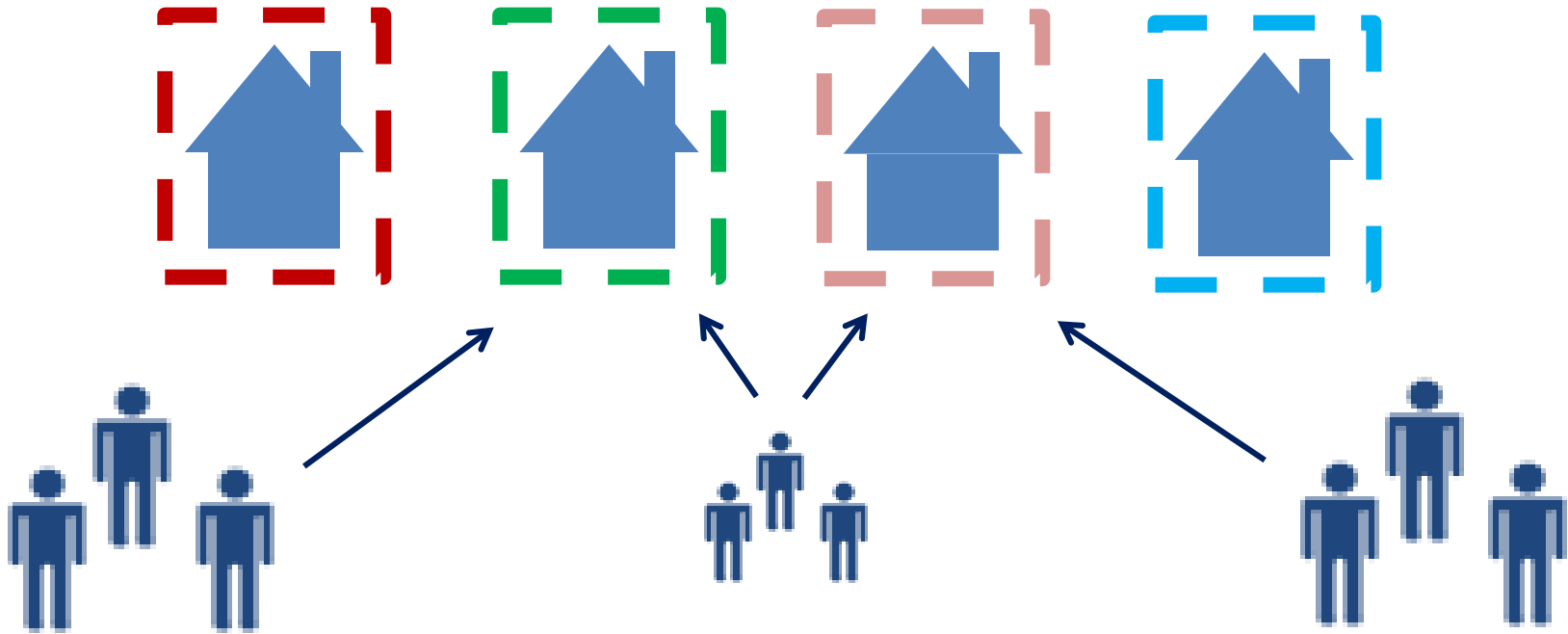


# **Socialist Architecture Usage and Conservation: Comparative Analysis**

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# Framework



- Heritage use for “Socialist” architecture is often **contextual**;
- **no common story** of all cases in the country

WHY?

**Socially embedded practices**

# Heritage protection policy and power in social world

New capital holders in the field state their power by setting their symbols and legitimating them through practices.

“ - *Is it possible to foretell the future?*

- *Yes, that is no problem: we know exactly what the future will be like. **Our problem is with the past; that keeps changing***”

[Olga Sezneva. *Socialist Spaces*  
(edited by David Crowley and Susan Reid), 2001]

# Agents of power and their heritage practices

Certain **power structures** and balance existing in social life are indicated by demonstrating symbolic meaning of the place.



*“Cultural landscape is one of the main representing languages of modern society, which signify the spiritual dimension of the investors, architects and users... **The aesthetic form is never neutral — the power is written into the landscape** through the medium of design, usually used and overused by rulers to stress the authority and legacy”.*

[Mariusz Czepczynski. *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities*. 2008]



# Research question

How **field of urban heritage**, which deals with both collective space and memory, is **constituted by actors of social world**?

# Research methodology

Concepts for research:

## 1. Vladimir Paperny “Culture Two”: Cultural oppositions

- ❖ Ideal types of Culture-1 (early Soviet) and Culture-2 (late Soviet)
- ❖ Agents in power state new aesthetic understanding

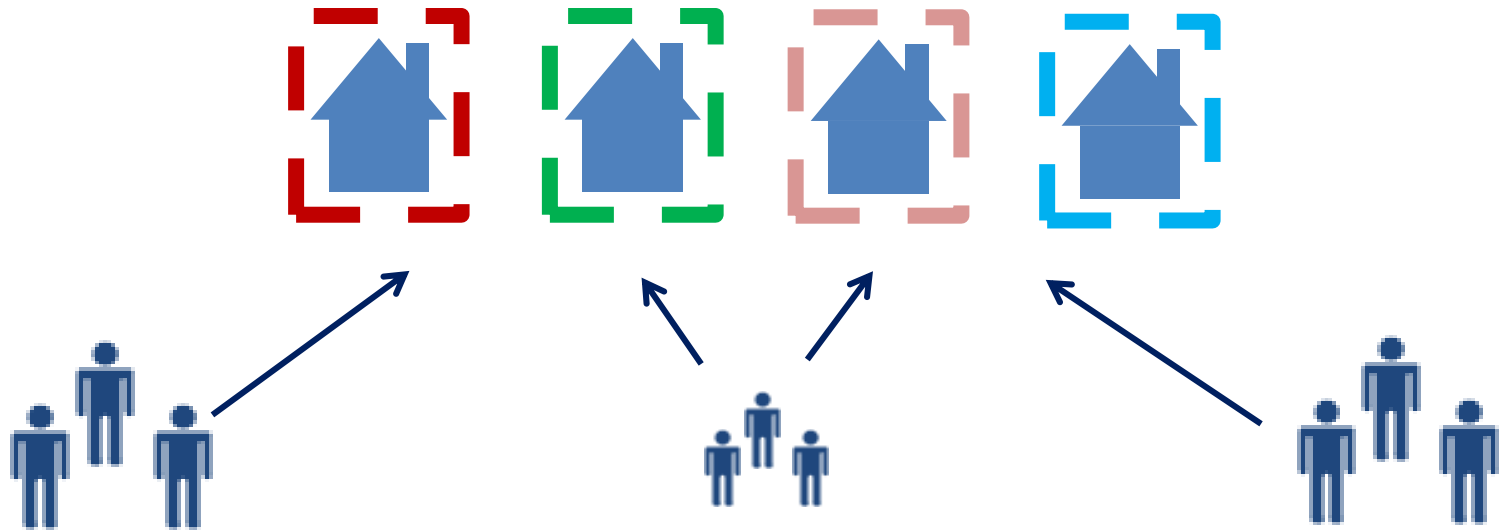
## 2. Pierre Bourdieu social positioning

- ❖ Habitus as an origin for practices and result of legitimate practices
- ❖ Practices of aesthetic taste recognition and instruments of their legitimation
- ❖ Market of symbolic goods

## 3. Approaches to socialist architecture in “post-socialist” world

- ❖ Modernity/post-modernity
- ❖ Colonization

# Research methodology



## Research object

Practices of the image legitimation

## Data (2009-2014)

- mass media messages
- interviews with experts and residents (Taiyuan only)
- documents, reports, excursions texts
- physical observation

# Cases

## **China:**

1. Mining factory residential area, Taiyuan
2. Steel factory residential district, Wuhan

## **Russia:**

1. ZIL Cultural palace, Moscow
2. Communal dormitory on Ordzhonikidze street, Moscow



# Debated history + “alien” images

**Object of the research** - heritage belonging to specially debated periods in modern history:

*China - 1950-s Soviet style buildings.*

*Russia - 1920-30-s avant-garde (constructivism / functionalism) architectural movement.*

Significant change, contributing also to a new type of style and idea of urban habitat, as the industrialization program was on agenda. Built to occupy and mark the space of new society in new countries

“Debated history” - significant discussion in modern media and public spheres. Unstable, constantly discussed position circulating in public opinion could be a reasonably **clear illustration** for the research on social competition, reflecting social symbols.

# CASES DESCRIPTION

# Case 1: Taiyuan, Mining factory residential area

Built 1954 to 1956 according to Soviet spatial planning

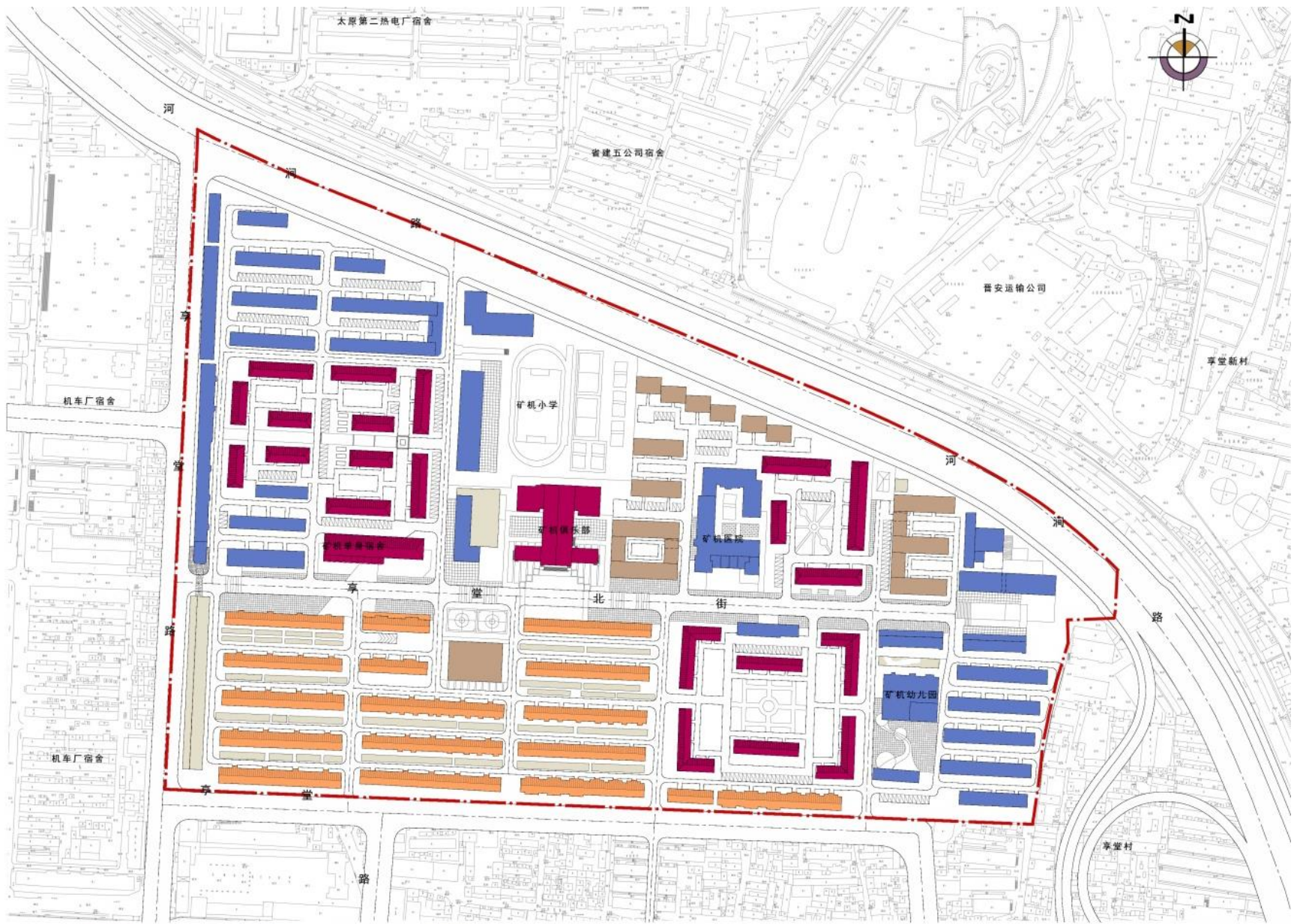






**Case 1:** Taiyuan, Mining factory residential area (photos 2012)





图例 屋顶保护修缮 坡顶改造 平顶整修 新建平顶建筑

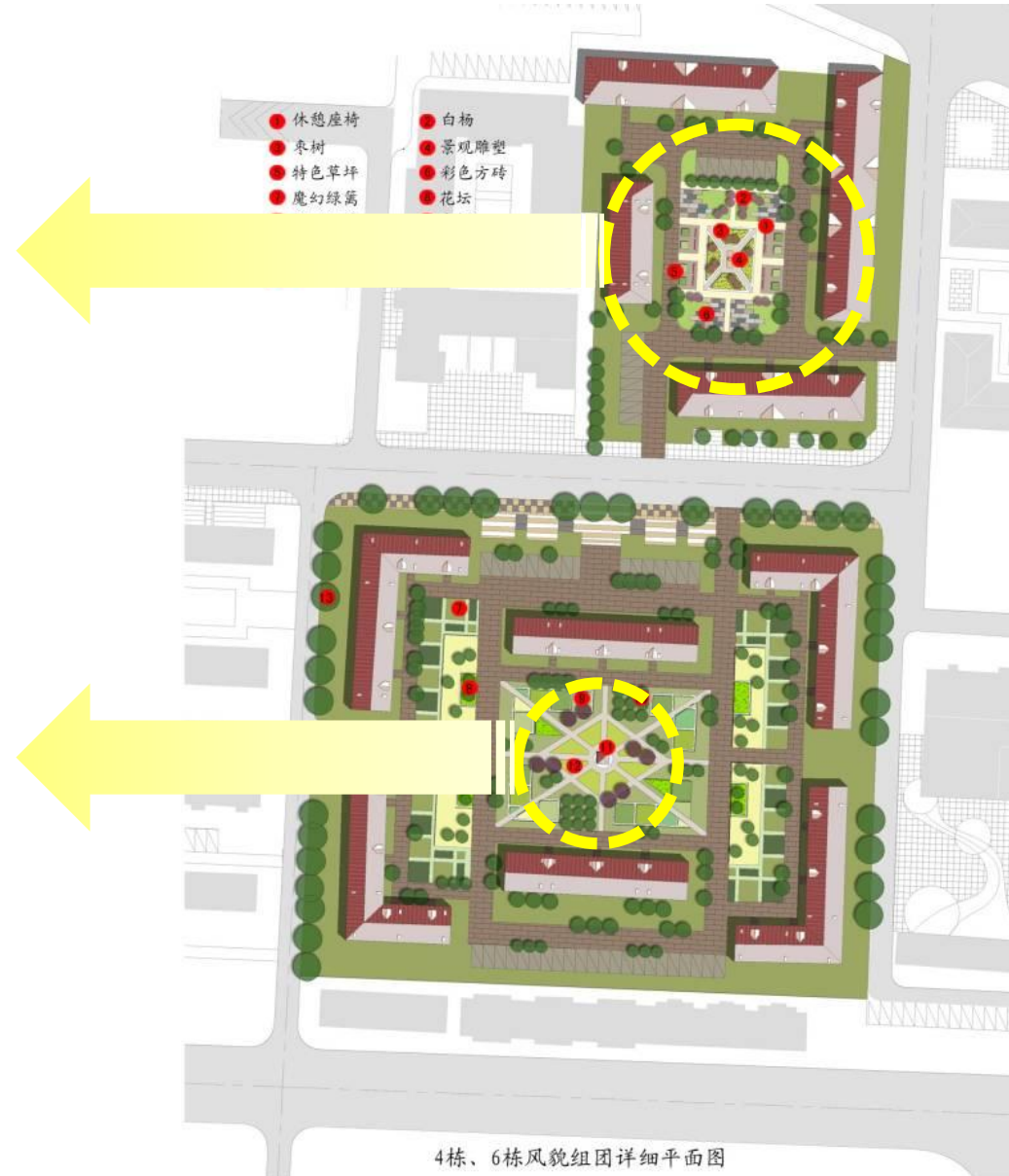
# Case 1: Taiyuan, Mining factory residential area (preservation planning in 2012)

# Case 1: Taiyuan, Mining factory residential area (preservation and renovation planning in 2012)

Plan for **lively sociable inner yard environment** (VS social life limited to the street lines)

Green spaces renewal according to **general understanding of USSR-style flower-beds** and public square planning widely known in P.R.China from 1950-s.

Although that type of flower-bed planning was never used on this particular site before.





(5) 特色构件

细部装饰



门、窗



其他



**Case 1:** Taiyuan, Mining factory residential area (extract from the preservation and renovation planning report, 2012)

## Case 2: Wuhan, Steel factory residential area

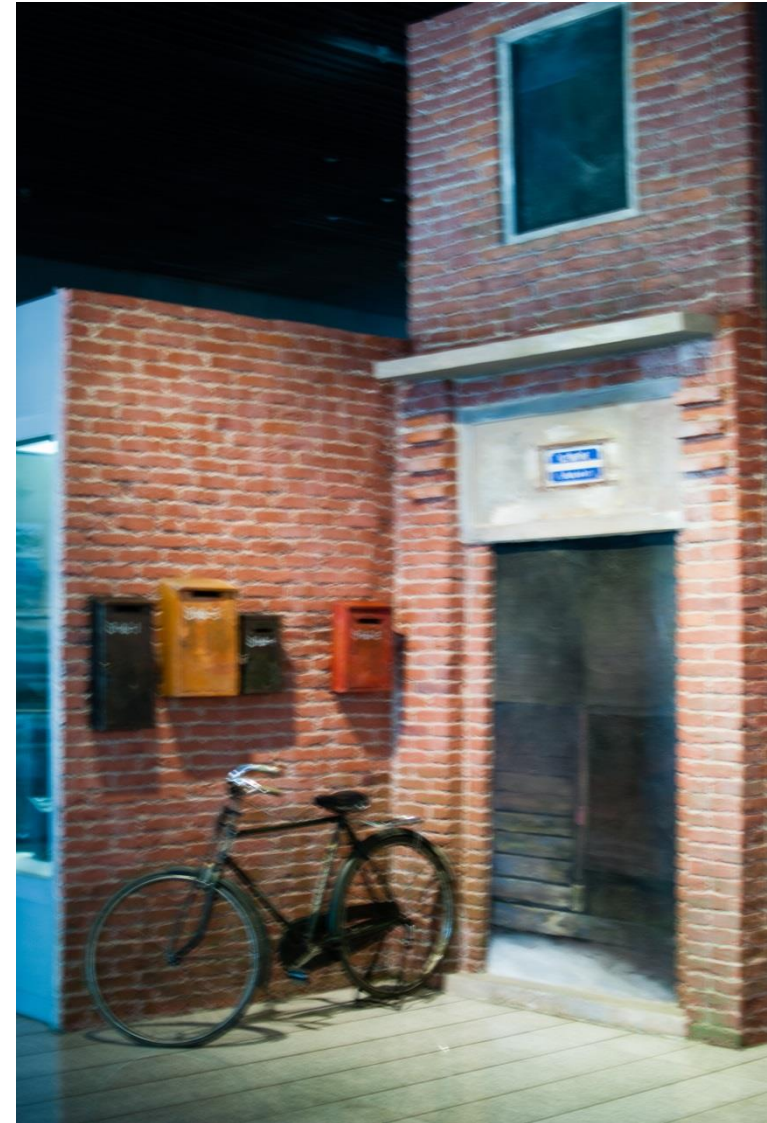


Built in 1950-55





The historical and cultural value of the area is stressed at the Steel factory Museum exposition, presenting the full-size model of the workers' house entrance along with other everyday life artefacts.



**Case 2:** Wuhan, Steel factory residential area (Steel Factory museum photos 2013)





**Case 2:** Wuhan, Steel factory residential area (street photos 2013)





**Case 2:** Wuhan, Steel factory residential area (street photos 2013)





囍, “xi” character

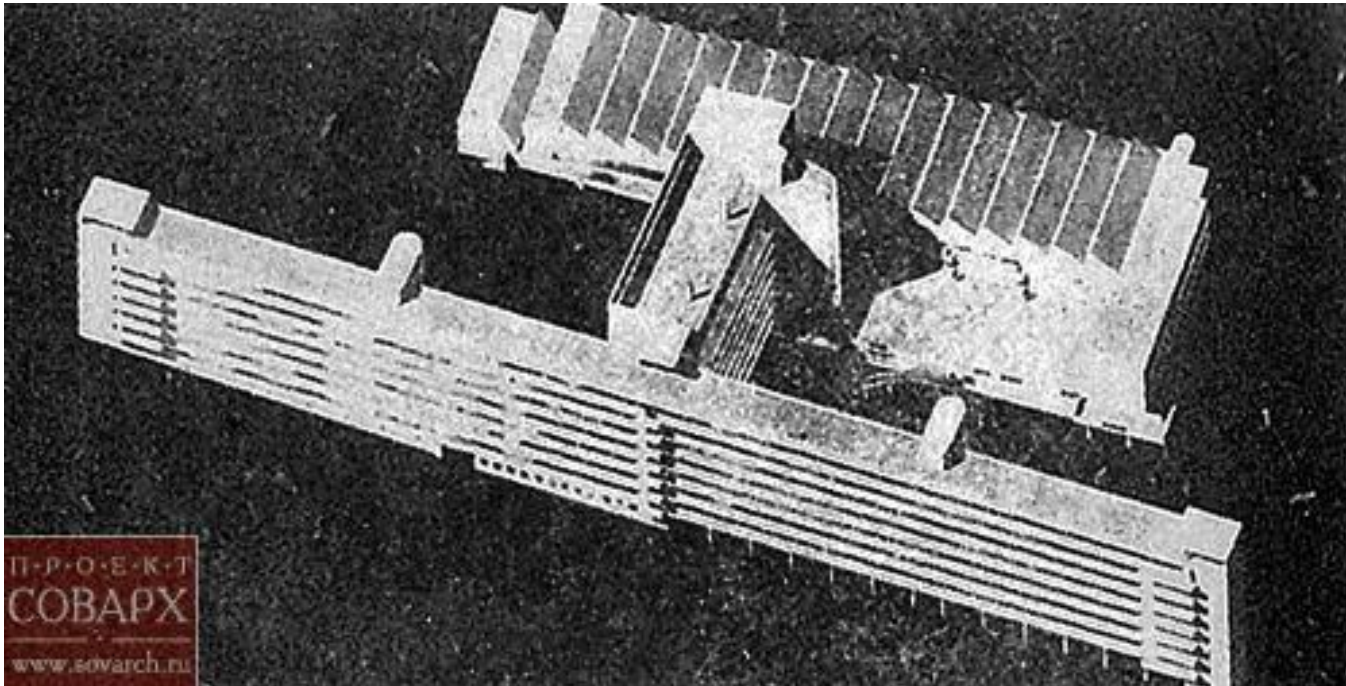


“Wuhan Xi-district (character made in big prints of red color for wedding celebrations) – according to quarters structure”

**Case 2:** Wuhan, Steel factory residential area (street photos 2013)

# Case 3: Moscow, dormitory on Ordjonikidze street

- 1929-1930, by later becoming famous young architect Ivan Nikolaev
- In the texts of excursions and public specialized blogs the personal space construction and size in this site is often becoming a mock object.





Despite the period of temporary absence of inhabitants, the site is the most permanent in terms of architectural care.

First renovation was consulted by architect Nikolaev himself.



**Case 3:** Moscow, dormitory on Ordjonikidze street

Interiors used as random offices for rent during 1990-2000-s



**Case 3:** Moscow, dormitory on Ordjonikidze street



Recent restoration (with removing of some substantial architectural elements)



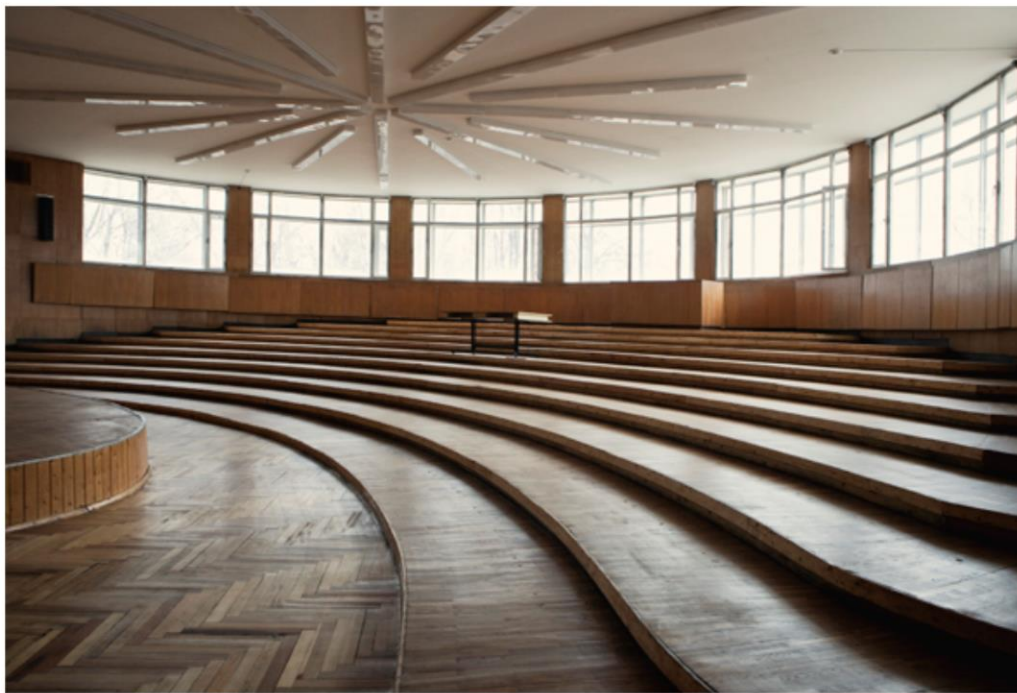
**Case 3:** Moscow, dormitory on Ordjonikidze street



# Case 4: Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace

- Built in 1931-1937 by famous architects Vesnin brothers.
- Initial idea - a multifunctional center covering space of 23 thousand m<sup>2</sup>, including several auditoriums, cinema, clubs, hobby sections, library, spacious halls, observatory, green house.





During WWII the building was damaged and then restored in pseudo Renaissance style in 1966-1976 with a lot of changes to the initial project.

Used mainly as hobby and children leisure center.



**Case 4:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (interior photos after last finished renovation)

- 2012 - Moscow authorities stated the project as a regeneration model trailblazer for other cultural palaces of the city, which are significant spatial resource.
- Active and influential (one year later project director was appointed deputy director in Moscow Department of Culture) team started to work on development program, engaging experts for evaluating both spaces and club activities.
- Initial name of the center, connecting it with Soviet and now Russian ZIL car manufacturer, is returning after decades of using a plain geographical name (Southern cultural center).



## **Case 4:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (official renovation concept)





**Case 4:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (communal events after renovation)



**Case 4:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (communal events after renovation)





**Case 4:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (communal events after renovation – Moscow City Day-2013 program)



**Case 3:** Moscow, ZIL Cultural Palace (communal events after renovation – New Year)

# Preliminary statements of practices

	Cases in P.R. China	Cases in Russia
Habituation character	Constant. Same social group (mostly factory workers and their families)	Interrupted. Different social groups (students, office workers)
Highlighted delights	General USSR style, although no info about architect	Famous architects works
Architectural and design transformations	Non-professional additions for household needs made by residents	Professional redesign significantly changing the initial idea
Media and excursions discourse	<b>High level of sense of belonging.</b> Notwithstanding their “alien” design, highlight even <b>double reference to the contemporary society identity</b> (regular worker’s everyday life + Chinese symbolism - red colour, description of the quarter structure as a lucky character <i>xi</i> “囍”)	<b>Remote</b> and cold mentor intonation. Architectural value, but often irony towards communal lifestyle. Alienate positions of expert or feuilletonist are mostly seen in the messages about Ordjonikidze dormitory.



# Practices of aesthetic feeling legitimation

	Cases in P.R. China	Cases in Russia
Place identity construction	Nostalgia for the sites refers more to the “good, old and charming ineffectiveness” of uninterrupted using the land by same workers groups alongside modern skyscrapers	Constructing attachment to “undeservingly forgotten” places, practices and architects. Broken window theory works: once been moved from initial idea, site referring to debated history is going even further from “socialist idea” and needs special effort to return to the “natural” state.

Situation of **more developed symbolic goods market** is characterized by wider variety of delivery of emotions towards certain objects of urban space.

By romanticizing the objects of urban landscape and history “making up” one could be more effective in legitimizing his position than using “realistic” logic of rationality and historical facts.

“**Productive**” legitimation practices, which add new symbols for existing urban space, have more convincing ability than “**negative**” practices, which would be more concentrated on emotional construction of symbol loss and longing for forgotten.

Thank you!