

DUPONT SUMMIT ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
December 1, 2023, Historic Quaker Meeting House / Washington, DC.

Architecture of the Conversation Commons

1 p.m. EST /online

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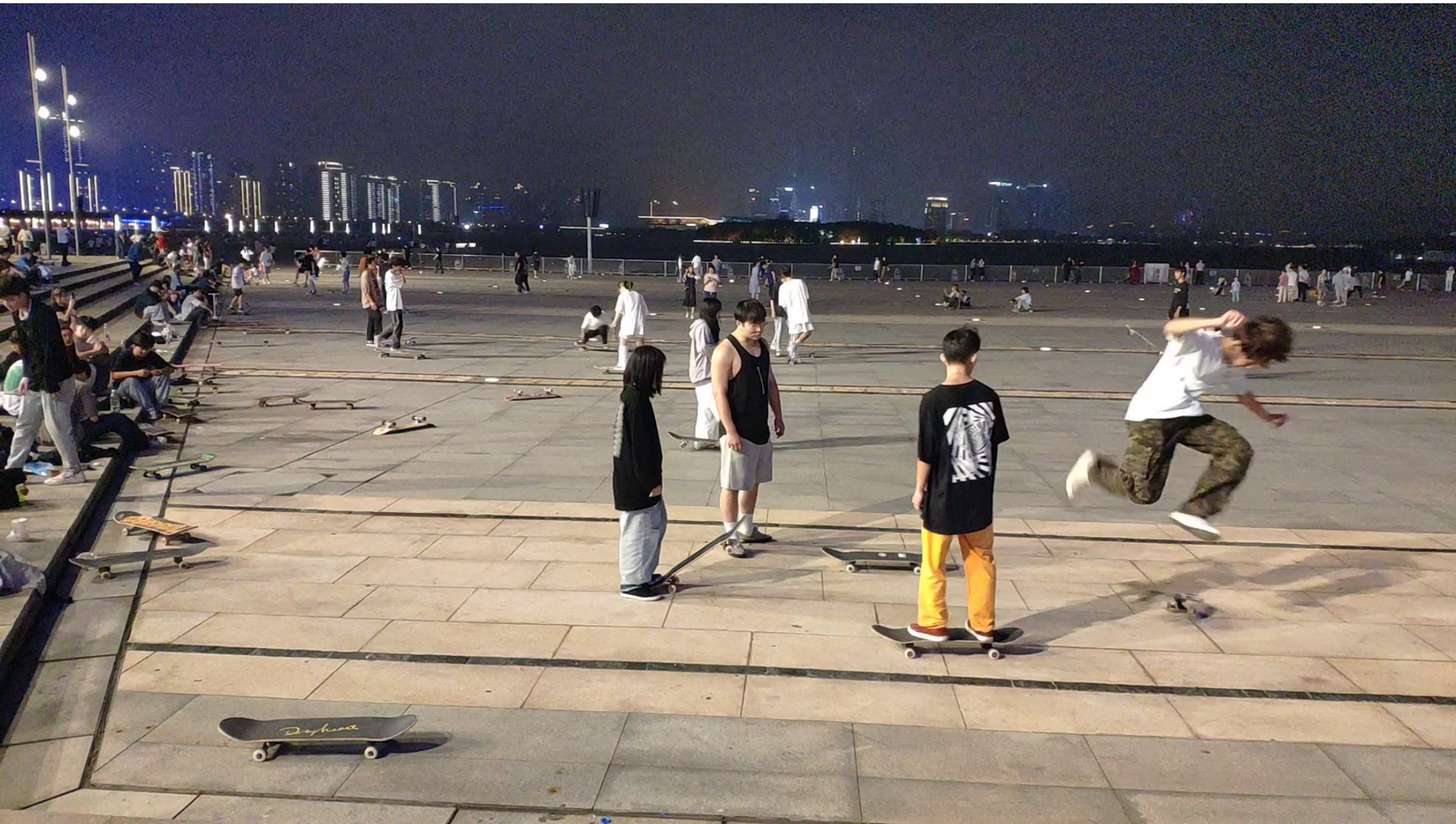
Photo by Li Lin (northwoodn) via Unsplash, 10.11.2020.



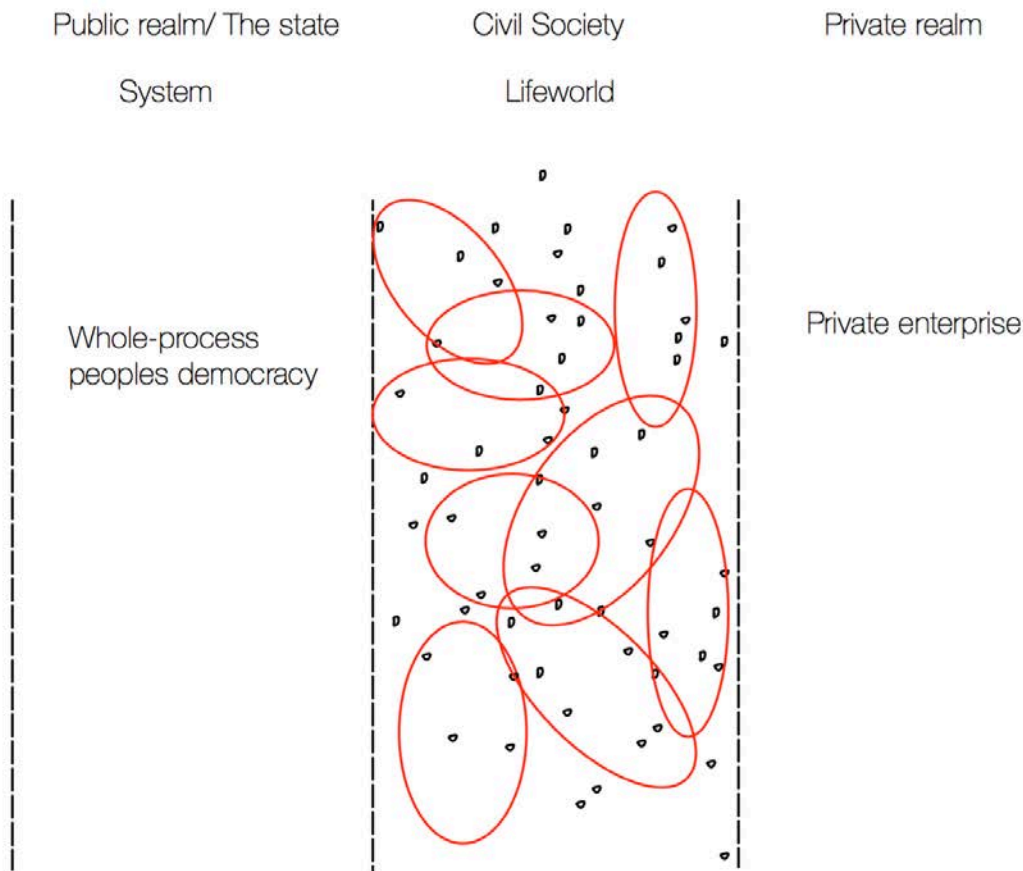
Young urbanites dancing on a public square. Photo by Li Lin (northwoodn) via Unsplash, 10 November 2020







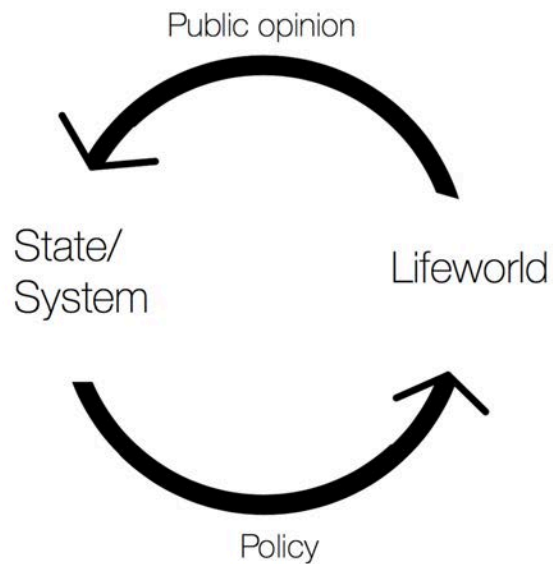




The democratic model emerging in China has been likened by many scholars to political theorist Jürgen Habermas's deliberative model of democracy.

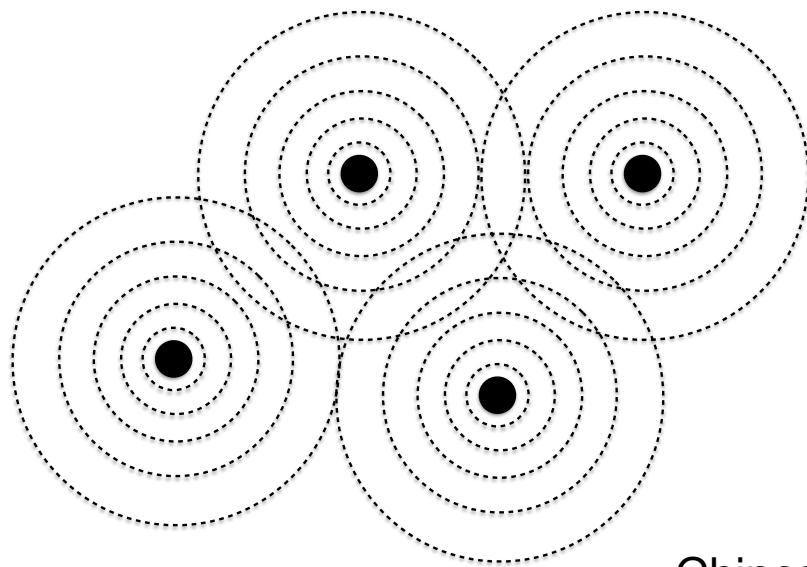
The deliberative model of democracy requires a strong public sphere. Public opinion formed through discursive practice creates a regulatory counterbalance to the state.

A key difference to the democratic model emerging in China from Habermas's idea of the public sphere is that in China the public sphere is proletariat or working class rather than the bourgeois or middle class public sphere put forward by Habermas.

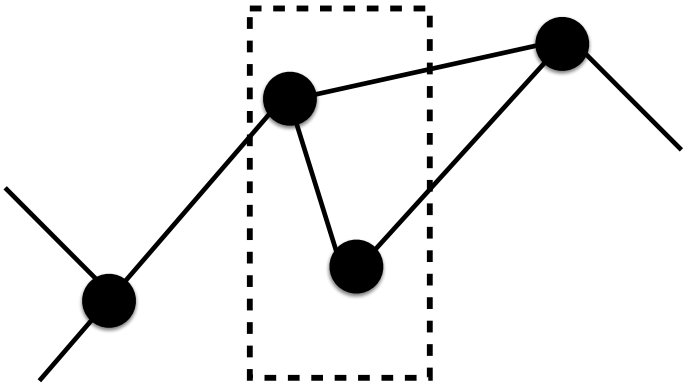


For sociologist Junxi Qian, public leisure is an important cultural terrain on which new social relations and cultural identities are enacted, negotiated and performed. He argues that cultural performance in China plays an important role in the production of collective identity and can be viewed as a collective project of self-actualization.

Patterns of social structure

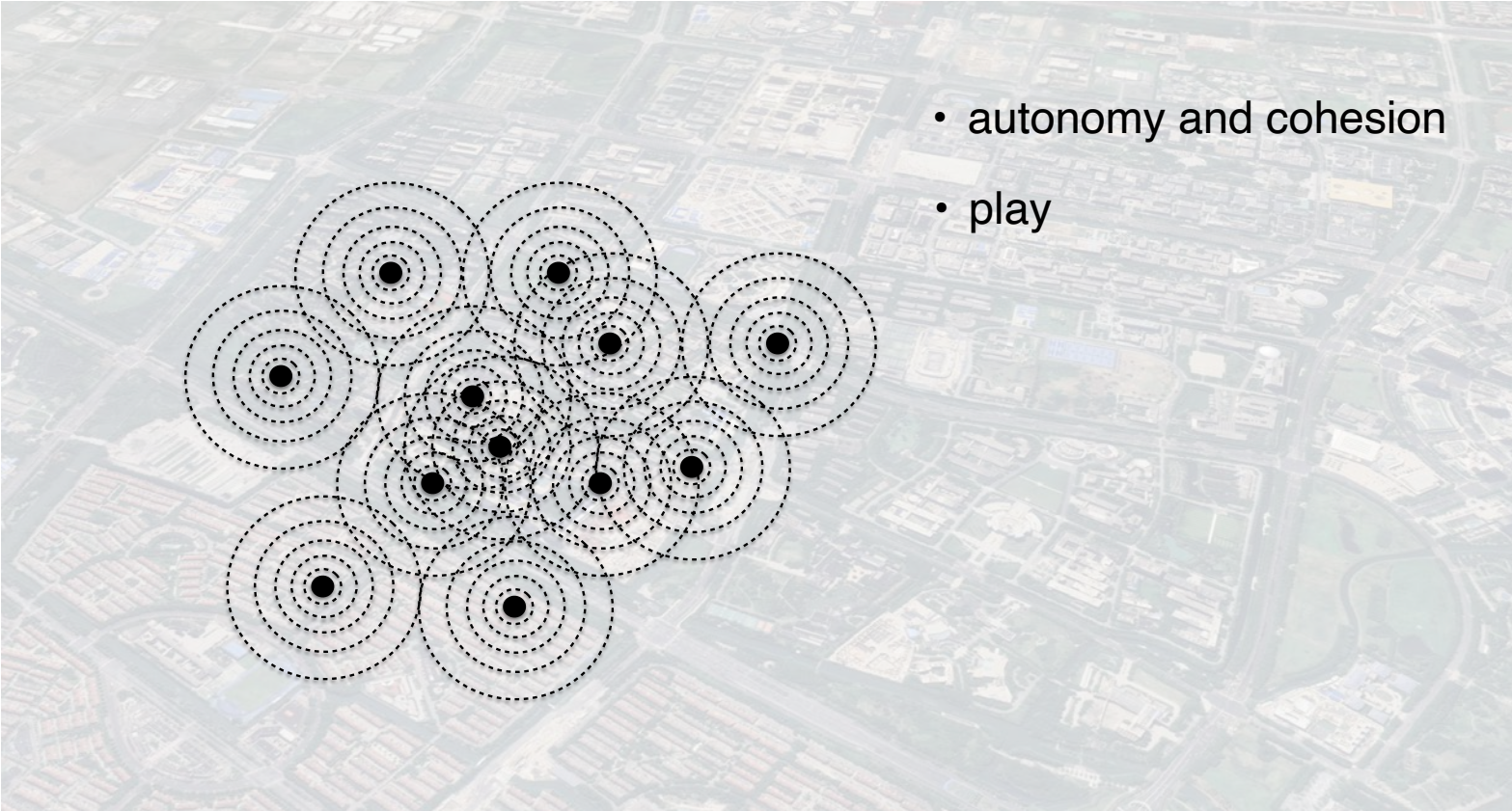


Chinese network model



Western network model

- autonomy and cohesion
- play



The atomizing of the city has put a practical end to an essential component of public space: the overlay of function in a single territory, which creates complexities of experience on that turf.

Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 1974, p. 297

In the West, we have seen the elimination of democratic public space through neo-liberalism and continuous privatisation that can be seen to have greatly privileged the private realm at the same time as de-democratising of our city spaces.

Re-imagining Public Space

- Spatial practice is the basis of democratic participation.
- Spatial practice should be considered part of the discourse on democracy.
- Cities and communities must ensure the creation of truly 'public' spaces.
- Our suggestion is for a re-focus and re-imagination of democratic public space in the West – the creation of spaces that are governed by the public and produced through local networks and differentiated activities of the social.

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