

Urban Sustainability and Social Integration in Cities in Europe and China— An Introduction

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1. Introduction

Europe and China share an old history of urban development. However, while Europe became a majority-urban continent already in the middle of the 20th century, China has turned primarily urban only about a decade ago. Moreover, in Europe, during the past 70 years, urban dynamics was and still is comparatively slow, as during this period, the share of the urban population has risen from 50% to only about 75% of the total population in 2020. It is expected to rise to 84% in 2050. On the contrary, China's urbanisation is unprecedented in speed and scale. The percentage of people living in urban areas skyrocketed from 20% to 50% in just three decades between 1980 and 2010. With a projected 71% in 2030 and 80% in 2050, the country is expected to almost reach the European level in the coming decades (United Nations 2018).

In absolute terms, this means that, since the year 2000, the urban population in China is growing by an average of more than 14 million persons every year, and in 2030, the country will have passed the mark of 1000 million urban dwellers. Thus, by then, every fifth urbanite worldwide will live in China (United Nations 2018). These figures underline the importance of urban development in China and the role of Chinese urbanisation in a global context. For many years, Chinese urbanisation has become a role model for many countries worldwide. Under the new "Belt and Road Initiative", revitalising the ancient Silk Route spirit within a modern context, it will probably continue, if not extend, to play a remarkable role in the urban world in the near future (CAUPD 2019).

Thus, in China and in other parts of the world, managing such rapid urbanisation processes is extremely challenging for policymakers and urban planners. Urban planning and development cannot be dealt with in an isolated way. They are closely connected with issues of collaborative urban-regional governance and comprehensive urban management, in general, putting emphasis on various dimensions of development, such as land use planning and management, resources for city financing, environment and urban economy, as well as social and cultural issues, at the same time. The provision of urban infrastructure facilities and public services

calls for balanced, integrated and participatory planning and development in order to avoid or minimise negative socio-economic, human and environmental repercussions.

According to the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union, “joint European-Chinese research taking into consideration these essential elements of city development could contribute to an improved reciprocal knowledge on urbanisation processes between the EU and China”¹. Moreover, for at least three decades, many efforts have been made to manage urban expansion in a more sustainable way in Europe. They may provide useful references for conceptually enriching the still rather new “people-centred” urban development approach in China, introduced within the framework of the New-type Urbanisation Policy (NUP) in 2014, although the general frameworks and concerns about urban development are quite different in both parts of the world.

On this background, this chapter deals with major recent trends in urban development policies in the EU and China, and it provides a general overview of the contributions published in this book. The focus lies on socially integrative cities understood as “socially mixed, cohesive, liveable and vibrant” urban areas, which are characterised by a number of features. These include compactness, functional mix, intra-urban connectivity and equal rights regarding the access to municipal services, strengthening a sense of community and fostering a sense of place, as well as empowerment and participation of the population, and social capital (see Schiappacasse, Müller, Cai 2021 in Chapter 2 of this book). Inclusiveness is an important characteristic. However, the joint understanding of socially integrative cities is wider and more comprehensive. At the end of this chapter, some conclusions concerning the role of socially integrative cities regarding urban sustainability are drawn.

It has to be noted that when talking about “cities” in Europe and China, the understanding differs considerably. According to Eurostat, the European Statistical Office, a city in Europe is a local administrative unit with the majority of the population living in an urban centre of at least 50,000 inhabitants². It usually consists of a large continuous urban settlement, and it may comprise peri-urban settlements as well as some rural territory. The size in terms of area is usually rather limited. For example, the city with the largest area in Germany, Berlin, has a size of about 890 km². On the contrary, the Chinese word for “city” is typically used to describe a larger region including an urban core, sub-urban areas and vast rural areas containing smaller cities, towns and villages. As one extreme, the city of Chongqing covers an area

¹ Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/eng-globally-08-2016-2017> (accessed on 22 March 2021).

² Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/cities/spatial-units> (accessed on 22 March 2021).

almost the size of Austria. Beijing covers an area which is 19 times the size of Berlin. The city of Wuhan is more than three times the size of Luxemburg. Therefore, when we talk in this book about cities in Europe, we follow the above definition by Eurostat, while with regard to China, we usually refer only to the urban area of a “city”.

2. Recent Urban Policy Directions in Europe and China

The year 2020 marked an important point in urban Europe and China. In Europe, “The New Leipzig Charter—The transformative power of cities for the common good” (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2020) was adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Matters organised at the end of November in the city of Leipzig, Germany. It provides a key policy framework document for sustainable urban development in post-2020 Europe, and its title points to the leading role of cities in the years to come. In China, the 13th Five-Year Plan and the first phase of the new urbanisation policy, which had been heralded with the endorsement of the National New-type Urbanisation Plan (2014–2020), came to their end. Towards the end of 2020, the proposal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on drawing up the 14th Five-Year Plan for national economic and social development and long-range objectives for 2035³ contoured the basic principles for future development (CSET 2020). In March 2021, the National People’s Congress (NPC) of China finally endorsed the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) (14th FYP) (NDRC 2021). It indicates that the basic urban policy principles and directions will continue to be a guideline for urban and regional development in China during the coming years.

2.1. Urban Europe and the New Leipzig Charter

In Europe, the New Leipzig Charter, focusing on the *transformative power of cities* for the common good, urges cities to establish integrated and sustainable urban development strategies and ensure their implementation at all levels of government and administration, i.e., from regional urban hinterland contexts to the very local ones at the neighbourhood level. The document summarises the European state of thinking in a comprehensive and consistent way. It calls for an urban policy of the common good, providing services and infrastructure which are inclusive, affordable and accessible for all. Furthermore, it acknowledges cities as places of pluralism, creativity and solidarity, and as laboratories for new forms of problem solving and test beds for social innovation. It promotes cities which are just, green and productive at the same time.

³ See the English translation of the document at https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/t0237_5th_Plenum_Proposal_EN-1.pdf (accessed on 14 March 2021).

Just cities provide opportunities for everyone to integrate into society, leaving no one behind. “All social groups . . . should have equal access to services of general interest, including education, social services, health care and culture Socially balanced, mixed and safe urban neighbourhoods promote the integration of all social and ethnic groups and generations All citizens should be empowered to acquire new skills and education” (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2020, p. 3).

Green cities contribute “to combatting global warming and to high environmental quality for air, water, soil and land use. The development of high quality urban environments for all includes adequate access to green and recreational spaces Cities are called on to protect and regenerate endangered ecosystems and their species and, to use nature-based solutions where high quality green and blue infrastructure can accommodate extreme weather conditions. Well-designed, managed and connected green and blue areas are a precondition for healthy living environments, adapting to climate change and preserving and developing biodiversity in cities” (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2020, p. 4).

Productive cities promote a diversified economy, providing employment while ensuring a sound financial base for urban development. They require “a skilled workforce, social, technical and logistical infrastructure as well as affordable and accessible space. Ensuring these preconditions . . . should be integral to urban planning Small-scale businesses, low-emission-manufacturing and urban agriculture can be stimulated to re-integrate production into cities and urban areas, enabling and promoting new forms of mixed-use neighbourhoods. . . . Transforming central urban areas into attractive multifunctional spaces provides new opportunities for urban development through mixed use for living, working and recreation, where manufacturing, retail and services are found alongside housing, hospitality and leisure” (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2020, p. 5).

Furthermore, the New Leipzig Charter highlights *digitalisation* as a major transformative, cross-sectoral force affecting all dimensions of sustainable urban development. “Digital solutions can deliver innovative and high-quality services to the public and businesses At the same time digitalisation can trigger a further spatial and social divide with risks to the protection of privacy. Digitalisation needs to be shaped in an environmentally sustainable, inclusive and fair manner” (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2020, p. 5).

With a view on its implementation, the document calls for four important ingredients: (a) An *integrated approach* towards urban development shall help to coordinate all areas of urban policies. (b) *Participation and co-creation* shall secure the involvement of economic actors, the general public and other stakeholders in order to consider their knowledge, potentials and concerns in urban planning and development and to strengthen local democracy. (c) *Multi-level governance* shall guarantee that all societal stakeholders, including the government, civil society and

the private sector, will tackle the complex urban challenges jointly across all levels of decision making: local, regional, national and global. (d) A *place-based approach* shall contribute to appropriately considering the specific local situation as a reference point for integrated horizontal and vertical coordination, evidence-based urban development and endogenous urban transformation.

Overall, the New Leipzig Charter builds on former European urban policies, programmes and policy documents which were initiated in the early 1990s as reactions to perceived urban challenges. Among them were national initiatives such as “Soziale Stadt” in Germany (in English: “Socially Integrative City”), the “Single Regeneration Budget” and “The New Deal for Communities” in the UK, “Politique de la Ville” in France and “Programmi di Riqualificazione Urbana” in Italy. All of these initiatives not only focused on upgrading the built environment in cities but also directed much attention to social integration and the cohesion of urban societies. In addition to these national responses, the European Union introduced specific programmes towards urban regeneration (Urban I and II).

The New Leipzig Charter also goes far beyond its predecessor, the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Urban Development of 2007 (European Commission 2007), which, basically, propagated two major directions of action, i.e., making greater use of integrated urban development approaches⁴, and directing special attention to deprived neighbourhoods of cities⁵. The New Leipzig Charter is based on the objectives and achievements of the Pact of Amsterdam (EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters 2016) and, thus, directly links with the Urban Agenda for the European Union and its multi-faceted initiatives for the years to come (European Commission 2019).

2.2. Urban China and 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025)

In March 2021, the Chinese People’s National Congress endorsed the 14th FYP following up on the prior proposal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (NDRC 2021; see above). It defines the details of the plan for national economic and social development as well as long-range objectives through the year 2035. Among many other topics, it provides a framework as well as major guidelines and perspectives for the future development of cities in China, which play a crucial role in the country’s ambitious efforts on its way to “socialist modernisation”(CSET

⁴ Three components were addressed: creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces; modernising infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency; and proactive innovation and educational policies.

⁵ Four components were addressed: pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment; strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy; proactive education and training policies for children and young people; and promotion of efficient and affordable urban transport.

2020, 1; NDRC 2021). On the one hand, the document highlights a number of *general objectives and principles*, which are basic for any future development in the country, including cities and their urban areas. On the other hand, it outlines *details* which are specifically relevant for *urban China*.

Similar to its predecessor, the 13th FYP, as well as the New-type Urbanisation Plan (2014–2020), the 14th FYP⁶ makes strong commitments towards certain *basic principles*. *People-centred development* puts the people, e.g., residents, at the centre of all government efforts. It calls for people’s engagement and for sharing the “fruits of development” by the people. The government commits itself to protecting the people’s fundamental interests, inspiring the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of all people, promoting the well-being of the people and continuously realising people’s aspirations for better lives.

The 14th FYP reiterates the continuing high relevance of the *new concept of development*, which had been introduced before. This concept puts special emphasis on higher quality, efficiency, fairness and sustainability. It shall be applied in all fields throughout development processes. Furthermore, the government commits itself to continue its efforts regarding *institutional reforms*. Among other things, they shall help to strengthen the modernisation of the national governance system and respective capabilities, break down institutional barriers constraining *high-quality* development and high quality of life and support initiatives that help to increase the efficiency of resource allocation. Through its commitment to applying *systematic approaches*, the government intends to strengthen forward-looking thinking, overall planning, strategic positioning and holistic advancement. The initiatives of central and local governments and other spheres of society shall be better utilised. Accelerating *digitisation-based development* is seen as a key to successful modernisation of the country in all spheres.

Regarding urban development and related issues, the 14th FYP provides a number of important details regarding objectives and intended measures during the coming years. The plan clarifies that the *new-type urbanisation strategy* will persist and be refined. Special attention is given to *territorial cohesion*, i.e., more balanced regional development on a national scale. Inter-regional imbalances shall be tackled, and regional development shall be better coordinated. This includes new development incentives for Western China, revitalisation activities in the northeast of the country, additional development support for Central China and the modernisation of the economic urban powerhouses in the eastern part. A coordinated development of small towns and small, medium and large cities shall be promoted. New growth

⁶ If not otherwise mentioned, the text refers to either the original version in Chinese (NDRC 2021) or the English text of the proposal, published in CSET (2020).

poles shall be created. The inter-regional transfer payment system shall be refined, financial resources to support less developed regions shall be increased and, gradually, equitable access to public services shall be achieved all over the country.

On a regional scale, the further improvement and refinement of *urban–rural relations* are high up on the national agenda. Above all, this includes the continued and intensified reform of the *household registration system* (hukou), the traditional Chinese government’s tool for managing internal movement, which has strongly deepened the urban–rural divide over the past decades. The National New-type Urbanisation Plan noted that in 2014, although 53.7% of China’s population normally resided in urban areas, registered urban residents comprised no more than 36% (Chu 2020). Nowadays, rural migrant workers make up about 40% of the urban labour force. However, their rights and access to urban services are still, in many cases, severely restricted if compared to urban residents. This has had negative repercussions in rural and urban areas.

Another anchor to improve urban–rural relations is based in rural reforms and *rural revitalisation* initiatives. Among other things, this comprises the reform of the rural collective property rights system, and the improvement of integrated urban–rural development, including land development issues. Moreover, rural construction will play a more prominent role within modernisation efforts. Regional urban centres, e.g., county seats, shall help to promote rural urbanisation and take over functions as central places for their areas of influence. Infrastructure and services shall be further extended, improved and upgraded.

Promoting *people-centred urbanisation* is a core element of 14th FYP from a local urban development perspective. Within this framework, previous urban expansion approaches, population densities and spatial structures of cities shall be reconsidered. This connects well with efforts to protect farmland and ecologically valuable natural areas. Moreover, the government emphasises its intentions to give more prominence to *urban renewal strategies*, to enhance historical and cultural preservation and to strengthen the renovation of old urban residential areas and neighbourhoods. The supply of *affordable housing*, especially for renting, shall be increased. Environmental concerns are highlighted, supporting the so-called “ecological civilization” of the country. For example, the government intends to promote urban ecological restoration, to fashion urban landscapes, to increase urban flood control and drainage capabilities and to construct resilient “sponge” cities, a Chinese urban development concept based on the wise management of water.

From an institutional point of view, people-centred urbanisation includes efforts to improve and strengthen *urban governance*, and to follow a more *comprehensive approach* regarding urban planning, construction and management. Housing speculation shall be mitigated, which seems to be especially important in the light of the actual oversupply of housing, especially in rather high-priced market

segments. Furthermore, the government expresses its intention to refine mechanisms for distributing *income from land transfers*, hitherto a major source of budget revenue of cities, which has significantly contributed to the rapid and often oversized spatial expansion of cities in China if compared with population growth during the past decades.

These institutional moves link well with efforts to refine the national administrative system and to improve “*social governance*” significantly, especially at the grassroots level (CSET 2020, p. 7). It has to be noted here that social governance, or social management as it was formerly called (Yu 2011), is a prominent concept in the country with a specific Chinese flavour. It is “a systematic project under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee to safeguard the social harmony and stability by coordinating with all parties in the society” (Liu 2018). It encompasses all government dealings with society, excluding business management and administrative management. Its connotation “is so broad that it includes areas such as social justice, public security, social stability, social trust, the coordination of various social interests, food safety, emergency management, city management and community governance” (Yu 2011).

Within this framework, China already disposes of a rather powerful tool of institutionalised community engagement (Palmer et al. 2010). For example, there is the institution of the Urban Residents Committee, i.e., “a mass organization for self-government at grassroots level” (Ministry of Commerce People’s Republic of China 1989, Article 2), forming the lowest level of the administrative hierarchy. Originally created in 1954 to ensure neighbourhood monitoring, urban residents’ committees started to provide social services for those in need since the economic reform in the late 1970s.

However, more recently, “residents’ committees . . . saw themselves as having to provide both administration . . . and services . . . ” (Audin 2015, p. 1). In practice, they handle public welfare services and assistance, provide public education and security and transmit the opinion and demands of residents to higher authorities. They have also proved their effectiveness regarding public health during the SARS epidemic in 2002–2003, and the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. In the future, they could play a more powerful role in enhancing social integration within the framework of urban planning and development of new neighbourhoods. However, until now, they have not been directly linked with urban planning and development, and they have limited capacities to promote lively, socially vibrant, open and mixed local communities (Audin 2015; Ma and Li 2012); see also Schiappacasse, Müller, Cai, 2021 in this volume).

From a Western perspective, social governance comes close to concepts of *public participation*, interaction between the state and civil society (organisations) and mechanisms of self-government at the local level. Referring to cases in Hangzhou,

Yang et al. differentiate four types of civic engagement in their paper about social governance in China: substantial, ceremonial, propagandistic and absorptive civic engagement (Yang et al. 2016, p. 2157). These types compare well with Western concepts of participation, which have been derived from Arnstein's participation ladder (Arnstein 1969).

For the transformation towards more socially integrative cities, it is of utmost importance that the 14th FYP puts much weight on further *enhancing social governance, participation and empowerment at the local level* in China during the coming years. For example, it explicitly mentions "people's rights to equal participation and equal development will be fully assured" (CSET 2020, p. 4). Participation in policy formulation shall be promoted (NDRC 2021, chp. 22). The "centre of gravity" of social governance shall be shifted towards an empowered grassroots level. "Urban community governance" shall be strengthened through modernisation (CSET 2020, p. 25).

More specifically, the 14th FYP calls for a clarification of the functions and responsibilities of institutions at the community level, district and sub-district offices and neighbourhood committees. "Diverse institutional channels for residents to participate in social governance" shall be provided. The Plan also wants to "give full play to the social organisations in social governance, and fully stimulate the vitality of grassroots social governance."

It is difficult to say what these stipulations concretely mean for *public participation in urban planning and development* in the future. On the one hand, they may refer to general organisational principles regarding the engagement of the population at the local level only. On the other hand, they could provide a basis for sustainably strengthening the role of local public participation in urban planning and development. This could lead to more and broader consultation and debate, as well as to new forms of joint decision making regarding the future of cities. It would allow climbing up Arnstein's ladder of participation and strengthening substantial civic engagement in the sense of Yang, He and Long.

Summing up the major issues of the 14th FYP for urban development, we can conclude the following:

Although the term of the National New-type Urbanisation Plan (2014–2020) officially ended in December 2020, the principles set up in this document will obviously continue. That means attention will be paid to the people-oriented development to ensure equity, as well as balanced urban–rural and regional development, intensive and efficient land use, green, recycling and low-carbon development, in order to promote ecological civilisation, and cultural continuity to ensure local identity.

Following these principles, planning is oriented to people, liveability, sustainability and resource efficiency, with quality as the key term. That is also part of the reasons for the restructuring of the planning system from urban–rural planning

to territorial and spatial planning, with more attention directed to the protection of nature and the efficiency of resource uses, including land for construction.

In terms of practice, comprehensive urban renewal will become more significant in the future, probably more than urban expansion and new town or new area development. Rural revitalisation will keep its national significance, as well as coordinating regional development. Community building and social governance at the grassroots level, particularly the so-called complete daily life community, will be of increasing importance. The latter is one of the lessons cities and urban planners have learnt under the impression of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis since early 2020.

3. Overview of the Book Chapters

On the background of the recent policy directions in Europe and China, this book can make timely contributions to the actual discussions about future perspectives of urban sustainability in both parts of the world. It touches on a number of central issues of the New Leipzig Charter and the Urban Agenda of the EU, on the one hand, and the New Urbanisation Policy and the 14th Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic of China, on the other hand. It deals with experiences and options to create socially integrative cities in Europe and China in a participatory way as a contribution to make cities more sustainable. It presents major original research results of a joint project of researchers and practitioners from fourteen European and Chinese institutions. It is multi- and interdisciplinary in nature, and it looks at a multitude of facets of the socially integrative city from different angles. The individual chapters can be grouped roughly into four parts.

3.1. Conceptual Basis, Urban Expansion and Land Management

The first set of chapters provides an overview of and insights into the conceptual basis of the book. The socially integrative city is framed by discussions in academia and practice, and it is defined in a comprehensive way as an element of urban sustainability. The management of urban growth processes in Europe and China and the principles of land management are presented as basic conditions shaping urban development.

Schiappacasse, Müller and Cai look for a common understanding and a suitable definition of socially integrative cities in Europe and China. First, they discuss the general relevance of the topic. Second, they trace respective approaches in Europe and China back to their origins. Third, based on expert group discussions, they present a comprehensive understanding of socially integrative cities, which comprises twelve characteristics grouped into five dimensions: collaborative urban planning and design; favourable urban environment and living conditions; vital local economy and labour market; solidary socio-cultural development and social capital;

and supportive institutional development and urban finance. Subsequent chapters refer to this general concept.

Schiappacasse, Müller, Cai and Ma look at ways to manage urban expansion in Europe and ask whether, from these experiences, new impulses can be derived for people-centred urban development in China. On the one hand, the article reviews urban expansion processes in China and Europe and looks at some European approaches oriented towards limiting urban expansion and promoting social integration. On the other hand, the authors show that European experiences, including model projects of participatory planning, may be inspiring for shaping future urban development and socially integrative urban expansion in China.

Finally, Suering, Ortner and Weitkamp focus on the importance of land in urban development. They deal with the role of land management for socially integrative cities. Their paper analyses land development in general, as well as related instruments and mechanisms in Europe. The authors are especially interested in instruments which can be used by municipalities for managing and shaping local land use. They demonstrate how these instruments may influence the provision of affordable housing as well as technical and social infrastructure.

3.2. Socially Integrative Urban Regeneration

A second set of articles focuses on socially integrative urban regeneration in cities. After an overview of policies and strategies in Europe and China, detailed aspects are discussed, such as community building through public engagement, challenges of place making and the role of education and life-long learning. Finally, a view on heritage preservation and its impact on social integration in urban regeneration concludes this part.

In their paper, Rößler, Cai, Lin and Jiang provide an overview of urban regeneration in China and Europe and its relation with social integration. The article focuses on the current framework, challenges and experiences of socially integrative urban regeneration in both parts of the world. In order to understand the specific challenges as well as potentials of urban regeneration strategies, the authors consider different pathways, origins and practices. This includes a comparative view on terms and definitions used in the debate as well as the current practice of urban regeneration. Drawing on the concept of socially integrative urban development, challenges of urban regeneration in China and experiences in Europe are described.

Valler, Korsnes, Liu and Chen look into community building through public engagement. They emphasise the role of public participation in the regeneration of neighbourhoods. However, they also demonstrate that the extent to which such processes are anchored in communities varies greatly. They attribute this to the groups of actors involved. Thus, they focus on the question of who participates in community building in Europe and China. The analysed cases show that there are

different levels of participation in Europe and China. The authors argue that a wide variety of actors should be involved early in local planning in order to ensure that residents have a say in the definition of the issues at hand.

Hamama, Repellino, Liu and Bonino discuss place making in post-industrial cities in China and Europe. Based on a literature review and selected case studies from China and Europe, the chapter embraces two transformative factors, people and places, to shed light on the processes behind the social and spatial transformation of urban spaces, the integration of the marginalised communities and the promotion of community participation in the preservation of the architectural and cultural heritage. The authors conclude that despite tremendous efforts to engage local communities in producing high-quality urban spaces, a number of challenges, such as gentrification, economic disparities and geographic segregation, are still hindering the realisation of socially integrative cities.

D’Aniello, Xu, Patrizi and Polenta look into the role of educational museums for creating socially integrative cities in Europe and China. They show how the idea of the “educating city” can help to find effective ways of social integration which have the potential to promote the well-being of individuals and the community. The authors analyse case studies of educational museums in Europe and China. They demonstrate that museums, as non-formal education spaces and an expression of collective identity, can play an important role in connoting a city as an educating city.

Sauarlia and Wang focus on the role of heritage in creating socially integrative cities. The authors look at the critical role of communities in the transition of historical urban districts. The authors compare two cases, i.e., a district in Trondheim, Norway, and one in the city of Xi’an, China. Both examples show that communities play an important role in transforming urban areas. The authors conclude that community building in urban transition is a key element for preserving the value of historical districts and neighbourhoods.

3.3. Urban Transformation and Evidence-Based Decision Making

A third set of articles looks into issues of urban transformation and evidence-based decision making. Transformation is understood as a complex set of interactions. Community platforms for information and dialogue can become effective instruments to facilitate transition processes. Community interaction and development as well as other features of transformative capacity can help to narrow gaps between planning and implementation. Advanced methods, such as social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA), may support social integration. Additionally, it is demonstrated that the use of multiple data sources can speed up the digital transition in cities and provide decision support for social integration.

Pasher et al. embrace complexity theory for discussing transition processes towards socially integrative cities. They understand the city as a living organism

in which resources, knowledge and people are closely interconnected. The authors point out that community building is a key factor for making cities more attractive for residents, businesses and visitors. Digital technology can contribute to establish lively online communication among inhabitants. The case of Tel Aviv in Israel can be taken as a good practice example for facilitating transformation processes.

Meyer et al. focus on capacity building for urban transformation. They discuss factors which influence the efficiency and consistency of urban planning in implementation, taking smart cities as an example. Case studies reveal that certain measures to enhance transformative capacities are critical across Chinese and European cities. For example, stakeholder involvement and the cooperation within a multi-actor community is key to reduce the gap between planning and implementation, both in China and Europe. Importantly, however, the case studies show that while there are commonalities regarding the role of certain transformative capacity building measures, the way these measures are expressed differs between Chinese and European cities and always embodies the local context.

Ricci, Enei and Ma present social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA) as an instrument to support urban planning and governance for enhancing social integration. SCBA techniques can be used for monetary valuation of impacts for which market prices may not be available. The quantification through SCBA techniques may help to better reflect the value which society attaches to non-market goods and services, enabling urban planners and policymakers to consider the net social welfare effects of urbanisation processes.

Liu et al. deal with a specific facet of attempts to enhance the quality of life and well-being of people. They take the mitigation of air pollution as an example. In their contribution, the authors present a study on interrelationships between air pollution, transportation, industries and social activities in Tianjin. The analysis identifies factors which have an impact on air quality in the city. A cost model for the reduction in air pollution provides insight into causal factors that may be taken into account while making decisions to lower air pollutants. With this example, the authors also demonstrate how multiple data sources can be used to establish decision support for planning socially integrative cities in an evidence-based way.

3.4. Replicability and Urban Laboratories

The final set of articles deals with questions of the replicability of experiences and the role of concrete urban experiments in so-called urban living laboratories. Methods to explore the replication potential of urban solutions for socially integrative cities are discussed, and the potential of urban living laboratories for nurturing open urban innovation in Chinese cities is scrutinised. Several examples are discussed, and conclusions regarding the enhancement of social integration in cities are drawn.

Paolucci describes a new method for estimating the replication potential of urban solutions for socially integrative cities (the SITEE replicability method). The author starts from the experience that a certain solution, which may be successful in a given context, does not necessarily work in a different context, bringing the same benefits. For example, measures successfully pursuing social integration in Europe may face various difficulties when implemented in a Chinese context. Thus, a thorough analysis of the replication potential is required. On this background, the author describes a new method for estimating the replication potential of urban solutions in different contexts, combining quantitative data with qualitative information collected from local stakeholders according to five dimensions: Socio-Cultural, Institutional, Technological, Environmental and Economic (SITEE). The multi-dimensional analysis allows describing and understanding the complexity of different contexts and helps to identify the most relevant factors that may limit or facilitate replication.

Finally, Wyckmans et al. discuss urban living labs as instruments of open innovation. Urban living labs, which are becoming increasingly popular in Europe, are still rather new in China. However, on-the-ground experiences in the cities of Wuhan, Tianjin and Jingdezhen, based on close interaction between local stakeholders and European and Chinese experts, demonstrate the potentials of urban living labs in China. The authors suggest applying open innovation-based principles so that urban living labs can function as meeting arenas to support communities' diversity, significance and connectedness, where participants can experiment with practical ideas and solutions towards a more cohesive, inclusive and sustainable everyday life.

4. Conclusions

Starting from major urban development trends in Europe and China, we have had a closer look at several key documents for shaping the urban future in both parts of the world. Comparing the stipulations of the New Leipzig Charter in Europe and the contents related to the 14th Five-Year Plan related to urban issues in China, we can conclude that urban policies in both parts of the world seem to head in similar directions.

Urban sustainability and territorial cohesion are general issues of concern. People-centred high-quality development shall guide future directions of urban areas. Community building, public participation and social governance at the local level will gain importance. Altogether, this may favour cities and urban areas in their efforts to become more socially integrative in the future, although one should carefully look at the basic cultural and conceptual differences between the two parts of the world, which may hamper mutual understanding and knowledge sharing.

Most chapters of this book are written by mixed European and Chinese teams. This shall help to avoid cultural and conceptual misunderstanding, although it never can be totally excluded. The contributions shall add new insights from Europe

and China to the discussion about socially integrative cities and their potential contribution to sustainable urban development.

Knowledge sharing, the exchange of experiences and good practice examples may help socially integrative cities to become a reality in more and more cases. We have seen that the basic documents in Europe and China pave the way for it. What is needed now is the will and capacity of all stakeholders in both societies, i.e., the state, the business sector, the civil society, media and academia, to seriously head in the direction of social integration, making cities and urban areas more people-oriented and securing future urban development at a human scale.

Author Contributions: B.M. is the main author of the article. He prepared all versions of the article, strongly supported by P.S. J.L. and J.C. provided inputs for the first draft. H.-M.N. and B.Y. commented on the final draft of the article.

Funding: This research was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 770141.

Acknowledgments: The authors of the article thank the authors of the book chapters for providing their abstracts, which were useful for describing the structure of the book. They would also like to thank Mengfan Jiang, TU Dresden, for her support regarding the text of the 14th Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic of China.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The founding sponsors had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, and in the decision to publish the results.

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