



Mapping and placemaking from the perspective of cultural field: the three historic sites of the western Han Dynasty in Hanzhong

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Recently, in the context of China's policy of vigorously developing the assertive culture confidence, the value of traditional culture has been re-recognized by the whole society. However, due to the unbalanced development of China's eastern and western regions, the value of cultural heritage is not valued in the western region. Hanzhong district in Shaanxi province, belonging to the intersection of the south and north, has its own unique natural and cultural environment. The three historic sites of the western Han Dynasty are located in the city centre of Hanzhong, and as the historical heritage of Han culture, it has been hesitant between protection and development for many years. On the one hand, this paper tries to introduce the concept of "field" into the protection of cultural heritage, by constructing the cultural field model and using the cultural field to explore the question of historical heritage activation. This article, on the other hand, by expanding the mapping function, using the method of mapping defined the three historic sites of the western Han dynasty culture field research scope and the elements, combing extracted place identity, controlling the space boundary of place and for placemaking, and proposing an operable strategy and approach.

Key words: Cultural field; place identity; mapping; placemaking; the three historic sites of the western Han dynasty

1. Background

Lewis Mumford commented that "a city is a concrete and authentic record of human culture." A city is the symbol of histories and culture of a place, so it has distinct feature of regional culture. Redevelopment an old city by respecting history is supposed to be basic rules to be observed in the course of urban planning and construction¹. Today, as China government make a firm cultural confidence, the values of traditional culture are gradually recognized by the whole society. However, as a result of development imbalance existing between the east and the west of China, west areas generally neglect historic and cultural values of cities. Even worse, some people consider traditional historic blocks or even cultural relics and historic sites as a barrier in economic and urban development. In the course of urban renewal, those ancient urban areas with cultural characteristics and hundreds of years' history vanish after a thorough transformation, or difficult to sustain. This leads to imbalance between cultural development and urban development of local places, mismatch and imbalance between urban cultural supply and demand and similar problems. Such problems are mainly reflected in participants' inadequate recognition of the values of historical and cultural heritages, fragmented memory of local cultures and complicated definition of boundary. The reason lies in the participants' unclear cultural identity toward historical and cultural heritage, which leads to lack of place identity, loss of local features and senses.

2. Construct Model of Cultural Field

According to the theory of field, every behavior of participants is affected by the field where the behavior occurs. A cultural field is a collection of movements of cultural factors. In a cultural field where cultural heritages occur, participants' physical behaviors become a factor that cannot be ignored and their psychological behaviors are also affected by many factors. In this paper, the author tried to introduce the concept of "field" in the protection of cultural heritage, construct a model of cultural field (Table 1) and discuss about how to achieve flexible use of historical and cultural heritage of urban from the perspective of the cultural field.



2.1. The Concept and Theory of Field

Based on the objective structure of society, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu put forward the concept of “field”, which means “a social space that works as per unique rules”ⁱⁱ and studied social cultural activities through three interconnected concepts, i.e. field, capital and habitus. A field is relatively independent and defines its boundary through its unique rules. “Capitals” mentioned by Bourdieu is classified into three categories, namely economic capitals, cultural capitals and social capitals. While habitus is pertaining to individuals in the social structures, i.e. behaviors of participants. The participants perceive and grasp social conventions and internalize them into their minds and behaviors, and the mind and behavior settings in turn affect the field where the participants are.

Meanwhile, a field exists objectively. Stan Allen¹ pointed out in his paper *Field Conditions* that “field gives a form to things but it lays particular stress on the form between things instead of the form of things themselves” and that “a field condition could be a matrix of any form or space and the matrix can contain various different elements and respect their respective characteristics”. And, a field is “defined by complicated and concrete connections”ⁱⁱⁱ. Which shows that a “field” is a structure without a clear boundary freely organized internally but orderly connected, and a “field condition” manifests characteristics of the field. Historical and cultural heritage is mainly a urban context of “field condition”.

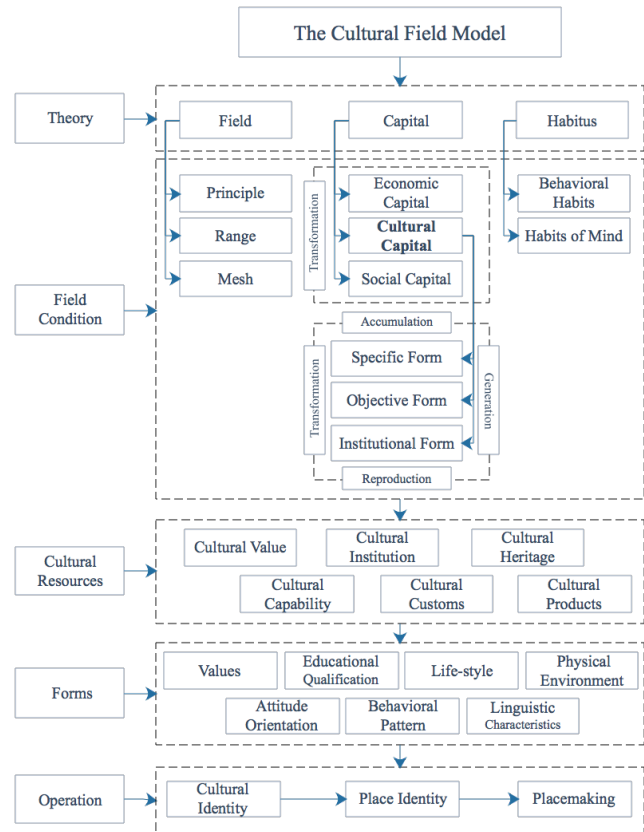


Table 1: The cultural field model

2.2. Cultural Field Condition

Every kind of culture has its own cultural field, which is composed of a series of values, ideas, attitude orientations, behavioral patterns and life-styles. A cultural field is open without definitive boundaries and forms in the course of interaction with other fields. It absorbs nutrients beneficial to its development from other cultural fields and makes them a part of it. In a cultural field, economic capitals refer to economic power of the cultural field; social capitals relate to population, the form of social organization and the like; cultural capitals refer to the attraction of perceptions, beliefs, values and cultural patterns. Cultural capitals are accumulated with time and labors and are manifested in physical, concrete and institutional forms; besides, they have a potential to earn productive profits and can realize reproduction of it^{iv}.

2.3. Cultural Resources and Forms

Bourdieu believes that, “cultural capitals is a sum of all cultural resources, including cultural customs, cultural capabilities, cultural institutions and cultural products and is reflected in forms of people’s educational qualification, behavioral pattern, linguistic characteristics and life-style.” Each city is an organic regional society and a specific cultural cluster. Culture of a city is characterized in both diversity and coherence. In the cultural field model, cultural resources include cultural values, cultural institutions, cultural heritage, cultural capabilities, cultural customs, cultural products, etc. Cultural forms include values, educational qualification, life-style physical environment,

¹Stan Allen, Dean of School of Architecture of Princeton University



attitude orientation, behavioral pattern and linguistic characteristics. As a symbolic system, urban physical environment has complicated and diversified senses. Cultural heritages, as historic physical environment, constantly convey rich historical and cultural connotations to people.

3. Operation Method

Field has inherent characteristics of a global concept formed by individual collections. The simplest field state is numerous existence of juxtaposition. In urban and architectural design, the numerous “existence” gives a spiritual shock, and symbols formed by field imply a certain context. We need to pay attention to large amounts of information about field, and the most essential physical information includes soil, bed rock, hydrology, historical value, animal and plant. This information not only provides cultural symbols which stimulate inspiration but also is used for architectural and urban development, from which we obtain inspiration and benefits. Based on the cultural field model, this paper researches the cultural elements through mapping with regard to historical and cultural heritage, and summarizes field characteristics from cultural identity to place identity, and placemaking.

3.1. Cultural Identity

Under globalization, culture transformation presents two distinct trends: non-territorial culture expansion and local cultural reconstruction^v. Culture is not only a local symbol but also the historical origin and base for identity formation of the individuals and ethnic groups. Identity is the premise of existence. Cultural identity refers to ethnic group identity. Historical and cultural heritage is one of important resources which the cultural field relies on, and is embodied by habitus in participants’ bodies, thoughts and life. It is evitable that one cultural field which affects or threatens cultural existence will affect and threat cultural identity of group members in the fields. Culture is a capital which can be converted into more economic capitals in practice so as to guarantee self-growth and continuity. Hence, it is very necessary to determine the concept of capital within the context of historical cultural heritage resources so that we can further recognize surface meanings of local traditional culture and form self-awareness for development and utilization. Cultural identity actually refers to local context summarization.

3.2. Place Identity

In 1983, Roshansky et al. introduced the concept of identity into environmental psychology and thought that it corresponded to social identity. Place identity^{vi} (Table 2) may be extended to object, thing, space and place, and refer to interaction of the individuals or groups in the places. This type of special socialization includes feelings, perception, cognition and other complex processes. Based on this process, the individuals and groups are defined as a

	Characteristic	Representation
Place identity	Cultural identity	Historical context, historical event, figure, protection and inheritance of local culture and cultural landscape, folk custom and local culture of festival
	Environment identity	Geographic location, natural environment, climate, life convenience, perfection of amenities, folk custom, social order and residential satisfaction
	Distinguishing	Resident’s sense of honor and superiority, local characteristics, identification and place memory
	Place dependence	Sense of belonging, psychological meaning, location and emotional attachment
	Self-efficacy	Individual life, daily demand, sense of security, stability and relaxation
	Commitment	Contact and relevance between people and place

Table 2: Characteristic of place identity



part of a certain place^{vii}, so as to establish the position and role in the society depending on place^{viii}. Under this context, place is no longer just a physical background for human activities, but a part of self-identity^{ix}. In other word, place identity is a part of self-identity and is developed from the nature of unique element and interaction between people and place^x. However, place is interpreted as site in a narrow sense and as land or context in a broad sense. So, place identity is sometimes called urban character, neighborhood character or local character. Place identity refers to a general item of elements of a certain place, and is the origin and vitality of place formation, continuation and development. These elements are formed through long-term evolution and combination, including region, path, building, space, fabric and other physical elements and possibly including human elements such as certain type of population or certain behavior or activity. The fundamental of planning and design is to explore the stable and orderly structure among these elements^{xi}.

3.3. Mapping

“Mapping” is originated from surveying and mapping, and expresses the concepts of drawing, mapping and plotting. James Conner created the operation system of “mapping” in landscape design^{xii}, and more emphasized that “mapping” is a design method appropriate for regeneration. Within the range of cultural field, the original intention of planning and design is to discover and guide actual usage requirements for the fields. Usually, field characteristics cannot be rapidly and effectively captured through traditional field survey in general. In any physical environment, discrepancies may exist between the intent of its design and how it is actually used. Behavioral mapping can be useful to help identify underlying patterns of participant movement and behavior within a given environment. It helps the planners and designers to discover current inherent laws and form place identity which achieves common cognition, effectively improve the current space during planning and design, promote overall design from bottom to top. It can be extended that mapping is an effective way of information visualization. For a field of a larger scale, we may carry out visualized research with big data to conduct objective data verification.

3.4. Placemaking

Based on cultural context and regional characteristics, the planners and designers establish the relationship between people and field, between behavior and space and between nature and artificial environment through analysis on building, site and environment elements. In general, it is impossible for us to fully understand the status quo in a short time by using traditional work methods, and we only superficially analyze current problems and internal relations, which leads to that design is disconnected from the reality. In addition, the place-making method is a set of logical methodologies of “observation-discovery-analysis-resolution”. Specific analysis methods include people-oriented analysis, multi-scale and multi-level analysis and comprehensive sensitivity analysis. Specific steps for place-making include: construction and analysis of basic network, expectation and perception description, mapping analysis, questionnaire analysis, composite mapping overlay analysis, identity image, comprehensive layout and design interference measure.

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces, such as cultural heritage sites. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing. It is political due to the nature of place identity. Placemaking is both a process

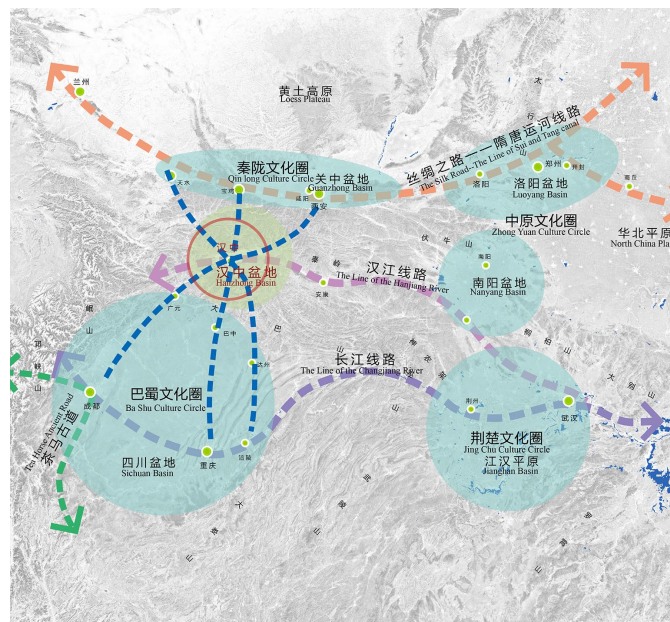


Figure 1: Cultural location map of Hanzhong



and a philosophy.^{xiii}The target of placemaking is to establish or rebuild place spirits^{xiv}.

4. A plan of the three historic sites of the western Han Dynasty in Hanzhong

Between the Qinling mountains and the Bashan mountains, Hanzhong district in shaanxi province is located in the west of China, belonging to the intersection of the south and north, has its own unique natural scenery and cultural history environment (Figure 1) . The three historic sites of the western Han Dynasty are located in the center of Hanzhong, and as the historical heritage of Han culture, it has been hesitant between protection and development for many years.

According to the model of cultural field, the author assimilated local culture of Hanzhong to an organic cultural field with the method of analogy. Specifically, psychological behaviors of participants are habitus; influencing factors of habitus are capitals of the field; such physical environments as historical blocks and architectures of the three historic sites are the core capitals of the cultural field; habitus and capitals interact with each other and jointly make the field work. The author introduced basic concept and working mode of cultural field and investigated current situation of the three historic sites, expecting to find out influencing factors for flexible use of the historic sites, make coherence of environmental image, ecological greening, physical and psychological behaviors, and make the classical theory of people-orientation and spirits of place the basis of placemaking.

4.1. Situation

The three historic sites mainly include Guhan Altar, Baijiang Altar, Yinma Pool and their surrounding areas, It covers an area of about 80 hectares.Using big data and mapping methods,such as average population density in Hanzhong city (Figure 2),it is clear that although the three historic sites are located in the city center, the vitality is very low.Furthermore, Guhan Altar is a provincial cultural relic protection site, which covers an area of approximately 1.37 hectares. It is now a local comprehensive history museum which starts to take shape with diversified styles of architectures after several repairs. Baijiang Altar is also a provincial culture relic protection site, which covers an area of approximately 0.73 hectare.It occupies a large area and is separated from surrounding areas by fences, so it is

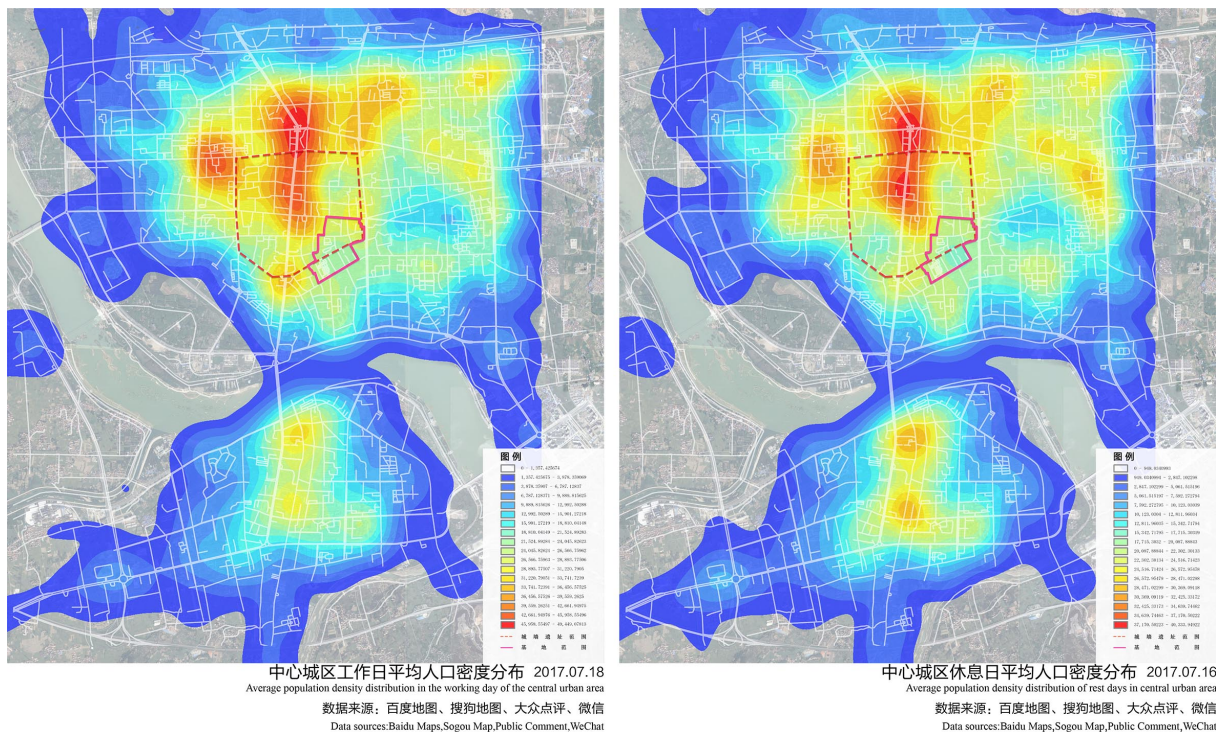


Figure 2: Mapping of average population density in Hanzhong city



generally enclosed. Yinma Pool is a municipal culture relic protection site, which covers an area of approximately 1.21 hectares. It is generally well-conditioned, but ancient city walls, Santai Pavilion and Longshen Temple disappeared, surrounding architectures and environment need to be improved. There isn't an open landscape vision. As historic and cultural blocks, their surrounding area cover a area of about 6.78 hectares, a protection area of about 31.64 hectares and a supporting area of about 40.44 hectares. It can be seen that the boundary relationship between the three sites is complex, and it is difficult to determine a reasonable research scope (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The boundary of the three historic sites of the Han Dynasty

surrounding area with low buildings. After mapping existing condition of the three historic sites, we made the following conclusions: ① slow-moving traffic system is missing, transportation system is not perfect; ② There are not adequate public service facilities, public places and open spaces; ③ Continuity of local culture is still weak; ④ Quality of physical environment is inferior. It is necessary to repair the spatial texture.

4.2. Identity

Hanzhong area has its unique local culture in long-time social and historical practices, which is an important distinguishing characteristic. Historic city that remains in Hanzhong is a special mark of it, and is also what local culture survives on. This kind of local culture can be classed as cultural capital according to classification of field capitals proposed by Bourdieu. A collection of local historical and cultural heritages are special cultural capitals of Hanzhong area. In certain conditions, they could be converted into economic capitals and social capitals. To tap the potential, they must be connected with a certain field and form a special cultural field. In other words, it is necessary to construct a structure of historic city area of Hanzhong centered in the three historic sites and connected with the city wall

the three sites is complex, and it is difficult to determine a reasonable research scope (Figure 3).

With the city wall site of the Ming Dynasty was discovered, cultural resources and information cross with each other in the whole area, it's hard to distinguish the primary and secondary cultural resources and information. Through behavior mapping of current participants, it found that the three historic sites work independently at present without any connection in terms of functions and transportation. As a museum, Guhan Altars relatively enclosed with independent functions; as an enclosed park, Baijiang Altar is not adequately lively; Yinma Pool remains in resting status; the T-shaped historic streets lacks adequate protection generally and traditional folk business activities declines day after day; position of city walls of the Ming Dynasty in Hanzhong is clear and distinguishable, as some multi-floor buildings were built orderly on the demolition position in 1980s, which is different from

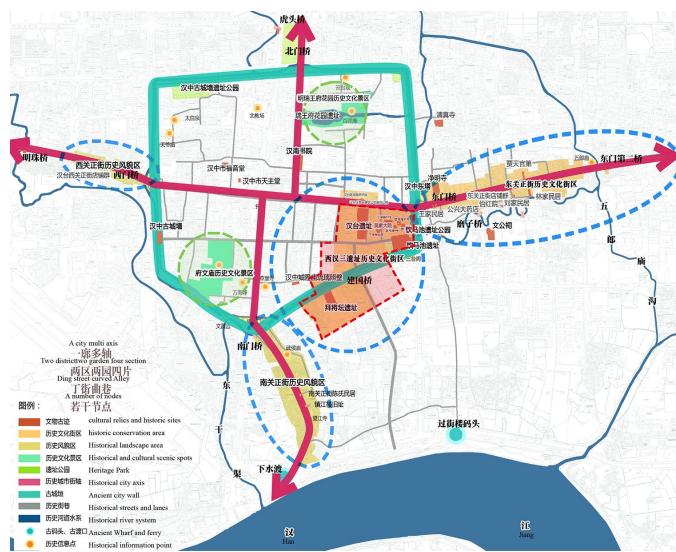


Figure 4: The structure of the historic district of Hanzhong city



ruins of the Ming Dynasty (Figure 4). In this process, we sorted local cultural elements of Hanzhong with mapping method. As an important resource in the cultural field and a physical environment of the city, traditional historical culture commercialize cultural resources in the cultural field through spatial production behaviors; connected with consumption, they initiate consumption behaviors and bring economic benefits, in which way, conversion between different kinds of capitals are finished.

As the core of ritual thought, the LI-YUE system originates from the Zhou Dynasty, and flourished in the Han Dynasty, together with the political and legal system forms the whole social system of ancient China and has a great impact to the politics, culture and arts afterward. And that is why China is called the Country of LIYUE. After studying local culture and cultural inheritance, it's not difficult to find that in the local cultural field of Hanzhong, the three historic sites of the Han Dynasty and surrounding areas are the most representative local cultural resources and physical environment. Guhan Altar and Baijiang Altar are both spaces constructed under the influence of traditional ritual system. As time passes, special folk liveness forms in surrounding T-shaped streets; however, it declined day after day in recent years as a result of lack of protection measures. Hence, we believe cultural identity of the place should be defined as ritual and liveness. Ritual represents the classical elite culture with sense of order and sense of ceremony, while liveness represents harmonious, natural grass-roots culture. The place identity may be defined as LI-YUE symbiosis. The three historic sites of the Han Dynasty, as a cultural center of the city, take both tourism and city life into consideration. It a center where people may experience diversified local cultures.

4.3. The strategy of placemaking

Based on the place identity of LI-YUE symbiosis, we put forward the strategy of placemaking: all parts are connected with each other and greenways are designed based on natural conditions; establish the axis LI and axis YUE, it is well protected and modern life is well guaranteed.

All parts are connected with each other and greenways are designed based on natural conditions. First of all, a large ring of local cultures – a recreation system around the main urban area – could be built. Hantai District is positioned as an experience center of Hanzhong culture. Various cultural resources of the city radiate from the center of Hantai District, in which way, cultural development of surrounding districts and counties is driven efficiently and comprehensively. The city highway ring serves rapid traffic, and national highway ring serve slow traffic and tour. Secondly, a middle ring of traditional culture is built. Specifically, it is suggested that a heritage park should be built on the position of city walls of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the city and rivers should be well connected and a demonstration urban reaction and slow traffic system should be constructed. By building up a city wall heritage park, connecting cultural relics inside and outside of the ancient city and creating a slow traffic system for the purpose of ancient city experience, it is able to recover and highlight patter of ancient city, expand public spaces of the city and improve people's identity and experience. Last of all, a small ring for local culture experience is built. The three historic sites are connected to maintain liveness of the city; a slow traffic system is



Figure 5: The small ring of the three historic sites

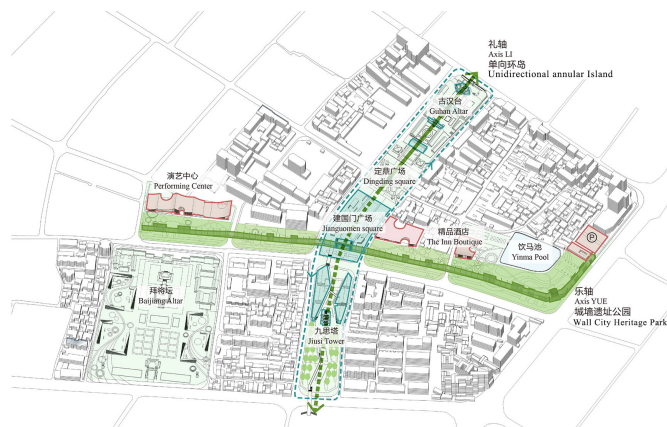


Figure 6: The LI-YUE axis of the three historic sites



built to connect main spatial nodes and public buildings; activities with local features are devised to create liveness experience(Figure 5).

Establish the axis LI and axis YUE, it is well protected and modern life is well guaranteed(Figure 6). Firstly, we should uphold traditional Chinese rituals and facilitate tourism. It is suggested that ritual architectures of Guhan Altar should be repaired and the traditional axis should be maintained; fences should be demolished to reshape background and foreground spaces of Baijiang Altar; the landscape of Yinma Pool is expected to be repaired and Santai Tower is to be recovered roughly to create an open space for the portal of the area. Secondly, the ancient city and city walls should be recovered. We should express pattern of the city walls and recover spatial pattern of the city walls of the Ming Dynasty in structure. It is suggested to devise display spaces, experience spaces and recreation spaces by taking the demonstration section of middle ring – the heritage park of city walls of the Ming and Qing Dynasties – as a carrier. Thirdly, roads need to be upgraded and cycle tracks should be offered. Roads are criss-crossed, graded and made denser; cycle tracks and footpaths are offered to create a slow-traffic system. Finally, heritages and liveness of daily life should be well protected. We should protect intangible cultural heritage successors and create a space where people live harmoniously; we should also make up daily life circles and activate occasional life circles.

5. Conclusions

“Field” originates from the idea of “social space” proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. It is a network in which there are objective relationships between all positions. Its nature depends on social position of each person and living functions of the space^{xv}. Without the sense of history and the attribute of culture of “cultural context”, it represents natural daily life. Being different from “environment” we usually care about, it stresses on the relationship between individuals in built environment or even milieu which is broader and more active. Basing on the naturalness of life represented by the “field”, planners and designers well explain sociality that they care about, space-time makes sense, people are valuable and splendid stories are told in the cultural field. The author drew the following conclusions: firstly, cultural field model can mark boundaries of historic blocks intuitively and concretely from a cultural perspective; secondly, to create a culture field for historical heritages makes for value identity and field identity of heritages; thirdly, as a technical and strategic research tool for research of historical heritages, mapping can not only help to find out internal connections between elements within the cultural field, but determine place identity in a more objective way by extracting cultural information and rebuild cultural connections through placemaking. Theories and practices discussed in this paper can help us to well know values of cultural heritages in historic areas, effectively enhance cultural inheritance and innovation and have positive significance in placemaking of historic blocks. There are still some troubles to be discussed. As a “public product”, historical cultural heritage needs involvement of stakeholders, but it’s hard to find a way out of the dilemma between protection of private equity and protection of public interest; protection of historical cultural heritages is a responsibility of both local residents and citywide citizens; to protect historical cultural heritages is to protect public interests, so high-level culture identity should act as main impetus for involvement of citizens, in addition to property right protection; as a deep-level variable, local culture has an impact on behavioral selection of the relation “government – market - society” and has the functions of building up social values, reconcile social conflicts and guide social development.

Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to express his most sincere appreciation to Prof. Zhang Pei, who read the manuscript carefully and gave valuable advice. Tremendous thanks are owed to Ms. Fang Minjie and Wu Hanru for helping me with the figure sort out. The writer is also indebted to BA studio for offering the case.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Image sources



Table 1: The cultural field model, by author

Table 2: Characteristic of place identity, by author

Figure 1: Cultural location map of Hanzhong, by author,

Figure 2: Mapping of average population density in Hanzhong city, by author, data sources came from Baidu maps, Sogou map, Public comment and WeChat

Figure 3: The boundary of the three historic sites of the Han Dynasty, by author, the information shown here comes from *the preservation plan of the famous historical and cultural city of Hanzhong*, photos by author

Figure 4: The structure of the historic district of Hanzhong city by author, the information shown here comes from *the preservation plan of the famous historical and cultural city of Hanzhong*

Figure 5: The small ring of the three historic sites, by author

Figure 6: The LI-YUE axis of the three historic sites, by author