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Yi Wang

# A Century of Change

Beijing's Urban Structure  
in the 20th Century

 Springer

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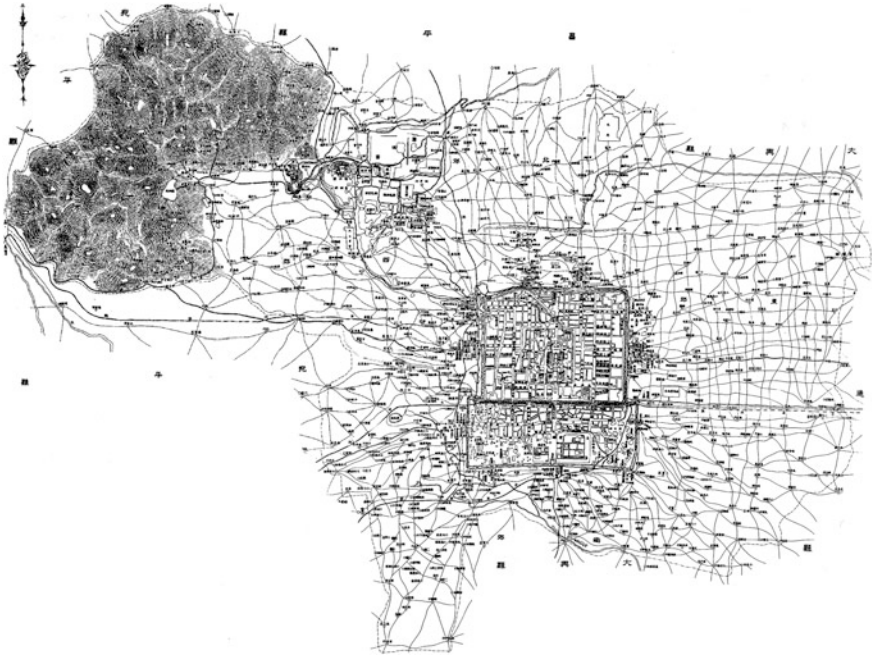
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# Preface

During the twentieth century, and especially during its last decades, Beijing underwent a number of profound changes. The aim of this book was to study these changes as they apply to Beijing's urban structure, in general, and to its housing in particular.

This book consists of four parts. Part I presents a historical review of Beijing's urban development in the twentieth century and a review of the relevant literature concerning urban structure theories and studies. Both of these provide a historical and theoretical background for the analysis conducted in Part II and Part III, which make up of the main body of the book. Part II identifies the reasons which underlie the disappearance of the traditional courtyard house in Beijing's Old City during the urban redevelopment which has taken place since the 1990s. This section also suggests ways of protecting the courtyard houses and thus reducing the damages to the Old City. While Part II mainly focuses on the changes in Beijing's urban spatial structure, Part III concentrates mainly on the transformation of its urban social structure. In particular, Part III focuses on the transformation of Beijing's residential structure from an originally homogeneous type during the period of the planned economy to a segregated type emerged during the period of the market economy. This section also suggests ways of reducing residential segregation. Part IV states the study's conclusions.

This study concludes that ever since China changed from a planned economy to a market economy, economic growth has become the overwhelming driving force of reshaping Beijing's urban structure. The underlying economic interest gave critical impetus for the redevelopment of Beijing's Old City which has caused extensive damage to Beijing's historic cityscape. Meanwhile, the gradually widening gap between household incomes was the main factor generating a noticeable trend toward residential segregation between rich and poor. The research suggests that the fundamental solution which could adequately protect the courtyard houses and Beijing's Old City would be to establish a polycentric urban structure

for the city with the purpose of reducing the pressure of demand for the land in the old city proper. In order to reduce residential segregation, it would also be necessary for Beijing's municipal government to create and perfect its housing security system which would help the low-income families with their housing difficulties.

Beijing, China

Yi Wang

# Acknowledgments

This book is based on one of my researches, which has been undertaking for many years. I should acknowledge numerous people who have helped me during the research. Forgive me, however, for mentioning only a few of them here.

My study on Beijing's urban issues gets started on in the year of 2000 when I was a SPURS (Special Program of Urban and Regional Studies) Fellow in Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the USA. I am grateful to Prof. Juhn de Monchaux, the director of SPURS then, for guiding an architect to pay attention to urban issues. It, while exactly at the turn of the century, actually has brought the origin of this study on the transformation of Beijing's urban structure in the past century.

After transferring to the Ph.D. Programme at the University of Cambridge in the UK, I kept on focusing on Beijing's urban structure in my Ph.D. thesis. Here, I would like to acknowledge Prof. Marcial Echenique for his support and direction of the thesis at the beginning of my Ph.D. study. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Andreas Schäfer for his specific instructions for each chapter, for his patient and painstaking direction, and for his constant and unstinting support during the last stage of the study. I am equally grateful to Dr. Marie Lovatt, my tutor, for her warm encouragement when I was in difficulties and Dr. Sally Church, the International Student Liaison Officer of Wolfson College at Cambridge, for her suggestions on the writing up. My thanks also go to Michael J. Lanford, Professor in Philosophy and Medical Ethics, and Mercier Raymond, Professor in Astronomy. They raised my spirits with encouragements, which determined me to carry on with the study.

Several years later after I went back Beijing, the thesis had a chance to be adapted for a book and was first published by Pace in Hong Kong in 2013. Here, I would like gratefully to acknowledge my colleagues and my students in Tsinghua University in Beijing for their generous help in the field investigations and refinement of the figures. My thanks also go to the relevant real estate companies for their cooperation in supplying materials. Forgive me for not mentioning them one by one here.



Finally, I would like to express thanks to Ms. Juliana Pitanguy, editor of Springer, for her support to republishing the book with Springer and her suggestion on adapting the structure of the new version. Her help is invaluable and most appreciated.

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# Abbreviations

FAR	Floor area ratio
HAR	Housing affordability ratings
HCCD	Historic and Cultural Conservation Districts
ODH	Old and Dilapidated Houses
ODHRD	Old and Dilapidated Housing Redevelopment District
ODHRP	Old and Dilapidated Housing Redevelopment Project
WHS	Welfare-oriented Housing System
Yuan	RMB Yuan, Chinese cash unit. 1 US Dollar = 8.2 Yuan (in 2003)

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