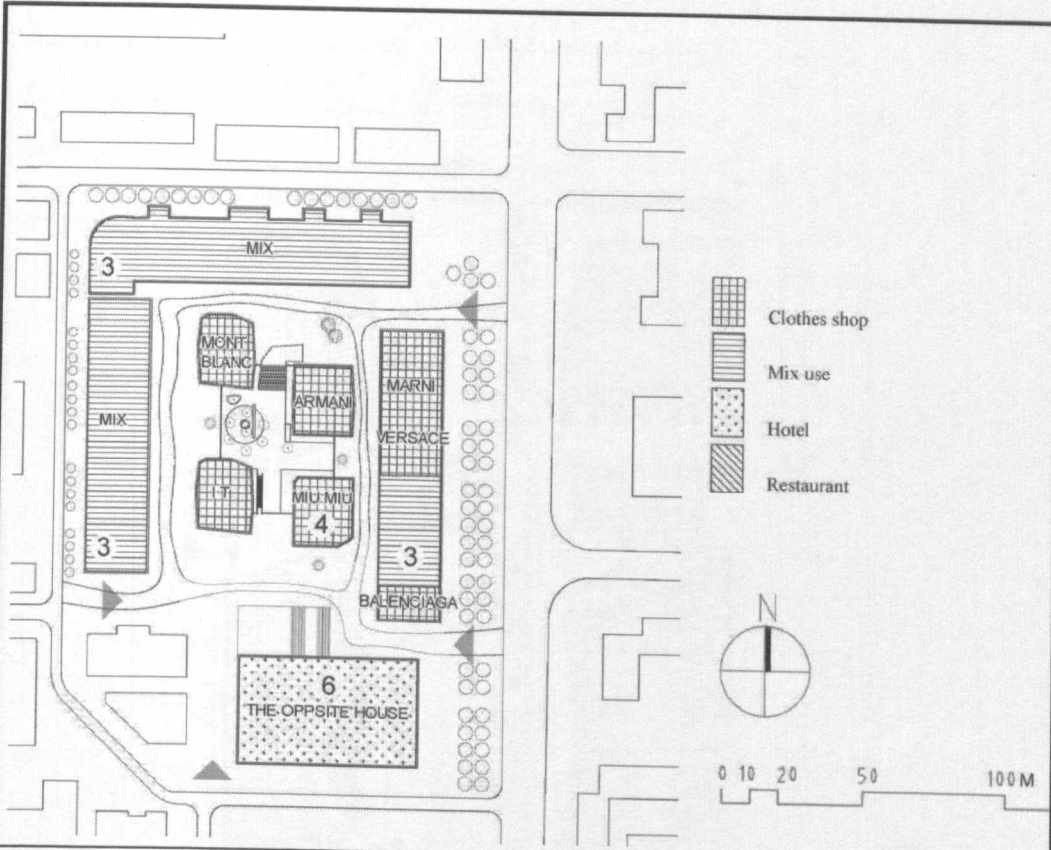


Figure 5.66 Function use of buildings in Sanlitun Village North.

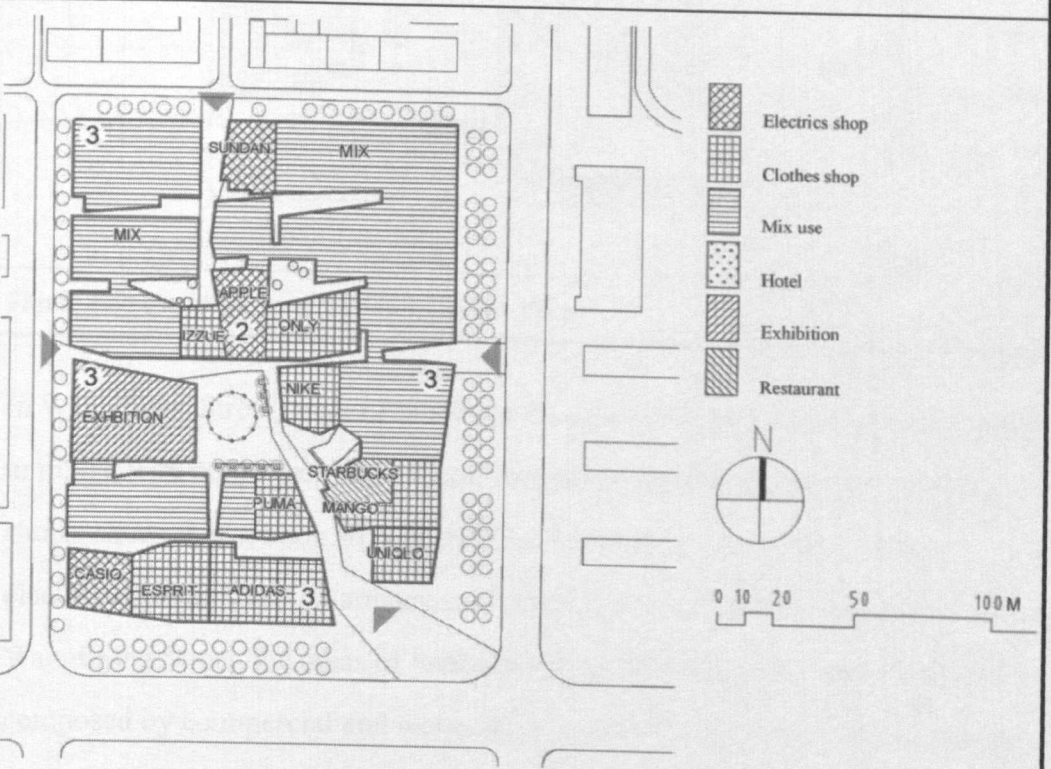


Figure 5.67 Function use of buildings in Sanlitun Village South.

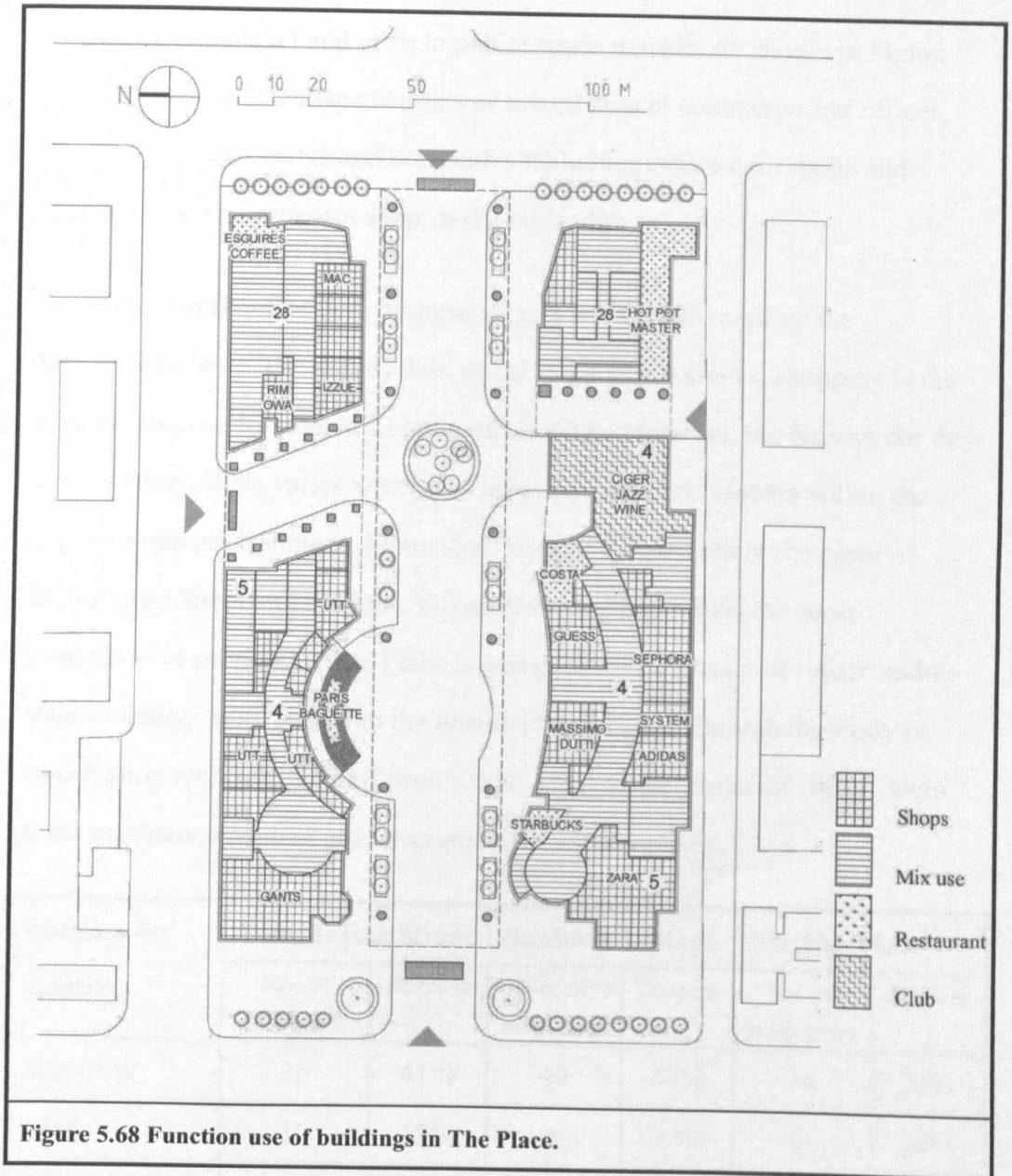


Figure 5.68 Function use of buildings in The Place.

In Wangfujing Street, most of buildings alongside the pedestrian street are used in mixed with commerce and offices, included in department stores, clothing shops, shoes shops, book stores, jeweller, fast foods, restaurants and bars, electrical goods stores, pharmacy, and office buildings, etc. In varied with Wangfujing Street, the areas of Sanlitun Village, both of South and North, are composed by commercial and recreational mixed use buildings, which include clothing and shoes shops, restaurants and bars, cafes, and cinema place in South. The area of Sanlitun Village North is almost covered by flagship stores of international luxury brands, and some restaurants and cafes which situated in

the underground level and open to public space outside. As shown in Figure 5.70, this area of The Place consists of mixed uses in commerce and offices, and places of restaurants and bars, cafes including indoor cafe shops and vendors outside, cosmetics shop, and a cigar club.

The variety of function uses of these areas has been delivered by the description above. The survey data stated in Table 5.4 shows, shopping is the primary purpose for people’s visit to these areas. However, the reasons for their visit to these places varies with place size, location and function within the central urban environment. Almost half people visited both in the place of Wangfujing Street and Sanlitun Village for shopping, whilst the most proportion of purpose in The Place is occupied by the choice of ‘other’ rather than shopping. With regard to the results of The Place, through the study of observation research, most of people who selected the choice of ‘other’ were local residents, and they used that area for daily exercises.

Purpose for visiting	Wangfujing Street		Sanlitun Villlage		The Place	
	No. of responses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent
Shopping	36	41%	40	47%	16	21%
Work	17	19%	5	6%	11	14%
Business	12	14%	3	4%	18	23%
Entertainment	3	3%	13	15%	1	1%
Combined	7	8%	15	18%	9	12%
Other	13	15%	9	11%	23	29%
Total	88	100%	85	100%	78	100%
Table 5.4 Purpose of people’s visits to each study site.						

5.5.2 Duration and frequency

The purpose of people’s visit in each case study sites has been stated in Table 5.4. Then the length of time people spent in each study areas will be recorded under five categories (Table 5.5). As Gehl (1987, p.63) emphasized the number of people and duration of their stay are equally important and the overall social activity of an urban environment is a product of the number of people and the duration of their stay. As Table 5.5 shows, the most number of responses spent more than 3 hours both in these three places whereas the comparable the least proportion is the duration of stay within 30 minutes in each study site.

Duration of Stay (mins)	Wangfujing Street		Sanlitun Village		The Place	
	No. of rcsponses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent
< 30	2	2%	0	0%	2	3%
30 to < 60	4	5%	0	3%	2	3%
60 to < 120	12	14%	13	24%	18	18%
120 to < 180	18	22%	16	21%	24	33%
> 180	47	57%	40	53%	32	44%
Total	83	100%	76	100%	73	100%
Table 5.5 Duration of stay in each study site.						

Based on the consideration of the purpose for people’s visit analysed above, because of shopping as the main purpose of using these places, people are probable to take more than 3 hours in these places. In addition to the duration of stay in Sanlitun Village, there are lots of people spend their time in cinema on the weekends or the evenings on weekdays. With regard to the minimum duration of stay, due to the specific functions in these three case study areas – shopping street or commercial centre, there are only few people walking through rather than stay for any other purposes.

Following the analysis of duration of stay in the three case study sites, the frequency of people’s visit to these places in the city will be stated under three ranks (Table 5.6). Frequency of visit indicated the percentage of responses to the question of ‘how often do you visit this place, Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, or The Place’. From Table 5.6, the frequency of up to one month is relatively usual to visit with the other choices. There are 44% responses in Wangfujing Street and 52% responses in Sanlitun Village visit these places up to one month. Whilst in The Place, 67% responses express their visit in this place longer than one month. The reason of this result is the absence of liveliness in The Place, except for the Sky-screen. Due to this consideration, most people come to The Place for visiting the huge screen rather than for shopping or other amenities.

Frequency of visit	Wangfujing Street		Sanlitun Village		The Place	
	No. of responses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent	No. of responses	Percent
Less than 1 week	12	16%	15	18%	6	8%
Up to 1 month	34	44%	43	52%	18	25%
Longer than 1 month	31	40%	24	29%	49	67%
Total	77	100%	82	100%	73	100%

Table 5.6 Frequency of visit to each study site.

5.5.3 People uses and capacity to places

Wangfujing Street in the study area has been upgraded and modifies within the last ten years. Sanlitun Village and The Place were built in the recent years. There have been an attempt to modify the urban environment of those three study areas to afford certain pedestrian-oriented activities and make it more pedestrian-friendly. It is shown through observing these places, however, only certain areas on the street or places served as good behavior setting for

stationary and social activities and behaviors. The types of people's behaviors will be discussed in next section. In this section, Figure 5.69 to Figure 5.71 represents the distribution of individual uses in three typical periods of one day in each case study site. As mentioned in research methodology chapter, data presented here were collected and recorded from observations by walking by the whole length of the street in Wangfujing and the entire extent of the spaces in Sanlitun Village and The place, which conducted between 8am and 12pm spread out on days and nights with temperatures between 25°C and 35°C in July 2011. Obviously, the result of distribution of people uses varies with seasons and weather conditions. Considering the most typical performance of people uses during a day, three periods in a weekday have been picked out, which are eight o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in afternoon and eight o'clock in the evening. These data collected by walk through the whole street and the entire places in these study areas three times in a week at the selected times. It has been taken around 20 minutes for each time. Through the observation and record during the walking, the average data has been calculated and considered as the usual distribution of individual uses in each place.

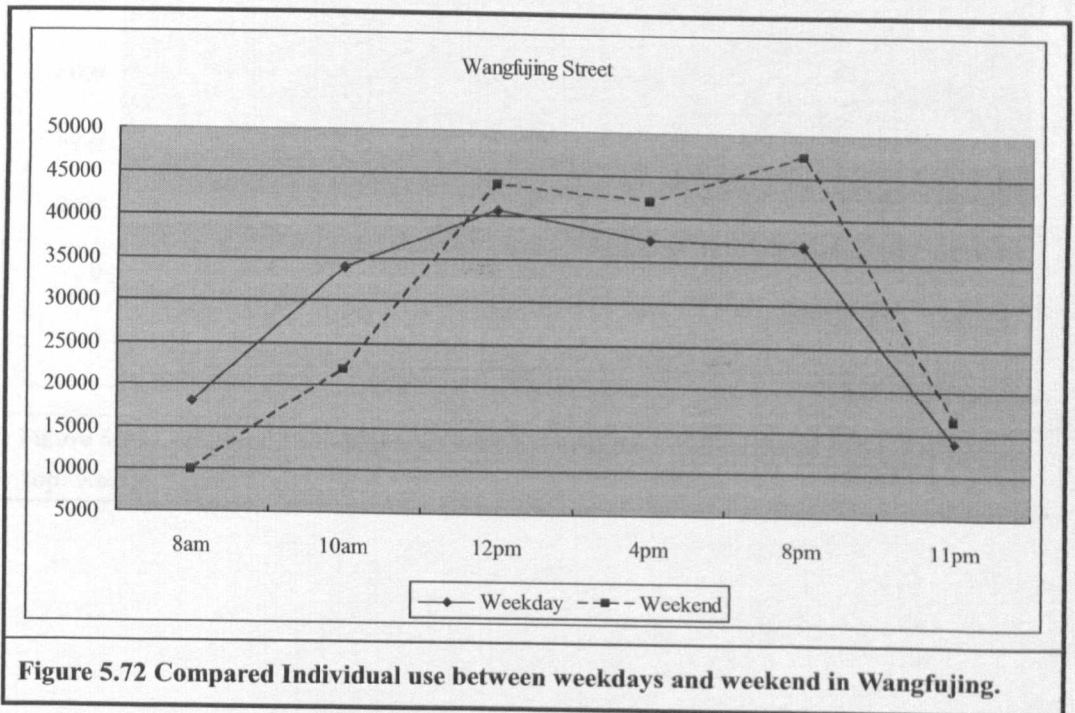
As Figure 5.69 shows, due to there is metro station situated in the underground floor and some part of this building used to offices, the most number of people assembled the main entrance of the building of Oriental Plaza at 8am. During the time of 2pm, more people gathered in the traditional food street, and some open spaces located in the front of department stores. Because these places people like to stay have more relatively sense of enclosure, more sitting places for resting and seeing or hearing from other people, and have easy connections with stores. It must be noted, compared with other two case study areas, there always assemble a large number of people in the Wangfujing Street at anytime during a day.

According to the functional analysis previously, areas of Sanlitun Village are mainly used to clothing and shoes stores, and restaurant and bars. Thus, it determines the uses by people in these places. As Figure 5.70 presents, there are very few number of people using these places at eight o'clock in the morning, except for certain people need to work in these stores or walking through there. From 2pm till the stores closed, there are always gathering many people around the public spaces located the centre of Sanlitun Village South with lively water features. It is noticeable that, there is very few people stay in the area of Sanlitun Village North at anytime in any days. One of the reasons is probable the gap between the South and the North, it is not easy and direct access to the North from the South, and the poor environment conditions between the South and the North might play a negative effect on the accessibility and link. Besides, the expensive flagship stores situated in the North cannot be afforded by the users most of whom are younger people from the South.

The Place has become a famous attraction in the city of Beijing. For this reason, a lot of groups of tourists come to see the sky-screen covered as the roof of this public open space during the time of evening. Thus, from Figure 5.71, the most uses of individuals in The Place took place at eight o'clock in the evening for watching the video played through the sky-screen. Due to lack of the variety of shops and brands, and absence of amenities in this place, Figure 5.71 also shows there are seldom uses by people in The Place during the other times of a day, except for some people work here or local residents for doing daily exercises and playing with little children in the morning and evening.

The difference of individual uses within one day in each study site have been analysed above. Another issue needed to be evaluated is on the uses varies in weekdays and weekends. Diagrams of Figure 5.72 to Figure 5.74 show the differences of individual use in different hours between the weekdays and the

weekends. The data shown in these diagrams represent pedestrian streams per hour during the summer time in the whole length of street and entire places of each case study site. Several research assistants stood in different selected point to count the number of people passed through within 10 minutes, and did it three times within one hours, then got average number of people passed by within 10 minutes and estimated the amount number during one hour. Similarly, in the weekends morning time, the number of people is fewer than the number at the same time in the weekdays as result of people need to work from Monday to Friday both in these three places. Since ten o'clock in the morning, people become more and more in weekends than that in weekdays, and after eight o'clock in the evening, the number of people decreased dramatically. It needs to notice that, in Sanlitun Village North, as mentioned before, although with the good quality of open space environment, it is always vacant with very few people the whole day, whatever in summer days or winter days, or other special days.



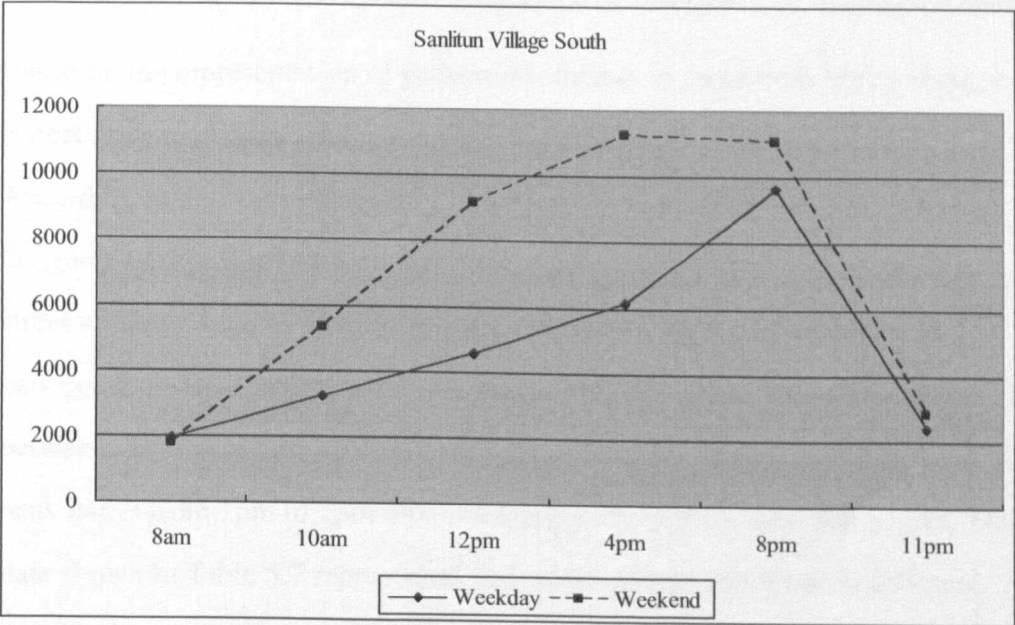
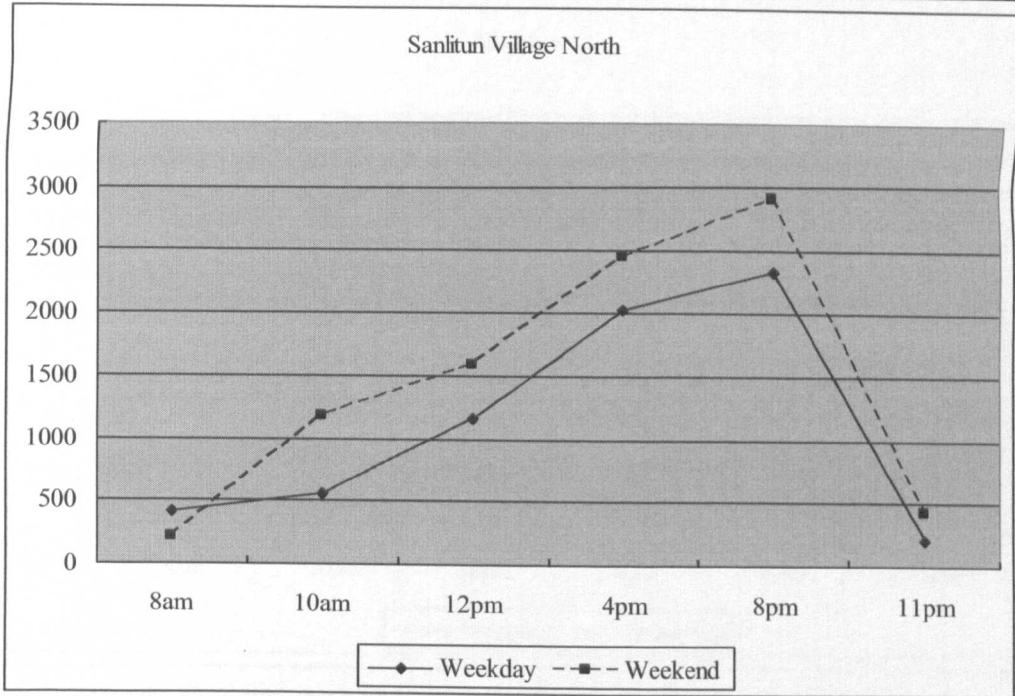


Figure 5.73 Compared Individual use between weekdays and weekend in Sanlitun. Top: North; Below: South.

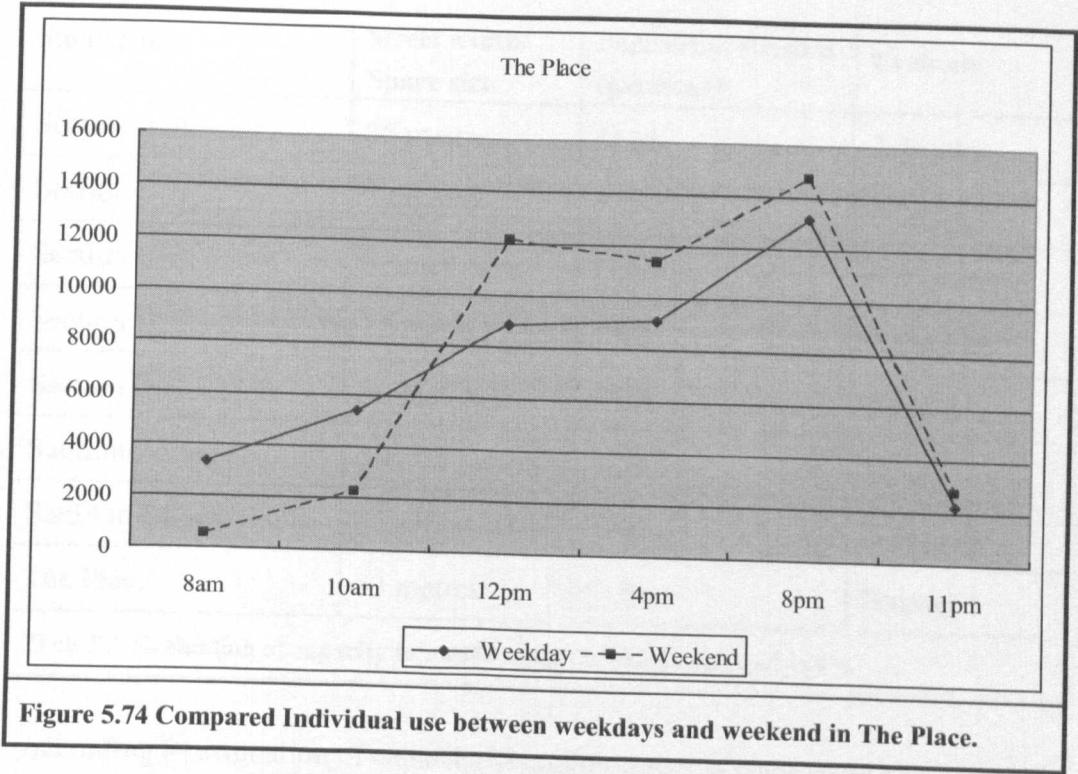


Figure 5.74 Compared Individual use between weekdays and weekend in The Place.

Based on the representation of pedestrian streams in these three study areas, it is necessary to evaluate the capacity to these places for individual use.

According to the study of spatial proportions by Gehl (2010, p.114), it shows the good relationship between the street widths and pedestrian streams, that is street width of 3,5,8 or 10 metres can easily handle pedestrian streams of between 2,400 and 7,800 people per hour. Table 5.7 shows the relationship between the street width or space size and pedestrian streams that happened in peak hours from 1pm to 2pm on a weekday in these three case study sites. The data shown in Table 5.7 represented pedestrian streams per hour in different nodes selected for observing with different width in Wangfujing Street, and the main public spaces which fit to the sections shown in Figure 5.35 to Figure 5.37 in other two study sites, Sanlitun Village and The Place.

Study nodes	Street width/ Space size	Pedestrian streams (per hour)	Evaluate
Section A-A	35 metres	4134	Adequate
Section B-B	32 metres	4434	Adequate
Section C-C	37 metres	2706	Adequate
Section D-D	35 metres	4065	Adequate
Section E-E	30 metres	3924	Adequate
Sanlitun Village North	50×53 metres	1521	Empty
Sanlitun Village South	43×43 metres	5907	Adequate
The Place	53 metres	9156	Empty

Table 5.7 Evaluation of capacity to public spaces in three case study sites.

According to evaluation of capacity to public spaces in each study site, most of public spaces are adequately and easily to handle the crowded pedestrian streams, even in peak hour use, and in these place people can take in the entire scene, seeing the space itself and the faces of other people when they walk through the space. However, it is necessary to pay more attention to create more liveliness and add more attractive amenities in Sanlitun Village North and The Place.

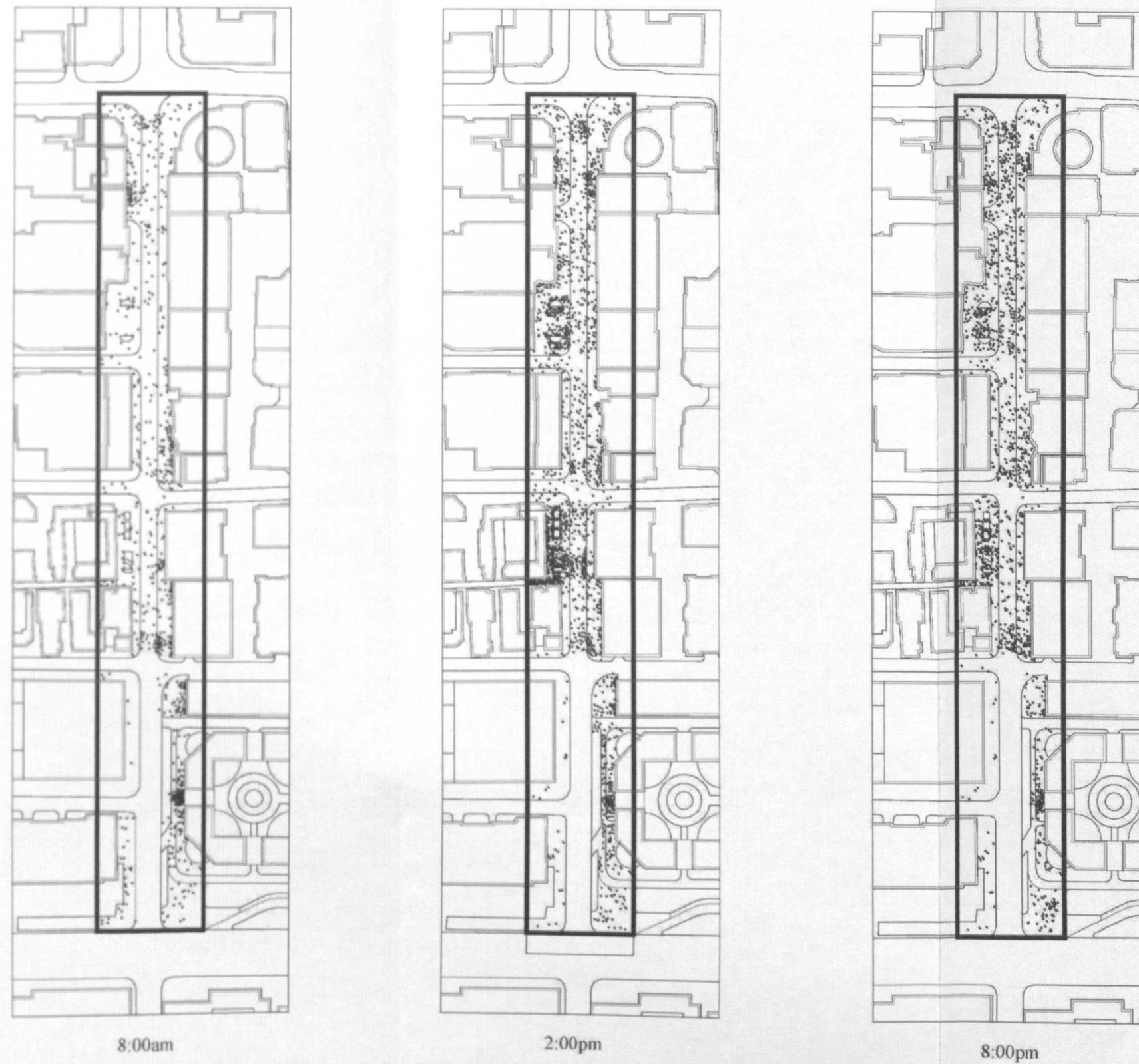


Figure 5.69 Distribution of individual uses in Wangfujing Street. Observation date: 19th July, 2011, Time: 8am to 11pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 25°C and 35°C.

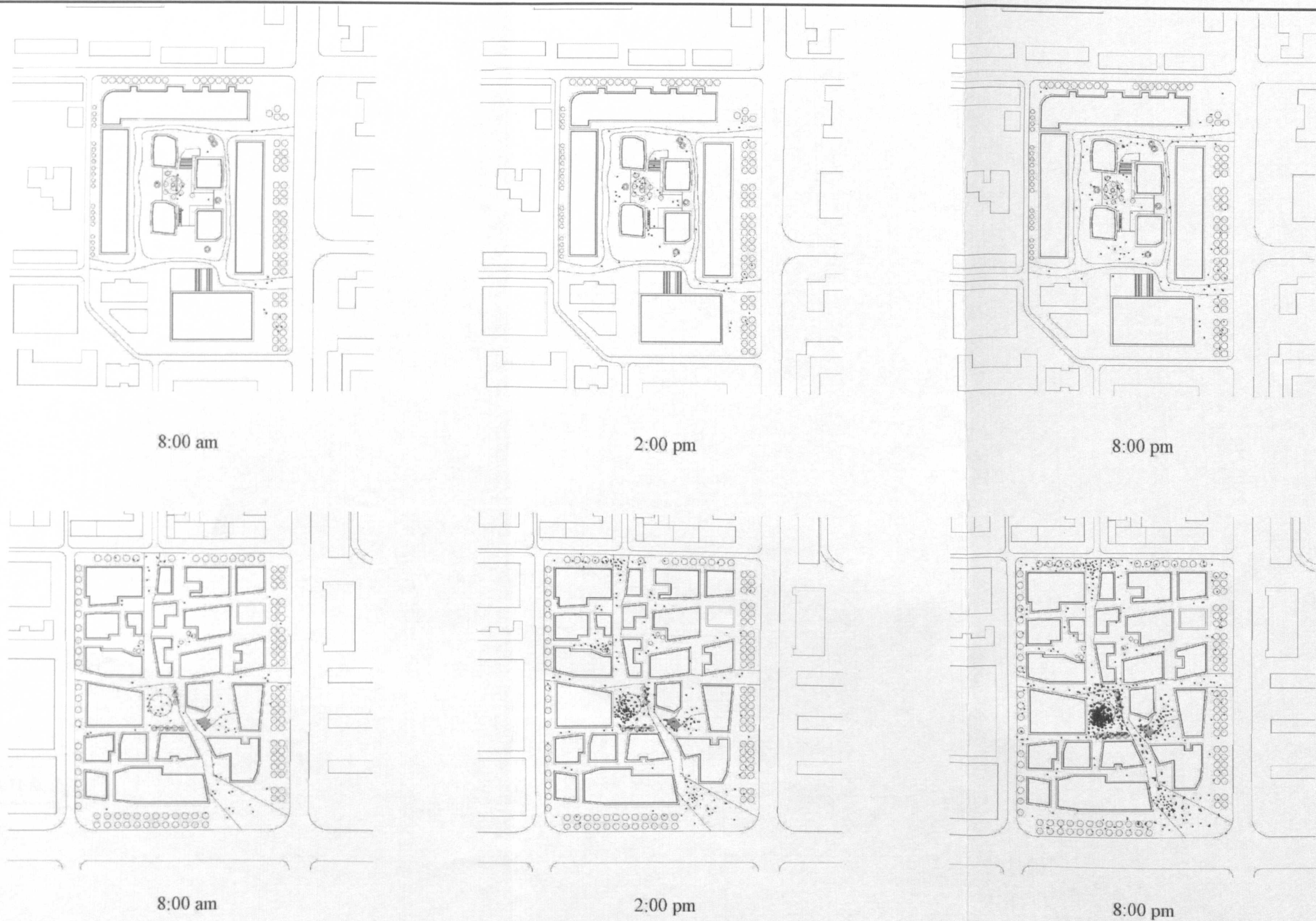
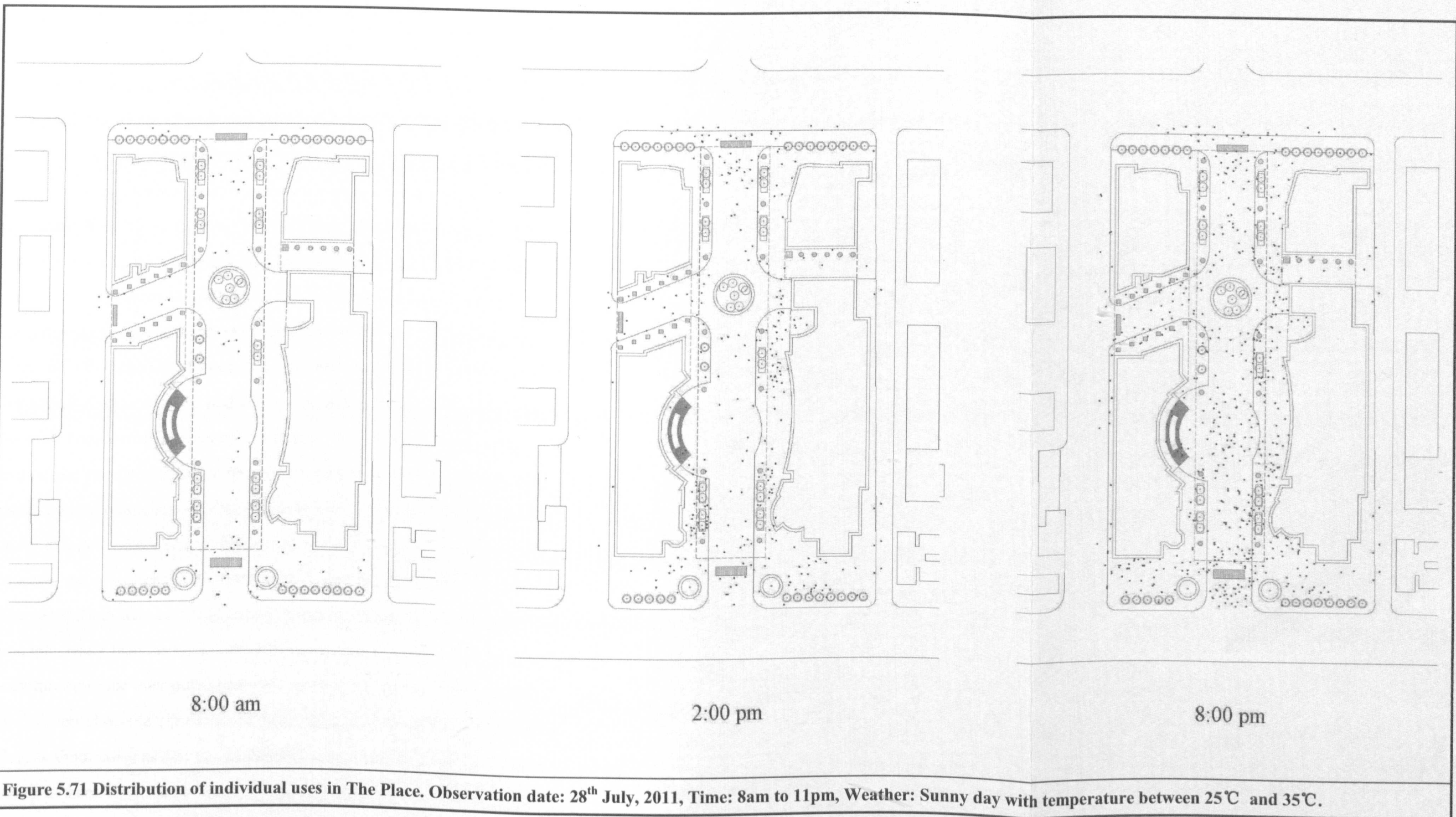
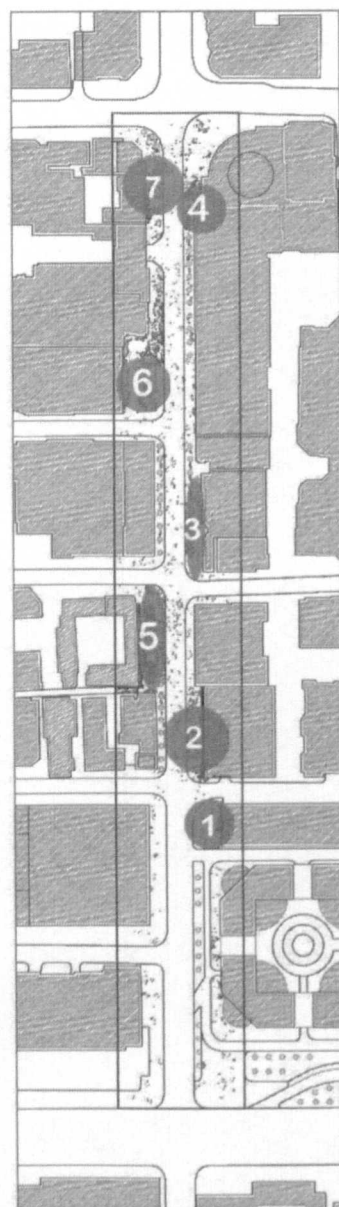


Figure 5.70 Distribution of individual uses in Sanlitun Village (Top: The North, Below: The South). Observation date: 21st and 26th July, 2011, Time: 8am to 11pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 25°C and 35°C.

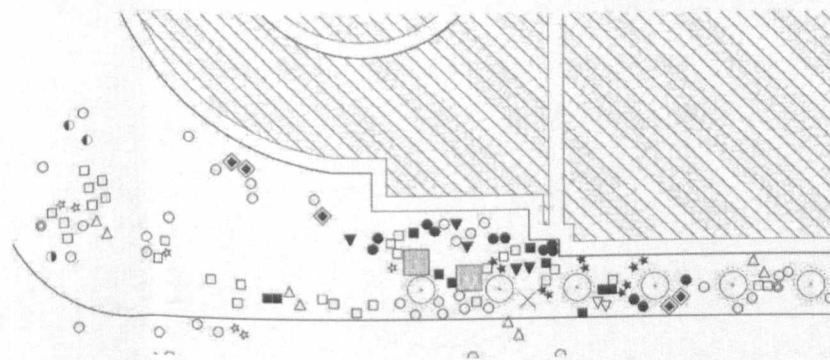


5.5.4 Pedestrian activity

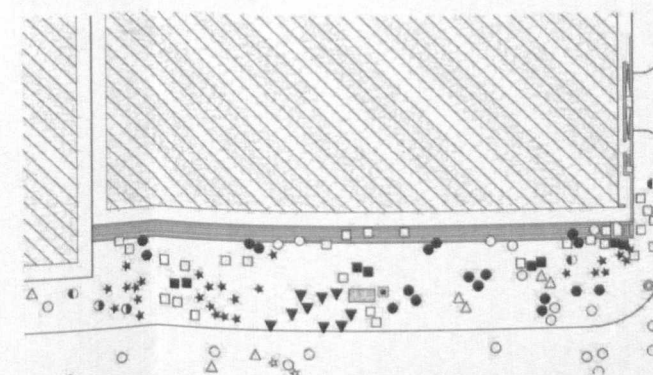
Based on the analysis of pedestrian use and capacity to these study places, a further graphic means of analysing these retail public realms is through the use of pedestrian activity maps (Figure 5.75 to Figure 5.79). These diagrams record observations about where people gather, sit, stand, or walk through spaces, and where people eating or drinking, playing games, taking pictures or smoking, and so on (See Table 5.2 for detailed indication of various activities). The observation conducted by walking by the whole length of the street in Wangfujing and the entire extent of the spaces in Sanlitun Village and The Place, which conducted between 2pm and 4pm spread out on weekdays with temperatures between 22°C and 28°C in September 2011. These diagrams of behavior maps enable to analyse how people use these three urban public spaces, and can also be used to plot and analyse movement patterns in such retail-oriented public places. From these figures, it clearly shown that people prefer to stay somewhere can offer sitting places to them, such as the fitted benches, the steps front of the entrance of buildings, or anywhere can be seated. Some attractions also can make people spend more time to stay there, for example, water features would attract people, especially children to play, and sculptures provide opportunities to take pictures, etc. Besides, through the observation of people's activities in these areas, most old people like to stay a place without noisy as they can as possible, and it is better to provide sitting places to them. By contrast, those children or young people prefer to gather places where have lots of people or some interesting things, such as street performances, etc. Also, as Mehta (2009, p.59) addressed that, behavior mapping and user perceptions indicated that it is the engagement between the elements of the behavioral environment, the elements of the physical setting, and the places that have special meanings for the community that creates a comfortable, pleasurable, meaningful and therefore desirable environment for people on commercial places in urban environment.



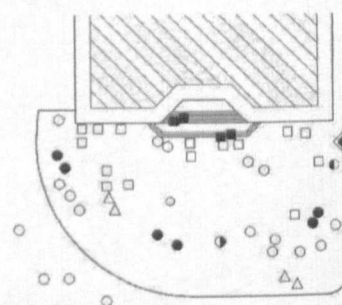
- Standing
- Sitting
- × Lying / Sleeping
- Standing & Talking
- Sitting & Talking
- △ Taking picture
- ▲ Pushing a stroller
- ★ Eating / Drinking
- ☆ Reading / Using a laptop / Working
- ▼ Shopping
- ▽ Window-shopping
- ◇ Playing a game / Performing
- ◆ Skateboarding / Rollerblading
- Smoking
- Vending
- ◆ Cleaning
- Blood donor
- ◎ Homeless



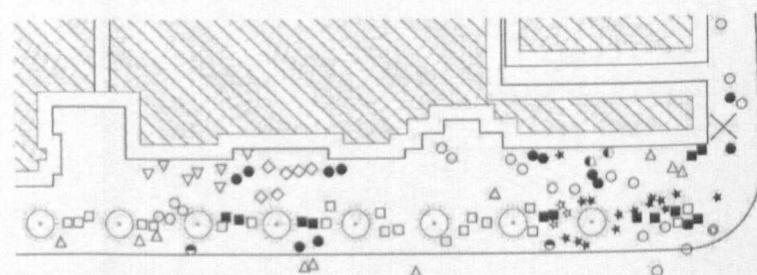
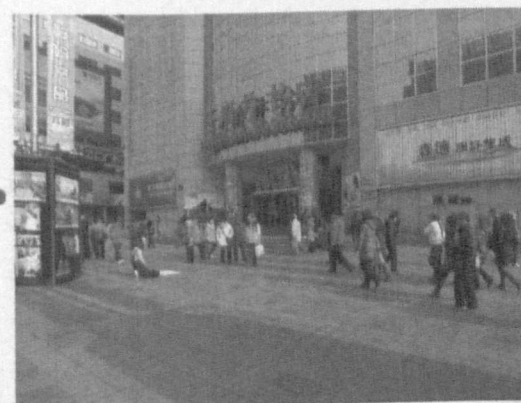
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Figure 5. 75 Pedestrian activities in Wangfujing Street (1). Observation date: 20th September, 2011, Time: 2pm to 4pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 22℃ and 28℃.

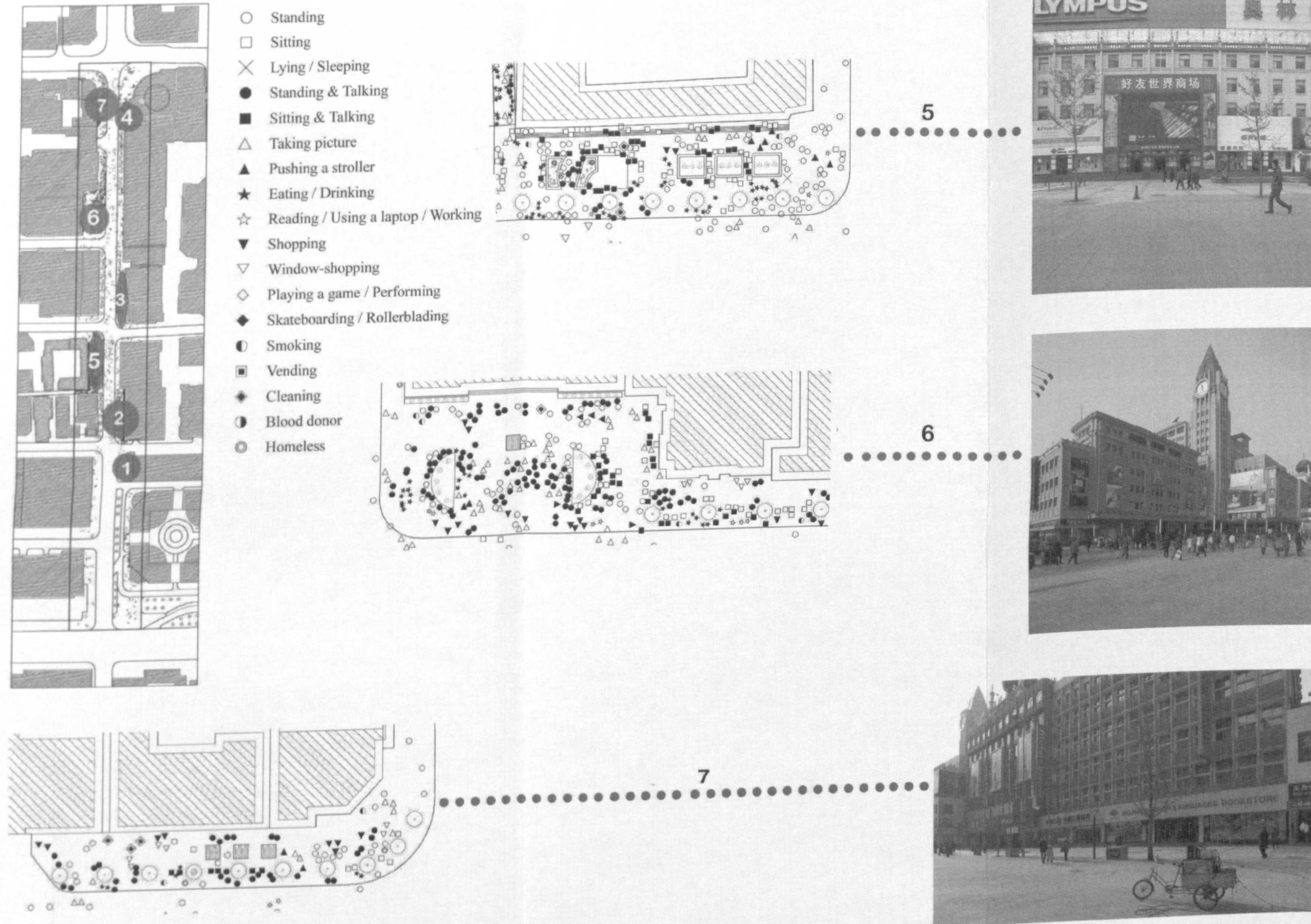
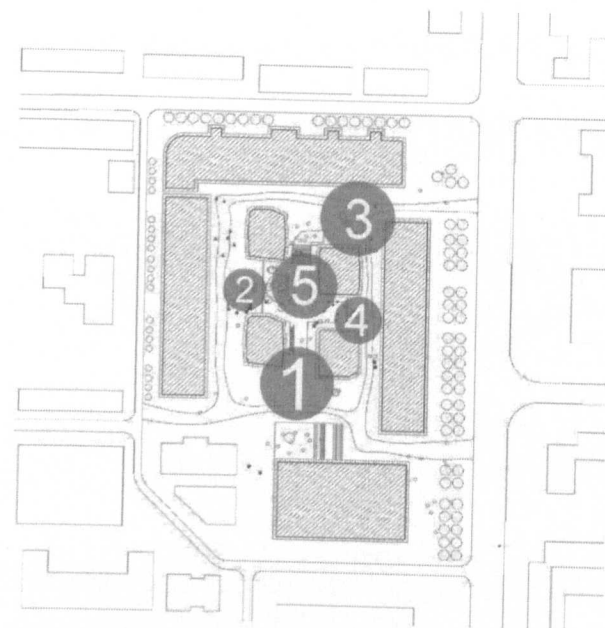
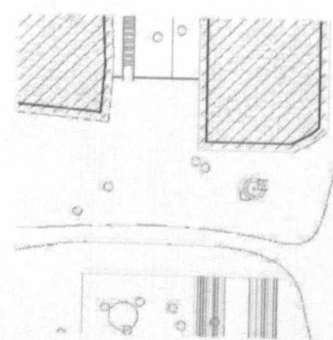


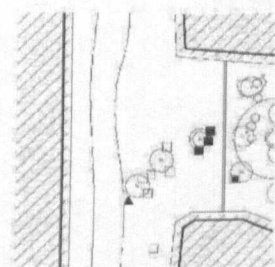
Figure 5.76 Pedestrian activities in Wangfujing Street (2). Observation date: 20th September, 2011, Time: 2pm to 4pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 22°C and 28°C.



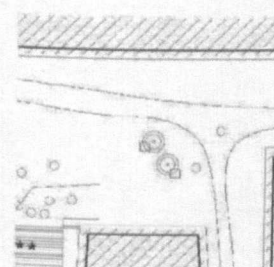
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ○ Standing | ▼ Shopping |
| □ Sitting | ▽ Window-shopping |
| × Lying / Sleeping | ◇ Playing a game / Performing |
| ● Standing & Talking | ◆ Skateboarding / Rollerblading |
| ■ Sitting & Talking | ⦿ Smoking |
| △ Taking picture | ▣ Vending |
| ▲ Pushing a stroller | ◆ Cleaning |
| ★ Eating / Drinking | ⦿ Blood donor |
| ☆ Reading / Using a laptop / Working | ⊙ Homeless |



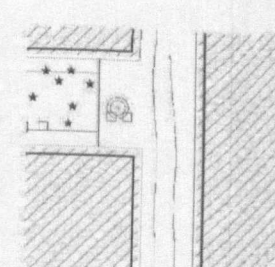
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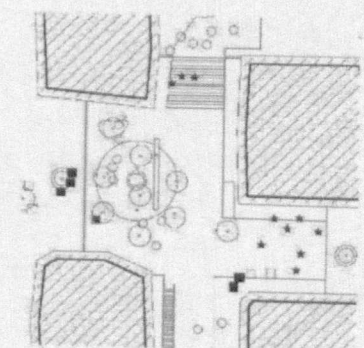
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Figure 5. 77 Pedestrian activities in Sanlitun Village North. Observation date: 21st September, 2011, Time: 2pm to 4pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 22°C and 28°C.

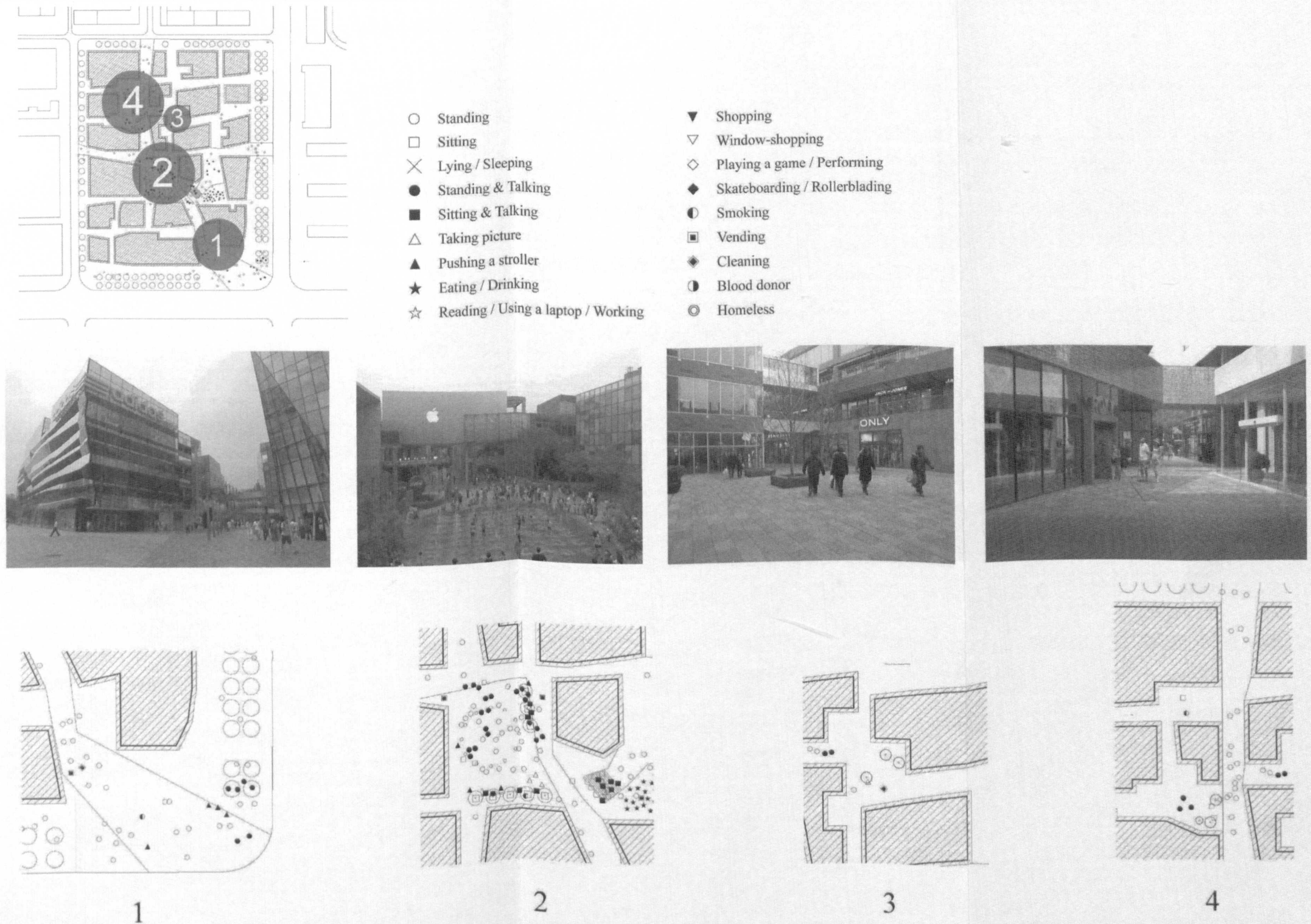


Figure 5.78 Pedestrian activities in Sanlitun Village South. Observation date: 21st September, 2011, Time: 2pm to 4pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 22°C and 28°C.

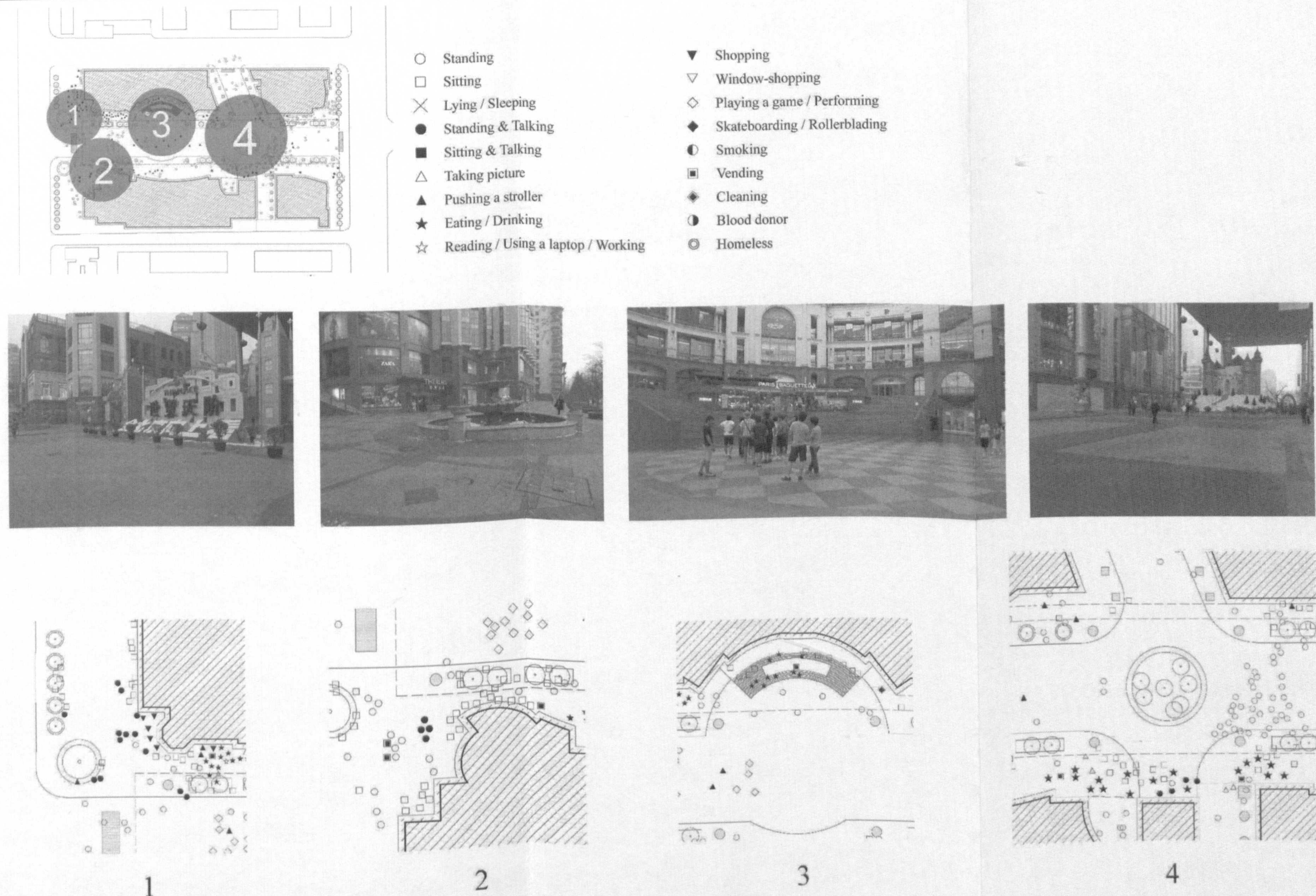


Figure 5.79 Pedestrian activities in the Place. Observation date: 22nd September, 2011, Time: 2pm to 4pm, Weather: Sunny day with temperature between 22°C and 28°C.

5.6 Safety and Management

Holland et al. (2007, p.83) point out issues raised in relation to the management of public spaces show that it is impossible to please 'all of the people all of the time'. Finding ways to keep the central areas public and open to all requires innovation and imagination, cultural stimulation, recognition of diversity of users, as well as access to resources to provide ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure. Overall control of the public spaces in Wangfujing Street is conducted by the government in Beijing. Whilst, areas of Sanlitun Village and The Place, and some shopping malls situated there are under private management and are tightly controlled, planned and regulated public spaces in private ownership. Rules and regulations, security and CCTV are in place to ensure acceptable behaviour. As the research of management of these public spaces was limited by time, techniques and certain social conditions, little substantive and effective data on this issue was obtained. However, an analysis carried out attempted to determine how to make people feel safe and comfort in the case study areas through the expected increase in control and surveillance, lighting, and other facilities which tends to come with emerging forms of public space management. Figure 5.80 to Figure 5.87 shows the exist distribution of lighting and other infrastructure facilities including CCTV, toilets, litter bin, telephone booth, and ATM, etc. Table 5.8 states the amount of each facility in each case study site.

During the observations and interviews, there is very few people make response for their opinions and attitudes on the issues of management. One reason is due to the special social conditions, most people do not participate in the management of urban environment and policy making, even they do not understand what and how management at all. Another is that some people are not interested in such issues of management; they do not think there is any relationship with their daily life. Based on this, some direct responses from

users about management were failed to gather. But according to the communicated with interviewees and the maps of distribution of infrastructure facilities, some responses in relation to this issue still could be discussed.

Facility	Wangfujing	Sanlitun North	Sanlitun South	The Place
CCTV	25	13	42	47
Litter Bin	62	12	53	43
Post Box	1	0	0	0
Telephone Booth	6	0	0	0
ATM	4	2	3	2
Toilet	-	1	-	2
Lamp post	45	90	23	43
Floor Lamp	53	98	33	8
Artistic Lighting	21	47	15	38
Street Light	16	-	11	32
Table 5.8 The amount of infrastructure facilities in each study site.				

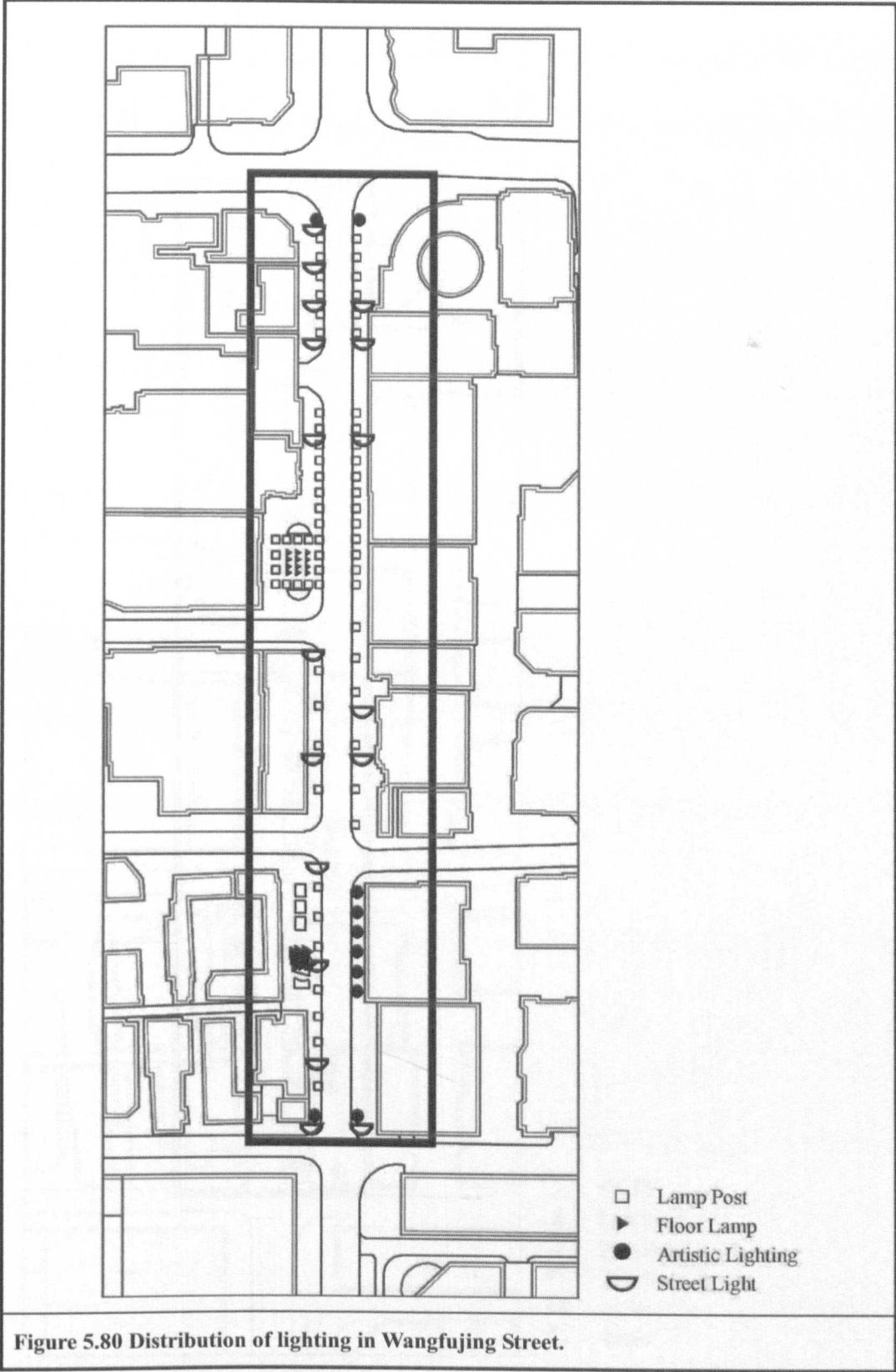
Compared with other facilities to provide people more comfort in places, it must be noted the importance of the provision of CCTV cameras which make people feel safer. As these diagrams show, a total of 25 CCTV cameras were found in Wangfujing street, 42 cameras in Sanlitun Village South, 13 in Sanlitun Village North, and 47 cameras in The Place, some of which were moveable, some of which could cover 360 degree. Through the observation in these areas, the provision of CCTV is only absented in Sanlitun Village North. As a security staff said that, these CCTV cameras are not enough to capture everywhere in this site if there is any theft happen. As EDAW (2001) reported that, many users of the space, especially for women, feel that the CCTV cameras make them safe and therefore more inclined to use the public space and its business more often. Especially, in the retail-oriented public realms,

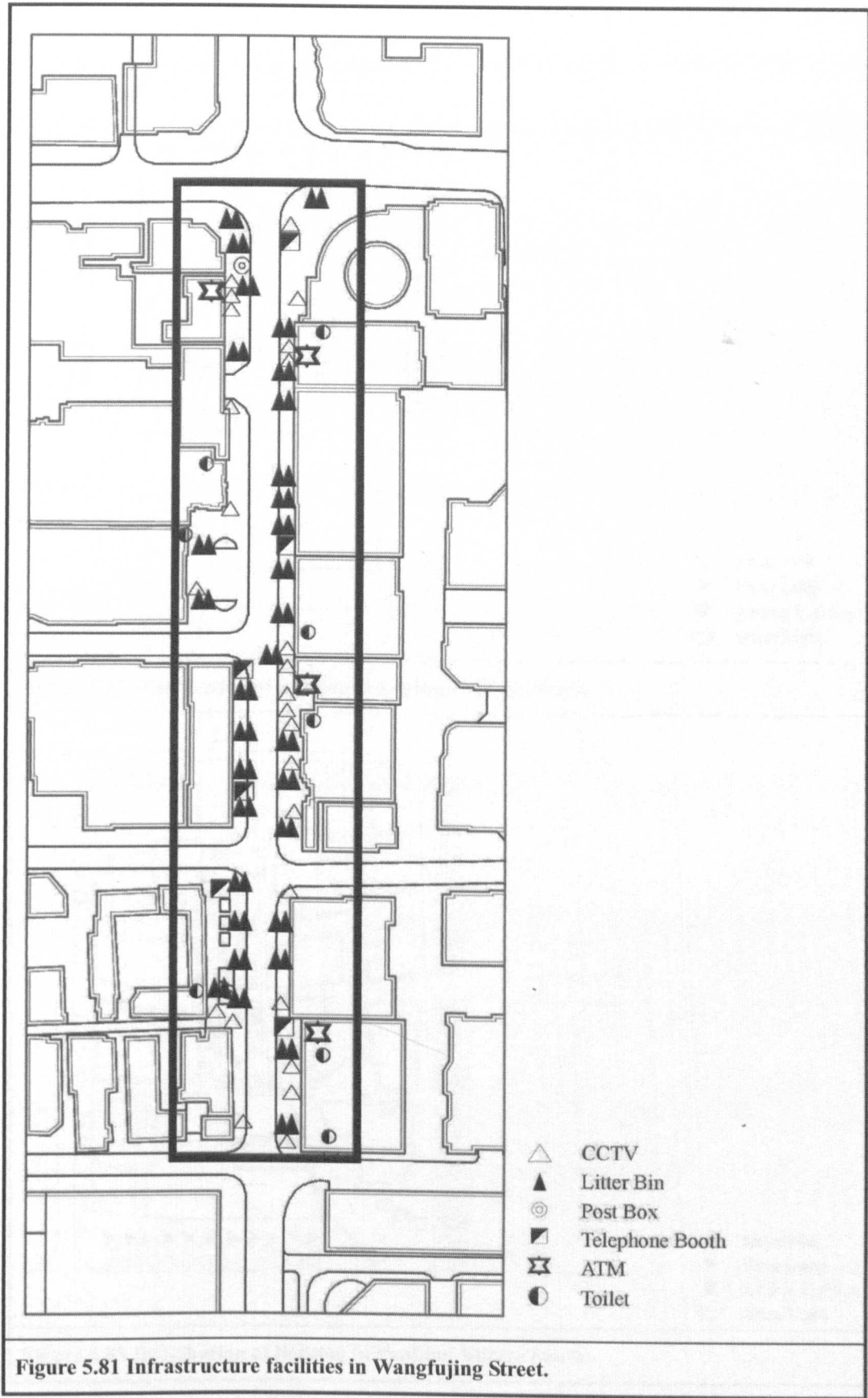
CCTV cameras have increasing surveillance the consumption-orientated activities.

Lighting is also a very important thing for keeping a place safe during the night time. According to Figure 5.69 – 5.71, the distribution of individual uses at night time in these places can easily present where people like to stay and where attract more people gather. If we put these figures with the figures of distribution of lighting together, we can see that the places where gathered lots of people at night time were the places installed more lights, especially for those lighting with aesthetic functions. For this reason, there are crowded people gathered under the sky roof during the night in The Place, with totally different condition with empty space during the daytime in the same place.

Another issue is worth to mention that the installation of toilet in these places. Figure 5.81 shows the distribution of toilet in Wangfujing Street, it is notice that those toilets are located in the department stores or fast food restaurants, only very few ones located in the street with easy access. Thus, in many such places in China, fast food restaurants such as KFC and McDonald's have become public toilets already. The same problem also exists in the other two study areas from Figure 5.85 and Figure 5.87.

With regard to other issues shown in those figures, litter bin, post box, telephone booth and ATM machine, all of these have not any direct relation with people's activities in study areas. But rational distribution and proper management of these would be providing a more comfortable and convenience places to people for dealing with some emergent things or just do their daily business.





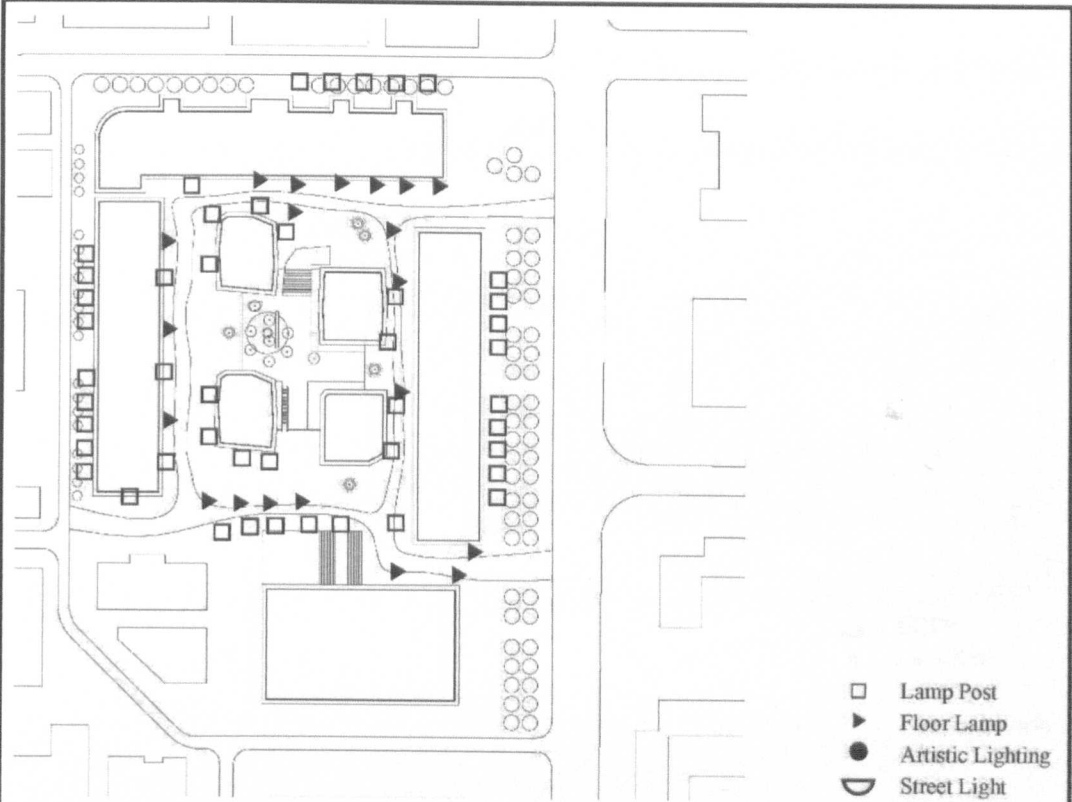


Figure 5.82 Distribution of lighting in Sanlitun Village North.

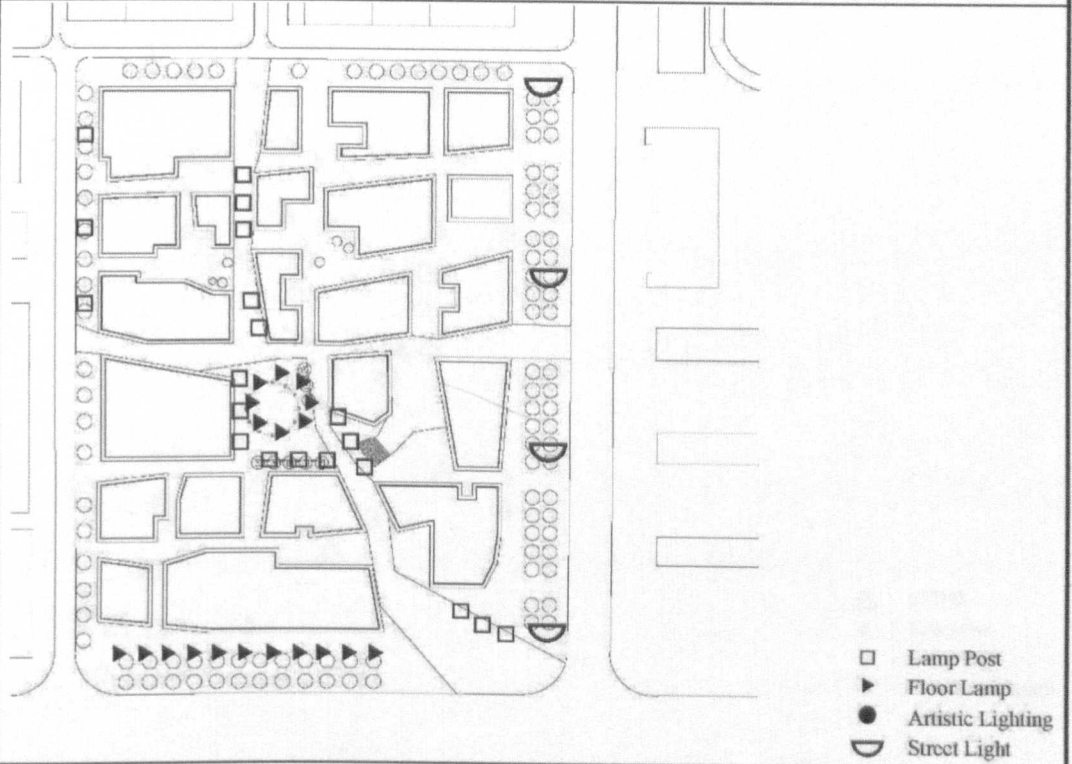


Figure 5.83 Distribution of lighting in Sanlitun Village South.

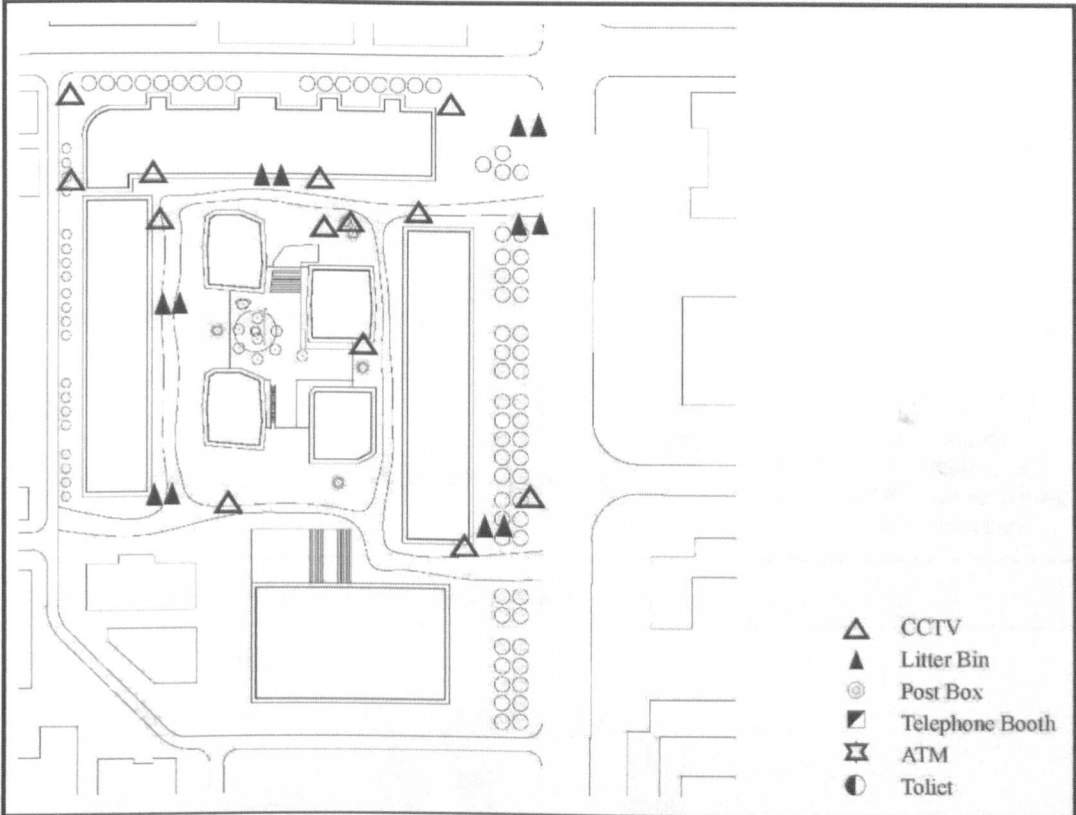


Figure 5.84 Infrastructure facilities in Sanlitun Village North.

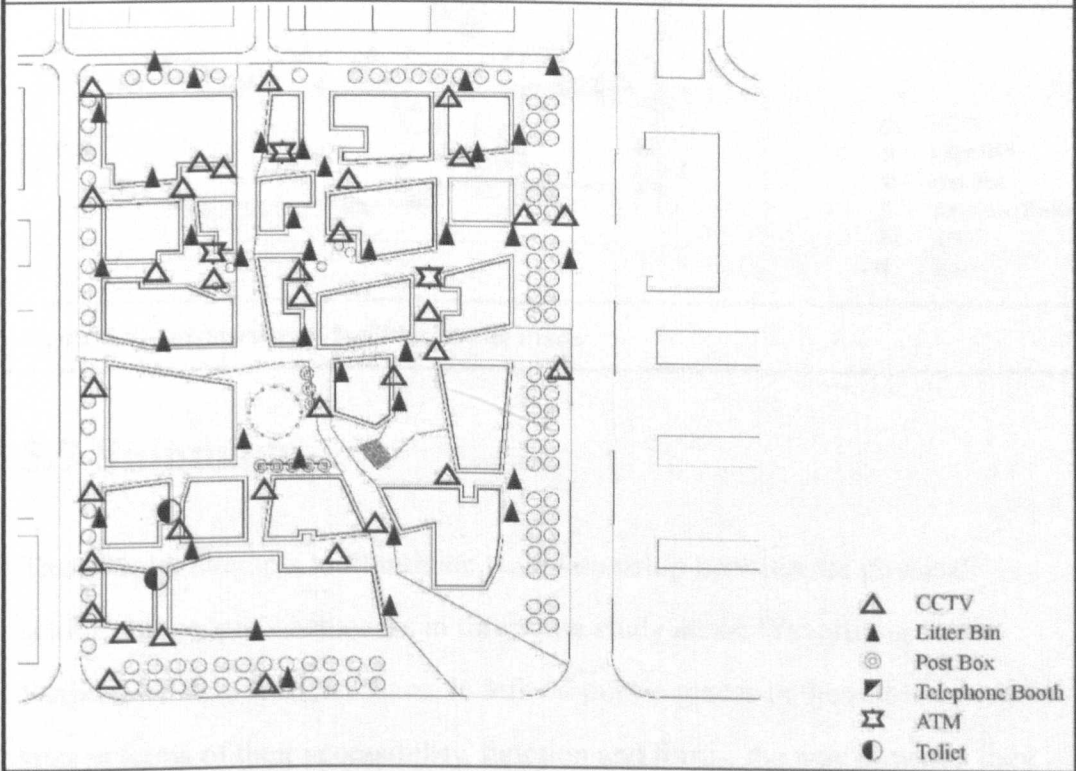


Figure 5.85 Infrastructure facilities in Sanlitun Village South.

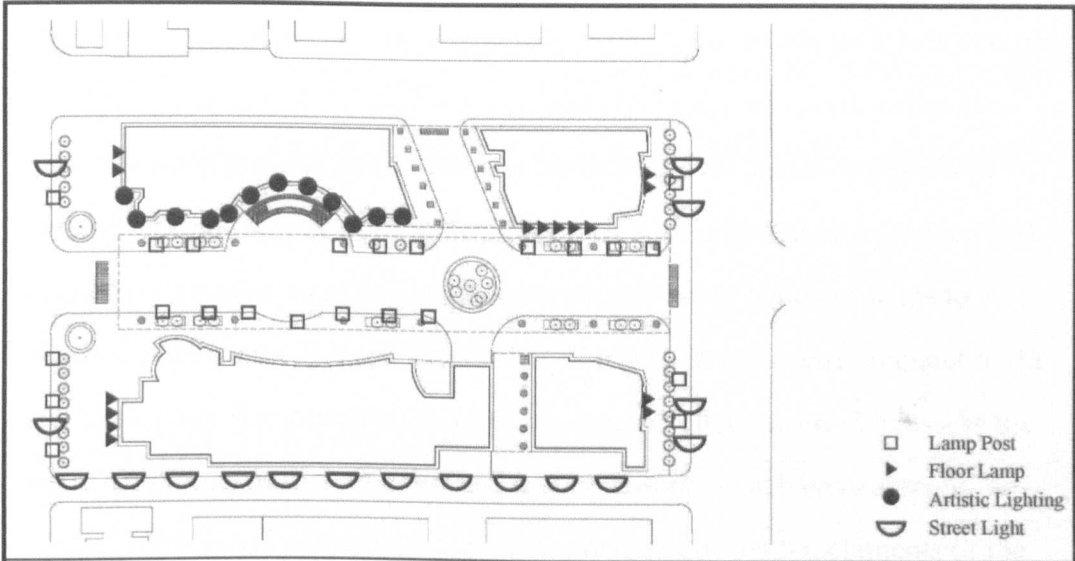


Figure 5.86 Distribution of lighting in The Place.

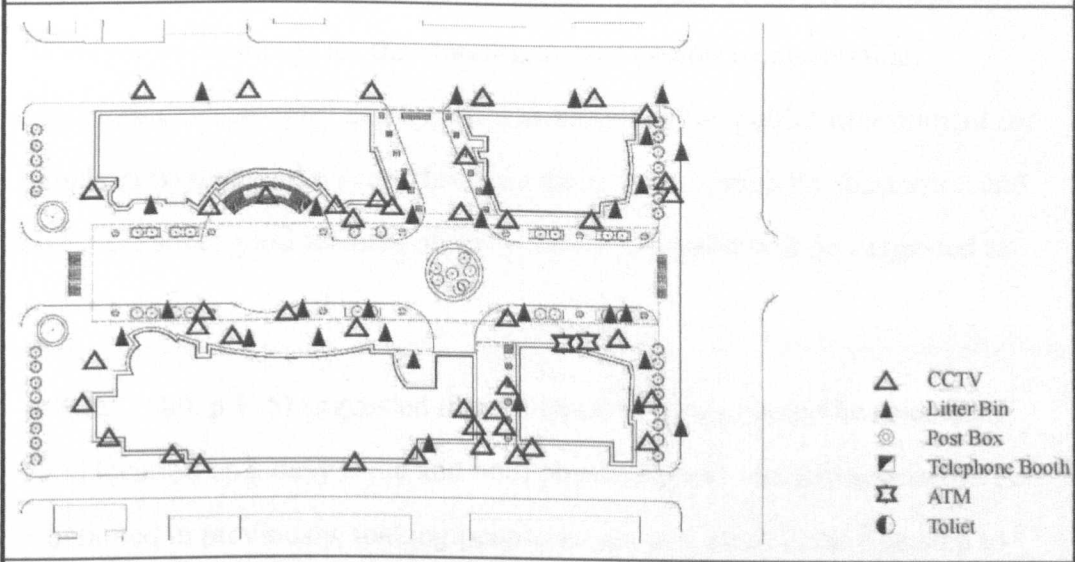


Figure 5.87 Infrastructure facilities in The Place.

5.7 Summary

This chapter attempts to illuminate the relationship between the physical setting and people’s behaviors in three case study areas: Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place. It defined public spaces in these three study sites in terms of their accessibility, function and forms, the way in which they were used, the range of activity supporting facilities, and so on, and also sought to identify individual’s perception and determine how they are varied according to both site characteristics and user characteristics. It provided information on

what people did on places and where they walked, sat, stood, took pictures, eat and drink, gathered and socialized, and what facilities they used, either as a part of their daily functional activities, for recreational purposes or both of them. A qualitative grounded theory approach with repeated observations and in-depth interviews was used in this chapter, and using behavior maps to measure public uses of three retail-oriented places in urban environment in the city of Beijing. It experiences how these common elements used to assess the visual environment and affect the behavior of users in such environment. As Metha (2009, p.41) pointed out the relationships between the elements of the physical setting, the characteristics of people's behavior, and the places that have special meanings for the community that creates a comfortable, pleasurable, meaningful and therefore desirable urban public environment for people in commercial places. Based on these, and through the discussion and analysis above, good features of the most active spaces will be suggested as following.

Whyte (1980, p.175) suggested that a successful place should be selected a good location on a busy route and both physically and visually accessible. As mentioned in previously, making people access to a place is the first step to attract people to use such place, especially for commercial places. People tend to go to a place where they can easy get to by any way they want, whatever public or private transportation tools. Besides, the convenience access within the commercial place is also important for people's use, such as the different forms of pathways linking with different stores people want to go.

Through the responses from interviewees, it is worth to notice that the physical size and feelings of enclosure of a place is very important to give what impression to people and keep people stay here for long time or no, but user's experiences are more important to make people decide whether they go there or how to use there. Different people has different experiences, thus they have

various needs, feelings and behaviors in a place.

In addition, combined arrangement of sitting places both with fixed benches and flexible seats, such as steps, is one of the most important characteristics in retaining people in city commercial places. People prefer to stay in somewhere with provision of sitting places for resting when they tired. Especially for some women with children, it is necessary to provide a sitting place for them when they caring for babies or children, or children feel tired. Some sitting places with shelter which probably are provided by private business are popular by users, especially during the summer. At the same time, those sitting places also take the private business more profits because more people gather there.

Besides, urban amenities have also played significant roles for providing people more attractions and more opportunities to stay. In this aspect, those places with unique and interested amenities, such as water feature and sculpture, are more preferred to be used by people. People tend to go to and stay somewhere with those amenities when they come out from stores in a commercial place. And also such amenities should be designed for people in all ages. If there is water feature with lively activities for children, somewhere with static activities and environment should be offered to the elder people in the same place. Additionally, such urban amenities also have positive effects on accessibility to these places in both in physical and visual level. If it provides some attractive urban amenities in a place, it could also attract more people come to this place both from other areas within the place and outside there.

Finally but not less important, places that lacked the safety and with inadequate management whatever by local government, private owners or public were less lively and not preferred use by people. Although most people do not interested in the management itself and not have understand enough what management is and how to manage a place by them, most of them have awareness of the influences between their uses and the level of safety and management. People

preferred to go to and stay in that place with adequate facilities for lighting, surveillance and adequate management both by local government and private ownerships with clean physical environment, adequate sitting places, and other urban amenities. Besides these, therefore, local government should pay more attention to set up a series of training to people for understanding the nature and procedure of management and make people participate in it.

Based on the suggestions above, another issue is necessary to stated here that government or developer should creative ways to provide a variety of business and stores in commercial places for daily shopping and leisure need. It is noticed that, although some places located in somewhere with poor surround environment, there are still many people to go there because of amazing shops there, e.g. the department store named 3.3 between Sanlitun Village North and South. Whereas some places arranged inanimate stores usually have only few people come, despite there are very good quality of physical environment.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS: THE WAY TO BETTER PLACES – LESSONS LEARNED FROM 3 CASE STUDIES

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the relationship between the retail-oriented public places and people's use within three selected case study sites in Beijing – Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Village, and The Place – to examine the retail public spaces which can satisfy the physical and psychological needs of people when they take activity in such places. Through literature review to analyse the theoretical issues on different factors, such as culture, urban design, physical setting, historical context, and contemporary use, and especially the retail public places developed in Chinese context, etc. and to establish the awareness of what the research subject refer to and what such places people like to use. The research summarised a half-year observational study undertaken in 2011 and focused on the rhythms of public life in the city of Beijing with the aim of finding out how these retail-oriented public places are understood, managed and used, including the use and quality of design amenities for sitting, circulation, and related activities by local people in urban environment.

Following the introduction, literature review has been presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. It discussed the basic understanding of the nature and historical context of public space, public space quality and people's activities on it based on the theoretical perspective. And it also pointed out the possible through of the physical environment to influence the activity patterns in public spaces in

cities. Besides, a brief overview of historical evolution of public spaces and the commercial public place use in Chinese context have also been addressed in this part. In methodology part, Chapter 4 provided several methods to measure three case study areas in Beijing through a general identification of what research methods are to set up a series of methods for collecting data during the research. At the same time, the criteria for choosing sites and populations for this research have also been addressed in this part. In the long case study chapter, it was to examine how people used the places in three case study areas by the analysis of the temporal and spatial forms of the physical setting and people's behaviors.

This chapter consists of three sections. Following the introduction as the start of this chapter which includes a general summary of this research, both the theoretical and practical value will be discussed in the next part. The last one will state limitations during the research and the possible future work to such sort of places.

6.2 From Analysis to Practice in Retail-Oriented Urban Environment

As mentioned in the chapter of Introduction, most urban design studies on public space emphasize an approach to design that incorporates the elements of the physical urban environment, or stress on elements of the behavioural environment which include its uses, activities and management. This study was an attempt to integrate these approaches to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the retail-oriented area as a setting comprising behaviour patterns and the elements of the physical setting. Through this integrated approach, this research explored new ways to address the understanding, design, and uses of this common retail public place, and to contribute the following indications during the process of this research:

- Retail-oriented public places should be assessed by both physical setting and its uses in the behavioral setting in mixed use urban environment.
- A good location with easy accessibility is actually the primary for encouraging more activities in a place.
- A good public transportation system that makes all people easy access to any place they want should be improved.
- Whether a place is comfortable for its dimension depends on the users' experiences before, not merely the physical factors.
- Urban amenities should be provided to encourage more lively activities and enhance the accessibility both in physical and visual level.
- For the majority of commercial places, the public sector will remain the dominated by government or provider of public space management services. Thus, a system that involves all users in caring for the quality of public space should be set up.
- Developer should find a way to provide various and interesting business and stores as well as physical characteristics on each commercial place for more active uses.

The lessons above derive from a broad cross-section of experiences from theoretical literature and practical observation and interviews. This study focused on the measurement of local commercial environment quality, including physical setting in public space and activities taken by users from such places. Thus, 'what user really want' and 'what quality of such places are expected' would be required to answer.

To address the work of this research, a qualitative research methodology was adopted mainly involves observation, interview, and small number of questionnaire. Study sites were chosen to take in their locations, physical

dimensions, typology, amenities, social uses and maintenance from a wide range of commercial places in the city of Beijing, whilst interview participants were selected to reflect focus groups in age, gender, family circumstances (with children or not), and life structure. The observation was the primary method to collect the data and information from those three selected study sites. Data were collected by slowly walked through the whole length and extent of each area in the study sites between 8am and 12pm spread out on weekdays and weekends on days and nights with temperatures between 20°C and 35°C from May to September in the city of Beijing.

The mixed-methods approach was undertaken by using behaviour mapping and user perception through interviews, to understand the public environment as a combination of patterns of behaviour and patterns of the physical environment, has demonstrated merit. It is worth to mention that the behavior mapping in pedestrian flows would be multi-used with the maps of distribution of urban facilities together. It provided more effective and direct ways to get where people like to use. This approach can also be used for understanding, design and management across varied environments and space types in different cultures.

Participants in this research revealed that people generally find it difficult to discuss qualities of their local public environment in a standard way, and some qualities more difficult to understand and improve than they thought. Although these participants had a different take on the qualities, some qualities were regarded as particularly significant in helping to improve the quality of commercial places in their local urban environment.

Although Beijing is more and more influenced by Western urban planning, the city still retains the traditions and symbols of ancient imperial times mixed with contemporary use. Hence, as Gehl (2010, p.121) stressed that, unless good places and a good human scale are provided, crucial qualities of urban public

spaces will be lacking. With regard to the large population in the city of Beijing, through observing the use of these three studied areas and interviewing with some users, the findings suggest that, a good scale place need to provide to make people feel comfort in such place, not too wide or too narrow.

In addition, according to the suggestions given by Bromley and Thomas (1993, p.131), a variety of urban amenities, such as seating places or others, should be provided in the form of subsidies to these retail sectors to encourage public life in urban setting. Cities should also find creative ways to make the physical elements of the place flexible to work with the changing businesses and stores. And also, the government should encourage new designs for urban amenities that respond to various physical and psychological needs. Through the observation and interview in this research, the findings suggest that such urban amenities should be designed to encourage and support multiple activities for people of all ages such as discovery and play opportunities for children or for relaxation for the elder people.

The findings of this research also suggest that it is the engagement between the places that have special meanings for the community, the elements of the behavioural environment, and the elements of the physical setting that creates a comfortable, pleasurable meaningful and therefore desirable environment for people on urban retail environment. These findings have implications for urban design, community planning and economic development policies. The findings show that people tend to choose settings that are meaningful to them as places of the community and that offer comfort and pleasure through various amenities and micro-scale physical features: elements that are extremely significant to the users of the environment. Most importantly, the findings show that when an appropriate combination of characteristics is present, according to Mehta (2009, p.58), the retail-oriented public realm can be a desirable place for stationary, lingering, and social activities.

As Clifford (1994, p.197) suggested that, mixed-use urban environments are a desired pattern of physical development to achieve a more vital, vibrant, attractive, safe, viable and sustainable pattern of urban lifestyle. From the observation in the study, on almost all lively areas, there are a mix of places to eat and drink, those that serve daily shopping needs, and other shopping and services, such as bookshop, bank, electrical goods, and so on. In all three case study sites in Beijing, the places were perceived to be the major commercial centre in local urban environment. This is where most people who lived or worked in the area did their daily or weekly shopping, came to eat and drink, to seek leisure and entertainment, meet friends and watch people, see or participate in activities, and so on. These places are the most lively, diverse, social and public spaces in the local urban setting. However, the findings of this study highlight a way to practice better in the businesses, stores, and other land uses as well as the physical characteristics that support this quality of liveliness, variety and diversity and social contact in such urban retail environment.

6.3 The Way Forward

This chapter has essentially been about lessons learned from the three case studies of the city of Beijing in China through strategic thinking both in theoretical and practical value, and through the development of public awareness that can create a context for even more significant actions in the future.

Based on the suggestions provided above, there may be many more creative ways to design and manage the retail public place in urban environment to suit the needs of the users. However, as Mehta (2009, p.61) pointed that, ‘who should be responsible for the overall design and operation of such public environments?’ remains an open question. At present, it is very crucial

understand and establish the combination of use, location, management and physical characteristics of studied retail places and devise the necessary ways in order to meet the physical and psychological needs of user in such places. Besides, it is important that some design strategies need to provide to serve pedestrians and help integrate social functions to make these retail places more useful and attractive to users. Once the aspiration is moved to action both individual and society on the physical and psychological context, the greatest potential will be offered for successful retail-oriented public place with shopping, play, relaxation and social interaction.

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Noted:

1. All pictures shown in this thesis without references were taken by author from May to December 2011.
2. Tables and Figures represented in this thesis without references were carried out by author through the results of case studies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: List of Question to Interview

The following table provides a list of empirical question of public space uses and assessment of public space qualities in the study areas in Beijing, include both physical factors and social feeling. These questions are basis for interview selected.

A	General Questions on Public Space:
	<div><div>1. Have you paid any attention to the quality of local urban environment?</div><div>2. What extent do you think the quality of the local environment could be affected by the quality of urban public space?</div><div>3. Thinking about this urban environment, which of these things do you think most need improving?</div></div>
B	Questions on Accessibility to Public Space:
	<div><div>1. How do you get this retail public place?</div><div>2. How long have you taken to get these retail places?</div><div>3. Do you think it is convenient to get here?</div><div>4. Is that accepted to the distance from metro station or bus stop to your destination? Is that easy to take taxi? Is there enough parking spaces for private car? How is the charge?</div></div>
C	Questions on Image and Comfort:
	<div><div>1. Thinking about this urban environment, which of these things do you think most satisfied?</div><div>2. Thinking about this urban environment, which of these things do you think most dissatisfied?</div><div>3. What's your first impression to this place?</div><div>4. Are there enough places to sit? Do people have choice of places to sit, etc.?</div><div>5. What are the most important things that you would like to change or add in this place?</div></div>

D	Questions on Uses and People's Activities:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the purpose you visit to this place?2. How long have you stayed in this place? How long have you visited here?3. Where is your favourite place in these places?4. Do you have favourite stores in this place? If yes, what are they, and what makes them your favourite?
E	Questions on Safety and Management:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How important is the safety and management to retail public places?2. Do you know who to responsible for this place?3. Have you got any idea on the management of these places?4. Do you think what the most important things to the safety of such places? Do you have any suggestion?
Table Appendix A: A list of question to interview.	

APPENDIX B: A Sample of Response to Interview

Based on the questions to interview listed above, an original sample of response to interview has provided in the following table.

王府井大街使用情况问卷调查表:

- 1、称呼: 陈朝利 性别: 男
- 2、您的年龄: 20-30岁
A. 20 以下; B. 20-30 岁; C. 31-40 岁; D. 41-50 岁; E. 51-60 岁; F. 60 岁以上;
- 3、您的职业: 一名教师 生活城市: 广西南宁
- 4、您是否有意关注您所在城市公共空间的品质?
☒ A. 非常关注; B. 一般关注; C. 不关注; D. 无所谓;
- 5、您认为城市公共空间对自己生活品质有影响吗?
☒ A. 影响很大; B. 一般; C. 没影响; D. 不关注;
- 6、您认为在您生活的城市空间环境中, 下列哪些因素是急需解决及改善的? (最多选 5 项)
A. 公共交通设施; ☒ B. 道路拥挤情况; C. 青年人的行为; ☒ D. 城市安全及低犯罪率;
E. 年轻人及儿童活动设施; F. 道路及路面铺装、维修; G. 道路及路面的整洁;
H. 居民健康服务; I. 居住条件; J. 交往空间及交往行为; K. 体育锻炼设施;
L. 文化氛围; ☒ M. 生活消费水平; N. 公共开放空间; ☒ O. 城市环境污染状况;
☒ P. 教育普及性; Q. 自然环境的维护; 不担心
- 7、您认为良好的城市公共空间环境, 下列哪些因素起决定作用?
☒ A. 设计; B. 管理及维护; ☒ C. 使用者的适当使用; D. 其他 _____
- 8、旅游者回答:
- 您来北京的目的: 参观学习, 城中村建设, 三日游
- 您第几次来北京: 二
- 您是怎么知道王府井大街的: 朋友介绍
- 您是第几次来王府井大街: 三
- 9、您来王府井大街的目的? 参观和学习
- 10、您平均多久来一次王府井大街? 所到
- 11、您通常在王府井大街停留多久? 半个小时
- 12、您来王府井大街, 通常都去哪些地方? 书店, 古玩店
- 13、王府井大街的品牌和店铺, 是否能满足您的需求? 如果不能? 有何建议?
☒ A. 能; B. 不能; 还行, 别
- 14、您认为王府井大街周围交通便利吗? 便利, 堵车, 堵车

- 15、 您使用何种交通工具到达王府井? 昨晚地铁, 早晨骑车
A. 公交车; B. 地铁; C. 出租车; D. 私家车; E. 其他 _____
- 16、 A. (公共交通回答该题) 公交站或地铁站到达目的地的距离是否可以接受? 您认为是否便利? 距离远, 不便利
B. (乘出租车者回答) 出租车停靠站是否便利合理? 返回时打车是否方便?
C. (驾私家车者回答) 您认为王府井大街停车是否方便? 是否有明显的停车场标识? 您认为停车场收费是否合理? 不
- 17、 您对王府井大街的管理及维护了解吗? 您认为王府井大街属于哪里管理?
A. 政府; B. 开发商; C. 其他 _____
- 18、 您对王府井大街的管理及维护有什么意见吗? 设计合理, 停车位有缺
- 19、 对于王府井大街, 下列因素您最满意的是? (按满意程度选两项)
A. 建筑; B. 雕塑及景观小品; C. 街道; D. 标识及广告; E. 生活特色; F. 文化氛围;
G. 休息空间; H. 品牌、商铺; I. 管理、维护; J. 空间尺度; 空间尺度
- 20、 对于王府井大街, 下列因素您最不满意的是? (按不满意程度选两项)
A. 建筑; B. 雕塑及景观小品; C. 街道; D. 标识及广告; E. 生活特色; F. 文化氛围;
G. 休息空间; H. 品牌、商铺; I. 管理、维护; J. 空间尺度; 没利用或不利用
- 21、 您认为王府井大街最需要改善的地方是什么?
停车难, 红绿灯太少, 以路全, 绿化少, 老房子
- 22、 对于王府井大街公共空间环境, 您还有什么想法和建议吗?
增加一些, 环境不友好, 不美观, 垃圾多
- 23、 您去过三里屯 village 吗? 对于那里的空间环境, 您有什么感受?
去过, 不好
- 24、 您去过世贸天阶吗? 对于那里的空间环境, 您有什么感受?
没有
- 25、 这三个地方, 您更喜欢去哪里? 为什么?
三里屯, 朋友, 晚上喝啤酒, 舒服
- 26、 您还有其他更加喜欢的购物场所吗? 为什么?
万达广场, 环境, 整洁, 价格低

Table Appendix B: A sample of response to interview.