

## Acknowledgment

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This project began from my naïve expectations of learning from an exciting pool of theoretical knowledge developed in Europe, and bringing them back to understand how the urban phenomena form and transform in where I grew up in China. I was born in the late 1980 and the Chinese cities I know have always been fast-growing. They not only grow incessantly in size but introduce new pieces of material, and technological infrastructures, building forms, symbols, rules, textures, flavors, sounds into their urban fabric. These elements seem to be drawn from disparate times and places with or without a shared vision, superimposed into existing social-spatial systems, or imposed in *tabula rasa* territories. In the latter cases, old material fabrics, along with the underpinning social organization and meaning systems, are discarded suddenly, disappear from people's sights. Yet, the inherent and familiar would reclaim their visibility in people's memories and practices, clash with the new in unexpected ways. How to take account of and explain the urban transformations in the condition of 'compressed modernity'? I found no ready answer to this question. Hence, the endeavors in this work are dedicated to answering it.

As many researchers from the sociology of knowledge, science and technology study disciplines have revealed, all forms of scientific knowledge are, to a certain extent, rooted in particular social-material conditions at particular times. Facing the ongoing processes and variegated manifestations under compressed modernity, researchers from late-developing regions are generally challenged with evaluating and recontextualizing the traveling scientific knowledge. Leaving the entangled power relations aside, epistemic gaps can be uncovered between the original and learned scientific knowledge, between the academically legitimated scientific knowledge, the local institutional norms, and common senses lived by the research subjects in concrete cases. In this work, I position myself as a late-learner researching social-spatial change embedded in late-developing societal contexts. This book is thus to demonstrate the ways in which traveling social-spatial theories (scientific knowledge) could be learned and employed constructively in describing and understanding particular and complex spatial phenomenon (e.g., the artworld in Beijing) of our time.

Apart from my naïve-ness, I have opened many doors in this research but was able to close very few tightly, if at all. My research topic is very profound, and I genuinely know, it is far from being systematically answered. Regardless, this research has taken enormous amounts of time and energy from me and many people from different places. I want to acknowledge my deepest debt of gratitude to these individuals and the places that made it possible.

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