To Alleviate Spatial and Social Divisions by Modifying Grids: City Planning and Social Orders in Ancient Multi-ethnical Chinese Cities

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1. Introduction

This paper is part of the research into the connection from grid to social orders. It attempts to explore the process of integration of immigrants and the design of grid to alleviate the conflicts between different ethnical groups.

Four cases are presented to explain the process of immigrant integration. The former three are historical examples in ancient China on the 'multi-ethnical' cities. They are the division of clans in Western Zhou dynasty in 8th century BCE, the mix of Chinese and Nordic cultures in 13th century CE and the multi-ethnical Chinese border cities in 19th century CE. The last case is about the transformation of Chinese ghettos in Milan, Italy. Though from different historical strata and location, they all present the issue of Frontier where different ethnic groups meet, trade, conflict and finally integrate.

The article will examine the cases from following aspects: the historical background, the economical, cultural and political conflicts and integration and the grid as spatial tools in creating the space for integration. Four cases share the similar model of social integration. In this process, grid is the physical interference as the reflection of the decision from rulers upon the social orders.

The study is written for planners and governors who are engaged in this immigrant Frontier issues. The lessons from historical and contemporary social integration can provide possible references in the political decisions and the planning of grid.

2. The Initial Spatial and Social Exclusions upon Clans in Ancient Cities

The first chapter is a description on the ancient Chinese tribal kingdom (20th centuries till 7th centuries) when first spatial and social exclusions of clans happened under massive migrations.

The primitive tribal society constructed upon local clans. The hierarchy is simple as families and the cohabitant with alien clans did not exist. This social system existed in ancient kingdoms like Xia and Shang dynasties (20th till 10th centuries BCE) where king is supported and surrounded by royal and noble clans, political and spatially.

Massive migration appeared in Western Zhou dynasty (10th till 7th centuries BCE), clans migrated, conflicted and integrated in different regions. It was the time first *Frontier* happened. Different clans coexisted in one city, strived for limited resources, controlled and excluded politically and physically. Walls are built to demarcate zones and the alien clans were excluded from the king and noble clans. (Loewe & Shaughnessy, 1999)

The following cases show that 'to exclude is inevitable initial choice when facing immigrants' even from the beginning of civilization.

2.1 The Centric Layout Capital with Solo Clan

The last Shang's capital, Yinxu (1300 BCE) was an assembly of tribes and small cities with a big area covering 300 thousand hectors. It was on the south bank of Huan River, on a higher terrain near the river. Shang King's Clan territory was in the centre, surrounded and protected by other noble tribes. It existed as gathering point of Shang clansman even after the Dynasty end by Western Zhou Dynasty. (Loewe & Shaughnessy, 1999)

The centric part is the Palatial Zone protected by moats. It was a planned rectangular area with 1100m long south-north and 650m wide east-west. The moat was the symbolic and physical boundary of the royal territory. There was no wall probably due to its strong military forces that multi-layers of Shang clan tribes protected it in the centre. Other handicraft, residence and cemeteries scattered affiliated to each surrounding tribes. Among different functional zones there were vast blank areas probably for cultivation. (Kwang , 1986)

As a capital with single Shang clan, the city did not divide or exclude any groups and zones. All tribes surrounded the king clan in the centre and create a centric layout. This type existed in most tribes (before 10th centuries BCE) when the massive migration did not appear and the mix of clans did not happen. Or to say, it is primitive model before the appearance of Frontier between different ethnical groups. (Xu, 2000)
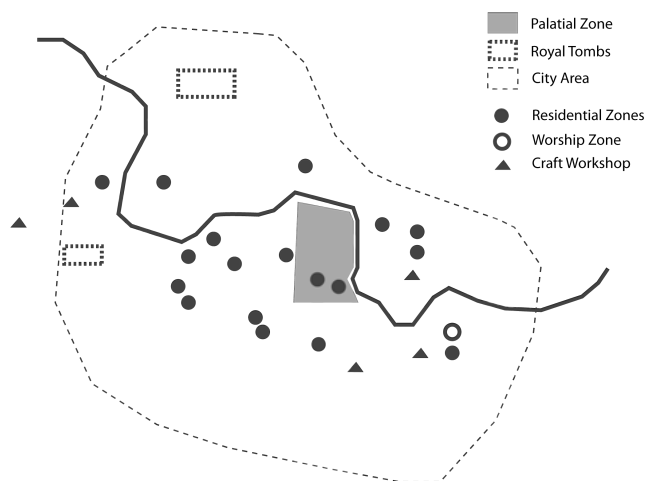
Caption 1: Plan of Yinxu City, the Centric Layout (Xu, 2000)

## 2.2 The Capital to Exclude Migratory Clans

After conquering Shang dynasty (10th centuries BCE), in order to weaken the power of Shang clans and control more territories, King Zhou, the leader of Zhou clan forced Shang clansman to migrate to remote regions, therefore remix the clans in all China. The first migration of different clans happened (10th till 7th centuries BCE). (Loewe & Shaughnessy, 1999)

However, the Shang clansman and other alien clans often made revolts. Thus the previous centric layout was not feasible in sense of safety of Zhou King and his noble clans. In the new capital of Cheng Zhou (currently southwest of Luoyang) a new spatial grid for social exclusion was designed to divide the clans. (Kwang , 1986)

The city consisted of two adjoined parts, on the west was a small palatial city and on the east was a large secular city. They were designed to separate the clans. The west city consisted the palace of King Zhou and other noble halls while the east secular one inhabited

Shang clansman, other migratory clans and the military troops of King Zhou, as a tool to surveillance and control the alien clans. (Yang, 2006)

From the liturgy, the western part also represents the supremacy over the eastern part. In ancient ideology southwest was a symbol of wellness. Nobles preferred to live in the southwest of the city and considered northeast as unlucky. Therefore, to show off the superior rank over other clans, the palatial city was created in southwest with halls and temples on high-platforms. According to this liturgy, the main gates, royal halls all faced eastward. In Chinese, it was called 'Sit in West and Face East', the king overviewing the subjects in the east. (Yang, 2006)
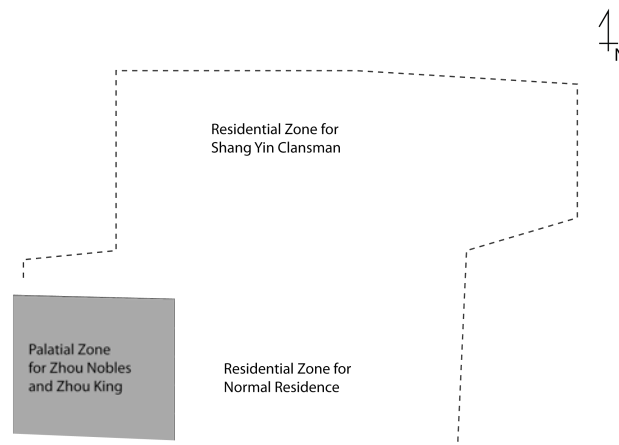
Caption 2: Plan of Chengzhou, the west-east separated city (Yang, 2006)

The above history shows the transformation from solo clan into the multi-clan. The initial spatial and political reactions towards the alien immigrants are to exclude. Walls are built and zones are demarcated to separate Zhou clans and alien clans. In politics the alien clansman are degraded as slaveries and cannot serve army, have lands or enter political discussions. Understandable, it is part of the intrinsic self-protection of human being, whenever there are aliens, the initial reaction is to reject, self-protect and exclude, at scale of social groups.

3. Assimilation of Chinese and Nordic Ethnics in Nordic Cities

In second chapter, we forward the history to the era that central China was occupied by Nordic ethnics, Khitan, Jurchens and Mongolians (11th till 13th centuries).

At first, nomads partly assimilated with Chinese. Cities were built with two foci, one Nordic zone with tent and Nordic halls and the other Chinese zone. Two systems on culture, politics, economy and spatial layout coexisted in one city.

Later on, nomads traded and cohabited with Hans, learnt Confucian liturgies, executed Chinese centralized political systems and finally built cities according to Chinese ideals. The assimilation happened and different ethnical groups learnt from each other. I.e. the famous city Xanadu is the hybrid of Chinese chessboard city and Mongolian naturalism ideology. (Twitchett, Franke, & Fair, The Cambridge History of China: Volume 6, Alien Regimes and Border States, 710-1368, 1994)

In these cases, the process of assimilation of locals (Chinese) and immigrants (Nomads) happened in every the aspects including culture, politics and the spatial planning.

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### 3.1 The Nordic Tents inside Chinese Imperial Grid

In the later Northern Song dynasty, a strong Nordic cavalries, Khitan conquered northern China and created Liao Dynasty (907-1125). The social system of Khitan is slavery. The emperors created zones and enslaved Chinese to cultivate lands for the troops and build cities. The first built capital of Jin, the Upper Capital, shows a grid planning with harsh combination of Chinese zone and Khitan zone. (Twitchett, Franke, & Fair, The Cambridge History of China: Volume 6, Alien Regimes and Border States, 710-1368, 1994)

This city was built from empty ground in Inner Mongolia. It consisted of two parts, the northern Khitan royal palace and the southern secular Chinese city.

Northern Khitan royal city is mix of Chinese city and Khitan tent. It has a rectangular shape with 2km south-north and 2.2km east-west. In the middle north there is the Imperial City that is a 600 by 300 m rectangular. Four east-west and north-south avenues crossed and shaped a '井' grid. The symmetric axis is the vertical avenue connecting the southern gate of Imperial city towards south. The wide horizontal outside the southern gate was used for the annual Big Court Ceremony. The above spatial characters are copy from Chang'An in Tang dynasty. The only difference was the orientation of halls. Khitan liturgy took east as supremacy. Therefore, except the two big courts, all other halls faced eastward. (Steinhardt, 1999)

While in the northwest plenty of un-built blank grounds existed. These lands are left empty for temporary tents when cavalry noble families visited the emperor. (Yang, 2006)

Southern Chinese secular city adjoined directly to the south of royal city. It is 1.4km south-north and 2.2km east-west. There are one south-north and one east-west avenues with Chinese residences alienated alongside. At each corner of street watchtowers were built to surveillance the Chinese. (Steinhardt, 1999)
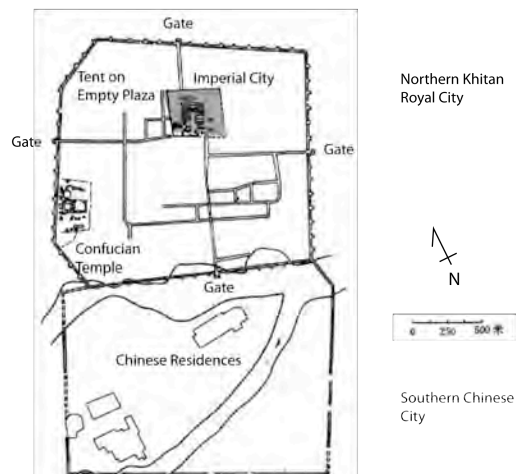
Caption 3: Plan of Northern Capital of Khitan (Yang, 2006)

Even though Khitan used Chinese grid style, its capital was still a separation of locals and newcomers. The tents are remained for cavalries. Two foci were built, the northern for Khitan and the southern for Chinese. The social system is still a mix of slavery and feudalism. The liturgies, cultures and political systems were not assimilated but remained as Nordic ones.

3.2 The Combination of Mongolian Naturalism and Chinese Imperial Liturgies: Xanadu

Mongolian emperor Kubilai Khan finally conquered the Southern Song, and established a big empire in the whole territory of China. He created a powerful empire based on feudalism. In 1250, he assigned Chinese architect Liu Bing Zhong to design the northern capital, Shang Du, the Xanadu in the book of Marco Polo. This city became a real hybrid of Nordic naturalism and Chinese imperial grid. (Twitchett & Fairbank , The Cambridge History of China: The Ming dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1, 1988)

First, Liu created the triple wall system from Bianjing, the capital of Northern Song, with the outer city, royal city and imperial city. The main part is the royal city that contains imperial city. The royal city occupied the major southeast part. The outer city consisted of northern and western parts. The northern part of outer city is the royal garden that linked to the palatial city.

The outer city is a square with 2,200 meters by side. In the southern and western wall there is each gate. A 25 m wide moat surrounded the outer wall. The northern royal garden has no street but gardens with hills. The southern part of outer city contained streets and residential zones. Three east-west avenues parallel in the western part of outer city, like and planned orthogonal chessboard grid as Chang'An from Tang dynasty. The middle avenue connected toward the western gate of inner city.

The royal city is in the southeast, a square with 1,400 meter in side length. There is a central gate in the northern and southern walls and two gates in eastern and western walls. The imperial city is in the northern part of inner city. The symmetric horizontal and vertical avenues are built inside inner city.

The imperial city is a beautiful scenario that contains half garden and half palace. It has groups of halls surrounded by natural elements as hills and ponds. (Steinhardt, 1999)

The assimilation also happened in liturgies. Kubilai Khan is an open-minded emperor who introduced ideas of Confucian, Taoism and Buddhism together into new social liturgies for Yuan dynasty (13th century CE). He followed the Chinese imperial systems, liturgies of courts and conduct traditional Chinese worship ceremonies for sky and ground. And most important, the planning of the city is no longer a separation but an integration for all ethnical groups. No tents, Mongolians, Chinese and other ethnical groups lived together in the outer and royal cities. Xanadu became the standard model for its capital, Da du, which is the foundation of Beijing. (Yang, 2006)
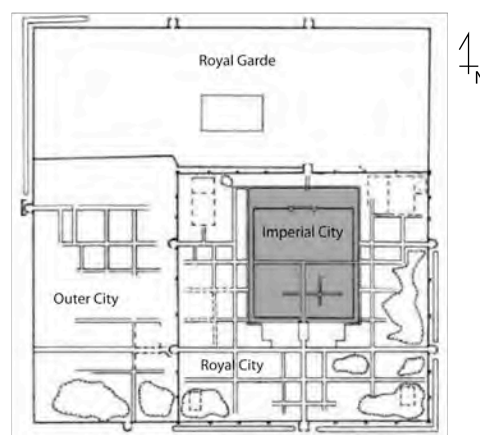
Caption 4: Plan of Shang Du, the Xanadu (Steinhardt, 1999)

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The change of Nordic immigrants into Chinese way of living and construction took over 100 years. From Khitan to Mongolian, the process undertook the initial conflicts, slavery and slaughters into trades and finally accepted the liturgies of Chinese, from Confucian to Buddhism. And the eventual assimilation reflected in the creation of grid. The grid represented trend of social changes. From initial thorough exclusion to later integration, this assimilation is clearly shown in Nordic cities.

4. The Powerlessness of Grid Change in Border Cities

In this chapter, we jumped to the border cities in Ming and Qing dynasty (14th till 19th centuries). They are remote from central China therefore special delegations were sent and inhabited in as the surveillance bureau of the city and minor ethnical groups. Normally, the border cities are also the pivotal trading points, the trends of ethnical mix are common as results of economical relationship and correspondent cultural acceptance. Therefore, the forceful divisions of cities from governance may damage the integration of different ethnical groups. (Twitchett & Fairbank , The Cambridge History of China: The Ming dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1, 1988)

Two cases, City of Li Jiang in southwest linking to south Asia in hinterland and City of Guangzhou (Canton) in southeast as international port are presented. While in these cases, the physical division is powerless compared to the spontaneous willing to communicate between groups. They give us the idea the economical needs and cultural merging are even crucial than the spatial interference.

4.1 The Powerlessness of Political Exclusion and the Prevailing of Spontaneous Secular Foci

Li Jiang Prefecture is in Yunnan Province and served as a trading pivot linking southern China and South-Asia nations. The secular and commercial focus had been Si Fang Street, in the northwest of the city.

While in order to rule the local Naxi minority and other ethnic people, in Ming Dynasty (14th century), a bureau city was built in southwest under a hill for Tu Si, the delegator assigned by central government. This supposed to be a new political focus, separated from the old. Later in Qing dynasty, a new local commander Liu Guan was assigned and new bureau city was constructed in the east. This city became the second political centre. They were walled and separated from secular centres. However, the focus of city never moved to these two isolated cities but stayed in Si Fang Street. The new political centres became leftover peripheries. (Committee of Chronicles of Li Jiang, 2000)

Si Fang Street had been the open market for local and international trades from day to night, Naxi, Han and other ethnical minorities lived closer to the plaza. And the prevailing secular power and hilly topography resulted into a labyrinthine city grid that starts from Si Fang Street and radiate outside in four directions.

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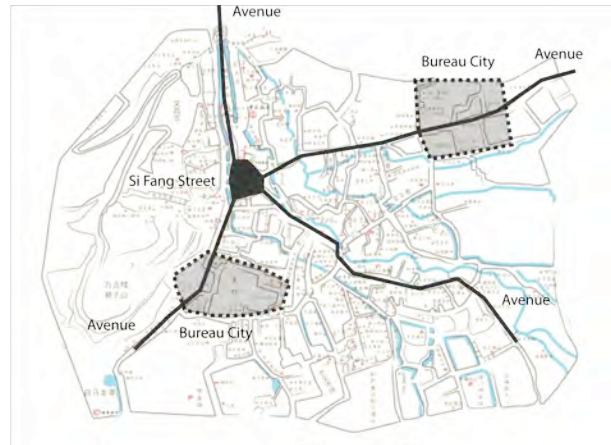
Caption 5: Plan of Lijiang (Committee of Chronicles of Li Jiang, 2000)

This case showed the political decision to create exclusion among ethnical groups, if contradictory to the trends of social integration, may fail and the power of trading can boost the spontaneous integration. As well the city grid is more labyrinthine as the result of self-growth.

4.2 The Forceful Exclusion Stopped the Integration and Resulted in the Failure of Civilization

Guangzhou located on the Pearl River. It was called Panyu in Qin and Han dynasties, as the capital of southern provinces till today. In Tang dynasty (7th century), the city was a rectangular with 5 *li* in perimeter with three gates in east, south and west. Till Song dynasty (11th century), it expanded to three conjoined cities: west, middle and east. With increasing residents and international traders along the riverbank, in 1565, the northern cities were combined into one as the bureau and Chinese city. (Committee of Chronicles of Guangzhou, 2000)

In Ming dynasty, Chinese emperors put laws to forbid the international sea trade. Therefore, China closed its doors towards the occidental traders. And in western border, the Ottoman Empire cut the connections from west to east in hinterland. Therefore, the Chinese world cannot communicate with western cultures anymore. (Peterson, 2002)

Later in 16th century, Ming dynasty emperor allowed foreigners to build factories and ports southwest outside the wall of Guangzhou. Guangzhou became a port contained limited zones for international trade. The southern linear city was made as for trading and buffering zones between foreign traders who inhabited outside the wall and local traders. A small island was used as an enclave of western settlements, named *thirteen factories*.

The island was planned by British and divided into long rows. Each row was assigned to each European country for their warehouse, embassies and factories. Compared to Guangzhou, western grids with straight parallel lines was very efficient considering the land division among countries and functional considering the process from transporting, organizing, storing, producing and selling. (Skinner, 1977)

Therefore, Guangzhou had three foci separated, one political Chinese bureau city, one for buffering zone of trade and one enclave for international settlers. According to the imperial law, different inhabitants cannot communicate among each other. Chinese can work in

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foreign enclave but the foreigners cannot enter Chinese city. It is a way to forbid the direct communication from newcomers, separate the ethnical groups. (Peterson, 2002)

Caption 6: Plan of Canton (Johnston, 1910)

This divided city is just a miniature on how China isolated itself from the world in 17th -19th century. Chinese emperors stopped the free trading, direct cultural contacts, put strict laws against foreign settlers and built cities into different enclaves. Because of this Sea Block, China lost opportunities to understand and take advantage of the scientific advancements from west, and finally got shocked and destroyed in Anglo-Sino war in 19th century. It has been the lessons for eastern Asians that 'to block the integration' is the bad option from bloody lessons learnt in history.

5. Chinatown in Milan

In this chapter, we come to the contemporary international *Frontier*, to examine the new Chinese immigrants in Milan, Italy. However, the Chinatown in Milan is different from those in other world. The tolerant attitude of Italian government and residents has helped to integrate the Chinese immigrants, and the Chinatown in Via Paolo Sarpi had become part of Milan attractive point.

5.1 The Integration of Chinese Immigrants and Renovation of Via Paolo Sarpi

Chinatown is a quarter of Zone 1 in Milan with the high concentration of Chinese communities and businesses. The Chinese presence began around 1920 with a massive immigration from the Zhejiang Province.

Despite its name, it is different from the traditional Chinatown known in the world. The peculiarity of the neighbourhood is the prevalence of Italian residents for the 95%, compared to over 500 Chinese wholesale businesses that serve peddlers from all over Italy, thus forming a particular area that, according to some, it would be wrong define 'Chinatown' but a Chinese Trading Street inside Italian residential quarter. (Farina, 1997)

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At the end of 2008 the municipality made via Paolo Sarpi area ZTL (limited traffic zone), while in 2011 became a pedestrian street, linking from Porta Volta towards Corso Sempione. The Milan municipalities hope these interventions can favour the reduction of wholesale trade activities on street and make the neighbourhood toward effective multi-ethnicity, enhancing both the history and the traditions. (Comune di Milano, 2012)

Of course traditional events occur during Chinese New Year. In 2011, a pair of dragon parade from the main street of the neighbourhood (via Paolo Sarpi) processed from piazza Gramsci at the western end of the neighbourhood, preceded by dances and drum rollers, and attracts a crowd of onlookers including tourists, locals and other immigrants from all parts of Milan.

In recent years, the municipality put two points of Bikemi, the economic city bike rent project, in both ends of Via Paolo Sarpi, to incorporate the neighbourhood in the public service system of Milan. And for the reviews of the newest Milan tourist guides, Chinatown is growing a stronger interest linked above all to the possibility of a different kind of shopping. (Bikemi by Atm, 2008)

Caption 8: The new design of Via Paolo Sarpi, with Bikemi and Festival (Associazione Liberi Esercenti Sarpi, 2009)

In this case, the Chinese community in Milan had grown as a commercial point instead of an ethnical residential area. After 2000, cargos and noise created by Chinese wholesalers aroused the complaints from Italian residents. The initial official sanctions over Chinese traders finally aroused the big protest in 2007. The municipality changed the attitude from 2008, refurnished Via Paolo Sarpi, incorporated it into centric pedestrian system and linked it with Bikemi, etc.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

In the first part, the initial spatial and social exclusion in ancient kingdom based on clans was presented. It showed the inevitable reaction towards the aliens from the beginning of civilization. The second part about the Nordic-Chinese cities show how the nomads learnt from Chinese way on culture, politics and the spatial layout of cities. The two examples in third part are arbitrary divisions of city zone based on ethnical groups are listed. The Li Jiang case did not succeed due to the strong magnet of commercial focus while the Guangzhou

case presented the thorough ethnical, economical and political cut among different groups, which is a miniature representing the failing self-block police of later Chinese empire. The final part the contemporary Chinese immigrant case in Milan gives us a positive example on the mutual acceptance between Italian government, Italian residents and Chinese newcomers in the cultural acceptance and the commercial mutual benefits.

These cases together constructed a general process of integration of ethnical groups into locals: At first, the conflicts happened between locals and newcomers, normally city is designed to facilitate separation and politics is made to limit contact; the economical actions among ethnical groups gradually result into cultural acceptance and mutual communications and eventually the new politics, rules and the space would be changed in favour of better integration of locals and immigrants.

In this process, spatial planning plays as the physical interference as the reflection of the decision from rulers upon the social orders: at first, space is divided to control new immigrants, normally shaped a ghetto spontaneously or politically to avoid direct conflicts among groups. When economic happened between locals and new comers as well cultures mutually accepted, the physical boundaries would break up and facilitate the communication of different communities.

However, the above two spatial tools cannot be used at any time. It depends on the coherence between spatial planning and trends of social integrations; it is unwise to merge spaces of diverse ethnical groups when immigrants just arrived and in reverse it is unsuitable to forcefully separate the mutual accepted groups to stop their future communications. To simplify, spatial change should be in favour of the trends of social changes in order to enhance and stabilize the mutual effects of different ethnical groups.

The four parts can help to understand the process of social conflicts between different ethnical groups. The key of integration is first economy, second culture, third physical merging by grid to make stable mutual coexistence. In this process, the usage of grid is delicate, listening to and observing the will of people, and change the grid by political force. Enhance and facilitate the merging and coexistence. Economy only is not enough, culture only is also in vain.

Therefore, for the political makers, it is necessary to create cultural events to improve economy and culture understanding. For planners, is to ready for the plan or urban renovation project that can increase the accessibility and centrality of the immigrant zone. And give advice for politicians about when and how to start the change of grid. For locals and immigrants, wait and open mind to the new neighbours.

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