Chaotic Identities in Chinese Commercial Streets

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ABSTRACT

The overall background is the Chinese metropolises like Shanghai and Beijing trying to become part of the modern ones with global and multicultural identities like New York, Tokyo, and London. In the craze for western styles many cities have lose their local cultures, especially notable in the commercial districts of Chinese cities where various themes such as Italian, Russian, and complex styles have become more and more common. In terms of domestic cases, small cities incline to become big cities or well-developed parallel cities and attempt to be urbanized, cultural, and attractive for investors. As a consequence, a mass of pseudo-classic buildings have been or being constructed under the banner of traditional culture. It is a common phenomenon that commercial streets share similar faces and disordered identities in the cities of contemporary China.

This thesis investigates why these problems emerged from different aspects - place identity, urban branding, producing and coping spaces from capital perspectives and specific conditions in China. In light of the theoretical study the thesis analyze the findings the case studies of commercial streets in Nanjing and Shanghai in order to find out how the chaotic identities are expressed and what causes to the admiration of western styles are to be found. It also seeks evidence of the rationality of Neo-Chinese style, a new style occurred mostly in residential projects reflecting traditional cultures, and indicates problems that appear during the progress of Neo-Chinese style exploration. The aim of this paper is to give a deeper understanding of the chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets, and to seek for solutions to the issue.

**Key words:** place identity, copy space, urban branding, commercial street, Neo-Chinese style
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Background of the topic

The urban construction in China has proceeded rapidly since 1990. Big cities, like Shenzhen, Beijing, and Shanghai started to build CBDs to meet the economic needs. From the perspectives of decision makers, it’s reasonable to start in these cities, because Shenzhen locates in southern China and is the first special economic zone decided in 1980; Beijing is the capital and political center which can give varieties of opportunities to investors; Shanghai was already opened to foreign traders in 1842 due to the ‘Treaty of Nanking’, and its development will promote areas in middle-east China. Then, many other provincial capital cities like Nanjing, Xiamen, and Hangzhou also raised the trend of modernization.

On one hand, western cultures and technology flooded into China which made people feel excited, but also confused. Cultural globalization does not necessarily mean the loss of national culture. However, the reality in China is that with the endless rumble of bulldozers, old houses were demolished, and concrete, high buildings established. Without thinking and researching local identities, cities rushed into a course of copying Western styles. For example, Zhonguancun in Beijing copies from Silicon Valley in style; Lujiazui in Shanghai copies from Manhattan; and various dwelling projects with titles like ‘Romantic Spain’, ‘East-Paris’ which are introduced by real estate companies. This phenomenon emerged not only in residential areas, but also commercial districts. Western style commercial districts are popular in China, and promoted by some local governments for investment purpose. The influence of the phenomenon is also involving citizens’ life, ‘every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings’ (Lynch, 1960, p1). Skyscrapers, window walls, neon lights, overpasses and big plaza filled up cities and pushed historical elements away.

On the other hand, topics on traditional culture revival were put back on the table as the response to the trend of western styles. Commercial district with local customs, as one of the most popular spots for locals and visitors which can primarily reflect certain city images started to develop vigorously. Urban branding with traditional or local cultures has become a prominent mean to manage and promote cities in the increasingly fierce competition background. The attractiveness in developing a historical district into a tourist commercial district has caught investors and city managers’ eyes, e.g. Tianjin Ancient Culture Street which was opened in 1986. The concept ‘cultural street’ refers to a tourist attraction with commercial and recreational functions which mostly present historical landscapes to public, whether it is really antique or not. Unfortunately, many cultural features in these products are not typically regional, but have their origin in general Chinese traditional culture or cultures of other regions. The effect of this is that commercial streets with ‘traditional banner’ look the same.

Copying space is becoming a serious problem in China, and chaotic identities are to be seen in the Chinese commercial streets. However, identities are shifting all the time and there is no constant identity. What cities need is a proper way to retain their attractive characters and develop them.
1.2 Objective and research questions

The aim of this paper is to give a deeper understanding of the chaotic identities in the Chinese commercial streets, and seek for solutions to making them less chaotic.

The main research questions are:

(1) What is the expression of chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets?
(2) What causes the phenomenon?
(3) What are people’s views of different styled commercial streets?
(4) Is there any viability to break down old conventions with a new style?

1.3 Strategy and methods

Surveys and case studies comprise the research strategies. Firstly, surveys aim to get empirical data, such as the feelings, attitudes, and replies of the public to a question, and also the objective statistics of people’s activities. As Denscombe (2003, p251) puts, ‘the use of statistics can give researchers additional credibility in terms of the interpretations they make and the confidence they have in their findings.’ Perspectives from different people can suggest various answers to questions, and if analyzed and well utilized, they will indicate better directions for the research. Secondly, case studies let the author go deep into the research. Two case studies were chosen as they represent two typical phenomena of Chinese commercial streets. Through the case studies, it is easier to understand the value of each type of commercial street. And the chaotic identities can be found in case studies as evidences. Data collection was made through multiple methods- questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document studies.

1.3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is one of the methods in the research progress, which aims to collect the factual information and opinions of people. According to Denscombe (2003, p159), the advantage of questionnaires is that by supplying standardized options, it is easier to get the answer from different people. In the internet questionnaires of Shanghai Nanjing Pedestrian Road and Confucius Temple Street which were designed by author on the website, 30 people who are all acknowledged were chosen as participants, including students, planners, architects, teachers, lawyers, engineers, and businessmen. Participants should have visited the site before, and be familiar with Shanghai and Nanjing. So I sought participants who are teachers, or students or have been graduated from universities in Shanghai and Nanjing; the friends who worked in these two cities; and also the group of people recommended by the former participants. 24 people participated in both two questionnaires, and the left part of participants is different from each other.
1.3.2 Interviews

Based on the replies to questionnaires, I made two interviews with two participants face to face and by emails with their consent. One is a staff who works in a bank and lives in Shanghai, graduated from Nanjing Forestry University. The other one is a college student in Nanjing. The questions were asked as ‘Why do you prefer Nanjing Road instead of Confucius Temple Street?’, ‘What are the disadvantages of each street?’, and ‘Are you satisfied with the current situation of commercial streets in China and why?’ The answers were collected from emails and notes, then analyzed and transferred in Chapter 5.3.2. The interviews assist the research from different perspectives.

1.3.3 Observation

Observation was taken in both case studies and with the aim to get a holistic view of the case. For instance, the observation of human activities is one method in case studies. I observed the usages of facilities one afternoon to see if the street space was made good use of, and the observation of building characters that presenting different identities. In the case of Nanjing Road, I mainly observed the building characters to see how colonial styles expressed in this site. What’s more, the observations in ‘window of the world’, Shenzhen, 2007, Suzhou Museum in 2013, and the ancient residential houses in Qintong, 2013 also helped me in data collection. These data were used as photos, descriptions, and also turned into table with other documents analyzing.

1.3.4 Documents

The materials that have been used are books on the topic of ‘place identity’, ‘producing and copying space’, ‘Shanghai history’ and ‘Chinese traditional architect’; articles mainly from China Academic Journal; newspapers such as Sina News, QQ News. Books and articles were mostly from CNKI, Google scholar, and Library with the research for ‘place identity’, ‘copy space’, ‘urban branding’, ‘commercial street’, ‘Neo-Chinese style’ and so on.

Drawings, photographs, and newspapers were partly made by author, and the others were collected from website, such as government website, tourism website, Wikipedia, Baidu Baike, Sina News, QQ News, and also bloggers of famous photographers, real estate developers, and tourists mostly in Sina Blog, Xici and Baidu Tieba.
1.4 Structure

The thesis consists of 6 chapters conveying the progress of the research. From the chapter of introduction, the phenomenon of chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets was introduced. Then, to support the research theoretically, concepts of ‘place identity’, ‘urban branding’ and ‘producing and copying spaces’ were cited and discussed according to different scholars. After that, studies on Chinese commercial streets and different styles were taken in Chapter 3, presenting two main styles. In Chapter 4, Confucius Temple Street and Nanjing Road were taken as case studies representing traditional Chinese style and colonial style separately. With the analysis of collected data, classification, findings, the problems, and the causes were discussed. As one solution to the problem, Neo-Chinese style was introduced and analyzed afterwards. And the last chapter is an overall conclusion which contained summaries of different parts of the thesis.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Perspectives

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the keywords ‘place identity’ and ‘urban branding’ by reviewing relevant studies of previous scholars on urban issues. To study identities in commercial district, it is necessary to start from ‘place identity’. ‘Urban branding’ can be related with space producers and city managers who influence the city construction to a great extent. And then, I introduce the concept of ‘producing & copying spaces’ associated with capital aspects, The reason for the discussion about capital aspect is that, along with capitalism, industrialization, and globalization, identities or something that dominated for long time in a place or a city have changed. Understanding the notion of ‘copying space’ is beneficial for researching chaotic identities in certain space.

2.2 Place identity

Identity, as Tomlinson (1999) outlined, is a description of the cultural belonging, besides being a collective treasure of local communities. A place can range in scale from a furnishing or room to a building, neighborhood, city, landscape, or region (Relph 1976, 1985). I agree with the interpretation which defines ‘place identity’ as ‘… those spatiotemporal similar attributes of a place, which form the internal target group’s perception of that place’ (Ebert, 2005, p. 567). A place identity that is generally accepted by those internal audiences as the foundation of a feeling of belonging to a place is regarded as an important factor for cooperation beyond resort-thinking and single interests in order to fulfill the overall brand promise of the place (Werthmöllel, 1995). It’s in people’s minds that the city takes form through the processing of perceptions and images about a city. This process is the same as that followed in the formation of images of other entities like products or corporations, which have long been managed as brands (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009, p. 521). City Images, people’s feeling of belonging, and brands are mentioned a lot when defining place identity.

In addition, ‘genius loci’, ‘spirit of a place’, and the ‘sense of a place’ can be also linked to this topic. The original Roman meaning of “genius loci” is described as sacredness of place, thought to be related to the spirit of the local deity, for whom a shrine was often built (Loukaki, 1997, p. 308; Rigby 2003, p. 108). And there is a debate about genius loci in the literature of “place”, that is whether “genius loci” is a phenomenon created by subjective human experience or a “thing in itself” at least partly autonomous in relation to the human beings who experience it (DeMiglio & Williams 2008, Nogue I Font 1993). From reviewing previous scholars’ opinions, the social-constructionist perspective is playing a dominant role. As Rigby’s interpretation, ‘genius loci’ is a kind of human projection which can be understood as “merely a metaphor, referring to the associations that an individual or collective subject has acquired in relation to a specific place: the god, in other words, is no longer located in the ‘place’, but in the head” (Rigby, 2003, p. 110).
Another helpful clarification made by Relph (2009) I want to mention is that he distinguishes between ‘genius loci’ (he terms ‘spirit of place’) and ‘sense of place’. From his view, ‘genius loci’ is the singular qualities of a specific landscape or environment that infuse it with a unique character; ‘sense of place’ is the synesthetic and largely unself-conscious facility of human beings to feel and sense the uniqueness of a specific landscape or environment.

In this paper, I am not denying the spiritual meaning of “genius loci”; however, what I incline to is more about the physical environment created by human beings. As Hough (1990) assumed, place identity is the product of local determinants, such as climate, geology, geography and culture. It evolved from necessity rather than design or decision as the settlements were shaped according to local constraints. And the environment was mainly shaped through vernacular processes with locally-sourced materials (Butina & Bentley, 2007) and the own character of the place which made it different from others. This situation has changed a lot when industrialization began, as ‘with the industrialization, local constraints were progressively loosened’ (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Due to industrialization and globalization, new features are introduced in cities which give citizens more choices, such as technologies, cultures, and also lifestyles.

### 2.3 Urban Branding

A brand describes names, designs, symbols, or other identifying features that distinguish one offer from others. Go through the literature, it shows the sequence of each kind of branding: firstly occurred branding commercial products; then developed into ‘co-branding’ which refers to a situation that two or more products form a short or long-term alliance, thereby allowing the transfer of certain aspects of image from one to the other’s (Rao and Ruekert, 1994, p. 87-p. 97); then, branding image is shaped by marketing programs that make strong, positive and memorable associations, but also by direct experience, by word of mouth and by identification with particular events, people or places etc. (Keller, 2003).

Here I will focus on branding urban products, because that it is connected with ‘copying space’, and I will give an example of a Chinese real estate’s project in Chapter 4 to explain what the influence of branded

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1 A widely used definition of “brand” which is from the American Marketing Association.
urban products is in current China.

**Branding urban products**

We can easily feel that buildings are increasingly looking similar in China (Fig 1 & Fig 2). To think about the reason, we need to start with the question ‘who produce these buildings’. As Peter Butenschon (1999) say in *Urban Culture: City Identity, Public Space and Global Market Forces*: ‘Because those buildings are sold as symbols of creative and financially solid companies.’ Buildings with certain style are viewed as the brand of one architect or a company. Branding in architecture means the expression of identity, whether of an enterprise or a city; New York, Bilbao, and Shanghai have used architecture to enhance their images, generate economic growth, and elevate their positions in the global village (Klingmann, 2010). So urban branding can be seen as a way to extract identities of a city or urban products into a brand which is attractive and distinctive.

On the contrary of discussion about city identity and branding, which people pay high attention to, there is another term ‘generic city’ (Koolhaas, 1994) I want to mention. From Koolhaas’s view, the stronger identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal and contradiction. He points out that after identity is stripped, the generic is left. “The best definition of the aesthetic of the Generic City is ‘free style’…There are three elements: road, buildings, and nature; they coexist in flexible relationships, seemingly without reason, in spectacular organizational diversity” (Koolhaas, 1994, p. 1254).

**2.4 Producing space & copying space**

In this section, I argue for subjective spiritual and cultural aspects, holding that urban development is largely oriented by capitalism, to get a better understanding of similar faces in Chinese cities. Space producers could be ordinary people or large-scale producers, like real estate companies. In this chapter, I emphasize on large-scale producers for the reason that commercial streets are public space which is more related with the will of governments and the masses instead of individuals.

**Producing space**

In the 70ies, Lefebvre made an interpretation of ‘producing space’ in his book *The Produce of Space* meaning that with the capitalist reproduction on extended scale urban, spaces turned into a means of production, joining with capital into a generative process. Capital finally reaches the purpose of appreciation through possession, production and consumption. Therefore, urban development is no longer a pure natural or technological process, but the process that capital utilizes urban spaces to realize reproduction. To some extent, urban space is the outcome of capitalist production relations development. As Castells (2000) indicated, space is not a reflection of society but an expression of society.

Producing space, with the built environment as an investment, costs a lot, takes enormous risks, and can only move on if there is enough fund flows (Jiang, 2009, p41). Meanwhile, it will make a handsome
profit from producing spaces which attracts more capital inflows.

**Copying space**

As Jiang (2009) argues, since the space becomes a means of production, and finally is remolded to a commodity, space acquires use value and exchange value, and is consumed like others. As with general commodities, quantitative production and standardization, these two most efficient modes are taken into the progress of urban space evolution. Correspondingly, appropriate mode of production emerged at the right moment. For example, Mumford (1961) argues that the ‘open-grid’ planning form in New York and San Francisco gives expression to a kind of commercial spirit which emphasizes on ‘the regular and the calculable on one side, and of speculative adventure and audacious expansion on the other’. As a corollary, indiscriminate grids took place of flexural alleys and provided standardized raw materials to space production in a simple but efficient way.

Real estate, as one typical capital concentrated industry, needs to accelerate the circulation of ‘production-consumption-appreciation-reproduction’ (Jiang, 2009, p. 41), in order to ensure the efficiency of appreciation and the safety of fund chain. As a result, the design cycle will be cut down as much as possible when the construct and approve cycles are relatively constant. It’s difficult for designers to respond to the local identity or surroundings in a very short period of time. Jiang (2009) also argues that the built space and the mature mode which have been accepted by market and the public seem like a safe way for huge investment of space. So, copying space becomes an acquiescent or even encouraged approach to some property developers, especially small companies with weak capital. In a word, copying space is a demand of spatial capital in early stage and an outcome of combination of the insistent demand and reality.

The motivation and objective of a merchant is capital growth, rather than actual need. Capital shapes images of city not only physically, but also ideologically. More specifically, the products dominate people’s mind in turn. If copying building image changes city partly, then the conscious of copying is an enormous catalyst causes the identity loss. Especially to city managers and planners, they subconsciously become collusion with merchants in this kind of spatial production.

**The impacts of copying space**

On one hand, fashionable commercial symbols reflecting the collage of mass culture and the diversification of building forms come forth at the request of market. But the diversification is not rooted in local physical environment or cultural traditions. For example, popular Mediterranean-style, German Town, and other various styles once aroused enormous passion of Chinese market, then was abandoned quickly (Jiang, 2009). The capitalist production system has unified space, breaking down the boundaries between one society and the next. This unification is also a process, once extensive and intensive, of trivialization (Debord, 1973). It will lose regional spirit and culture connotation, if the ‘style’ departs from its rooted soil and just turns to be a label. Besides, local identity faces destruction when various ‘styles’ come on stage together. Owing to the global transformation process of the contemporary capitalist economy, cities with an industrial background and heritage are therefore busy transforming or even
erasing the traces of that historic legacy (Short, 1999).

On the other hand, the trend of building landmarks grows stronger. The numbers and height of modern buildings as landmarks are one of the competitive forces for cities, and the way for governments to show off their achievements (Jiang, 2009). Such as Jin Mao Tower which was highest modern building in Shanghai, as one of the distinguish landmarks in 1999. But since the rapid construction in Shanghai, more and more skyscrapers have been built. The modern buildings are not as rare as before, and due to the construction of Shanghai World Financial Center in 2008 which is 72 meters higher than Jin Mao Tower. The tile of highest building was changed; Jin Mao Tower has less effect than before.

2.5 Conclusion

From the components perspective, it can be seen that ‘place identity’ contains climate, geology and geography native determinants, the physical environment created by human beings such as building characters, and also the spiritual aspect like local cultures and customs. Then, local identities get extracted when urban branding happened. Along with the urban development, identities are refined as brands representing a city or a place, in order to promote its position in the global environment. And from capital development, capital growth is the main goal of space producer that leads to the phenomenon of copying space.

There are also connections between ‘place identity’, ‘urban branding’ and ‘copying space’. One of the impacts of ‘urban branding’ and ‘copying space’ is that the productization and commercialization of space generate building forms incompatible with local cultures from negative aspect. Another influence is the trends of building landmarks as a way for governments to display their achievements.

In Chapter 4, I will present two case studies of commercial streets in China from style perspectives in order to find out the value of each style and what leads to chaotic identities. In Chapter 5, I will introduce ‘Vanke’, the biggest real estate company in China, as an example for a better understanding of the notions of urban branding, copying space and a new style.
Chapter 3 The Chinese commercial street and its different styles

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will introduce two kinds of commercial districts based on cultural and style distinction, one is the traditional Chinese commercial street, and the other one is the colonial commercial street. From my observation, they are the two basic models of current commercial districts construction in China. The traditional Chinese commercial street refers to one which is constructed with traditional Chinese building style and street layout, no matter if this district existed before, regardless of the former property, such as Qianmen Street in Beijing (Fig 4), Tunxi District in Huangshang (Fig 5), and Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing (Fig 6). The colonial commercial street means the street with western style, which is mostly developed from concessions with historical remaining buildings, like the Italian Style Town in Tianjing (Fig 7), Russian Style Street in Dalian (Fig 8), and Nanjing Road in Shanghai (Fig 9). To make
an investigation of these two kinds of commercial streets and find out where the value of each lies, I take Confucius Temple Street and Nanjing Road as case studies in Chapter 4.

The traditional Chinese commercial street:
Fig 4: Qianmen Street in Beijing, under construction (photographed by author).
Fig 5: Tunxi District in Huangshan (guide.uuyoyo.com).
Fig 6: Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing (photographed by author).

The colonial commercial street:
Fig 7: Italian Style Town in Tianjing (Disheng, 2009).
Fig 8: Russian Style Street in Dalian (Wu, 2009).
Fig 9: Nanjing Road in Shanghai (photographed by author).

3.2 Profile of Traditional Chinese commercial streets

3.2.1 History

According to the *Rites of Zhou*\(^2\), market was first appeared as early as the ‘Spring and Autumn Period’ (771 BC-476 BC). There was one 2-5 stories high building standing in the central position for flag raising ceremony when the market opened. Walls and gates formed a closed space and this pattern was lasted till the Tang Dynasty. From the map of Chang’an\(^3\) (Fig 10), it shows clearly the separation of markets and residential houses. At that time, business was limited inside East and West markets. Then, the model was gradually developed into open market in late Tang Dynasty (618-907).

\(^2\) *Rites of Zhou* is one of the three ancient ritual texts listed among the classics of Confucianism, along with the *Book of Rites* and the *Etiquette & Rites*.

\(^3\) Chang’an is an ancient capital of more than ten dynasties in Chinese history, today known as Xi'an.
When it came to the Song Dynasty (960-1127), more and more shops were set up along the streets, which generated the model of early commercial districts. On both sides of the avenue, there were densely arranged with tax office, taverns, restaurants, hotels and pawn shops, forming a cultural and entertainment center of the city (Fig 11). Shops were usually downstairs or in the front, dwellings and workshops were upstairs or in the back. Along with the development of handicraft industry, a series of commercial streets were shaped during that period.

In the early decades of the founding of New China, urban managers canceled traditional fairs and small markets, in accordance with the Soviet experience, only set a few numbers of outlets which were mostly in city center and downstairs of the building along the streets (Xu, 2009, p. 17). This commercial layout
cannot meet the growing shopping needs of people, and was not conducive to economic development. After 1978, in response to the needs of ‘reform and opening up’, commercial construction started booming again. The number of shopping malls, trade centers, and supermarkets was on the increase. Meanwhile, commercial streets with local characteristics had returned to the track of recovery and development. Various forms of traditional Chinese commercial streets were in construction in many cities, such as Qianmen Street (Fig 12 & Fig 13) in Beijing and the Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing (Fig 14 & Fig 15).

Fig 12: Qianmen Street with typical northern houses which constructed mostly by grey bricks, with less windows compared with southern buildings (photographed by author).
Fig 13: “Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant” in Qianmen Street with resplendent decoration (photographed by author).

Fig 14: Confucius Temple Street (photographed by author).
Fig 15: Restaurant in Confucius Temple Street (photographed by author).
3.2.2 The spatial patterns

The buildings are always nestled among hills and streams, reflecting Chinese traditional architectural designs, ‘feng shui’ practices and the close relationship between man and nature. Traditional districts are profoundly displayed in famous landscape cities like Suzhou, Hangzhou and Nanjing.

On both sides of the streets, buildings are arranged symmetrically. Narrow streets are in twists and turns along with the topography that form a multi-level street landscape.

Although traditional streets are in different widths, they become narrow as a trend. Buildings are mostly of 1 to 2 floors, with a height-width ratio between 1:1.2 and 1:2. In late Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), large commercial streets are 10 to 15 meters wide, 6 to 10 meters high; and small commercial streets are 4 to 8 meters wide, 4 to 6 meters high, and all of them are less than 1000 meters long.

According to different historical and geographical conditions, various patterns of street can be divided into 2 types:

(1) Straight-line distribution: It presents one-way street or parallel straight lines. This type of open street space is made up with central axis, buildings arranged on 2 sides which contain mostly both commercial and residential function. It is easy for install buildings as much as possible in limited space which increases space utilization of the district. Usually, there are some important nodes such as outstanding buildings, structures, or decorations to enrich this simplex street.

(2) Enclosure distribution: This kind of district is a closed space with collection of buildings; outside these buildings there is the main street; and inside the space there are several branches. It is usually strongly linked with local culture and customs, and the collection of buildings relies on cultural connotation. The typical examples include the Wide and Narrow Alleys in Chengdu, Sichuan.

3.3 Profile of Colonial commercial streets in China

Different from the development pattern of the traditional commercial street, the colonial commercial street is more based on the colonial buildings which were constructed with the invasion of western

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4 ‘Feng shui’ is a Chinese system of geomancy believed to use the laws of both Heaven (Chinese astronomy) and Earth to help one improve life by receiving positive qi (Stinnett, 2007-2009).
colonists. As Zheng (2008, p. 9) summarized, early Western architecture transferred into China mainly through three ways: missionary with the introduction of Christianity in China which led to the appearance of church buildings; the development of trade between China and western countries; and the construction of a large number of Shikumen\(^5\) houses in concessions like Shanghai, Hankou, and Tianjin from 1870s. The colonial buildings in commercial district are mainly linked with the trade way. These buildings are basically for handling official business and living, therefore the building shape is simple and practical. The colonial-style building is widely used in concessions, such as banks, clubs, and consulates. Along with development of Chinese modern architecture, the number of types has increased and the building size is also enlarged. The function of buildings gradually became separated into big shopping malls, office buildings, and apartments. Colonial-style building is of a transitional style, which is mainly distributed in the earliest traces of concessions.

As I claimed in the introduction of this Chapter, it is obvious to recognize the streets developed from concessions are colonial-style. The reason why I incorporate those commercial streets with no historical concession remains into colonial category is that these streets still get influenced by western cultures, in other words they are cultural colony without war.

### 3.4 Trends of fake Western and fake Chinese

#### 3.4.1 The origin and progress of fake Western and fake Chinese in China

There are a lot of scholars studying about the trends of fake western and Chinese in architectural aspects. According to Ruan (2003, p. 29), the ‘Window of the World’ which was built in Shenzhen, 1989 can be seen as the origin of domestic imitation of European style, because it was a miniature landscape park which gathered many foreign architectural styles and environmental characteristics. ‘Window of the World’ lets people experience famous sceneries without going abroad and appreciate Western architectural style more easily, thus becoming a hot tourist spot (Fig 16). After Reform and opening up, a large number of modernist glass curtain walls and square boxes were built which caused people’s discontent. The exquisite characters of European tradition building styles began to be favored and admired. As a

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5 Shikumen is a traditional Shanghainese architectural style combining Western and Chinese elements that first appeared in the 1860s.
consequence, imitation of European style began spread many cities. Due to Ruan’s research, since 1990, large-scale development of urban real estate, imitation European style grows increasingly, and reached its peak around 1996, developed into urban fashion for local officials and even urban planners and architects. Imitation of European styles includes so-called ‘continental style’, ‘Spain, Romanesque architecture’, or ‘European style street’, by using components or decorative elements, and imitating the ratio scale and style of western buildings. Taking Shanghai as an example, in 1996, two thirds of real estate advertising were ‘European style’, ‘European courtyard house’, etc., which then gradually subsided, and didn’t disappeared until 2002. For fake Chinese styles, its broader meaning is imitation and copies of ancient Chinese building facades, body mass and some structural practices. The first simple imitation can be traced to 1986 when Beijing Glass Culture Street was built, and then followed by Nanjing Confucius Temple Street and Ancient Cultural Street in Tianjin which are in compliance with similar imitation technique.

3.4.2 Evaluation on imitation of western style and fake antique Chinese style

As for imitation of European style, the majority of Chinese scholars in field of urban planning are taking a critical attitude. Firstly, the concept is unclear to designers. For many European styled projects in China, Designers often borrowed Greek, Roman local column, set a dome, made an arch, and put several sculptures catering to so-called artistic pursuit. While in some specific architectural forms and decorative treatment, designers were too subservient to the owners, reducing the architect's professional standards and stifle creative talent with the limits of funds, construction time and also the wills of party A.

As to fake antique Chinese styles, there are two views on the topic. One is that existence is reasonable. Antique is a way of inheriting cultural heritage, which is a necessary stage in Chinese development of local architecture. Therefore, fake antique buildings should be reasonable to accept. As Wu (2006, p. 5) said that ‘there is a need and rationality for fake antique districts, and it is feasible for some selected areas or regions to present or rebuilt with old styles or take on semi-ancient semi-new look.’ And Zhang (1998, p. 32) agreed with Wu’s attitude, ‘through imitation, there comes gradual innovation, some steady, some radical, later successively into the modern’. The other view was that ‘fake antique’, to some extent, confuses the history and destroys the authenticity of history. From Ruan’s (2003, p. 30) view, the value of historical heritages not only lies in their external material form, but also includes the complete information of times they can convey after thousands of years, where no imitation can reach. I agree with Ruan’s standpoints, and that’s why I do this research. In many cities and regions, people take it for granted that to protect a historic city is to put up a temple, to build a pagoda or to build a commercial street with traditional Chinese characters. There is even emerged a phenomenon that really old buildings were replaced by new fake antiques. The newly-built antique buildings are only picture fragments of history in some few minds, not based on historical research, nor of historical relics. Therefore they do not have any historical value, and yet they mislead the public.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter gives introduction to two kinds of commercial streets in current China, and makes
description of each one, according to literatures. By presenting the discussion of evaluation on fake styles, it is clearer to see what scholars’ standpoints are. It gives background of relevant research made by predecessors and the entry point for this paper.
Chapter 4 Case studies

4.1 Introduction

I will take two case studies in Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing and Nanjing Road in Shanghai which are two types of commercial streets in current China. By researching the value of each type of commercial street it is easier to understand why people prefer these styles and why city managers develop commercial streets in these ways. Observation of the two cases helps to find identity problems in detail, which can be set as an example for identity study on a larger scale. That means not only chaotic identities in a certain street but also between different commercial streets. What’s more, to answer the research question ‘is there any viability to break down old conventions with a new style’, it is meaningful to do in-depth study for there are both pros and cons in each case.

4.2 Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing

4.2.1 Background of the site

The Confucius Temple is the core of ‘Qinhuai Scenic Belt’ and its development has experienced the tortuous process of starting, prosperity, decline and recovery. The origin of the Confucius temple area can be traced back to the Eastern Jin Dynasty (AD 316 -420). Early in the Six Dynasties era, being hustling and bustling with Wuyi Lane, Suzaku Street, Taoyedu Ferry, etc. There were famous and distinguished families of that time living in this area.

In 1034s of the Northern Song Dynasty, Nanjing Confucius Temple was formally completed on the bases of the old official school house of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. By the Ming and Qing dynasties, thanks to the provincial and metropolitan examinations, the town had been the gathering place of merchants from all over the country, thriving of its time, with restaurants, teahouses, snacks, brothels and other service industries coming into being.

After the Japanese bomb attack in 1937, the Confucius Temple area fell into an unprecedentedly decaying scene and was gradually reduced to dilapidated residential area. To regain its past prosperity and improve the development environment, the Nanjing government took measures to restore it in 1985. Now, the Great Hall as the main body, the Confucius Temple makes an ancient group, with both the style of Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911) and temple city streetscape features. Here once again it becomes one of China's famous tourist attractions. The scenery of Qinhuai Scenic Belt was listed as one of China's top forty tourist resorts in 1990.
Fig 17: Restored Confucius Temple Street in 1941 printed on postcard (xici.net).
Fig 18: The East boundary of Confucius Temple District in 2013 (photographed by author).

Fig 19: North entrance of Confucius Temple Street (photographed by author).
Fig 20: Southwest entrance of Confucius Temple Street (photographed by author).
As shown in Fig 21, the Confucius Temple District is divided into two main streets including Gongyuan Street and West Gongyuan Street. There are also East and West Markets separated by the wall of Confucius Temple. At either end of the Pedestrian Street there is a memorial arch (Fig 19 & 20), marking the entrances. At the intersection of West Gongyuan Street and Jiankang Road stands the arch with a span of 18 metres, on which is written Nanjing Confucius Temple. As a mini pedestrian street, there exists a striking contrast between markets on both sides of the pedestrian street and the pedestrian street itself. Taking the scheme for the Confucius Temple Street in 1985 as the basis, I made a new survey on the pedestrian street. As shown in Fig 22, after the transformation, the scope of the market once separated, extends outward along the wall of the Confucius Temple, the east in correspondence to the west, taking on a jointing layout pattern.

**Fig 21: The map of Confucius Temple District (made by author, based on Google map).**

The red line represents main pedestrian street, and within the red line, there are two zebra markings which mean East and West Market.

### 4.2.2 Layout

As shown in Fig 21, the Confucius Temple District is divided into two main streets including Gongyuan Street and West Gongyuan Street. There are also East and West Markets separated by the wall of Confucius Temple. At either end of the Pedestrian Street there is a memorial arch (Fig 19 & 20), marking the entrances. At the intersection of West Gongyuan Street and Jiankang Road stands the arch with a span of 18 metres, on which is written Nanjing Confucius Temple. As a mini pedestrian street, there exists a striking contrast between markets on both sides of the pedestrian street and the pedestrian street itself. Taking the scheme for the Confucius Temple Street in 1985 as the basis, I made a new survey on the pedestrian street. As shown in Fig 22, after the transformation, the scope of the market once separated, extends outward along the wall of the Confucius Temple, the east in correspondence to the west, taking on a jointing layout pattern.
Gongyuan Street is about 500 meters in length from east to west, including the square outside the Confucius Temple. Spatial patterns of eastern and western sections of Gongyuan Street are quite different if set the square as a boundary. The east section is 330 meters long and 20 meters wide on average. On both sides of the street are buildings with two floors, tall trees still separating and dividing the street space. By contrast, the western part of the street is narrower, only 9 meters wide. On both sides of the street are mainly buildings with two floors and three or four story buildings behind, not affecting the sense of the scale of the street space. The distance of the street is very short, just 80 meters. There are no trees planted on the street. Gongyuan Street becomes narrower from north to south, 10 meters in width on average, with lush green trees and buildings bumping uncertain on both sides of it. While its square is larger than the other two, the flow of people here is much smaller.
Constructions on both sides of the traditional street are mainly two-storied buildings, their eaves 5-6 meters high above the ground. The ratios of eaves and street width range from 1:1.5 to 1:2.5. The width of the road between east and west markets varies between 3.5 meters and 5 m. Two layers of eaves separately have a height of 5.8 m and 6.1 m, in line with the ratio. Due to the narrowness of street, underlying buildings are connected to each other, so the facade of a building is also the street elevation. Underlying buildings and the street has formed the same space as a whole. As shown in Fig 23, bead curtain replacing hard material doors and windows allows the street space to penetrate into the interior of buildings. Buildings more than two-storied are enclosed by common Chinese windows and walls. At the same time, the adjustment in the positions of gables and walls highlights the changes of street space. With respect to the change of street space, square nodes, being static space, are an important part of the layout of activity center, withstanding crowd distributaries, relaxation and other activities. To visitors, with east-west market strip of terrain, the node square functions as a desirable place for easing fatigue (as shown in Fig 24). East market square is slightly larger, and inside it there are pavilions, stone lanterns and other resting places and architectural oddments.

Fig 23: Soft edges of the first floor in East Market Street (photographed by author).
Fig 24: Node Square in East Market Street (photographed by author).
There are pavilion and stone lanterns in this square for sightseeing and resting.

4.2.4 People’s activities and comparison in uses of facilities in two areas

(1) North Entrance

This region is located at the junction of Jiankang Road and West Gongyuan Street, where it is convenient to take public transport or park bicycles. Most local residents or individual travelers choose this access. Shops in West Gongyuan Street operate in the low-end leisure clothing, and young people are fond of
hanging around here. At the north entrance region there are 6 groups of rest facilities combined by the tree pool and seats. In the middle, with small crown diameters, trees give almost no shade in the day when the sun shines. Seats around the tree pool have the centrifugal tendencies, and the four corners are about 20 cm higher than the chair surface, which is not conducive to the communication between people (as shown in Fig 25). These factors affect people’s behaviors in this region. The "Nanjing Confucius Temple" arch in the north entrance of this area is outstanding, classical architectural style embodies the status of the Confucius Temple as a center of traditional commerce and culture (Fig 19). On holiday evenings, arches with decorative lighting and the subsequent imitation fireworks modeling, though of little new ideas, have become a local landmark. From observation, tourists often take pictures here.

(2) Dacheng Hall Square

In front of the main building of the Confucius Temple, Dacheng Hall Square is the core area with Qinhuai River in the south. Having the largest visitor flow rate, here is a place most prominent in its function of tourism and leisure. When shopping or sightseeing, visitors like to take a little rest here or just hang around for pleasure. All this is owing to its core status in the whole neighborhood and abundant historical and cultural landscape facilities. As the landscape facilities embodying traditional cultural characteristics of the Confucius Temple, buildings and ornaments here, together with golden dragons on the screening wall and red lanterns hanging on the other side of Qinhuai River attract lots of tourists. Attached to some monuments are pieces of stone engraved with introductory texts, decorating the space, delivering information and spreading culture as well. Visitors prefer to take photos in front of these landscape facilities as a souvenir. Through further observation, on the other hand, it is found that there are extremely an inadequate number of seats within the area, only 10 groups in the tree pool between Dacheng Hall Square and Lingxing Gate and 7 stone seats on both sides of the World Wenshu Memorial Archway.
4.2.5 Conflicts between traditional buildings and modern business

With the introduction of clothing, food, and other kinds of industries, Confucius Temple Street has taken on different features, such as boutiques centered in West Gongyuan Street and Gongyuan Street, antiques and paintings in east-west street markets, small commodity market in Jinling Road and food streets, etc. According to the questionnaire, one of the questions ‘what impress you most when you go to Confucius Temple Street’, 56.67% of participants choose ‘Food’ and 63.33% choose ‘Crafts’ option which indicates that these kinds of industries really make sense from consumers’ perspectives (Fig 28).

Considering the relationship between traditional building style and modern business, the conflict between them should not be ignored. Here comes the question, ‘are these kinds of industries really fit the historical environment?’ By investigating the site, the findings are found as follows:

On the one hand, too much commercial behavior occupies pure historical space. As Fig 29 shows, if the Chinese roof was taken away, it seems like white pillars and wall are more natural together with first floor decorated by big colorful brands. To the contrary, traditional buildings are suitable with traditional business, because there are no modern styled brands, or big scale shops (Fig 30).

On the other hand, the pursuit of outward appearance rehabilitation not only leads to the loss of authenticity of the architectural style, but the transformation of old buildings becomes too rough. ‘Fake buildings’ become a character of this area based on visitors’ view and author’s observations (Fig 28).
4.2.6 Chaotic building features

4.2.6.1 Conflicting brand plates, shops, and goods

Firstly, there are different shapes, sizes, colors, and materials. As Fig 29 and Fig 31 present, plastic or metal brand plates are abrupt on old style houses. With no unified limits, plates are decided by owners as they want; some plates are even oversized than the building façade. Secondly, different kinds of shops join together, such as cloths shop-restaurant-shoes shop-crafts shop. Although it shows diversity in shops types, the shop types and the chaotic situation are almost the same as other commercial streets. Thirdly, some goods which belong to foreign culture but made in China appear in crafts shops (Fig 32), such as Russian Matryoshka dolls and Japanese dolls. These foreign goods are in conflict with Chinese crafts, especially in a traditional Chinese commercial street and chaotic identities are presented as a consequence.
4.2.6.2 Characters from different regions and wrong time period

According to Table 1: The Classification of Building Characters in Different Dynasties with region examples in Chapter 4, Fig 33 shows the character of buildings in Xi’an, Tang Dynasty; however, the theme of Confucius Temple Street is announced as Ming & Qing Style. Fig 34 shows the wall from old Huizhou region which includes Nanjing, thus there are at least two different regional building characters. These two identities are mixed up and too much Hui-style walls are used in the area (Fig 35).

4.3 Nanjing Road in Shanghai

Nanjing Road is the main shopping street in Shanghai located in the city center. From East to West, Nanjing Road is divided into 3 sections (showed in Fig 36): East Nanjing Road, the Pedestrian Nanjing Road and West Nanjing Road. Since there are many well-kept historical buildings in Nanjing Road, I take it as a case to investigate colonial style in commercial district.

4.3.1 Background information

Shanghai acquired its township status from late Song Dynasty (1127-1279), and developed into a metropolis after 1843 since it opened to foreign traders⁶. It’s the birthplace of Chinese modern commerce and industry, and the center of Chinese modern architectural culture (Zheng, 2002, p. 46).

Nanjing Road was once a path with river besides, then filled up and broadened after 1845. Due to the construction of Race Club (People’s Square nowadays) in 1850 by merchants living in British Concession, Nanjing Road was rebuilt by Race Club (Fig 38) with plants around which also called as Garden Lane. Till 1853, the commercial pattern was formed since several companies set branches in Nanjing Road. Then, as the increase of population inside the concession, foreigners and Chinese were separated by

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⁶ According to the Treaty of Nanking signed between the United Kingdom and the Qing Dynasty of China in August 29th, 1842, Shanghai should be opened for trade, together with Guangzhou, Fuzhou, and Ningbo from 1843 till 1943.
Henan Road which shaped quiet east foreigner zone and busy west Chinese zone. This gap exists till now between pedestrian and east parts (Fig 37).

Fig 36: Nanjing road and relevant historical buildings (made by author based on Google map).

Fig 37: The British Concession in Shanghai, 1912 (made by author).
Source from: maps.mychinastart.com
There are four periods of architectural development in The Bund and Nanjing Road area:

(1) From 1845 to 1849, there were less than 175 emigrants in British concession. Early colonial buildings are next to the British Consulate gingerly. Houses along Nanjing Road were mostly old Chinese two-floor brick and wooden structure (Fig 39).

(2) The next stage is from 1860 to 1910 with the Second Opium War and several domestic movements such as Taiping Rebellion and the Westernization Movement held by the Qing government. During this time, merchants from the United Kingdom, France and United States were more confident of investing in Shanghai. In consequence, the size of concessions expanded and the quality of buildings improved. Foreign firms became more focus on the corporate image and quality which lead to a booming of various architectural styles (Zhang, 2009, p. 17). Some rich Chinese also entered into concessions from other provinces during the domestic movements, and promote commerce development.

(3) After the First World War, the United Kingdom and United States increased investment in capital input, foreign firms expanded rapidly. On the other hand, buildings were renewed every 30 years averagely that reflected in building height, size, and decoration from 1845 to 1925.

(4) The modern time of colonial buildings was from 1920s to 1940s, as many of them were rebuilt or updated by international famous architects, such as Hungarian architect Ladislav Hudec who designed Grand Theatre and Park Hotel.

4.3.2 Space and profits

Thinking back to the starting point of time and space, it was clear that the Opium War and Shanghai port were closely linked to trade. Among the three forces that set foot on the British concession in Shanghai, diplomats and businessmen are undoubtedly for commercial interests. Only protestant organizations came

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7 Second Opium War is a war pitting the British Empire and the Second French Empire against the Qing Dynasty of China, lasting from 1856 to 1860.
with the purpose of publicity doctrine, but at the same time, what they spread was a Protestant ethic, which was also seeking reasonable profits. Therefore, it can be said that all the constructions, from as large as concessions to small buildings, were set up for ‘benefits’. In fact, the construction of a residential or commercial district was not to promote the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, but to earn rent through rental property. As long as the business relationship is reasonable, space construction is likely to stand and maintain. (Zhao, 2008, p. 11)

4.3.3 Colonial buildings in Nanjing Road

According to the collection of colonial buildings in Nanjing Road (showed in Fig 36), the classification can be done into three sorts. It is not based on which style the building presents, but the impact of building groups including big stores, high public buildings, and residential buildings. There will be some description of certain buildings that can show their characters in details.

(1) The first sort is commercial buildings represented by four companies. They are mostly big stores which can cover one block, with elegant facades:

**Fig 40:** Shanghai No.1 Dept Store (photographed by author).
Shanghai No.1 Dept Store used to be Da Sun Company, built in 1934. It is located in No. 830, East Nanjing Road. This building was designed by Kwan, Chu and Yang Architects, learned from Art Deco. It has 9 floors, uses creamy glaze porcelain as façade material, and handrails as decorative symbols.

**Fig 41:** Seventh Heaven Hotel (photographed by author).
Seventh Heaven Hotel was designed by Harshad and Philips in 1933. It has 22 floors, with glaze porcelain facade, and triangle plan.

**Fig 42:** Shanghai Yong’an Department Store (photographed by author).
Shanghai Yong’an Department Store is located on No. 830, East Nanjing Road. It was designed by Harshad and Philips in 1918. The main material on façade is granitic plaster, and the ground is mosaic tile. The usage of ionic column and attached square column shows it belongs to eclectic classical style.
(2) The second sort is the group of high public buildings and some of them progressively changed the building function to finance, hotel, and administration.

Fig 43: Grand Theatre (Image.baidu). It is located in No. 216 West Nanjing Road which was first built in 1928 and reconstructed in 1933 designed by Hungarian architect Ladislav Hudec. A series of thick & thin horizontal lines and large size of glass form the bright and brief facade. It belongs to early modern style (Ruan, 1994).

Fig 45: Park Hotel (photographed by author). It was former North Four Banks, built between 1931 and 1993 on No.170, West Nanjing Road. The designer was also Ladislav Hudec. It is 82 meters high, with 24 floors inside, vertical lines on façade.

Fig 47: Peace Hotel (by author). It’s the north part of Peace Hotel built in 1929 designed by Palmer & Turner Group, with brief appearance, vertical lines and geometry shape decoration on the roof line. It belongs to art deco style.

Fig 44: Shanghai Art Museum (photographed by author). It was Shanghai Race Club at first, once was also Shanghai Library. It is located on No. 325, West Nanjing Road, designed by Mahai Firm. The character is high tower and striking clock. The building style is more like church or house of congress, belonging to eclectic classical style.

Fig 46: Pacific Hotel (photographed by author). The former name was Huaou Life Insurance Company, located on No. 104, West Nanjing Road. It is eclectic classical architecture designed by Harshad Firm, with golden dome towers and arch corridors.

Fig 48: Peace Hotel South part (by author). The south part was built in 1906, designed by British merchant Gabriel James Morrison and used to be Sassoon House. It used white bricks as main façade material and red bricks as decoration. The building is 6-floored high with flat roof, arch window and door.
(3) The third sort is building that shows the transition between classical and modern styles, and mainly developed from old residential houses or traditional shops (Ruan, 1994, p. 11).

*Fig 49: Plaza 353 (photographed by author).*

Plaza 353, former named Cishu Building, Donghai Building, was built in 1933, designed by Zhuang Jun. There are 7 floors as main part and the bottom floor is street-across. Vertical lines on façade, and tower built on the corner of the roof.

**Conclusion:** The colonial architecture phenomenon in Shanghai is described as modern Shanghai style which means the architectural characteristic that emerged during the period from 1850s to 1950s. The colonial style contains four characters (Zhang, 2009, p. 50): multi combination of decorative elements of individual building, unique personalities and overall uniform system in building group, explicit orientation of buildings’ business function, and fashion.

### 4.3.3 Street space in Nanjing Road

By data collection and observation, I find some details of the street space with both merits and drawbacks according to personal experiences:

(1) Firstly, Nanjing Road was already 24 meters wide when Nanjing Road started to be built, and now changed to 22 meters. The height of buildings along the street is near 12 meters, which means the Width/Height is almost 1/2 (Fig 50).

(2) There are clear separation of pavements, and different decorations on buildings. The change of sceneries seams interesting and easily oriented for visitors (Fig 50).

(3) The street cross the end of Nanjing Road is wider than those in the middle part, because the buildings in the end are usually big department stores, and the shops in the middle part are relatively in small size (Fig 51).

*Fig 50: Nanjing Pedestrian Road (by author).*

*Fig 51: The street across main pedestrian streets (by author).*
4.3.4 Space colonialism

Actually, the existence of both Nanjing road and other colonial commercial streets can be seen as space colonialism. As Bao (2003, p. 2) said, ‘space has always been a kind of mold casting of historical and natural elements, yet its process is of politics. Space is both political and ideological. It really is a product filled with a variety of ideologies’. It was through space that colonial powers were penetrated to China (Chen, 2005, p. 25).

Space politics of the foreign concessions and residents come down to ‘space colonialism’. As a supplement to the previous policy of colonialism, space colonialism acts as a cultural foundation necessary for capitalist powers to pursue their unequal trading, commodity dumping and export of capital. Its essence is aggressive, which is a continuation and cultural expression of the policy, on the base of which colonists enslave and exploit others. Wu (1995, p. 38) described the feature of ‘Space colonialism’ from both architectural and cultural aspects as, ‘out of their habits and cultural preference, they construct their favorite space environment in the towns of others, by taking the patterns as a medium such as urban and architectural forms, interior decoration tastes, building materials, and even energy consumption, in order to meet and promote their own way of life, to express their own cultural superiority without taking into account others’ economic foundation, material conditions, energy resources or ecological environment, whether of a person or of a town, a city, even a country’. Space colonialism penetration is diverse. It may be of art, of product, or of education. Still it is coated with ‘modern’. For instance, the old Shanghai Bund suggests Liverpool of England while Qingdao displays German-style architecture. And the Hong Kong City, returned in 1997, is also a typical work of space colonialism.

All of the following reflect the characteristics of space colonialism, including the urban planning, architectural style, entertainment and other aspects of Shanghai Concession. The landmarks of Concession are of European style with its marble and other materials directly shipped from Europe (Liang, 1930). The foreign residents brought with them their domestic recreational way to Shanghai and for their leisure pastime established clubs, racecourses, parks, dance floors, cafes, billiard rooms and all that. The foreign residents lived together in the west of the concession, not far from the Nanjing Road.

4.4 Conclusion

Collection of data through various methods helped me to carry out the case study. From the case study of Confucius Temple Street, I found the chaotic identities reflected in two aspects: one is the conflicts between traditional buildings and modern business, the other is related to chaotic building features. Then, in the second case study, space colonialism was showed in Nanjing Road which is one of the causes of trend for western styles.
Chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

There are five parts in this chapter: the first one is the classification of commercial streets in current China; the second one is the findings from questionnaires and interviews, with both qualitative and quantitative data; the third part is the problem with the chaotic identities of the commercial streets; the fourth part is the causes of the problems with the chaotic identities; and the last section refers to the introduction and research of Neo-Chinese style which occurred in residential area in order to verify if it’s beneficial for commercial street construction.

5.2 Classification

First of all, there is a brief summary of classification of commercial streets in China with the development of urban construction. Then, a classification of traditional Chinese styles is followed, combined with time and region factors.

5.2.1 Classification of commercial streets in current China

The update of old commercial streets is an important part of urban renewal. After the 1990s, China entered into a rapid and large-scale urban renewal stage, especially in the old city center area. In this context, old business districts gradually integrated with modern business model appeared as new form in line with their own development. There is an overall classification of commercial streets in current China, mainly focused on the causes of each kind of street:

(1) Commercial district with department stores as its main body:

“Department store” emerged in the early 20th century, and the first big department store was built in Wangfujing, Beijing, 1955. Due to the construction of department stores, Wangfujing shopping street got expanded after 1956. From late 1980s to 1990s, commercial district with big department stores were built in succession. Taking Nanjing Road as an example, it kept old stores, and added new buildings to create a synthetic commercial district.

(2) Commercial district relying on historical relics:

There are three situations: A) The commercial district has existed for a long time linked to historical relics, which means, it is a historical district with commercial function, such as Tunxi old street in Huangshan. B) The individual relics are decentralized, and urban managers try to connect historical relics with commercial street in order to attract more visitors. C) Temple culture, which is a character in Asian customs, means that there are usually markets or shopping streets in front or around the temple area. The district is very popular especially at festivals, such as Confucius Temple Street in Nanjing and Nakamise Shopping Street in Tokyo (Fig 52).
(3) Commercial district with specific theme or landscape:

Take Italian Style Town in Tianjing and Russian Style Street in Dalian for example. They are influenced by western culture. There are no big shopping mall, but restaurants and small entertainment houses instead. Therefore, this kind of theme can be linked with historical relics. On the other hand, as Nanjing Road in Shanghai, it has a colonial theme and also reflected a specific theme of one period of China. The street is based on shopping malls with large scales than former two streets. So, this kind of street is relevant with the first sort as well.

5.2.2 Classification of traditional Chinese styles

According to the documents studies, there are many scholars research the antique Chinese building styles and they make two kinds of classification. One is from timeline aspect which reflected in naming different styles with different dynasties’ names; and the other one is based on regional factors. Zuo (2007) made the classification in line with different dynasties, such as Qin (221 BC-206 BC) & Han (206 BC-220 AD) style, Sui (581-618) & Tang (618-907) style, etc. On the regional aspect, Zuo (2007) and Xie (2009, p. 67) listed several cities as examples to show the differences places. However, from my point of view, timeline should not be separated from region. Instead, they should be linked with each other. To make it easier to be understood, I made a table which entwines time with region examples. Generally, the regions which represent specific characters were capitals or well-developed cities in certain dynasties.

Table 1: The Classification of Building Characters in Different Dynasties with region examples (made by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (Dynasty)</th>
<th>Region (City, Province)</th>
<th>Imitated Building Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tang (618-907)</td>
<td>Xi’an, Shaanxi; Luoyang, Henan.</td>
<td>All windows are mullioned and every door is wooden, extremely simple. The building is characterized by a higher pedestal, far-reaching eaves, grand brackets timber, flat roof and black-gray tiles. The capital of Tang Dynasty was firstly Xi’an, and then changed into Luoyang. Fig 51 shows one image of the restoration of Daming Palace in Xi’an, Shanxi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song (960-1279)</td>
<td>Kaifeng, Henan; Chengdu, Sichuan.</td>
<td>External decorated fan-grille doors and windows replaced the stiff mullioned windows and doors. The</td>
</tr>
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formation of institutionalization of painting process and glass products widely used in roofing and architectural decoration turned early bold architectural style into soft, gorgeous state. On the whole, the Song-style buildings were a continuation of the Tang-style buildings, more precise and mature in structural modeling. Building size transformed to diversity, rich in architectural form with a luxurious magnificent architectural form as the main feature. Fig 52 shows the commercial street constructed in Kaifeng which was the capital of the Song Dynasty. This street is built with the influence of famous painting *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* mentioned in Chapter 3.

For the lack of building materials, wood columns used in buildings were not as thick as those in the Tang and Song Dynasties. Building eaves brackets became significantly smaller, thus beam frames and trusses were raised. Rich colors are the main features of architectural style of the Ming Dynasty. The capital of Ming was Nanjing first, and then changed to Beijing till Republic of China period. Until Qing Dynasty, a stricter style pattern was developed with characteristics of times in the form of solemnity. Except gorgeous imperial buildings, normal northern houses were constructed mostly with grey bricks and fewer windows than buildings in middle and south China. Fig 55 shows the normal houses in Qintong which is almost 170 km from Nanjing, inside Jiangsu province.

Buildings in the period of the Republic of China are the epitome of architectural art at home and abroad during a specific historical period. The buildings vary in architectural style, generally of brick concrete structure. This structure is of a vertical load-bearing structure of building wall with pilasters, etc. Using brick or block masonry and a reinforced concrete structure of column, beam, floor, roof, truss, etc. Such a structure has extended the use of building space, reducing the building's construction costs at the same time.
5.3 Findings from questionnaires and interviews

5.3.1 Representativeness of local identities

As to the question about the two streets (Fig 57), people give a similar answer. The majority of them choose ‘perhaps’ and on an overall scale, Confucius Temple Street and Nanjing Road can be seen as representatives of local identities to most people. Then what identities people think these two streets own is a more specific question. The impressions of Nanjing Road can be summarized as three main features: visitors flow, shopping malls and buildings (Fig 58). From the description of buildings in Chapter 4, colonial style is one of the basic identities of Nanjing Road. However, as topic goes on, people also think the buildings style is diverse, modern, and historical. And since modern buildings are built in a great amount, ‘colonial’ is even followed after other identities (Fig 59). Different with mixed characters of Nanjing Road, Confucius Temple Street seems simpler, because its building characters can be concluded as historical and fake historical. Although literatures indicate that Confucius Temple Street is a fake historical commercial street, a lot of people consider ‘historical’ as the most obvious character instead of ‘fake’. From the components of participants, most of the people who are in planning and art field choose ‘fake’ more than ‘historical’, which means the
authenticity of antiques is not clear or does not get the public’s attention. As I formulated in Chapter 3, scholars hold different opinions about the value of fake antiques. The answer to this question is just confirmed that fake antiques confuse the authenticity of history.

5.3.2 Preference of different styles

As to the question ‘what buildings style do you prefer in commercial streets?’, the majority of people prefer traditional Chinese style including fake ones, only a small group choose colonial style or styles from other countries, and many people also look forward something new instead of western and traditional Chinese.

The contradiction is that people don’t like colonial style, but still consider Nanjing Road is a good shopping place. They like traditional Chinese style most, but rank Confucius Temple Street behind Nanjing Road (Fig 61). In Fig 61, there are one colonial street which is ‘Nanjing Road’, one real antique street ‘Tunxi Old Street’, and two fake antique streets ‘Confucius Temple Street’ and ‘Qinghefang’. The result shows Nanjing Road is the most popular one instead of antique ones, and inside the range of antique, Confucius Temple Street ranks last together with Tunxi Street.

Fig 59: Question: How do you feel about the buildings in Nanjing Pedestrian Road?

Fig 60: Question: what building styles do you prefer in commercial streets?
To get a better understanding of this conflicting result, I made interviews of two participants, asking for their attitudes. Here are the answers presented with their permission. One staff working in a bank in Shanghai, said, ‘I can buy all kinds of goods in Nanjing Road. Shopping there saves me much time. However, traditional streets are somehow repeated in goods varieties, with limited selection for consumers. For example, I can buy clothes, electronics, and also have lunch in a better environment. On the contrary, shops in Confucius Temple Street are mostly small sized, crowded, noisy, and even dirty.’ From his view, the diversity of goods and industries attracts him most, and it seems that modern shopping mall is more suitable for people nowadays. Another participant is a college student in Nanjing; she likes Confucius Temple Road some years earlier, and would rather go to Xinjieikou (modern shopping district in central Nanjing) nowadays. The reason she gave is ‘When I was a child, I like the interesting crafts, delicious food, and cute pets sold in Confucius Temple Street. It was a nice place for families taking a walk after dinner. However, I am a citizen living in Nanjing for almost 20 years; the street is boring because little has changed these years. Especially in summer time, shopping mall is a better choice because you don’t need to go outside… I think only tourists will visit Confucius Temple Street with their curiosity.’ As the research was done in summertime in China, the temperature was extremely high in Shanghai and Nanjing. The superiority of better facilities and conditions is obvious when commercial streets are compared.

All the above shows the fact that traditional Chinese street style can hardly match up modern life. Although western styles are more comfortable and suitable for fast-pace life, people still want to see more Chinese features. The failure of fake traditional streets leads people to choose the one which they don’t prefer but accept passively. This situation indicates a big growing space for commercial streets exploration as well.

5.4 Problem of chaotic identities

(1) Misused features

Buildings of different dynasties and areas have their own distinctive personalities. For example, buildings in the North look strong, mainly using masonry materials with gentle slope roofs, while buildings in the south are light and agile, using wood with steep slope roofs. And each building has a different geographical condition and functional requirement, which determines the distinctness in layout, size and
scale of buildings. Confucius Temple Street presents the problem in Chapter 4, which mixed up different characters of Xi’an and Hui style.

(2) Modern elements and historical features

Not only modern buildings, but also modern shop signs can be seen as a conflicting force to historical features, such as the brand plates in Confucius Temple Street, and modern glass shopping mall in Nanjing Road. This simultaneous existence is a problem with the relationships between modern industry and historical street, modern life and historical building styles.

(3) Rough design

Traditional architectural symbols are simply grafted on modern architectural forms, without considering combination of the building itself and new materials. And yet, what fails to attract popularity is the lack of traditional, cultural atmosphere in space shaping, business positioning, environmental landscape etc. All these phenomena are reflected in such a fact: Antique commercial buildings should be the accumulation of history and culture of a city, but a simple rough design tends to make traditional significance quietly disappear.

(4) Monotonic industry and mixed industries

A lot of antique commercial buildings laid too much emphasis on traditional cultural products, such as Glass Culture Street in Beijing. Most of the shops sell glass crafts and antique books, which are somewhat attractive to visitors, and yet bring in limited profits. The reason is that, while what those shops sell are not authentic work for collection, generally the local residents are not going to buy those products that do not serve their modern daily life. Therefore, it is the monolithic commercial form that has caused some antique commercial buildings being deserted. On the contrary, the situation in Confucius Temple Street is mixed industries; there are goods from foreign cultures which make the theme of street confusing instead of unique.

5.5 Causes of the problems

5.5.1 Commercial influence

Commercial and tourism economic benefits are another direct cause of the popularity of imitating European and antique styles. In some cities, the imitation of European and antique styles has brought in great economic interests and tourism benefits successfully, which at once turns into a huge driving force, leading real estate, and tourism in droves. The mere pursuit of economic interests leads to a large number of poor imitation buildings. However, the public opinion does not give a warning, but hypes up positive effects of imitation of European and antique styles, misguiding public opinion.
5.5.2 Limitations of Chinese traditional architecture

Chinese traditional architecture lacks types of public buildings and it focuses on the shaping of small patios or gardens. On the contrary, Western public buildings form the most active architectural space. During the Renaissance period, numerous churches and squares combined with excellent arts and humanities left later generations unlimited imagination space. Another specific limitation comes out of its characteristics. That is, Chinese buildings focused on building groups without the pursuit of individual architectural flexibility. Although the Chinese timber frame system is unique to the world’s architectural system, yet from a practical point of view, wood can hardly be widely used as a building material today.

In urban planning and construction, the advanced concepts and practices of Western urban planning, such as satellite towns, rail transportation, etc., provide cities in China with direct, valuable reference, and those concepts and practices have come into use in many cases of urban construction, opening up a new prospect for the modernization of cities in China. Meanwhile, Chinese traditional layout of a city, such as Palace centered, axis symmetrical, as well as ‘Feng shui’, appears to contradict to modern city construction. The traditional idea of Chinese historical city and the construction of modern city are difficult to find the appropriate combination. Thus, the cities designed as planned in the feudal times are completely abandoned, and the original historical city pattern, road network, water, space landscape logo are thoroughly changed.

5.5.3 Not enough attention to overall environment

The designs for cities and buildings nowadays reflect lack of the overall concept, taking no account of the relationships between buildings or relationships between architecture and the environment. Viewing imitation of European and Chinese antique styles, it is not difficult to find that most of these building and city designs did basically not take into consideration harmony with the surrounding environment. At present, there does exist such a design, whether completed or being done, but not in the minority. This issue, from other aspect, reflects lack of consideration about historical traditions, context and environmental issues, which should have been paid much attention to.

From my point of view, designers may jump out of the selection range between traditional Chinese and western styles. Therefore, I introduce and discuss the concept of ‘Neo-Chinese’ in the next section.
5.6 Neo-Chinese style

Beyond the scope of commercial district, the two cases represent the cultural diversity that can be related to the conflict between western styles and Chinese styles. In the process of architecture development, a new phenomenon which is called ‘Neo-Chinese’ has arisen. A general description is the style which uses modern structures and materials, and contains traditional Chinese architectural elements or symbols (Liu, 2010, p. 10). The definition about ‘modern structures and materials’ is fuzzy; however, the simplification of traditional wooden structure is an obvious character. It is a new approach that seems to help designers get rid of traditional and western patterns, instead of using strange patchworks or modern buildings as if they are coming from outer space.

There is no specific neo-Chinese commercial street example. Here I will mention some individual buildings and residential districts which are considered as neo-Chinese style, such as Vanke’s dwelling projects called ‘The Fifth Garden’, Suzhou Museum. All the above examples of buildings and projects break adhere to the traditional Chinese and Western-style state. They are employed to make a brief analysis of the value of Neo-Chinese style, and how it changes the symbols of traditional Chinese buildings, which is beneficial to the exploration of commercial street.

5.6.1 Vanke Fifth Garden

Vanke, the biggest real estate company in China, has expanded up to 48 cities during recent 27 years. One of Vanke’s dwelling projects located in Shenzhen, Guangdong province is called ‘The Fifth Garden’ which is derived from the famous Lingnan Four Gardens, and the implication is to be the 5th garden as a residential district in Lingnan region. ‘Vanke Fifth Garden’ was first built in Shenzhen from 2006, and then in Shanghai. Setting aside the differences between materials and some details, the problem is that the new form made by Vanke mainly develops from Hui style, which doesn’t belong to any of these two regions. In this section, I will give discription of the advantages of ‘Vanke Fifth Garden’, and then present the disadvantages as well.

5.6.1.1 Shifting traditional symbols

Firstly, the overall layout of the Fifth Garden borrows ideas from the texture and layout of Chinese traditional village symbols, with individual houses in order, neither too crowded nor too fragmented. Traditional courtyards are introverted space, showing a space level transition, that is, neighborhood - streets - public courtyard - private courtyard (Hu, 2009, p. 51).

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Lingnan refers to the region that covers the Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces of modern China and northern Vietnam [1]. (See Fig3 on page 15)
Secondly, the Fifth Garden recreates the symbols of traditional dwelling forms such as ‘courtyard’ (Fig 63), ‘window’ (Fig 65) and ‘wall’ with abstract simplified manipulation. As figure 65 shows, the wall is an important element of the building due to its varieties of form, height and length as well as being changeable in direction. The wall of the Fifth Garden is symbolization of traditional ones. It abstracts geometric shapes of Hui residential gables in the form and adopts three colors black, white and gray.

Thirdly, the Fifth Garden pursues plain and simple appearance consistent with the traditional Hui region residential buildings. It uses black and white as its main colors, while red in part. Therefore, the material selection for the façade are mainly white paint, gray tiles and gray profiled steel sheet sloping roof instead of black roof tiles.
5.6.1.2 Widespread Regional identities

The designers of ‘The Fifth Vanke Palace’ are from BIAD (Beijing Institute of Architect), abstracted the architectural features of Huizhou region which refers to Anhui province and some surrounding places including north Jiangxi and south Jiangsu province. White wall, black tile, horsehead firewall are basic symbols of Huizhou region. Taking firewall as an example, here are two kinds of walls located in Anhui, and the other is in Shenzhen, Guangdong (Fig 70, 71). And according to experts on firewalls’ studies, there are five common forms of wall in Lingnan traditional architecture (Fig 72). The walls in Lingnan are mostly grey and made of bricks, with various wall shapes.

Fig 68: Distribution sketch of Hui style and Lingnan Style (made by author).

Hui style spread in south Anhui, south Jiangsu, north Jiangxi, and west Zhejiang province which were called Huizhou region. One of the determine factors caused this distribution is the Yangtze River.

Lingnan style mainly covered Guangdong, Guangxi, South Hunan, and South Jiangxi.

Fig 69: ‘Vanke Fifth Garden’ in Shanghai (Wang, 2011).

Yellow walls combined with white walls, square windows combined with cavernous windows. This dwelling project in Shanghai still utilized Hui style, although added in some different features compared with the one in Shenzhen.
There are many choices of designing houses with Lingnan identities; however, ‘Vanke Fifth Garden’ chose the Hui style which is far from its site. Does that mean Hui style is more popular than others? From my research, most of Neo-Chinese style projects are developed from Hui style. At least, Hui style is one of the most widespread styles in current China, as an origin of Neo-Chinese style. And due to the expansion of the company into many other cities, the brand of Vanke is more and more popular with people, and its projects with similar identities also spread wider. The meaning of Neo-Chinese may be misunderstood by designers and consumers, which is ‘white walls, black roofs, geometric windows are neo-Chinese style’. Neo-Chinese style should not only be new, but also be diverse developed from many regions, just as traditional Chinese contains multiple components.

5.6.2 Suzhou Museum

Located in Northeast Street of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, Suzhou Museum is a Chinese art museum of local history. It was set up in 1960 and in October 2006, a new Suzhou Museum was built in which was the Palace of Li Xiucheng, Zhong King of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. It was designed by the famous architect IM Pei. The new museum and the ancient Palace of Zhong King add radiance and beauty to each other. As part of the new Suzhou Museum, the ancient Palace of Zhong King, restored as its old condition, and the new Suzhou Museum buildings form a perfect match, making a trinity comprehensive museum with a collection of modern library architecture, ancient architecture and innovative landscape. Thus, in this section, I will focus on how traditional features are transformed into modern styles.
Firstly, the eave height of the main building of the museum is below 6 meters. In this case, the scale of architecture is under control to keep balance in body with the ancient Palace of Zhong King and Humble Administrator's Garden, showing respect for historical legacy at the same time. Secondly, the geometric sloping roof of the museum is an abstraction of Jiangnan (southern Yangze River) roof. As Figures 73&74 show, rearranged in different heights and directions, the traditional pitched roof was set apart, reappearing in three-dimensional geometry, realizing the reconstruction of traditional roof in modern architecture. Thirdly, the museum also uses black, white and grey as its basic tone like Suzhou buildings. Instead of bricks and tiles, it uses black tile stones as roof materials. Its changes in the shape of ornamental perforated windows and symbolization of ‘mountain and water’ are in fact approaches to transforming traditional elements adopted by the Museum.

Fig 76: Symbolic ‘mountain and water’ in Suzhou Museum (photographed by author).  
Mountain and water represent Chinese painting, and water can be used as the mirror reflecting landscapes.

Fig 77: Rockwork and water in Suzhou Garden (photographed by author).
5.6.3 Rationality of Neo-Chinese style

(1) The purpose of putting forward Neo-Chinese style is to help designers jump out of the range of western or traditional Chinese styles. It is a new way intended to be connected with regional identities which are conflict to copying space.

(2) According to the answer to the question in questionnaires ‘what building styles do you prefer in commercial streets?’ A large number of participants choose ‘none of them’ followed by ‘western style’ and ‘traditional Chinese’, which means a new style may meet the demand of the public.

(3) Neo-Chinese residential projects are doing well in urban districts, which indicates that fresh identities attract people, and profitable from investor’s view. Neo-Chinese commercial streets can be also spread with fewer obstacles.

(4) Neo-Chinese commercial streets will keep pace with Neo-Chinese residential projects, which will create a harmonious city image on the whole.

5.6.4 Weaknesses of Neo-Chinese style

(1) Neo-Chinese has limitations in regional practice, as Zou (2002) indicates, in exploring the green technology of land-efficient, energy-efficient, and measures to deal with bad weather. Lack of technologies and economic conditions are obvious flaws.

(2) Along with the capital development, the success of current Neo-Chinese projects will eventually lead to the wide spreading of similar styles and identities. As a result, a unique style turns into general. The superior identity of neo-Chinese is weakened.

(3) Brands affect urban projects a lot. When facing local identities, designers or companies will find it challenging to keep a balance between different features. It is impossible to reject the brands of company completely, and it is true of the opposite.
5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the one-side view of classification of commercial streets in China and its use of different time periods to distinguish different street styles and argued that the classification should include both time and regional factors. The findings from the data collected were presented and by analyzing perspectives from different people, I made the conclusion that people prefer big shopping malls in western-style commercial streets and are disappointed with the current situation of traditional commercial streets for there are better facilities and more choices of goods in western-styled commercial streets. The requirement of reviving traditional features in commercial streets was confirmed in the replies of the questionnaires. After analyzing the questionnaires and interviews, I summarized the problems with the chaotic identities were summarized and the causes were inferred including commercial effects and the limitation of traditional buildings. This shows the difficulty in combining traditional elements with modern lifestyle. To answer the fourth research question, a discussion on a new style was introduced in the last section. Through the study of two examples, I analyzed the definition and characteristics of the Neo-Chinese style as the public expected, Neo-Chinese style can be utilized not only in residential areas, but also in commercial streets, according to its rationality. Neo-Chinese style can be seen as a solution to chaotic phenomenon in current Chinese commercial streets although there are still weaknesses concluded in 5.6.4. It is not a constant or simplex style, but instead, neo-Chinese refers to the style developed from traditional features and closely connected with different local identities. Therefore, it is a new and diverse style.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

This paper started with the introduction of a phenomenon that there are chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets. Copying space is one problem in an overall scope that leads mixed characters in different streets; the conflicts between traditional Chinese style and colonial or western styles are another problem. Thus, based on the analysis, the conflicts between traditional commercial streets and modern business have been studied. To focus on the topic, four research questions were raised: (1) What is the expression of chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets? (2) What causes the phenomenon? (3) What are people’s views of different styled commercial streets? (4) Is there any viability to break down old conventions with a new style? Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documents are used as methods for data collection.

WHAT IS THE EXPRESSION OF CHAOTIC IDENTITIES IN CHINESE COMMERCIAL STREETS?
Firstly, the definition of ‘place identity’ was found by theoretical studies. Concepts from different scholars on ‘place identity’, ‘urban branding’ and ‘producing and copying spaces’ were cited and discussed. What can be seen as the expression of place identity include climate, geology and geography native determinants, physical environment created by human beings such as building characters, and also the spiritual aspect like local cultures and customs.

In order to study specific field in China, the research into Chinese commercial streets and relevant styles was carried out in Chapter 3, which covers history, spatial patterns, colonial commercial streets, trends of fake Western and fake Chinese, the origin and progress of fake Western and fake Chinese, and evaluation on imitation of western style and fake antique Chinese style. From this research, the background and current situation were further discussed. Based on the research, two case studies are presented to get empirical data of chaotic identities in Chinese commercial streets, one is Confucius Temple Street representing fake traditional Chinese style, and the other is Nanjing Road in Shanghai referring to colonial style.

In the case study of Confucius Temple Street, this thesis reveals how chaotic identities are expressed in traditional Chinese commercial street from two aspects. The first one is the conflicts between traditional buildings and modern business; the second one is the chaotic building features that are mainly reflected in imitating identities of other regions and mixing building styles. The Nanjing Road case study mainly focuses on how the colonial style street expresses its identities, and how western cultures were transferred into this area which raised the space colonialism. As is shown, space colonialism can be connected with the phenomenon that the public admire western cultures in a certain period of time. These two case studies play an important role in the study of the chaotic phenomenon in both small and large scopes.

WHAT CAUSES THE PHENOMENON (OF CHAOTIC IDENTITIES)?
Theoretically, threats to ‘local identities’ are found as ‘urban branding’ and ‘copying space’. Urban branding is the extraction of place identities. Due to the branding of urban products, urban components are sold as symbols of creativity and financially solid companies. Capital growth is the main goal of space
producer that lead the commercialization of space. Therefore, urban development is no longer a pure natural or technological process, but the process that capital utilizes urban spaces to realize reproduction.

Then with the analysis of questionnaires and interviews, the thesis concluded the causation of this phenomenon in Chinese commercial streets and people’s perspectives towards different styles. It is found that the causes are mainly connected with commercial influence, limitations of traditional architecture, and the lack of attention to overall environment.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE’S VIEWS OF DIFFERENT STYLED COMMERCIAL STREETS?
According to the results of questionnaires and interviews, the public are not satisfied with fake Chinese styles. Instead, they prefer big shopping malls in western styled commercial streets; they favor new styles, and at the same time, they expect the revival of traditional cultures which means some difficulty in combining traditional elements with modern lifestyle.

IS THERE ANY VIABILITY TO BREAK DOWN OLD CONVENTIONS WITH A NEW STYLE?
As a consequence, Neo-Chinese style is introduced as one solution to the problem. By researching examples of ‘Vanke Fifth Garden’ and Suzhou Museum, merits and demerits are illustrated, as a way to break down old conventions. Neo-Chinese style is not constant or simplex. Instead, it should be a new and diverse style developed from traditional features and closely connected with different local identities.

In my opinion, history is a fact we have to respect. It is only to be understood, not to be repeated or to be copied. Whatever occurred in the past is of a causal relationship. History, as a living textbook, should be carefully read. The obvious reason is that nowadays we are still writing about the history of our present and future, and our duty is to accept the lessons of history, and as far as possible to avoid unnecessary failures that appeared in the historical process.
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Figures:

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Fig 5: http://guide.uuyoyo.com/cn/huangshan/scenic/892/
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Fig 38-39: Iceh, 2010 http://icehhhsshhh.blog.163.com/blog/static/4444580620101195328986/
Fig 53: http://www.nalila.com/wheels/12524
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Fig 63, 64: Wang, 2012 http://www.archcy.com/focus/house/2396f427a54076ae
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Fig 73-77: Photographed by author, 2011
Appendix:

Questionnairies:

Nanjing Road Questionnaire: http://www.sojump.com/jq/2628938.aspx
(30 participants)
1. Please choose your age range.
2. What's your field?
3. Which word can be related to your impression of Shanghai?
4. What can influence a "place identity" or "city identity"?
5. Can Nanjing Pedestrian Road represent Shanghai local identity?
6. How do you feel about the buildings in Nanjing Pedestrian Road?
7. Do you enjoy Nanjing Pedestrian Road?
8. How long will you spend if you are shopping in Nanjing Pedestrian Road?
9. What impress you most when you go to Nanjing Pedestrian Road?
10. What issues about Nanjing Pedestrian Road should get more focus?

(30 participants)
1. Please choose your age range.
2. What's your field?
3. Can Nanjing Confucian Temple Pedestrian Zone represent Nanjing local identity?
4. What impress you most when you go to Confucian Temple Pedestrian Zone in Nanjing?
5. Please rank the commercial districts as you prefer (Nanjing Road in Shanghai, Confucian Temple pedestrian zone in Nanjing, Qinghefang in Hangzhou, Tunxi old street in Huangshan).
6. Which building style do you prefer in commercial district?

(24 of participants are the same in these two questionnaires)

Interviews:
(2 participants)
1. Why do you prefer Nanjing Road instead of Confucius Temple Street?
2. What are the disadvantages of each street?
3. Are you satisfied with the current situation of commercial streets in China and why?