

Article

How Can It Be More Real? A Case Study to Present the Authenticity of a Local Heritage District from the Perspective of Regional Spatial Morphology

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Abstract: The discussion of authenticity has become an academic theme of great interest to scholars in the tourism and heritage fields. However, there have been relatively few studies related to the authenticity of the spatial morphology of a historical urban area. This paper is based on the approach of the theory of “constructive authenticity”, and takes a local historical district heritage in Beijing as an example to analyze the authenticity of the spatial morphology of a particular heritage site. This paper takes into account three aspects: (1) overall layout; (2) street landscape; and (3) the pattern inside the courtyards. It then analyzes the Nanluo area from the perspective of the change in spatial patterns from the past to the present, as an aspect of research on the protection and sustainable development of local historic districts. Through the analysis, it can be seen that from the point of view of spatial morphology, the Nanluo area is distant from its shape in the past, and the main differences are reflected in the above three aspects. It also can be seen that in today’s Nanluo area, the authenticity of the layout that is perceived by tourists is a “constructive authenticity” that has been developed over years.

Keywords: constructive authenticity; historic districts; spatial morphology; the Nanluo area

1. Introduction

The discussion of authenticity has become an academic theme that is of great concern to scholars in the tourism and heritage fields. The discussions of authenticity in the study of tourism and heritage began in the 1960s, and in 1973, MacCannell’s “staged authenticity” theory laid the foundation for the further study of authenticity [1]. Since then, the main discussions have focused on the relationship between authenticity and tourism commoditization. In recent years, a variety of theories regarding authenticity have gradually developed, in which four theoretical approaches dominated: objective authenticity (and “staged authenticity”), constructive authenticity, postmodern authenticity, and existential authenticity [2]. The objective authenticity theory emphasizes the existence of an absolute truth. Constructive authenticity focuses on the process of the authenticity being constructed. Postmodern authenticity and existential authenticity theories are applied more often to the study of non-object-related tourism or heritage. The postmodern approach emphasizes the negation of absolute truth. Wang Ning summed up the previous theories, and put forward the theory of existential authenticity, which interpreted the authenticity issue from the perspective of existentialist philosophy. The research on the theories of authenticity covers a wide range. In addition to the above-mentioned four major theories of authenticity in tourism and heritage research, in recent years, there have also been other perspectives; for example, studies have combined authenticity research and psychological research, such as Knudsen et al.’s work. In their article, “The fantasy of authenticity: Touring with Lacan”, the research of tourism authenticity is combined with Lacanian psychology analysis [3]. As

another example, in past discussions, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their work *The Invention of Tradition*, conducted an in-depth study of six cases, stating that “tradition” is not immutable, but rather has been invented by modern people, which has something in common with the “constructive authenticity” theory [4].

The theory of authenticity is not only widely used in tourism research, it is also often used in heritage study. In the document produced by the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Symposia in 1994—the theme of which is authenticity (“the Nara Document on Authenticity”)—it was clearly proposed that “The understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all of the scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used for the World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories” [5]. Since then, there have been an increasing number of discussions about the authenticity of heritage. In these discussions, research achievements regarding the theories that focus on the relationship between heritage and authenticity are rich. Alan Gordon proposed that, “What is crucial in understanding authenticity is how it supports heritage” [6]. John Pendlebury et al. emphasized the importance of introducing the theory of authenticity into urban spatial research, which is not limited to the scope of the buildings [7]. Jenny Kidd mentioned that although there is still much controversy surrounding the authenticity theory, it is still important for us to use it to interpret “the past” [8]. In addition, studies of the authenticity of heritage tourism are also abundant. For example, Gordon Waitt studies tourist perceptions of the authenticity of an Australian historical heritage site “The Rocks” [9]; Chris Halewood and Kevin Hannam discuss how the notion of authenticity is constructed during Viking heritage tourism [10]; Doug Arbogast et al. do research about DMOs (Destination Management Organizations) and rural tourism in Tucker county, West Virginia, and their discussions include the issues of maintaining authenticity and a sense of place [11]. Additionally, the discussion and application of the theory of authenticity in the field of heritage research is not limited to the four theories mentioned above. Unlike most of the analysis based on these four perspectives of the theories of authenticity, Konstantinos Andriotis’s article about the authenticity of Mount Athos is written based on Pine and Gilmore’s genres of authenticity, which are classified into natural, original, exceptional, referential, and influential [12]. Taking into account the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994, Ozlem Karakul studied tangible and intangible Turkish cultural heritage [13]. Recently, there has been an endless stream of research on authenticity. In 2017, Yemima Cohen-Aharoni discussed the authenticity of heritage sites in absence and distance states [14], and Andreas Wesener studied the authenticity of an intangible cultural heritage in the Jewelry Quarter [15].

From the existing research results, it can be seen that although there have been many discussions on the authenticity of heritage, previous studies have mainly focused on architecture, policies, and the interaction of tourists, with world cultural heritage as the main research object. Specific tourism sites and historic districts are other areas that concern scholars. However, results focusing on historic districts still need to be strengthened. Additionally, existing studies regarding historic districts that are devoted to the authenticity of the spatial morphology of a historic urban area are still not enough. The study of the spatial morphology of an urban historic district mainly discusses the pattern of districts, streets, and the architectures within them. Some important heritage documents have mentioned the significance of spatial morphology in the study of historic districts. For example, in 1933’s “Athens Charter”, there was an item mentioning the reconstruction of buildings in historic areas, and that the “The practice of using styles of the past on aesthetic pretexts for new structures erected in historic areas” is not right [16]. The “Washington Charter” in 1987 is called the “Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas”, and stated the elements that should be focused on protecting historic towns and areas. The first and second items are: “urban patterns as defined by lots and streets”, and “relationships between buildings and green and open spaces” [17]. These documents are all about the spatial morphology of historic districts; meanwhile, there are also academic research achievements that have paid attention to the heritage value of the spatial form of the urban area, and among them, one of the earliest and most representative is John Ruskin’s work [18]. Ruskin

emphasized the value of inhabitation, and showed the “relation between social processes and spatial form” [19]. Additionally, along with the development of tourism industry, the spatial morphology of heritage may be influenced by developers, tourists, and commercial activities, which have all changed from its state in the past. For example, nowadays, Beijing is in a high-speed development period; accordingly, the historic districts have also changed a lot. The inner city of Beijing is changing from a city full of traditional architecture to one that only contains several conservation districts, and the authenticity of these districts also changes along with changes to their spatial morphology. There are many issues concerning authenticity in this process that are worth discussing. However, in the heritage study field of China, there is still not enough discussion on the authenticity of the layout of historic districts. The discussion around the spatial morphology of a historic district is often used as background material, or as a component for discussing the authenticity of heritage. Therefore, this article chooses a local historic urban area heritage site named the Nanluo guxiang area (or “Nanluo gu alley area,” henceforth the Nanluo area), as the object of study, and discusses the authenticity of the spatial morphology of this area.

Historic areas, especially urban historic areas, have changed greatly over time; some sites, such as the cases analyzed in this paper, have been reconstructed many times. Therefore, it is impractical to explore absolute authenticity in these cases. Taking into account that historic districts often experience several reconstructions over a long period, and different residents, builders, and tourists have their different understandings and interpretations of the districts, this paper believes that it is more appropriate to discuss its authenticity from the perspective of constructive authenticity. Therefore, this paper chooses constructive authenticity as the theoretical basis of this study.

Constructive authenticity is the reality that is seen as “the results of the versions of our interpretations and constructions”. Also, this reality “is pluralistic and plastic” [2] (p.354). The pioneer and representative scholars of this theory are Erik Cohen and Edward M. Bruner. Cohen discussed the relationship between authenticity and commoditization through the approach of constructivism. He proposed a concept called “emergent authenticity”. That means that over time, an inauthentic cultural product can “become generally recognized as authentic, even by experts” [20]. Bruner, in his paper in 1994, takes New Salem as a case and studies historical reproduction based on a constructivist position. In this perspective, which is based on his fieldwork, Bruner proposes four meanings of authenticity, which can be summarized as: verisimilitude, genuineness, originality, and authority [21]. Bruner also emphasizes the constructive process of the authenticity, believing that for a historic site or heritage place, the new culture that has emerged in it is influenced by social and environmental changes; and today, our view of a heritage site also affects our view of this heritage site in history. He points out the core idea of constructive authenticity theory: “no longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history” [21] (p.407–408). Over the years, with the development of the tourism industry in this region, the Nanluo area has undergone enormous changes. The streets have been repaired several times in a few years, and major changes have taken place in the surrounding transportation, the residential population, and the distribution of shops within and outside the area. With the changes in the function and the specific layout of the area, the authenticity of the morphology of this place has not remained unchanged through the years, which is more appropriate to be analyzed using the above-mentioned “construction context”. Therefore, I think that it is suitable to choose the constructive perspective of authenticity as the basic theory for the case in this paper.

2. Methods and Case Backgrounds

In this paper, I use the comparative study method to study the spatial morphological changes of the Nanluo area in the past and the present. The materials used here include maps and archives, and maps are used as the primary analytical materials for the comparative analysis of the area’s pattern and its street patterns.

The clearest recorded map of the streets and buildings in Beijing city in the premodern period that we can find now is the *Qianlong Jingcheng Quantu* (henceforth the *Quantu*), which was finished in 1750 in the Qing dynasty [22]. This map was so detailed that it drew almost every house in the city at that time. So, this map has been chosen as the core material for the comparative study of the spatial morphology of the Nanluo area in this paper. Historians have done some research on this map, but studies focusing on the spatial pattern of the areas that are shown in it are few. Several scholars from Tsinghua University have conducted in-depth studies regarding the *Quantu* from the perspective of architectural elements and the courtyard pattern. For example: Li Jing's "The Study of Heyuan Building Pattern in *Qianlong Jingcheng Quantu*" [23] and "The Study of Heyuan Building and Hutong neighborhood space in *Qianlong Jingcheng Quantu*;" [24] and Deng Yi, Mao Qizhi's "Study on the Formation and Scale of Block of Beijing Inner City Based on Qianlong Map" [25].

In addition, in the comparative analysis of the morphology of the area between the past and the present, this article also uses the text analysis method. One of China's largest travel comments and social network websites, Mafengwo, was selected as the object of analysis. In this website, the Nanluo area has its own comment page, which is one of the most popular comment pages for tourists visiting this region. Therefore, the comment information on this website is very helpful for us to understand visitors' perceptions about the Nanluo area. I use the keyword extraction method, which extracts the top 50 keywords in all of the comments to analyze people's overall perceptions of the Nanluo area. Next, I compare these results with the situation shown in historical maps, and analyze the changes of spatial morphology in the process of regional development.

The case discussed in this paper pays particular attention to Beijing's local heritage, and focuses on an analysis of a local historic area: the Nanluo area. The Nanluo area is now the most important historic district in today's Beijing, and has even become a landmark of Beijing's traditional hutong cityscape. Hutong is a typical traditional form of alley in Beijing. It is a relatively narrow alley, in which Beijing traditional residential courtyard architecture (*siheyuan*) is distributed along the both sides of the alley. The pattern of the Nanluo area was formed in the Yuan dynasty of China (1271–1368). In the Yuan dynasty, this area was located in the center of Beijing city at that time, and in the following Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and Qing dynasty (1644–1912), this area was near the north end of the central axis of Beijing, and used as a residential area.

There is a lot of academic research about the Nanluo alley in China, from the perspectives of tourism, heritage, history, and architecture, because this area is the area in central Beijing, which retains a relatively complete historic district. Nanluo alley is also one of Beijing's most famous attractions today. However, in this large number of studies, there is still very little research focusing on the authenticity of this historic district. Existing studies include the paper of Jonathon Day, Xiaolin Shi et al. which discusses perceptions of authenticity of the Nanluo alley by evaluating the perceptions of 353 visitors [26]. Plácido González Martínez takes another historic area in Beijing—Guozijian as an example, and studies how urban intervention policies affect the alleys in Beijing, and further discusses the compatibility between authenticity and change in the Guozijian area [27]. Comparative research about the spatial patterns of this area from the past to the present, and the discussion of the authenticity of the heritage based on it, are even fewer. Therefore, I have chosen this direction as my research topic.

3. A Comparative Study on the Spatial Morphology of the Nanluo Area at Different Levels

In order to study the authenticity of heritage, the first thing to do is to find out what is authentic, and what is relatively authentic. This study requires a comparative reference, which was often recorded in the classical literature of the historical period. This paper will compare the spatial pattern of the Nanluo area from the past to the present using maps and archives. The discussion of the spatial morphology of the Nanluo area in this section will be divided into three levels of perspectives to discover the overall layout, the street landscape, and the pattern inside the courtyards, and then analyze the differences. On this basis, this paper will go further and discuss the authenticity of this area today from the perspective of the "constructive authenticity" theory.

3.1. The Overall Pattern of the Nanluo Area

Regarding the overall layout, we can see the differences between the spatial morphology of the past compared with the present from maps. Figure 1a is a map of Beijing that was drawn in the middle period of the Qing dynasty, in the Qianlong period, in the 18th century (*Jingshi quantu*) [28]. Figure 1b is this area on Google Maps today.

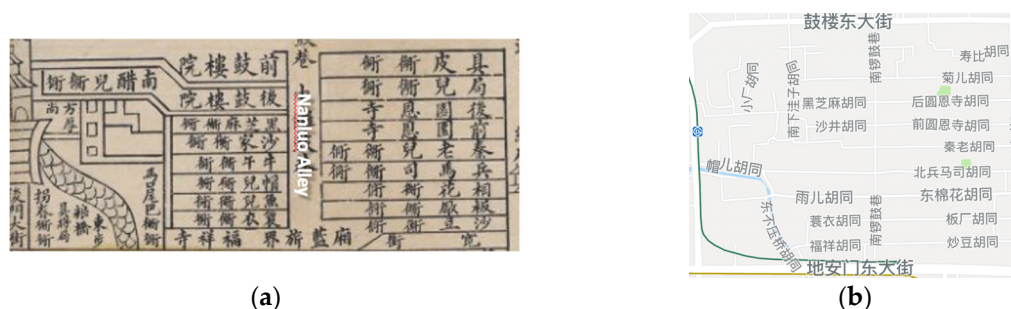


Figure 1. (a) Nanluo alley in the 18th century; (b) the Nanluo alley today. Notes: The corresponding English names of these hutongs in the maps include: Nanluo guxiang 南锣鼓巷; Ju'er Hutong 菊儿胡同; Hou Yuan'ensi Hutong 后圆恩寺胡同; Qian Yuan'ensi Hutong 前圆恩寺胡同; Qinlao Hutong 秦老胡同; Bei Bingmasi Hutong 北兵马司胡同; Dong Mianhua Hutong 东棉花胡同; Banchang Hutong 板厂胡同; Chaodou Hutong 炒豆胡同; Heizhima Hutong 黑芝麻胡同; Shajing Hutong 沙井胡同; Mao'er Hutong 帽儿胡同; Yu'er Hutong 雨儿胡同; Suoyi Hutong 蓑衣胡同, and so on.

From these two maps, we may think that the overall layout of streets in this area didn't change much from the Qing dynasty until today. As the pictures show, the streets in the Nanluo area are both arranged and distributed very neatly and in an orderly fashion; Nanluo alley is the main south–north street in this area, and several small east–west hutongs go across this main street. This layout has been in place since the Yuan dynasty in the 13th century, and today, this overall layout is almost the same.

Comparing the two maps, the overall pattern of the streets in the Nanluo area today is generally similar to the pattern in the Qing dynasty. However, in fact, from an urban administration point of view, this situation seems a bit different. During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), when the shape of the district was formed, the range of the Nanluo area today was under the administration of two “fang” (“fang” was an urban basic administration unit in the historical period of China), and the Nanluo alley was the dividing line between these two fangs in these districts. So, we can reasonably speculate that since the Nanluo alley was the dividing line at that time, from the cognitive perspective of the region, people at that time were likely to regard today's Nanluo area as two separate regions. Furthermore, since the Nanluo alley was the dividing line of two basic units, the east–west hutongs were probably the main traffic routes in their own fang districts.

Regarding the specific situation in the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), we can refer to the details drawn in the Beijing map *Quantu* (mentioned in Section 2), to see more clearly the situation of the overall street layout of the region in the Qing dynasty. In *Quantu*, almost every house in the inner city of Beijing was drawn. The north part of the Nanluo area in *Quantu* is as shown in Figure 2 [22].

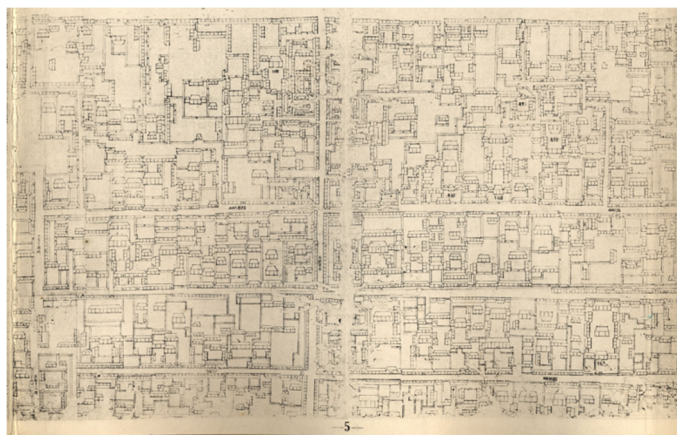


Figure 2. The north part of the Nanluo area in the *Qianlong Jingcheng Quantu*.

It can be seen that the overall layout of the buildings and streets in this area is also very orderly. However, the proportions of the streets in this area differ from those of the streets shown in the previous two figures. In this map, the sizes of several east–west streets are basically the same as the central north–south street: the Nanluo alley. Furthermore, parts of the east–west direction alley of Juer Hutong and Qian Gulouyuan Hutong are wider than the Nanluo alley. People’s places of residence, the siheyuan (the courtyard), are located between the east–west direction hutongs. Most of the time the two north–south siheyuans are distributed between two east–west hutongs, while at other times, there is only one large siheyuan located between two hutongs.

In the Qing dynasty, as Figure 2 showed, some of the east–west hutongs are almost as large as the north–south Nanluo alley. In addition, from the streetscape point of view, along the Nanluo alley in the Qing dynasty as shown in Figure 2, most of the architecture on both sides of the road are the east and west walls of siheyuans; meanwhile, the alleys in front of siheyuans were the east–west hutongs, because the front door of a siheyuan is always on the south side of the courtyard (for a detailed discussion, see Section 3.2). Taking into account that the entire Nanluo area in the Qing dynasty was a residential area, so the road in front of the courtyard—that is, the east–west road—should carry more significance at that time than the Nanluo alley (at least, it was more important to people’s daily life).

However, today, the situation in this region is completely different. Although the street shape generally remains intact from the time of the Qing dynasty, regarding the focus of the regional layout, the Nanluo alley has become the absolute core of development in this area. The key industry in this area is the large numbers of tourists who travel to the region, who are concentrated in the Nanluo alley. In contrast, far fewer tourists visit the east–west hutongs. Every visitor to the area can clearly feel that the number of tourists varies greatly between the east–west hutongs and the Nanluo alley.

On one of China’s most popular tourist social network websites, Mafengwo [29], important tourist attractions have corresponding pages, and every page has many tourist comments. In the “Nanluo alley” page, the number of comments is now up to 7542 (as of 28 February 2018), while on the pages of the two most famous east–west hutongs in the Nanluo area—Juer Hutong and Maoer Hutong—the comments number 47 and 370, respectively. Additionally, we can see that the comments on the Maoer Hutong page have reached 370 mainly because the name of this hutong has appeared in a very famous TV series in China. It is not only the number of comments that vary widely. Summarizing all of the keywords in these comments (See Table 1), it can be seen that in the Nanluo alley page, the east–west hutongs are rarely mentioned (do not appear in the top 50 most-often mentioned vocabulary), but on the pages of Juer and Maoer Hutong, Nanluo alley has always been the top keyword. This paper uses the method of text analysis to extract the top 50 keywords in all of the the comments of each site. The top 10 is as Table 1:

Table 1. 10 Most Frequently Used Words of These Three Pages.

Order	Nanluo Alley		Juer Hutong		Maoer Hutong	
	Word	WF%	Word	WF%	Word	WF%
1	Beijing	0.112	Hutong	0.238	Hutong	0.27
2	Hutong	0.099	Nanluo Alley	0.103	Beijing	0.154
3	Nanluo Alley	0.085	Juer	0.099	Maoer	0.083
4	Feature	0.067	Beijing	0.067	Nanluo Alley	0.073
5	Stores	0.055	Feature	0.045	Feature	0.023
6	Snack	0.053	Reconstruction	0.027	Wenchang	0.019
7	Commerce	0.041	Siheyuan	0.027	Former residences	0.018
8	Alley	0.032	Hotel	0.018	Feeling	0.017
9	Literary	0.027	Reside	0.018	Dianmen Gate	0.015
10	Delicious	0.027	Old alley	0.018	Avenue	0.015

Notes: As of 28 February 2018, these words are the ones mentioned after removing the non-meaningful adverbs and separate characters; WF: Word Frequency. WF% = The number of appearances of certain words/the total number of appearances of the top 50 keywords.

As can be seen from the table above, the name “Nanluo” is at the top of the most frequently used words on the Juer and Maoer Hutong pages. In the comment section of Juer Hutong, the number of times that the Nanluo alley is mentioned is even more than that of the name of Juer Hutong itself. Of course, this significant difference is in part because many tourists commonly use the place name of “Nanluo alley” to refer to the Nanluo area, and think that “Nanluo alley” covers all of the alleyways in the area. However, from the above statistics, we can still see that it is obvious that the degree of recognition regarding the east–west hutongs is far less than that of the north–south Nanluo alley, which was not the case in past times.

So, we can say that from the point of view of perception, the core streets today in this area are different compared with those in the historical period. Today, the phenomenon that Nanluo alley occupies the dominant position is the result of tourism planning and development in recent years. From the visitor comments, it also can be seen that not many of them know of the importance of the east–west hutongs of this area in the past. Some of them even consider that the (current) situation—that the Nanluo alley occupies the dominant position in this area—is authentic. It can be seen that this understanding is inconsistent with the situation in the historical period. It is the result of being constructed over time, and is “influenced by social and environmental changes” [21] (p.407–408).

Of course, this situation of neglecting the east–west hutongs is closely related to the increased number of shops along the Nanluo alley, but we need to be aware that almost every shop along both sides of the Nanluo alley was constructed in recent decades. Of course, this commercialized phenomenon is also far from the authenticity of this area in the Qing dynasty. In historical times, this area was a residential area, not a business district.

Therefore, according to what we know, the residents of this area during the Yuan dynasty belong to two regions. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, especially in the Qing dynasty, people mainly lived in the east–west hutongs of this region; and today, the local residents live in east–west hutongs and the north–south direction Nanluo alley, and meanwhile, shops are concentrated around the north–south Nanluo alley. From the perspective of the perception of people from different periods of time, the Nanluo area, from the Yuan dynasty until today, has experienced changes in terms of the focus of the overall layout of this area, as the figures shown in Figure 3:

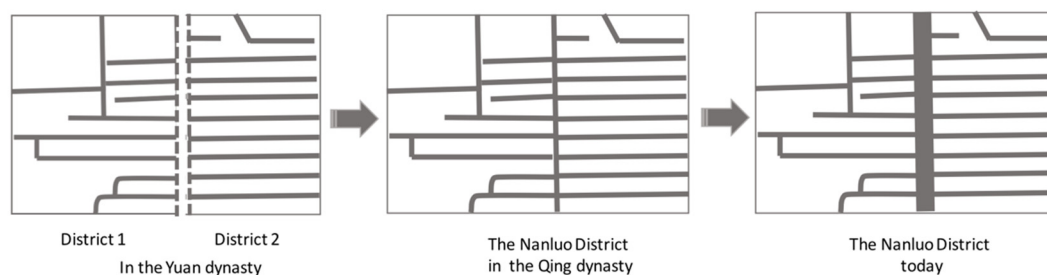


Figure 3. Schematic diagram of the change of people’s cognition of this regional focus.

From this point of view, the overall layout of the region has undergone certain changes in its authenticity.

Certainly, at the same time, we should realize that the Nanluo area residents of the past and the present are very different. In the Qing dynasty, according to the official records in *Baqi Tongzhi*, the Nanluo area was an area where banner people lived, specifically those belonging to the third regiments under the Manchu Yellow Bordered Banner [30]. Banner people were the ruling class in the Qing dynasty, which was composed of Manchu people, Mongol people, and some Han Chinese people. Banner people were administrated by the eight banners system, which was the basic administrative system in the Qing dynasty. It can be said that one of the banner people’s status was their role as soldiers. Therefore, their places of residences ought to be neatly arranged, like the *Quantu* recorded. In addition, one can easily imagine that the atmosphere of the entire region in the Qing dynasty, to a certain extent, correspondingly lacked a commercial atmosphere (there was a rule in the Qing dynasty, that banner people were not allowed to do business). However, today, the social environment has changed so that the people who live in this area are urban residents, rather than soldiers (one of the status of banner people in the Qing dynasty) any more, and the Nanluo area has become one of the most developed areas of tourism business in the city.

The status of the residents has changed, and accordingly, the function of the area has also undergone a major change (from a residential area to a commercial–residential mixed area, which in recent years has mainly become a tourism business district). After a long period of development, the morphology of this area and the specific layout of its streets and architectures have correspondingly experienced changes. Bruner has pointed out that authenticity is a “social process” [21] (p.408). From above, we can see that for an urban area, its spatial morphology changes are not only affected by the layout of the tangible streets and buildings, but also by the residents who live in them. Residents with different status living in different periods can also influence the development of the regional spatial pattern to a certain degree.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that although Figure 1 shows that the overall layout of the streets in this area didn’t change much over the years, the perceptions of people from different periods of time about the hierarchy in the street pattern and the atmosphere of this region vary greatly. That means that the authenticity of the overall layout of the streets changed accordingly. First, today, the Nanluo alley has become the absolute core street in this area, and this new pattern has been gradually formed after the tourism development in recent years, which has turned into the new “authenticity” of this region. Some people have begun to think that this pattern is the real pattern of the Nanluo area. For example, one comment on the webpage that has been mentioned many times by tourists: “It (Nanluo alley) is the street that has most completely preserved old Beijing custom and culture in China. (my translation)” Second, in general, the Nanluo area has changed from a residential area in the Qing dynasty to a commercial area today, which has influenced the overall layout of this region to some extent. Although there are still many citizens living in this area, and this area has been designated as a “History and Culture Preservation District” by the government to protect the historical landscape of this region, the shape of the region and the focus of the street pattern are still affected to some extent by the tourism development process in recent years, as mentioned above.

Since the Nanluo area is an important part of Beijing's Hutong Tour, these new features naturally become the features of Beijing's historical allies, so that many new tourists may think these characteristics are authentic. However, in this analysis, it can be summarized that the "authenticity" of the overall pattern of streets and the atmosphere of the region in this "typical" old area, which many tourists flock to, is actually the result of long-term tourism construction, which is suitable for analysis by constructive authenticity theory.

3.2. The Street Landscape of the Nanluo Area

To study the spatial pattern of specific streets and their landscapes, the map from the Qing dynasty needs to be read more carefully. There are two main types of houses shown in the *Quantu*: One is the typical traditional Chinese architecture, the siheyuan (courtyard), which is a place where a household lives; another is a house called a "pumian house" (e.g., shops), which is generally used for commercial purposes. The shapes of these two architectures are different. Therefore, the pattern of the store-based streets and residential-based streets is different too. Here, I capture a part of Xuanwumen Avenue from the *Quantu* to show the shape of a store-based street, for comparison. The parts of the map showing Xuanwumen Avenue and the Nanluo alley are shown in the *Quantu* (Figure 4 below) [22].

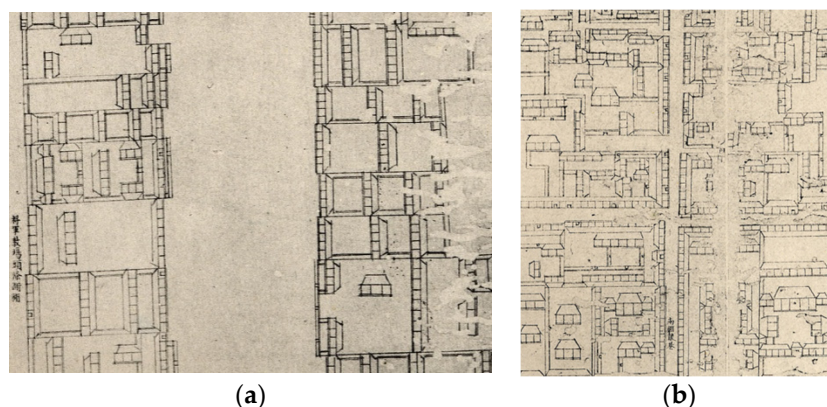


Figure 4. (a) Xuanwumen Avenue in *Quantu*; (b) the Nanluo alley in *Quantu*.

Comparing the houses along Xuanwumen Avenue and the Nanluo alley (Figure 4a,b), we will see that the houses alongside of the Nanluo alley were not like the houses alongside of Xuanwumen Avenue. Most of the houses alongside of Xuanwumen Avenue were part of east–west direction courtyards, but some of the houses alongside of the Nanluo alley were more like the east or the west walls of the south–north courtyard. Xuanwumen Avenue was one of the most important commercial streets in the Qing dynasty in Beijing, so both sides of the streets were full of pumian shops, while the Nanluo area in Qing was a residential area, so the shapes of houses along the roads were largely different. Therefore, not only from the record in the archives, but also from the patterns of houses on both sides of the main street, it can be seen that the Nanluo alley was a residential community in the Qing dynasty. In this respect, as mentioned above, the differences between the ancient and modern period are great. Today, the Nanluo alley is a tourist area that has been seriously commercialized. From Table 1 in the previous section, we can see that in the Nanluo area, the fifth most-often mentioned keywords in the visitor comments is "store"; in sixth position is "snack". Snack food stores are the most popular type of stores in the Nanluo area.

Store-based streets and residential-based streets, in the view of the street landscape of the architecture, will have big differences. In addition to the morphological differences in houses shown in the above maps, the direction of the yard and the location of the door also both vary greatly from the Qing dynasty to the present. There is a tradition that the siheyuan should be located facing the south side if this is a residence. That means that in historical times, the gate and the front door of a

siheyuan should be at the south side of the yard, and may even need to be on the southeast corner of the yard (according to the rule of geomancy); this feature can be seen in the many courtyards shown in Figure 2. In general, if the courtyard is a residential courtyard, in accordance with the requirements of the traditional layout of courtyards, the main entrance should be on the south wall of the yard, and the direction of the whole courtyard is southward. Therefore, it can be easily assumed that when you walk into an east–west hutong, for example, walking from the east side to the west, the gates of people’s courtyards should be always on your right-hand side. Usually, the wall on your left is the back wall of a courtyard. Of course, today, this landscape has undergone great changes. For the purposes of a more convenient life and tourism development needs, there are gates on both sides of the hutongs. This situation is particularly prominent in the Nanluo alley, and the east–west hutongs near a section of the Nanluo alley also show such characteristics.

Hence, because of the changes in the function of the area, the landscape of the streets has also undergone great changes. From the comments of the visitors, we can hardly see one sentence that mentions the landscape of the hutongs in the historical periods, that the front door of a courtyard should have been on the north side of the road, that there would not have been many shops in this area, or that along the Nanluo alley, most of the street landscapes showed east or west courtyard walls, not door-to-door scenes, as visible today. These features seem to only exist in historical maps and historians’ minds; they are not reflected in the real landscape of the area today, and are not known by the visitors to this place. We can say that many street landscapes of today’s Nanluo area have deviated from their appearances in the Qing dynasty, and with the development of tourism, street landscapes in this area have already been reconstructed in new forms that are received and accepted by visitors who have no enough knowledge of the history of the area, hence positing a transformative authenticity as the representative image of the traditional hutong landscape in Beijing.

3.3. The Pattern Inside the Traditional Courtyard

Regarding the study of siheyuan (courtyard) architecture in the historic district in Beijing, the existing research results are abundant. Many scholars in China have studied siheyuan from an architectural point of view, and there are also some articles on the architectural layout of the ancient siheyuan. For example, Li Qingmiao and Han Maoli have discussed the differences in the layout of the siheyuan between the inner city and outer city of Beijing in the Qing dynasty [31]. So, this topic is not the focus of this article. However, we must realize that the change in the layout of the courtyard architecture from ancient times to the modern period is the largest change in the three levels from the previously mentioned perspectives of spatial morphology (the pattern inside the courtyard). The architectures in most courtyards varies so much, it is difficult to find their shape in the past.

Meanwhile, today, the courtyards still retain their residential natures, and are not open to visitors, which is different from the situation of the overall layout and street landscape shown above. Therefore, although the spatial layout of the architecture in the courtyard has been very different in the past versus the present, we can still consider that most of the siheyuans in this area still maintain the authenticity of their residential function.

Moreover, because it is not the place for tourism development inside the siheyuan—which is a residential place for local people—while the degree of changes inside the siheyuan is great, the impact of these changes are not very relevant to tourists’ perspective (since they don’t see it).

4. Discussion about Authenticity and Conclusions

From the above analysis, it is obvious that from the point of view of the spatial pattern, the Nanluo area keeps a certain distance from its shape in the historical period regarding these three different levels of perspective: the overall layout, the street landscape, and the layout inside the courtyard. However, today, the Nanluo area is still packaged as the representative site of Beijing’s old city streets, and has become a must-visit for tourists. Perceived authenticity and differences among them deserves further discussion.

In his literature review about “constructive authenticity,” [2] (p.356) Wang cites Culler’s opinion regarding authenticity [32]: “the toured objects or others are experienced as authentic not because they are originals or reality, but because they are perceived as the signs or symbols of authenticity.” Hutong and siheyuan are the most typical symbols of the old Beijing culture. So, as the representative site of the hutong and the siheyuan, the Nanluo area has become a famous scenic site where visitors experience the authenticity of the old Beijing culture, especially after the government named it one of the “History and Culture Preservation District” in Beijing. The government established the “History and Culture Preservation District” to protect the historic architectures in the area and the overall appearance of the district. However, the hutong and siheyuan landscape only can be “verisimilitude” [21] (p. 399–401), and actually, from the spatial pattern perspective, they are already far away from their appearances in the historical time. As summarized above, we can see that the main differences are reflected in the following aspects.

1. From the overall layout point of view, the pattern of hutongs in the Nanluo area in the past is interwoven vertically and horizontally, and the east–west direction hutongs are also important streets. However, now with regional development, from the perspective of the perceived significance of streets, the north–south direction Nanluo alley occupies the dominant place in this region. There is a great difference in the authenticity of the sense of space in this respect.
2. In historical times, the Nanluo area was a residential area. Today, inside the siheyuan, it is still a residential area that is not open to tourists. However, from the point of view of overall development, this region has been turned into a tourist area, and that is quite different from the situation in the historical period.
3. From the specific landscape level, according to the traditional layout of the ancient siheyuan, there are not always doors on both sides of the east–west hutongs; rather, these are concentrated on the north side of these hutongs. However, today, many shop doors open on the both sides of the hutongs.
4. The layout of houses in the siheyuan today is very different from the situation in the historical period. However, because inside the courtyard is not a place for tourism, these changes do not impact the perception of the authenticity of the Nanluo area much from the point of view of tourists.

New arrivals to this area do not know the differences between the past and the present in terms of its spatial morphology and landscape. They think that the scenes they see are basically the appearance of ancient streets and alleys, which should be “authentic” to a certain extent; even if there are differences, the differences will not be particularly large. However, we should be aware that in today’s region, the authenticity of the layout of the regional patterns perceived by tourists is a “constructive authenticity” that has developed over years, and the construction process has always been ongoing. These “constructed” contents include: (1) the idea that the Nanluo alley is the absolute main street in this area, (2) the situation that the Nanluo alley and many parts of the Nanluo area have become a commercial place full of stores, rather than not a residential area, and (3) a layout in which there are doors on both sides of the street. According to Bruner’s four meanings of authenticity, these are all only “verisimilitude”, not “genuineness” or “originality”. In Bruner’s study of New Salem, he argues for “transcending such dichotomies as original/copy and authentic/inauthentic”. In the four meanings of authenticity that he proposed (verisimilitude, genuineness, originality, and authority), as for the “originality”, he considers that for a historical reproduction site, “no reproduction could be authentic, by definition”. As for the “genuineness”, it reflects the perception of the authenticity of this place from the people in the past [21] (p. 397–401). For example, what is the banner people’s perception about the authenticity of the Nanluo area? Additionally, the perception of people from the Qing dynasty about the authentic situation of the morphology of the Nanluo area can be reflected in the detailed record map drawn in the Qing dynasty. Therefore, comparing the “genuineness” reflected in the old map and the authenticity of today’s region after all these years of construction still has

positive significance. Through this, we can further understand the development of this area and its authenticity issue based on this.

The logical relationship is as Figure 5:

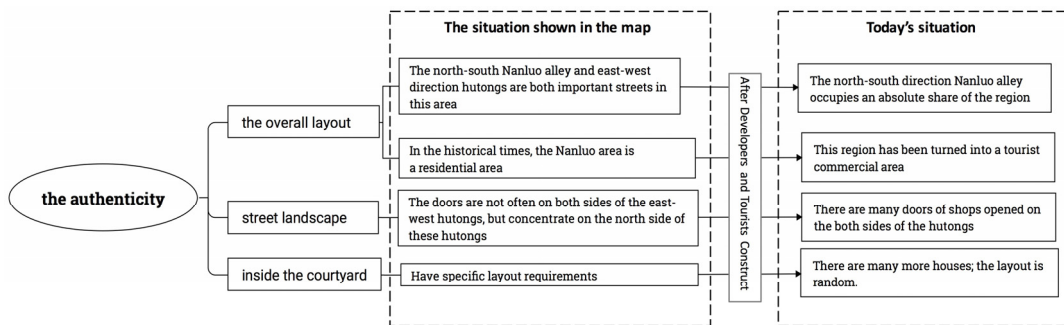


Figure 5. The constructive authenticity in the Nanluo area.

Some ideas related to constructive authenticity theory and the corresponding cases in this paper are shown in Figure 6:

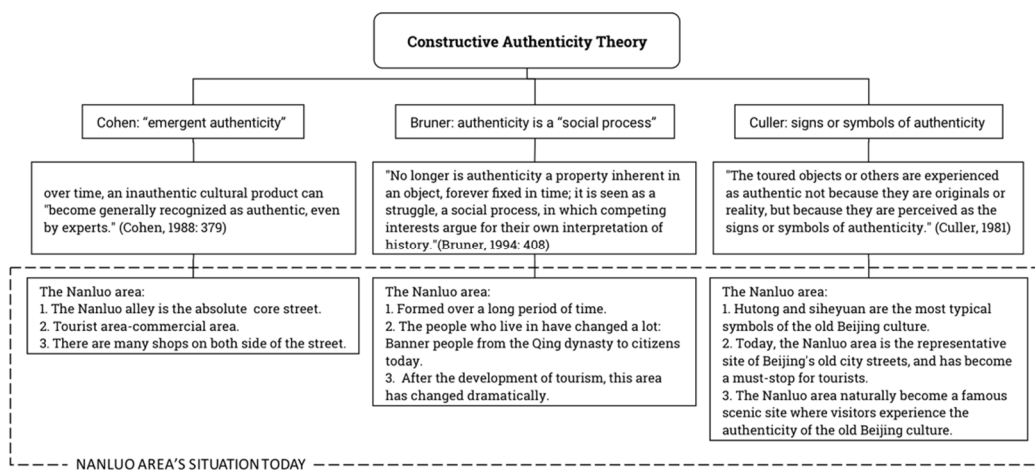


Figure 6. Mind map of some ideas in constructive authenticity theory and the corresponding cases in this paper.

This is not to say that we should completely restore the past. Authenticity is also gradually built in the process of development, especially under the theory of “constructive authenticity”. At present, the Nanluo area has become a tourist commercial area, which is the result of years of development. We must realize that this situation is also welcomed by some visitors and many local people. The tourism industry does not need to break, or cannot break, this fait accompli, and it is correct to respect the authenticity that forms over time to some extent. However, this step cannot go too far, because this will easily lead to the homogeneity of historic districts, making each old street the same. Therefore, on this basis, the tourism industry should create projects that are closer to the authentic situation in the past. Some examples of what such projects could be as follows: (1) When developing local tourism, more attention can be paid to the combination of specific tourism projects with the residential nature of the Nanluo area. For instance, local residents could be encouraged to participate in the development of hotel and homestay industries based on the siheyuan architectures. At present, there have been some siheyuan hotels in the Nanluo area, but the number of them is still relatively small. It can be predicted that, whether from the perspective of regional heritage tourism development or the conservation of the residential nature of this area in the past, this construction both has positive significance for the

reconstruction of the authenticity and the future sustainable development of the region. (2) During the construction of the Nanluo area in the future, more attention could be paid to the development of east–west hutongs. Most of the shops are now concentrated on the north–south Nanluo alley. In the future, more construction and development projects ought to focus on the east–west hutongs, especially the north side of the east–west hutongs. At the same time, it is better to start publicizing the importance of east–west hutongs, as well as knowledge points such as: the orientation of a siheyuan, the layout of different doors of a siheyuan, and so on, during the historical period. To a certain extent, this will restore the authenticity of the spatial morphology of this region. (3) Pay attention to the protection and reestablishment of the specific official Protected Historic Sites in this area, and do in-depth research about their authenticity. Respecting the authenticity issue during the process of new construction will be more beneficial in terms of the sustainable development of the region.

Today, as mentioned above, the hutong and the siheyuan are the symbol of Beijing culture, and are the most attractive elements in this area. Nowadays, the renewal of historical districts mainly focuses on ways to reconstruct the architecture and rearrange the layout of stores. However, in terms of exploring the authenticity of historical areas and letting visitors perceive the local culture, only studying the architectures are not enough. Enhancing the overall regional cultural atmosphere and making the overall sense of space and the regional function more authentic also play important parts in the process of regional construction and sustainable development, and these areas should receive more attention. In this process, it is important for scholars to present and discuss the authenticity of the spatial morphology of the region, and make suggestions accordingly. Therefore, this was the main discussion topic of this article.

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