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**A compensatory heterotopia:
a microethnographic study of Zhongshan Park, Ningbo**

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Title

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Abstract

This is a microethnographic study of Zhongshan Park, Ningbo. The research explores how far the sense of place produced in Zhongshan Park by older people conforms to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia. Ningbo is a wealthy east coast city in Zhejiang Province. Studying cities is essential for understanding contemporary China, given their rapid growth and influence on economic and social change. Zhongshan Park is a place which has many characteristics which make it distinctive in the city of Ningbo, particularly the concentration of people over sixty who frequent it. It is one of the oldest surviving places in the city and is visually in marked contrast with surrounding spaces. It is popular and lively, yet has few signs of the contemporary city, with few young people, and no obvious sites of commerce or consumption. Foucault's concept of heterotopia enables an analysis of Zhongshan Park as a counter-site to the spaces in the city that surround it. Foucault's six principles of heterotopia provide the framework for coding the data collected using participant observation, semi-structured interviews and online postings. The study concludes that the sense of place produced by older, arguably marginalised people conforms to the concept of heterotopia, although the strong evidence of social capital built through self-generated leisure and cultural activities is not entirely represented by Foucault's concept. It is argued that the park is a compensatory heterotopia for older people, which subverts the ubiquitous values of global capitalism in the spaces outside it, but is powerless to change them.

Declaration

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the Master's Degree in Contemporary Chinese Studies. I declare that it has not been previously submitted for assessment and the content is entirely my own, except where otherwise referenced.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study focuses on a section of Zhongshan Square in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province known as Zhongshan Park.¹ Zhongshan Square is located in the north part of the old city centre in Haishu District and was redeveloped in its current form in 1998 (Ningbo History, 1949-2010). Zhongshan Park is built in the style of a traditional Chinese private garden with rockeries, pavilions, waterways and bridges (Appendix 1; Cheng, 2012). It is one of many Zhongshan Parks named in memory of Sun Yatsen after his death in 1925 (Sun Wujun, 2012). It is mainly frequented by older people.

Zhongshan Park is a place which has many characteristics which make it distinctive in the city of Ningbo and therefore an interesting research site. It is one of the oldest surviving places in the city; it is visually in marked contrast with the surrounding residential area, nearby shopping malls, or even the adjacent plaza-like Zhongshan Square. It is popular and lively, yet has few signs of the contemporary city, with few young people, and no obvious sites of commerce or consumption. There are many other parks in Ningbo, but none have the same concentration of older people who visit regularly and are apparently able to dominate through their behaviour, language and activity.

The research question explored in this study is:

How far does the sense of place produced in Zhongshan Park by older people conform to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia?

Place

'Place' as a central object of geographical theorisation emerged in the 1970s with the beginning of humanistic geography (Agnew and Duncan, 2011: 23; Soja, 1989: 12). Theorists began to distinguish between the more abstract 'space' and 'place',

¹ <http://www.nbsylgj.com/art.aspx?aid=1283&cid=006001> accessed 26/4/2014. Zhongshan Park is officially known as the Traditional Culture Park (传统文化公园 chuantong wenhua gongyuan). However, local Ningbo people call the Traditional Culture Park 'Zhongshan Park', its name before the redevelopment; this study will use Zhongshan Park to refer to the Traditional Culture Park.

although the meanings of both concepts remain contested. Essentially place focuses on meaning and experience: 'Place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power' (Cresswell, 2004: 12).

This study is concerned with describing how and why mainly older people invest meaning in Zhongshan Park to make it a 'place'. As a marginalised group, the older people exist in a particular 'context of power', which has impact on their 'place-making' strategies (Cresswell, 2004: 83). Place-making describes the never-ending process by which people 'produce' a place, for example by their behaviour, changes to a natural landscape or physical objects that they might bring to it (Pred, 1984: 279). The older people in Zhongshan Park are a marginalised group in that they wield limited political or economic power and many are frail or in poor health. Nevertheless, they exert power through their critical mass and their actions, which have 'produced' a distinct place in Zhongshan Park.

Chinese cities developed since 'reform and opening' in the 1980s have been the focus of many studies in urban planning and design, economic development and social stratification because they are a key to understanding contemporary China (Logan, 2002; Yu and Padua, 2007; Naughton, 2007). While scholars have focused on some aspects of urban poverty (Solinger, 2006a; Wu *et al*, 2010), there are few studies that specifically focus on the social needs and activities of older people aged 60 and above in the city, despite the fact that China has a rapidly aging population (Eberstadt, 2006). In Haishu district, in Ningbo, where the study site is located, in 2011 the population aged over 60 was already 19.5% of the total in the district (Zhejiang Statistical Yearbook, 2012). Despite the existence of so many older people, most new places in Ningbo, as in other globalised Chinese cities, appear mainly to focus on the requirements and tastes of young people in order to encourage consumerism. This study suggests that other groups also have needs and preferences and older cultural places are important in fulfilling them.

Heterotopias

Heterotopias are defined by Foucault as sites that have 'the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspend,

neutralise, or invert the set of relations designated, mirrored or reflected by them' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 16). This relational property is a key characteristic of heterotopias; they can only be fully understood in relation to other places around them (Hetherington, 1997; Johnson, 2006; Sohn, 2008). They reflect everything around them, yet in ways that can be subversive and disturbing; they seem to challenge the order and rationale of the space that surrounds them. Their reflective property is explained by Foucault through the metaphor of the mirror. The places reflected in the mirror can be idealised or utopian and occupy an unreal space that opens up behind the surface, but at the same time they are 'effectively realized' as real places in the space of the viewer and Foucault calls them heterotopias to distinguish them from utopias (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 17).

As they actually exist, heterotopias can be a powerful tool of analysis; the concept offers a unique framework for reading what appears to be an essentially different space. By examining a place that appears to be different, partly because it is frequented by a marginalised group, we are given insight into all the places that appear to be the same outside a heterotopia (Sohn, 2008: 44). Describing the particularity of Zhongshan Park and its importance to older people will necessarily expose its difference from surrounding places in the contemporary city, allow us to characterise them and consider why older people seem to be comparatively absent from them.

Foucault described heterotopias as having six principles (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008). Heterotopias are places:

1. present in every society, categorised as places of crisis or deviation
2. with functions that change over time
3. that unify incompatible places
4. that link to slices or breaks in time
5. with boundaries or systems of opening and closing
6. relational to all other spaces that surround them.

Each of these principles is discussed in detail in the study and has provided an etic framework for the analysis of the data.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 is a literature review of discourses relevant to the study, including: interpretations of Foucault's concept of heterotopia; China's aging population and the relationship between poverty and older people; urban development in China and its impact on space and place; leisure and culture in China and their disruption during the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used and discusses ethical issues.

Chapters 4 to 9 analyse the data and discuss the extent to which Zhongshan Park conforms to each of Foucault's six principles.

Chapter 10 is a conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Foucault's heterotopia

Foucault first outlined the idea of heterotopia as textual spaces in 1966 in the preface to *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970; Topinka, 2010). He returned to the concept of heterotopia as spaces in the physical world first in a short radio broadcast in 1966 and then in a lecture given to architects in 1967 (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 13; Johnson, 2006: 76). It is the application of the concept in the second spatial sense that is used in this study as Zhongshan Park is a physical place. The lecture was not published until 1984, but after its translation in 1986 it became very influential for geographers in the Anglophone world concerned with the impact of globalisation on space, especially in cities (Crampton and Elden, 2007: 2; Foucault, 1984 and 1986). The lecture includes a brief history of space, a discussion of the relational and reflective qualities of heterotopias and then gives a 'heterotopology' of the six principles that apply to them, illustrated through a number of examples.

Foucault's spatial framework has provoked different and conflicting interpretations. It has been applied across many disciplines, especially human geography, sociology and architecture, and to a huge range of places in different cultures (Johnson, 2006). Foucault was never again so explicit about the importance of space for the modern era and did not return to the framework in a sustained way (Soja, 1989: 19).

The lecture was not originally meant for publication and remains full of ambiguities and sometimes sketchy ideas and examples (Johnson, 2006: 81). Foucault uses a range of words such as 'espace' (space), 'lieu' (place), 'autre' (other), 'different' (different), and the favoured 'emplacement' (placing as in marking out a position) when describing heterotopias, all of which are difficult to translate precisely. Sometimes these are confusingly used in the same sentence (Johnson, 2006: 77). Other words, such as 'réseau', which is usually translated as a 'network' seem prescient of the idea of the 'network society' as it has been developed by later theorists (Castells, 2010). It is not surprising then that the lecture has been a

'source of inspiration in urban and architectural theory, but also one of confusion' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 4).

Boundaries and a definition of difference or the 'otherness' of heterotopia are essential to Foucault's idea. However, scholars argue that it is in this area that the concept is weakest, as Foucault does not fully explain how the 'other' or the spatial difference should be defined, suggesting it is both invisible and visible. It could be argued that a category 'heterotopia', which can include carpets and prisons, ritual baths and holiday villages, is thus too broad to be meaningful (Hetherington, 1997: 7; Sohn, 2008: 44). Despite this criticism, or perhaps because of its innate flexibility, the concept is still widely applied. Indeed, for some scholars the principle of boundaries can be a key to their analysis, as in a discussion of hospitals (Coleman and Street, 2012).

Dehaene and De Caeter attempt to overcome the problem of the wide range of examples given by Foucault by grouping six types of heterotopic places around three different axes: normal/abnormal (the anthropological); permanent/temporary (the temporal); and illusionary/compensatory (the imaginary) (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 27). This study considers how Zhongshan Park fits into this typology as this makes the findings more generalizable.

Foucault's first principle, that heterotopias are found in all cultures and that they are spaces of crisis or modern deviation, has led to persistent associations between heterotopias and resistance and transgression. Although the examples given by Foucault do not necessarily support this interpretation, Sohn argues that the relational aspect of heterotopias makes the emphasis on the marginal and the deviant inevitable, as the importance of heterotopia is that as different spaces they challenge and disturb other spaces around them (Sohn, 2008; 44). Hetherington suggests that heterotopias offer an 'alternative way of ordering things', which is disturbing but not necessarily transgressive (Hetherington, 1997).

Johnson emphasises that Foucault's heterotopias differ from utopias and are not spaces of hope (Johnson, 2006: 84). The lack of an overtly progressive or utopian agenda is a source of frustration for some commentators, such as Harvey, who perceives the breadth of Foucault's concept as making it banal and escapist on

the one hand, and static and sterile on the other. This is in contrast to Harvey's interpretation of Lefebvre's view of the phenomenon in *The Urban Revolution*, first published in 1970. Lefebvre's 'heterotopy' is a more dialectical concept of alternative spaces which could be absorbed by and transform mainstream space, rather than always remaining separate (Harvey, 2009: 162; Lefebvre, 2003: 9). However, it is Foucault's concept of heterotopia, rather than Lefebvre's which has proved to be the more influential. For Lefebvre, ultimately heterotopy proved less interesting than utopia (Lefebvre, 2003).

China's aging population and urban poverty

Zhongshan Park is full of older people. As the Chinese social scientist Wu Cangping has said, China is 'getting old before getting rich' (Lu, 2011:159). Because of the low birth rate, by 2025 the country will account for almost a quarter of the world's population of people over 65, while having less than a fifth of the world's population. In 2030 China will have more elderly dependents than children (Lu, 2011:166). Rich western countries also have aging populations, but China's per capita output is much lower and its pension apparatus is in disarray (Eberstadt, 2006). The greatest growth of the grey population will be in the poorest provinces, such as Heilongjiang, Liaoning and Jilin, but people throughout China aged over 65 are most likely to be illiterate or semi-literate and least able to sustain themselves. While Japanese women can expect to spend one fifth of their final years disabled, Chinese women can expect to spend one third of their final years in a similar state (Eberstadt, 2006).

Although Zhejiang is a wealthy province, it has a high Gini co-efficient of 0.46-0.53, showing that there are large gaps between the richest and poorest (Feng *et al* 2012). Those in the lowest quartile of income are three times as likely to report poor health compared to those in the richest quartile and the poorest people in an unequal society are likely to experience the most stress due to 'distrust, shame and exclusion' (Feng *et al*, 2012: 2482).

Social and economic changes that have taken place in China since 'reform and opening' in the 1980s, have led not only to widening income inequality (Goodman, 2008: 2), but to significant differences in taste and outlook between older people

(aged 60 and above) whose early life experiences included the Mao era, and those born later whose first experiences as adults have been based on the encouragement of individual consumerism within the open market economy (Tomba, 2004; Zhou, 2008; Chen and Goodman, 2013).

Some of the older people who visit Zhongshan Park are among the 30 million or more made redundant from state owned enterprises following government-led restructuring in the late 1990s to 'cut the workforce and raise efficiency' (Solinger, 2006a: 182; Zeng, 2011: 180). From research in a number of Chinese cities, Solinger has argued that since 1995 serious urban poverty has emerged. The urban working classes or 'old soldiers of socialism', often deprived of education because of the Cultural Revolution, have been brutally 'shunted aside' and marginalised because of their inability to adapt to modern industries after they became laid off. Government attempts to provide them with compensation or sufficient social security have had limited impact, and many cannot afford to visit a hospital for treatment (Solinger, 2002; 2006a).

Urban development

Urban development in Ningbo as in most cities in China has replaced the intimate spaces of 'hutong' or courtyard style housing with high-rise apartment blocks, wide boulevards to accommodate burgeoning car ownership, European and American-style shopping malls and large, open plazas such as Zhongshan Square. This is sometimes known as the 'City Cosmetic Movement' (城市美化运动 *chengshi meihua yundong*) and suggests that contemporary Chinese landscape architects struggle to define an indigenous design tradition (Yu and Padua, 2007). It can be argued that it has led to the physical and psychological displacement of people from their old communities, albeit to better quality accommodation (Yang and Volkman, 2010).

Social stratification is leading to increasing spatial differentiation in Chinese cities, with the wealthier 'new rich' moving to gated communities in newly built suburbs, while poorer permanent or temporary residents live in older and more deprived neighbourhoods, such as those adjacent to Zhongshan Park (Wu *et al*, 2010).

Literature on the development of the new cities in the reform period suggests that spaces of historical or cultural significance have often been destroyed and that this has had a negative impact on civic life (Yan *et al*, 2002: 46). The legacy of traditional gardens is vanishing at 'alarming speed' (Yang and Volkerman, 2010: 210). Social science critique has played little role in urban planning in the reform era, and this may explain why there is a paucity of literature on the role of cultural spaces, such as parks in the lives of urban residents in China (Abramson *et al* 2002: 168).

Leisure, culture and 'zhi qing' nostalgia

'Leisure' is a contested term as it has connotations of both constructive use of time for social and health purposes when not at work, and less positive suggestions of 'idleness', or purposeless relaxation. Foucault himself brings these two readings into his discussion of the first principle of heterotopias, suggesting that in western society 'leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008:18). In the west, leisure has become synonymous with commodified consumption, and scholars have contested the extent to which people have freedom in choosing leisure activities (Spracklen, 2009: 17). As Chinese society becomes more globalised, leisure as commodified consumption is becoming more evident as part of the growth of a middle class (Zhou, 2008). However, scholars have also shown that in East Asia, the idea of 'collective idleness', where men relax together and enjoy playing cards or chatting, is an important part of adult life (Chua, 1997: 79).

In China, a quantitative study, such as Jim and Chen's, is situated in the discourse of studying leisure as consumption, for the purposes of urban planning and improving physical health. Their study of Zhuhai in Guangdong Province showed that watching TV was the most popular pastime, illustrating the contemporary withdrawal of leisure into the private domestic sphere and towards passive pursuits, as in western societies (Jim and Chen, 2009: 663; Putnam, 1995).

In her study of leisure in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, Rolandsen identified the existence of a continuing government discourse on correct or morally acceptable leisure activities, which she labelled the 'PRC leisure ethic' (Rolandsen, 2011).

Wang also dealt with the power relationship during the Mao era between the PRC and the individual, when any leisure activities were expected to improve fitness and thence readiness for work and ability to contribute to the collective good (Wang, 1995). It may be that even in the Mao era actual practice differed from the official leisure discourse and popular leisure activities may never have been completely dormant (Rolandsen, 2011: 7).

The presence of official and unofficial leisure discourse is also discussed by Clark in his study of youth culture in China. He shifts the language from 'leisure' to 'culture', and explains the important role of performance, music, reading and creative writing to the generation who were Red Guards and then 'sent down' to rural communes and militarised settlements in remoter parts of China after 1968 during the Cultural Revolution (Clark, 2012: 11). There are many representatives of this generation in Zhongshan Park. Clark shows how eight 'approved' model performances dominated the cultural discourse during the Cultural Revolution, but provides evidence that young people resisted this restriction through composing songs, writing poetry and novels which expressed their own feelings (Clark, 2012). An important part of the cultural experience of the school leavers or educated youth (知青 zhi qing) who were 'sent down' to the countryside, was that it was a self-generated and shared experience, where the needs of the group always took precedent over the individual or minority interest (Clark, 2012: 53).

The phenomenon of 'zhi qing' nostalgia, of which there is evidence in Zhongshan Park, emerged first in Beijing in the 1990s and then spread to other parts of China (Yang, 2003). Yang suggests that the nostalgic literary accounts of the period, the exhibitions, social gatherings, online forums and visits back to the north east where many young people were sent, are a kind of 'cultural resistance' as the 'zhi qing' generation struggled to find meaning and identity in the changed world of China after 'reform and opening' (Yang, 2003: 269).

Some theorists have argued that leisure is not merely commodified consumption, but plays an important role in building social capital or 'networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam, 1995: 66). A link between leisure and social capital is also made by Rojek, who supports

the view that 'leisure is one of the principal institutions through which social capital is accumulated' (Rojek, 2005: 324). His approach accommodates a broader view of leisure to include cultural activity such as group music-making and the behaviour of mutual support observed in Zhongshan Park.

Chapter 3

Methodology and ethics

Overview

The research question of this study is:

How far does the sense of place produced in Zhongshan Park by older people conform to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia?

To answer this, the research focused on the following questions:

Who are the regular visitors to the park?

Why do so many older people come?

What is the history of the park?

What activities take place?

Why do some groups of people *not* come to the park?

How does Zhongshan Park differ from other places in Ningbo?

The research design was that of a qualitative case study (Bryman, 2008: 54; Silverman, 2013: 142). Using ethnographic research methods, it focused particularly on the relationship between the research site and the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 32).

The study cannot claim to be a classic ethnography as fieldwork could only be carried out over a period of two months (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 3; Bryman, 2008: 402). It is a 'microethnography', in that it studies selected aspects of everyday life 'giving emphasis to particular behaviours' in a particular setting, rather than 'attempting to portray a whole cultural system' (Wolcott, 1990: 64).

Epistemologically this was an interpretivist study which attempted to understand the meaning of social behaviour by observing and understanding the point of view of the participants. The study adopted a constructivist ontological position, aiming to explore how participants produce, assemble and maintain social realities in the park to create a sense of place (Bryman, 2008: 19; Silverman, 2013: 107).

Although the concept of heterotopia provided a framework for coding the data, the study took an inductive approach, relating its findings to generic concepts such as: city reconstruction and modernisation; retirement, unemployment and old age; history and memory; leisure and culture (Bryman, 2008: 11).

Why adopt this approach?

Behaviour in parks is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon which does not lend itself to a positivist approach. While leisure studies in China have used household surveys, this has been to collect quantitative data, such as type of activity, frequency and location (Jim and Chen, 2009). Extensive and accurate quantitative data were not needed to answer the research question although secondary data sets were consulted (Zhejiang Statistical Year Book, 2012).

As a focused, microethnographic study, the research was concerned with the cultural meaning of the social behaviours encountered in the park (Wolcott, 1990:64). A structured quantitative survey, suited to collecting numerical data, with closed questions or using a Likert scale to measure attitudes would have been likely to offer an impoverished characterisation of personal experience (Bryman, 2007: 394; Stiles, 1993: 595). This was especially the case as some of the issues that emerged, such as redundancy or roles during the Cultural Revolution were extremely sensitive. It is unlikely that informants would have responded to written questions on these topics. A rich understanding of personal experience was needed to provide evidence of the extent to which the park conformed to Foucault's qualitative principles of heterotopia.

The main demographic group at the heart of the study were elderly people who were regular if not daily visitors to the park. They were a vulnerable group, partly due to their age and physical fragility, but also because of the turmoil through which they have lived. In terms of field relations, as a marginal outsider it was important to adopt an approach that would enable rapport to be built, as can be achieved through ethnographic methodologies (Solinger, 2006b; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 89). Administering even a short survey would have been culturally inappropriate, intrusive and probably likely to fail in the park setting. Anything

involving writing or giving their names would have been met with suspicion and fear of authority by potential informants (Solinger, 2006b).

Choice of site

Zhongshan Park was chosen as the research site because of its unique character as an historical site and its attraction to older people who appear to be marginalised. Other parks are specifically for families and young children or for mixed aged groups, reducing their difference from other places in Ningbo. Initial observation suggested it had the highest concentration of elderly people and the greatest number of groups performing music among any of the eleven or so parks in the Ningbo city area. Its position next to unmodernised housing and older apartment blocks meant it would be likely to have frequent local visitors; its location within the old city centre and near public transport meant it was also accessible to people from further away.

Zhongshan Park is small with activities happening in a concentrated area of perhaps 50 square metres, making it an ideal site for a microethnography (Appendix 1). Although it is not gated it has clear boundaries. It has an outer, slightly open area, approached from Zhongshan Square on the east; a central area on a north/south axis, with a covered pavilion, known as the Will Pavilion (遗嘱亭 yizhu ting) to the north, and an old teahouse near an archway leading to the pedestrianized shopping area of Gulou to the south; and a paved area with chess tables and exercise equipment to the west. The study concentrated on the eastern and central areas because these were where most of the older people congregated.

Data collection

Data collection was through participant observation, semi-structured interviews using an interpreter who spoke Ningbo dialect and from online documents and postings. The field role of researcher-participant is closest to the approach adopted for participant observation, that is, participating in the situation, for example by listening to music or watching card games, without being fully involved (Bryman, 2008: 412; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The research site was visited for an initial period of observation on 7 occasions during the day. Each period of observation lasted about two hours. There was some reactivity, in that as a foreigner I often became a focus of curiosity. On the other hand to some extent participants become accustomed to my presence and sometimes began conversations spontaneously in Putonghua (Bryman, 2008: 467). This field research took place in February and March 2014, in spring weather (similar to autumn), rather than in winter or summer. Conversations with informants suggested that activities were not significantly different in winter and summer.

I took 'jotted notes' when in the field, usually out of sight of participants, to avoid reactivity as much as possible. Following each session of observation, I wrote up the notes into detailed descriptions (Emerson *et al*, 2011; Bryman, 2008: 417).

In the second stage of research, I went to Zhongshan Park on three extended occasions with a local interpreter who spoke Ningbo dialect, and carried out 10-12 semi-structured interviews with park visitors, some of whom had been identified as potential informants during the observation stage. The research adopted purposive sampling, focusing on informants who represented key groups, such as regular visitors, or musicians, singers and card players, and attempting to get a gender balance (Bryman, 2008 :458).

These interviews were an important source of additional data, and allowed theories that had emerged from observation to be tested (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 102). Using an interpreter was necessary as informants spoke only limited Putonghua and is a common approach to field research in China because of the prevalence of local dialects (Thøgersen, 2006: 111; Solinger, 2006b: 163). As a local person, the interpreter also acted as a gatekeeper, helping to build rapport with informants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The interpreter was briefed about questions to ask and who to talk to, although there was also an element of opportunism. The interpreter often translated as the interview took place and was asked to insert additional or follow-up questions. Following Solinger's methodology when working with an interpreter in the field, interviews with vulnerable informants were not recorded as this would have been too intrusive. Instead, we quickly left the site of the interview and I immediately made

detailed notes and ensured I fully understood what had been said (Solinger, 2006b: 163). Extracts from interviews in the study are taken from these notes.

It is likely that the interpreter/gatekeeper exercised some surveillance and control over the research, sometimes underestimating my interest in the ordinary or overestimating a foreigner's ability to interpret different cultural practices, but as the research progressed these problems lessened (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 52). Doubtless, some 'filtering out' of the information took place, especially due to embarrassment around sensitive issues such as the Cultural Revolution. Details were inevitably lost in translation, but this was the best available methodology for gathering data in the field.

Five additional interviews took place away from the research site, two with the interpreter. One of these with a middle-aged Ningbo resident was recorded and the English transcribed (Mrs Li). Another took place with a member of the Ningbo 'zhi qing' group (Mr Wang); on advice from the interpreter this was not recorded, but translation and note taking took place during the interview. Three other interviews were carried out in English with younger Chinese informants without an interpreter (Xiaoming, Mia and Linyue). This minimised the risk of filtering or inaccurate data.

Websites were the final source of data, including Ningbo government archives and the Ningbo Daily newspaper, and social media websites for older people in Ningbo and specifically for 'zhi qing' (Ningbo Culture, 1966-70; Ningbo History, 1949-2010; Sun Wujun, 2012; Jin Peipei, 2013; Tao Qizheng, 2012; Qing Xin, 2010). The interpreter provided translations of these online sources where necessary.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis was ongoing and iterative; it was not a distinct stage of the research, but overlapped with data collection and started at the earliest stages (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 168 and 158; Silverman, 2013: 232). At first, analytic memos generated theory that sought to explain social interactions in the park (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 152). Early findings, such as the phenomenon of 'zhi qing' nostalgia and memories of the Cultural Revolution, were further investigated through the academic literature and online sources (Yang, 2003; Pye,

1986; Clark, 2012). This was a way of confirming the trustworthiness of the findings and avoiding anecdotalism (Stiles, 1993; Silverman, 2013: 301).

In order to answer the research question, data was coded using a framework based on Foucault's six principles: crisis or deviation; changes over time; unification of incompatible places; links to breaks in time; boundaries; and relation to other spaces (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008).

Each data source (field notes, transcripts, online documents) was analysed six times and data allocated to some or all of the six principles using a matrix (Bryman, 2008: 555). Some data sources most strongly illustrate one principle and are thus given more prominence in that section; other data appear in several sections.

Reliability and validity

Although it could not be replicated exactly, preliminary visits to the park and the more sustained visits during the study suggest that the site is stable and that other researchers could observe the same range of behaviour, even if they interpreted it differently. Dependability has been extended through keeping accurate records of observations, interview notes and transcripts (Bryman, 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Silverman, 2013).

Triangulation, for example by checking out observations through interviews, reading online postings, government archives and statistics and consulting the literature has improved internal validity and strengthened the confirmability of interpretations (Silverman, 2013: 301).

As this was a case study, generalizability to other settings may be limited (Bryman, 2008: 391). However, there are many Zhongshan Parks and other cultural spaces in China that specifically attract older people and some transferability of results may be possible. The study could be compared with research on other city heterotopias, especially those of compensation (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 27).

Ethics

The study complies fully with the University of Nottingham Code of Ethics for carrying out qualitative research. As the research site allowed public access, during the observational stage at first participants were not necessarily aware that I was carrying out research, and to this extent it could be argued that I was adopting a covert role, although I had no intention to mislead or deceive participants. In a public setting the distinction between covert and overt research is not straightforward (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). Writers on qualitative research methodology have suggested that there are no serious ethical issues in carrying out research in parks, even if the researcher remains covert throughout, as participants will come to no harm (Lofland *et al*, 2006: 39).

However, a foreign woman in a Chinese park quickly attracted attention, especially when frequently returning to the site. When asked, I explained I was interested in why the park was popular. In the second stage, with an interpreter, I was able to give a more detailed explanation of my link with the University of Nottingham Ningbo and the academic purpose of the research.

The situation was too informal for people to want to give written consent to being interviewed, although the interpreter always asked for and received verbal consent before continuing with questions. It is unlikely that the informants in the park completely understood the purpose of the research, and signing a consent form would not have guaranteed their understanding (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). The approach adopted followed Solinger's advice on interviewing people in China using an interpreter, particularly vulnerable groups such as the unemployed (Solinger, 2006b). The interpreter never asked for people's names and informants cannot be identified. Ethnographers recognise that socially excluded or people from marginalised groups make excellent informants (Kjellgren, 2006), but are unlikely to consent in writing to being interviewed (Miller *et al*, 2008: 71). Younger people interviewed in English away from the research site signed a consent form. Although their names are known to me, these have been changed in the report and tapes and transcripts of interviews will be destroyed (Bryman, 2008).

The names used by people who posted online accounts of Zhongshan Park have been given in the study as these were freely available and it seemed most ethical to acknowledge the authors. It is unclear if these are the authors' real names.

The name of the park has not been disguised as it has historical significance and is important in understanding the changing functions of the space as a heterotopia. However, it is unlikely that harm could come to informants because the research site can be identified, although naming the site would be reconsidered were elements of the research to be published, the time of greatest risk in ethnography (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). In its present form, the study is only for academic purposes and will not be more widely read.

Chapter 4

Principle 1: present in all societies

The first principle that Foucault sets out for heterotopias is that they are present in every society. In this way he introduces the ‘anthropological axis’ of heterotopias suggesting they should be categorised into two major types, the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008; 27). Crisis heterotopias relate to sites of initiation or purification where groups of people are temporarily removed from their society because of their life stage or life state. Most of these have disappeared and have been replaced in modern societies by heterotopias of deviation, ‘those in which individuals are placed whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the mean or required norm’ (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 18). Examples are rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons. The elderly are the one group singled out by Foucault as being present in heterotopias of both crisis and deviance, as retirement homes are

on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation since, after all, old age is a crisis, but is also a deviation since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008:18).

Although the example of a retirement home is not directly applicable to China, where it is the norm for the elderly to live with their children (Jankowiak, 2002), the way that old people are emphasised is of relevance to this study. This section will explore how far Foucault’s description of old age is reflected in Zhongshan Park. It will consider if the old people there can be described as ‘in crisis’ and to what extent they are ‘deviant’.

Observation shows that older people (60 and older) dominate the central and eastern areas of Zhongshan Park. One online source, writing on a ‘zhi qing’ website, calls Zhongshan Park the ‘world for the elderly’ (Jin Peipei, 2013). Although the older people visit the park voluntarily and have not been ‘placed’ there, there are signs of both psychological and physical crisis in the park. Significantly more men than women are in evidence. One 87 year old informant described how he comes to the park every day, whatever the weather, including New Year’s Day, to meet his friends and have lunch with them. Although he lives

with his son, he no longer feels he can communicate with him. Research suggests that many older Chinese men feel undervalued and that they no longer have the respect of their children. Society has changed dramatically since 'reform and opening' and older men in particular have found it difficult to maintain a dominant role in the family (Jankowiak, 2002: 324). This 'crisis' in status might explain the presence of so many older men in Zhongshan Park; it could be argued that they seek compensatory companionship from their peers outside the home where they feel neglected and isolated.

Although Jin Peipei's posting emphasises the lively, happy and noisy atmosphere in the park, where people play cards or chess, debate, read the newspaper, listen to or play music and sing a local version of Shaoxing Opera (越剧 yue ju) or 'Red' songs from the Mao era, visual observation also provides ample evidence of elderly people in physical crisis. For example, there are significant numbers of people in wheelchairs, people with obvious injuries and with disabilities. Many people are in poor physical health, for example many have no or decaying teeth, have minor facial disfigurements and visible scars from operations. They provide evidence of the relatively poor health of older people in China (Lu, 2011).

Many of the older women in particular are small in height, suggesting that they have suffered from malnutrition in their youth, probably during the famine years following the Great Leap Forward around 1960 (Spence, 2013 :697). Some people in the park show the kind of social stress associated with poverty and inequality (Feng *et al*, 2012: 2482). For example, many older men sit alone and stare vacantly. One woman observed on several days sat alone crocheting by the pool, rather than in a social group with other women, as was the norm. She spoke with difficulty, apparently having suffered from throat cancer. She said that coming to the park reminded her of when she could dance and sing, further suggesting the compensatory function of the park, discussed in Chapter 9.

Despite this evidence of old age as a time of crisis, Zhongshan Park seemed to be a very tolerant environment where people relaxed and enjoyed themselves. People greeted and treated each other with respect. By coming to the park, it

seemed that the older people were strengthening social networks and sharing social capital (Rojek, 2005; Putnam, 1995).

This was evidenced by the patience of the instrumentalists with any singers who were not very competent or who were overly demanding (Jin Peipei, 2013). For example, on one occasion a woman was observed who could no longer sing, but who mimed a 'yue ju' role while another woman sang the part for her. Informants stated she was an ex-professional opera singer. Her expertise was respected, even if she could no longer fully exhibit it.

In her posting Jin Peipei ends by saying:

It is amazing to find such a crazy (疯狂 feng kuang) group of old people who are leading such a colourful life. I sincerely wish that all elderly people can be as crazy as them, saying farewell to mahjong, loneliness, sadness and all the worries to live every day as happily as they can (Jin Peipei, 2013).

The use of 'feng kuang', meaning mad or crazy introduces the idea of deviance from the norm, but in a more positive and empowered sense than is implied by Foucault's original categorisation of old age as deviant because it is synonymous with idleness, rather than leisure. This is an interesting dialectic in the context of China where recent leisure studies discourse suggests that leisure should be understood as commodified consumption (Rolandsen, 2011; Jim and Chen, 2009).

'Idleness' does not connote consumption, instead suggesting that time is not being spent constructively; the actor has no purpose and no purchasing potential.

Presumably Foucault is using the term ironically to emphasise that old people's 'idleness' is deviant because it is not contributing to economic activity.

However, informants stated that they came to the park precisely to avoid what they thought of the idleness of staying at home and to express a resistance to commodified leisure:

We come here every day. It's better than staying at home and watching TV. I want to keep my brain working. I don't want to sleep all day. I like the park because it is lively. Moon Lake [another park in Ningbo] is more scenic but there aren't as many people there (81 year old male informant).

For this informant, the popular leisure activity of watching TV would mean not using his brain in some way. He considers that coming to crowded Zhongshan Park, meeting friends and listening to the opera performances every day is more stimulating and purposeful. He is expressing pleasure in being part of the sociable 'collective idleness' of the park (Chua, 1997: 79).

In the context of contemporary China, the behaviour of the old people in the park is arguably deviant not because they are 'idle' but because they are not aspiring or consuming. To this extent they illustrate Foucault's principle. Observation shows that the old people in the park are infrequent consumers with limited disposable income. Most wear old, unfashionable clothes, which show signs of wear. Very few seem to have mobile phones, although digital recorders are sometimes used to play opera and performers use amplifiers. Of those who have not walked to the park from nearby apartments, many have arrived by bus, for which they do not have to pay. Although one informant, a flute player, sells flutes that he has made, there are few opportunities for commerce. There is no café and many of the park visitors bring their own food and drinks, although one elderly informant explained that he comes to the park every day to meet friends for lunch which they take in a nearby restaurant in Gulou.

As will be argued in Chapter 9, the 'deviant' behaviour observed in Zhongshan Park, alongside the evidence of the psychological and physical crisis of old age, makes it strikingly different from or relational to other spaces in Ningbo, and is an important component of its character as a heterotopia of compensation.

Chapter 5

Principle 2: changes in function

Foucault's second principle in describing heterotopias is that 'in the course of its history, a society can make a heterotopia that exists, and has not ceased to exist, function in a very different way (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 18). To illustrate this idea Foucault uses the temporal example of the cemetery. In western culture, the function of the cemetery changed from being primarily a repository for corpses in the city centre, to being a site for bourgeois ostentation, well removed from where the living resided and might be contaminated by death. These differences are linked to changes in belief and socio-economic status. They illustrate how societal changes impact on the functions of heterotopias and show how these 'other spaces' are not static in terms of meaning.

This section will explore the evidence that the function of Zhongshan Park has altered over the last 100 years. Most profoundly, in terms of its usage, it has changed from being Houle Garden, a private garden (后乐家花园 *hou le jia hua yuan*) built in the late 19th century for the enjoyment of Xue Fuchen, the governor of the Ning and Shao Region (old Ningbo), into Zhongshan Park, a public park (中山公园 *zhong shan gong yuan*), officially opened in 1929 (Sun Wujun, 2012). Like Foucault's example of the cemetery, this indicates changes in Chinese society from one where only the elite had access to gardens to one where eventually private property was outlawed and public parks were available to be enjoyed by everyone.

The earliest public use of the park in the 1920s seems to have included overtly political purposes, rather than simply leisure and relaxation. These political uses are presented differently in written accounts, suggesting contested memories of the site which give insight into conflicts in China's past. This is in keeping with the view that Foucaultian heterotopias are often ambivalent and contradictory (Johnson, 1986: 85). For example, Sun Wujun in his account for the Ningbo Daily emphasises Zhongshan Park's links to early Nationalist organisations and its historical links with Sun Yatsen who visited it in 1916, while Tao Qizheng, writing on a website for 'zhi qing' focuses on the connection between the park and early

Communist Party associations and gatherings (Sun Wujun, 2012; Tao Qizheng, 2012).

Tao Qizheng's account includes nostalgic memories of the park from the period following the Communist victory in 1949; boats on the ponds, 'and then after returning from the farms [a reference to the 'zhi qing' experience], flower exhibitions, lantern shows and quizzes'. He recalls that there was a zoo in the northwest corner of the park, a memory corroborated by at least two other informants.

For Sun Wujun the immediate post-1949 period is more sombre. He writes that Zhongshan Park was taken over by the Ningbo Military Control Commission, certainly a radical change in function for the site. The journalist describes an open-air cinema which attracted large crowds, but probably in an oblique reference to the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution notes that 'other cultural activities and entertainments were sporadic and less notable' (Sun Wujun, 2012). One informant, Mrs Li, also remembered the Communist Party propaganda films shown during the late 1960s and early 70s. Tao Qizheng makes no reference to the Cultural Revolution, even though he was a 'sent down' youth, despite the fact that the park seems to have strong associations with that period, as is discussed below, and was vandalised by Red Guards when the Will Pavilion (遗嘱亭 yizhu ting), which sheltered a tablet with an inscription of Sun Yatsen's Will was destroyed. 'Zhi qing' nostalgia tends to omit references to the Red Guard movement as it has taken on negative connotations in the current era (Yang, 2003: 270).

The old city sports stadium adjoined Zhongshan Park, although they were separated by a 'wall and lanes' until these were knocked down when Zhongshan Square was completed in 1998 (Tao Qizheng, 2012; Ningbo History, 1949-2010). The new square is partly built over the old stadium, which was used for political rallies in the Mao era (Ningbo Photos, 2009: 22). Mr Wang remembered the stadium and the park as the same place, especially when recalling a tragedy at the start of the Cultural Revolution, further emphasising the link between the park and political events:

In 1966 there was a big gathering after the plenum in Beijing. A young person in front of me got killed in the crush as we tried to get out when it rained (interview with Mr Wang).

In fact 21 people were crushed to death in the stampede (Ningbo Culture, 1966-70). Mrs Li recalled that the stadium had further negative connotations as it was used for public humiliations during the Cultural Revolution (Ningbo Culture, 1966-70).

One man, Qing Xin, posted a lengthy description of what he called the Zhongshan Park 'Elderly People's Corner' on a forum for older people (Qing Xin, 2010). He is probably referring to the old tea house near the south entrance to the park, where men gather in the afternoons and engage in animated discussions (Jin Peipei, 2013). Although Qing Xin was happy to listen to the conversations and noted that there was now freedom to speak out, he himself did not join in because of bad memories of the Cultural Revolution, when people were paraded in the 'tall hat' and 'black board' and beaten. The proximity of the teahouse to where humiliations happened may have sparked painful memories. The politically toothless nature of the present day gatherings is underlined by Jin Peipei who emphasised that most of the elderly men 'held a teapot or cup in their hands, an essential item for the talking group' (Jin Peipei, 2013).

Zhongshan Park has returned to its function as a place for leisure and relaxation, but there have been changes in the kind of entertainment that is offered and the main audience for it. Tao Qizheng's account suggests that a wide age group, but especially young people, enjoyed coming to the park during the Mao era (Tao Qizheng, 2012). The activities he mentioned probably had a commercial element and would have appealed to young people and families. Now the entertainment on offer, such as the different kinds of music, is self-generated by older people and there appears to be almost no commercial activity.

Informants confirmed that the appropriation of the park by older people is a change of use. Mrs Li could remember when the park was not 'the world for the elderly' and considered this concentration of old people as a relatively new phenomenon. The change probably took place from the late 1990s and is arguably linked to the reconstruction and modernisation of the city, which led to

the rehousing of many people from the area into high rise apartments and the reduction in the number of local shared public spaces (Ningbo History, 1949-2010). As discussed in the previous section, many older people come to the park as it is a place that still holds meaning for them and where they can produce further meaning through social interaction (Tao Qizheng, 2012). The role of the park as a compensatory heterotopia in the context of changes in the city is further explored in Chapter 9.

Illustrating Foucault's second principle, changes in function have affected who has been able to access the place now known as Zhongshan Park and how it has been used for different political and leisure purposes.

Chapter 6

Principle 3: unifying incompatible sites

The third principle of Foucault's concept is that a heterotopia is able to juxtapose in one place several incompatible sites. The examples Foucault chooses to illustrate this principle, the theatre, the cinema, the garden and the carpet, draw on the imaginary and the temporal axes (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 27). The theatre and the cinema are real spaces, but they are vehicles for bringing together for a short time representations of places, rather than real places. They also allow the spectator to escape temporarily into an illusory world, something that is further explored in the final and sixth principle.

The Persian garden that Foucault describes is also illusory in that although it is a real space, it is only a symbolic representation of the four parts of the world gathered around a central pool or fountain. It allows the visitor to escape into an idealised environment where various landscapes and plant schemes are somehow brought into perfect harmony. For Foucault, the garden represents 'the totality of the world' and has been 'since the dawn of antiquity, a sort of blissful and universalizing heterotopia' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 20).

Foucault's examples, especially the garden and the carpet, and the tone of his discussion suggest that the heterotopia is a place that is successful in bringing together apparently contradictory elements into an harmonious whole. In the context of Zhongshan Park we can explore the extent to which incompatible elements exist and if and how they are brought into unity.

As described in Chapter 5, Zhongshan Park, was once a garden, but one that was very different from Foucault's Persian example. The Chinese private garden was not symmetrical, and was not built around one central point; instead it deliberately created a series of apparently incompatible spaces and contrived views, each hidden from the one before and with a different atmosphere and intention, often based on a specific poem (Cheng, 2012). Zhongshan Park, maintains key elements of a private Chinese garden, particularly the division into a series of small, intimate spaces which can operate as different 'rooms' and have various functions within the total area. This design seems to be important to the way in

which many different activities can happen simultaneously in the park, without creating tension between participants.

Observation, online accounts and interviews with informants suggest that regular visitors to the park are very aware of the different sites within the total space. Different place-making strategies can be observed which serve to avoid conflict (Cresswell, 2004: 83). This mostly happens without the intervention of any official authority figures, although the different spaces in the park are policed to some extent by two or three security men. During the study they were observed telling people to get off the grass which grows between the outer area and the central area and on one occasion preventing a man from selling or advertising what appeared to be calligraphy skills from a portfolio of photographs. Otherwise, the place-making strategies which include the negotiation of what activities occupy which spaces is left entirely to the participants themselves. The security men do not intervene and can often be observed sitting at a table at the northern edge of the outer area drinking tea or watching men play chess.

Many groups of men and some women, come to the park to play cards. A strategy for the allocation of space can be seen in the way that some card players have brought their own small bamboo tables and chairs to the park. In the later afternoon they fold these up and padlock them to the balustrade of one of the small halls in the north east corner of the park. They then return the next day to the same site for their next game. Thus a 'card area' has been 'produced' in the park, without apparently causing any disharmony with other visitors or disputes with the security staff (Pred, 1984: 279).

Probably the use of the park to perform a wide range of music is the strongest example of how the place-making strategies of the visitors enable incompatible sites to work together successfully. Jin Peipei identified three distinct types of opera as she moved around from one group to another in the central area, as well as the 'Red' songs being played in the large three-storeyed pavilion in the eastern outer area and something more akin to street dance. She makes a link between the performances in the park and a society which is happy and harmonious (Jin Peipei, 2013). In fact, occasional disputes were observed between singers and

singers and musicians, perhaps over the quality of the singing or of the accompaniment, and the issue of quality was mentioned by at least one informant:

This is the area for high quality performance – I’m a very good player. I’m still invited to give performances in Zhejiang. Over there is the pavilion – anything goes there. Inside is the opera area (interview with 61 year old musician).

This comment shows how one musician categorised the different musical activities in the park, using markers of quality to define each of three different areas and to emphasise his own superiority.

The live musicians all use amplification of varying quality and often groups perform very close to each other; as is frequently observed by visitors and online commentators it is very noisy and lively, yet the musicians seem to be able to carry on without being disturbed by each other. This is partly because the park contains many devices which provide boundaries for performances, such as balustrades around pavilions, or paved areas marked out with different stones, or grassy areas bounded by rockeries, which ensure performances can remain separate from each other. Nevertheless, the musician who defined himself as a ‘very good player’ in the extract above, also remarked that many other ‘good quality’ musicians had stopped coming to the park, so it maybe that the atmosphere is not as harmonious as it appears and the implicit boundaries do not work perfectly.

The different activities and performances, all taking place in agreed sites make the park analogous to a theatre, albeit one in which the ‘scenes’ are taking place simultaneously. It has its own internal order, through which the older people themselves unify incompatible elements in conformity with the third principle, but the park is not orderly. It has elements in common with the more disorderly heterotopia of the festival or fairground, discussed by Foucault as examples of temporal heterotopia under the fourth principle.

Chapter 7

Principle 4: breaks in time

Foucault's fourth principle is that heterotopias are linked to 'slices of time'.

Foucault characterises these as times when people find themselves 'in a sort of break with their traditional time' (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20). The word 'traditional' is ambiguous, but could be interpreted as meaning 'expected', in the sense of a break with what a person could be expected to be doing at a certain life-stage, for example if they are sent to prison. The extreme example given by Foucault is the cemetery, when time no longer exists for people.

The examples given in the description of this temporal fourth principle fall into two categories: those that are concerned with the permanent accumulation of time, such as libraries and museums; and those that are expressive of the temporary or transient, such as festivals or holidays villages (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20).

This section explores to what extent Zhongshan Park may be characterised as a temporal heterotopia in the permanent and transitory categories and thus conforms to the fourth principle.

It could be argued that in some ways Zhongshan Park is a heterotopia that has permanently accumulated time, in that it is a very old place, a type of heritage site which exhibits the history of Chinese gardens. There are several tablets with elaborate inscriptions giving the history of the site, in the style of a museum, and several informants remarked on the age of the park, suggesting that its age gives it meaning, presumably because there are very few such places left in the city. It could thus be argued that the park is valued by its users as a 'lieu de mémoire' (place of memory) in the context of a society that 'inherently values the new over the ancient, the younger over the old, the future over the past' (Nora, 1989: 12). The heterotopic accumulation of time is further emphasised through the existence of a small museum which opens onto the outer area of the park. This celebrates the life of Zhang Cangshui, a Han general who tried to resist the Manchu invaders in the 17th century.

Many visitors to the park are very elderly and the extent to which the park is a site of the crisis of old age has been discussed in Chapter 4. But other groups of people who have faced a critical 'break in time' by being made redundant, not being able to complete their education or being sent away to a remote area for many years are represented in the park. These are people born in the 1950s and 60s who may have suffered as a result of dramatic changes in Chinese society caused either by the Cultural Revolution or by 'reform and opening' or both. From their age and appearance of having very limited income, it is likely that many of the older people who gather in the afternoons to listen to the opera performances belong to this demographic. They may have been made redundant in the 1990s or simply be retired on low pensions or existing on the government minimum living allowance (Solinger, 2002; 2006a; Zeng, 2011; Naughton, 2007).

An example of a laid-off worker, aged about 60, was observed on several occasions. He explained that he comes to the park every day to support the musicians. He was made redundant about fifteen years ago, (about the time of the mass layoffs). Now he brings folding chairs, stools, food and drink on his bike and sets up a refreshment station so that the musicians can take a break. He described how several of the musicians and singers had become his friends and some were observed sitting and chatting to him during the day. Over time, this place-making strategy and the meaning he has produced in the park have arguably become a substitute for being employed (Cresswell, 2004; Pred, 1984).

The Cultural Revolution meant that many people in this demographic group lost the opportunity for any post-primary education as secondary schools and universities were closed (Spence, 2013: 551). This was confirmed through interviews with informants. Adolescents aged 16 or 17 from Ningbo who had completed middle school in the late 1960s, experienced another 'break in time' when they were 'sent down' as educated youth (知青 zhi qing) to the countryside to contribute to the rural economy. Many young people from Ningbo were sent to remote Heilongjiang, in north east China, and could not return until after 1979 when the period of 'reform and opening' began (interview with Mr Wang).

Although this period of forced exile was a 'break in time' for people, when many experienced deprivations, the phenomenon of 'zhi qing' nostalgia is expressed in Zhongshan Park (Yang, 2003). Indeed, one writer calls the park the 'epitome of 'zhi qing' culture', suggesting that the place has particular meaning for this generation (Tao Qizheng, 2012). Following their first return visit to Heilongjiang in 2004, a group of Ningbo 'zhi qing' held an exhibition in the Zhang Cangshui pavilion about their youthful experiences. When asked why this venue was chosen, a member of the group said:

Zhongshan Park was the best place to visit as a child, because of the zoo and the stadium, although we didn't go there very often. The hills, the bridges all remind you of the past. We have an art troupe of 'zhi qing'. They go to the park to perform popular Red songs (interview with Mr Wang).

This comment, postings and observation show that groups come to the park to sing 'Red' songs from the Mao era. It was common for troupes of 'zhi qing' to be formed during the Cultural Revolution to perform the model operas and other plays with officially sanctioned propaganda messages (Clark, 2012: 29). One 63 year old man said he comes to the park every so often specifically to listen to the songs. He had been sent to Heilongjiang Province for three years, and had fond memories of that time.

We just worked, chopping down trees to keep warm. We only had a radio for entertainment. There were young people there from all over China and we had a good time. Red songs are better than songs nowadays. People don't really sing anymore (63 year old male informant).

This informant suggests that during the Cultural Revolution period access to entertainment was extremely limited, but shows that the young people were able to make their own musical entertainment through group singing (Clark, 2012: 36).

Several other informants mentioned that they had learned a musical instrument at school, but with the unnatural 'break in time' that the Cultural Revolution forced on them, had stopped playing. Now they were happy to take up their hobby again and enjoyed coming to the park as a place to play and share music with others. It is unclear if local operas and all traditional instruments were completely banned during the Cultural Revolution in favour of 'approved' instruments and the small number of operas based on the Beijing style (Clark, 2012: 16). However, it is clear

that 'yue ju' is undergoing an enthusiastic revival in Zhongshan Park, supported by courses in the local adult education college (www.nblndx.com). It is the vivacity and noise of the opera and the size of the audience which attracts listeners and performers. The 'breaks in time' caused by redundancy, retirement or the Cultural Revolution have arguably created the conditions for the opera revival to flourish, perhaps as part of the 'cultural resistance' of 'zhi qing' nostalgia and a desire for live performance, as opposed to the globalised, synthetic popular culture now prevalent in China, as is discussed in Chapter 9 (Yang, 2003).

But if there is evidence of 'breaks in time' relating to life-stage crises, what kind of a temporal heterotopia is Zhongshan Park? Although there are elements of the accumulation of time, as suggested at the beginning of this section, it can also be argued that the cacophony of sound and the atmosphere, described by informants as noisy or boisterous (热闹 *renao*) or crazy (疯狂 *feng kuang*) (Jin Peipei, 2013), show that the park has aspects of the festival or fairground, examples of transient temporal heterotopias where behaviour can be less inhibited.

Foucault presents fairgrounds as empty sites with only occasional use, filled with 'stands, displays, heteroclite objects, wrestlers, snake women and fortune tellers' (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20). Zhongshan Park has a comparable range of entertaining 'acts', but with the difference that they happen every day. However, they are transient in that they end abruptly in the late afternoon when the older people leave to go home.

Zhongshan Park can thus be conceptualised as a daily festival that takes place in an historic site, where many participants are people who are likely to have experienced critical 'breaks in time' due to changes in China caused by the Cultural Revolution and 'reform and opening'. In this way, Zhongshan Park conforms to Foucault's fourth principle of heterotopia, having elements of both the permanent and the transient 'heterochronisms' (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20).

Chapter 8

Principle 5: a system of opening and closing

Foucault's fifth principle is concerned with the boundaries that make heterotopias into distinct places. He states that '[h]eterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20). This means that heterotopias have boundaries, which isolate them, but these can be penetrated by people who belong in some way or have a right to access the heterotopic space inside the boundary.

Heterotopias are not conceived as fully, open public spaces; in order to enter the visitor must conform to certain conditions. These may be related to overt rules, as in the examples of the prison or barracks; to rites, as in religious or health related places, such as ritual baths or saunas; or to more subtle or covert exclusions, where the visitor may have only the illusion of full entry (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 21). This last category is relevant to Zhongshan Park in that as a public space the park is simple to penetrate, yet to be completely accepted by the groups that occupy it one needs to cross barriers linked to age, language and behaviour.

It could be argued that Zhongshan Park does not appear to conform to the fifth principle, in that it does not open and close in accordance with Foucault's defining statement. Although it has physical boundaries, which separate it from adjacent spaces, such as rockeries, bridges and waterways and can only be entered via narrow paths, it is a fully accessible public space and anyone can go there. It is distinct from Gulou to the south and from the adjoining open plaza of Zhongshan Square to the east, but it is not controlled by security gates nor is a ticket required to enter, as with many Chinese heritage sites designated as 'scenic spots' (Nyíri 2011:54).

Nevertheless, Zhongshan Park seems to have what younger informant, Mia, called 'entry criteria' in that it mainly attracts a distinct demographic of people over 60, many of whom seem to be relatively badly off in terms of income. This seems to exert a powerful psychological effect on other demographic groups and possibly more affluent income groups who do not go there. It could thus be argued that the

park conforms to Foucault's statement that some heterotopias 'look like pure and simple openings, but that, generally, conceal curious exclusions' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 21).

The park is in effect a work unit within the city centre (Naughton, 2007:117). It has a set of rules on display at the south entrance path and security guards in attendance. But just as officialdom does not seem to be responsible for how sites are allocated for different activities, as discussed in Chapter 6, neither is it responsible for how the space operates in reality to exclude or include. For example, the written rules prohibit commercial activity or hawking, yet on several occasions migrant workers cleaning shoes were observed in the inner area, successfully selling their services to the elderly people there.

Once again, it seems to be the older people themselves and their place-making strategies that set the heterotopic boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Young people in fashionable clothing can be observed in the park, but they use its pathways simply as a thoroughfare to get from Gulou to Zhongshan Square. They move directly through, skirting the large groups of elderly people and ignoring the musical or other activity. When asked about Zhongshan Park, a 25 year old female informant said:

It would feel strange to go there. Old people take up all the space and they are very noisy. I used to study in a library near a similar park and I found the opera very disturbing; I don't like it. [...] I would go to Yinzhou Park with my boyfriend because it has more mixed age groups and it's modern (interview with Linyue).

This extract shows how a young person feels excluded by the physical presence of the old people and the 'noise' of the opera. Her opinion is in strong contrast with the way the old people talk enthusiastically about the 'lively' atmosphere (Jin Peipei, 2013). The young person's preference is for the 'modern' location of Yinzhou Park within Ningbo's business district. As another young male informant suggested, the term 'modern' may refer to the different ideology now prevalent:

The older people in the park have lived through a time of group ideology. Young people today only know urbanised, city life and they live more individualized lives. They can't identify with the group mentality of the older people in the park (interview with Xiaoming).

In Yinzhou Park younger visitors and families use different place-making strategies; they allocate private space for themselves through erecting tents. This is different from the behaviour of the elderly people in Zhongshan Park who seem to want to be as physically close as possible to each other. However, it could be argued that the elderly people also use place-making strategies to appropriate space for their exclusive use, albeit without the help of consumer products. For example, observation showed that every day several groups always sat in the same place in the Will Pavilion, making it difficult for any outsiders to penetrate their circle.

Language may be another hidden factor which works to exclude and include people at the park. Jin Peipei emphasises the friendly and accommodating nature of the musicians who will accompany any singer, but like Tao Qizheng, she is presumably local and experiences no language barrier, unlike some elderly informants from other parts of China who remarked that they could not understand the local Ningbo dialect (Jin Peipei, 2013; Tao Qizheng, 2012). Conversation with informants in the park revealed that most spoke Ningbo dialect and had only limited Putonghua, which would make communication difficult for visitors or migrants who spoke either Putonghua or one of the other seven to ten mutually unintelligible major dialects that make up the 'Chinese' language (Thøgersen, 2006:111). This may mean that outsiders cannot access the full meaning of what is produced in the park and are reduced to the status of spectators. Mia, who lives in Ningbo with her parents, who come from Shandong, explained that even if her parents wanted to come to the park, they would not be able to understand the conversation or the opera and would therefore feel excluded.

Conforming to Foucault's fifth principle, Zhongshan Park has a system of inclusion and exclusion, although this is not created by simple openings. It is the presence of the older people in the park and their place-making strategies, including where they sit, their close proximity, their language and their activities that create the heterotopic boundaries.

Chapter 9

Principle 6: relational to all other spaces

The final principle of heterotopias as described by Foucault is that they have, 'in relation to the rest of space, a function' (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 21). This relational characteristic, which can only be fully understood by contrasting the heterotopia with the space outside it, is seen by some commentators as the key to understanding Foucault's idea (Sohn, 2008: 44; Hetherington, 1997: 51). It is thus the relational function of heterotopias, their role as a counter-site which is most important, and helps us to understand why they exist.

Foucault illustrates the sixth principle through examples between two extremes that are either illusory or compensatory. Illusory heterotopias expose other places as even more illusory, while compensatory heterotopias are places arranged according to rules of perfection which contrast with the difficulties and imperfections of all other sites. The illusory example is a brothel, functioning as a counter-site to an unhappy relationship, which exposes the hypocrisy of bourgeois marriage and society. The compensatory examples are newly created colonies which arrange society in an idealised form, both spatially and in terms of daily routine. These are the closest Foucault comes to the concept of utopia, but as the Puritan and Jesuit colonies he describes actually existed, they remain heterotopian rather than utopian (Dehaene and Decauter, 2008: 22).

This section explores how Zhongshan Park is relational to the places that surround it, and how it can be characterised as a heterotopia of compensation, rather than illusion. As this is arguably the guiding principle of the six, discussion will return to some of the ideas covered in previous sections.

Most of the sources used for this research, including interviews with informants, offer limited direct commentary on Zhongshan Park's relational function to other places in Ningbo, and thus why it is particularly attractive to older people. An exception is Sun Wujun who comments that 'amid so many choices around the city, people still prefer Zhongshan Park as it has witnessed their youthful passion and happiness' (Sun Wujun, 2012).

This comment suggests there are many new 'choices' or modern developments in the city, but at the same time acknowledges that these are not places with meaning for people who are now old, as they do not resonate with memories of their youth, nor are they able to impose their own place-making strategies on them, unlike in Zhongshan Park. The kinds of new places in the city which are popular with younger people are the shopping malls, cinemas, KTV establishments and 'modern' parks, such as Yinzhou Park. As explored in Chapter 4, many of the old people in Zhongshan Park cannot access these new places because they are arguably in a state of crisis, that is they are physically frail or simply too poor to be able to act as consumers. Their appearance is in marked contrast to the youthful images of perfection presented in the ubiquitous advertisements displayed in the city. Many of the new places require constant mobility. For example, there are very few places to sit down in the shopping malls, except inside a restaurant, café or shop and entry to these requires money. Other new places in the city, such as the station, are also spaces of transit, to be passed through; they are not devised to enable people to engage in extended place-making strategies.

Augé has extended the space/place dialectic through his concept of the 'non-places of supermodernity', which he contrasts with 'anthropological places'. The latter are meaningful because they are socially relational, historical and concerned with identity, while non-places lack all three characteristics (Augé, 1995: 54). 'Non-place' is useful in theorising why Zhongshan Park is relational to other places in Ningbo, using Foucault's sense of 'relational' to mean different or contrasting, rather than Augé's socially linked.

The contrast between place and non-place is helpful in explaining why Zhongshan Park is visited by so many old people, many of whom once lived nearby and have memories of the park from their childhood and youth. It could be argued that the park is compensatory in that it helps the older people recover a sense of their own identity and history in a city which has changed beyond recognition. For the older people, it is an 'anthropological' place, in contrast to the many non-places which can now be found in the city.

Another informant also offered some insight into the relational nature of Zhongshan Park in terms of its role as a compensatory heterotopia.

She said that in old days in 1980s or so, as she can remember, because there used to be teahouses, and these old people who have retired, they can gather in the teahouses to talk, whatever of interest and also they can have such chats in the courtyards of their own houses (interview with Mrs Li).

This extract suggests that the gathering of older people in Zhongshan Park relates to the loss of social spaces for them in the city, specifically local and accessible teahouses, and to changes in their style of housing, which followed the reconstruction of the city from the 1980s onwards (Ningbo History, 1949-2010). Courtyard housing allowed casual social exchange between the different families that lived around the internal courtyards. Now, as another elderly informant explained, people go inside their apartment and shut the door and there are fewer opportunities to meet. The older people who meet regularly at Zhongshan Park in the seating area of the Will Pavilion appear to reconstruct the intimate spaces of traditional Chinese courtyard housing, sitting closely together in the same places, bringing snacks and drinks, greeting friends and overcoming feelings of isolation by enjoying the company of their peers (Yang and Volkerman, 2010: 211). One elderly woman offered pieces of paper to protect our clothes when sitting down for an interview, as if the area was her own home. Although they are not creating an idealised, perfect, environment, in the sense of one of Foucault's colonies, the elderly people are arguably using place-making strategies which compensate for elements of the life-style they have lost and which they valued.

It could be argued that the park offers compensatory routines for people who have experienced 'breaks in time' through redundancy or retirement, particularly the many men who gather to listen to opera in the afternoons or take part in debates around the teahouse. The man, who had been made redundant, described in Chapter 7, certainly seemed to find compensation in his new routine of coming to the park every day to listen to the opera and provide refreshments for the performers.

Some musicians and opera singers maybe compensating for the 'breaks in time' they suffered during the Cultural Revolution (Clark, 2012; Yang, 2003). Several musicians remarked that they had 'stopped playing' instruments they had learned at school, because these were banned during the Cultural Revolution. Within the

compensatory heterotopia of Zhongshan Park they are able to take up their hobby again and regain self-esteem from the appreciation of the large audience. The revival of the opera could also be interpreted as an attempt to reconnect with something that is viewed as authentically local, in contrast to the globalised, synthetic entertainment available on TV and on the many screens playing in the 'non-places' of the new city (Augé, 1995).

As we saw in Chapter 7, Zhongshan Park is a repository for 'zhi qing' nostalgia. This factor differentiates it from the political space outside the park where the current official line is that the Cultural Revolution was 'ten years of great disaster' (十年浩劫 *shi nian hao jie*) (Pye, 1986: 597). This means that there are limited opportunities for people who were young in the late 1960s and 70s to express their positive feelings about that period. For example, in 2012 in the context of the arrest and trial of Bo Xilai, Premier Wen Jiabao said that the Chongqing 'model' where Bo encouraged the singing of Red songs, must be crushed because it risked another Cultural Revolution (Kenny, 2012).

Zhongshan Park seems to provide a heterotopic space for 'zhi qing', to remember and salvage something positive from a period which those in power in China have decided should be forgotten. In relation to the rest of the city, the park has become a place of compensation, where 'zhi qing' can recreate the camaraderie of performing in a group that they experienced when 'sent down' (Clark, 2012). Their nostalgia about this part of the Cultural Revolution perhaps expresses their 'cultural resistance' to what they perceive as the negative elements of post-reform China, with its emphasis on individual wealth as opposed to collective identity (Yang, 2003).

Conforming to Foucault's sixth principle, the park is relational to other spaces and can be defined as a compensatory heterotopia, where older people use place-making strategies to produce meanings that relate to their own experiences, both now and in the past.

Chapter 10

Final discussion and conclusions

Limitations of the research

The research was undertaken over a short period of time and could only collect limited data. While every effort has been made to ensure that interpretations are trustworthy, a longer period of observation and more interviews, especially with women in the park, would increase validity (Stiles, 1993). The oldest women were very reluctant to talk to strangers, especially if they were alone and, as a result, more men than women were interviewed. This was overcome to some extent by interviewing women singers and ensuring that women were the focus of additional observation.

It is likely that informants were guarded in giving information to a foreigner. More time in the park would have allowed greater trust and rapport to be built, and some informants might have revealed more information. As an outsider, I was able to maintain objectivity, but this meant that I may have misinterpreted the significance of some cultural behaviour. Probably the greatest weakness in the research was the language barrier. The necessity of using an interpreter meant that information was inevitably filtered and important nuances of language and tone were lost. However, because of the prevalence of local dialects, working with an interpreter is the norm in China, especially for short periods of fieldwork; the interpreter also became very sensitive to the aims of the research, which reduced communication problems (Thøgersen, 2006: 111; Solinger, 2006b: 163).

As a case study the research has limited generalizability (Bryman, 2008: 391). The validity of the interpretations would be improved by comparing them to similar studies of older people in Chinese parks or other public spaces, especially where the concept of heterotopia has framed the research.

Conclusions

This study suggests that Zhongshan Park has elements that come from all three of the 'axes' which can be used to group Foucault's examples of heterotopia (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 27). It is an anthropological heterotopia, because

a particular demographic group gathers there; it is a temporal heterotopia, as an heritage site and thus an historical accumulator of time, but also as a site with the characteristics of the transient festival; finally, and most importantly, as an accessible cultural space it is an imaginary heterotopia which provides compensation for experiences, spaces and values which have been lost or are no longer acknowledged in contemporary China.

The sense of place produced in Zhongshan Park by older people to a large extent conforms to Foucault's concept of heterotopia. Zhongshan Park provides evidence of each of the six principles of Foucault's heterotopology. It is a place where old people, especially old men congregate; some of the old people are in a crisis of frailty, poor health, poverty and isolation. They can be defined as deviant as they are not consumers in a society where consumption is increasingly the norm. The function of the park has changed over time, from a private garden to a public park; it no longer functions overtly as a political site, although it could be argued that the 'zhi qing' nostalgia expressed there is a political statement. Old men discuss current affairs but they are politically powerless. Physical traces of political activity in the adjoining old stadium have been lost with the construction of Zhongshan Square, although older people still have memories of this. Use of the park has shifted from families and young people to predominately older people, probably as a result of the reconstruction of the city from the 1990s, the destruction of courtyard style housing and the loss of accessible social spaces for this age group.

The park has a shared purpose of enjoyment and relaxation which brings together many different and incompatible activities into a workable unity. The older people's place-making strategies impose an internal order, although the park is not orderly. 'Breaks in time' are represented in the park, such as redundancy, retirement and those brought about by the Cultural Revolution. As an historical site, the park is an accumulator of time, while the daily activity has elements of the transient festival. The park has boundaries, which exclude and include through age, language and behaviour and not by simple physical openings. Finally, it is relational as a counter-site to the spaces and places that surround it, especially those 'non-places' which promote aspirational consumerism, based on global capitalism (Augé, 1995).

The study brought together two theories, the construction of place and heterotopia. Using the frame of Foucault's heterotopology to code the data showed the power of the older people in producing the sense of place in the park. This was particularly the case for the principles of unifying incompatibilities and creating boundaries. The older people's actions, behaviour and language rather than any official authority allocated spaces for different activities and produced the implicit inclusions and exclusions observable in the park.

However, the first principle, that the park is a heterotopia of crisis and deviation does not fully describe the sense of place produced in Zhongshan Park. As discussed, there is plenty of evidence of poverty, ill health and stress, but there is also evidence of enjoyment, relaxation, tolerance and mutual support through social networks which build and share social capital (Putnam, 1995; Rojek, 2005). This essential function of the park for older people is not fully represented in Foucault's concept, perhaps because the positive idea of 'collective idleness', as an important element of adult life, is not part of western thinking (Chua, 1997).

Foucault defines heterotopias as counter-sites, 'effectively realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008: 17). This definition emphasises the relational quality of heterotopias and their ability to challenge, disturb and subvert the established 'order of things' and to act as a contrast to the sameness of the spaces outside and show a reverse side of society (Sohn, 2008: 44).

Zhongshan Park is a counter-site in that the very concentration of older people makes it completely different from other places in Ningbo which tend to either reflect the full range of ages or attract younger people with the resources to be consumers. The fact that older people seem to have power in the park also inverts the established order in contemporary Chinese cities, and suggests that the park is a kind of 'effectively realized utopia' for older people. It could be argued that it has such meaning because it is socially relational, historical and concerned with identity (Augé, 1995: 54).

The park is a site of entertainment, but the norms of modern China, with the emphasis on globalised, homogenised popular culture are subverted. In Zhongshan Park, the cultural forms of entertainment are imperfectly self-generated, with authentic local forms of opera dominating. Some cultural forms, such as the singing of 'Red' songs as part of 'zhi qing' nostalgia also contest the established political narrative.

Zhongshan Park inverts the quintessential sites of contemporary Chinese cities, such as shopping malls, hotel lobbies or stations, which represent the aspirations and idealised perfection of globalised consumerism. It has small, intimate spaces that invite people to sit down and linger. People eat their own food, they move slowly or not at all, and there is little or no commerce. The older people's outward appearance is unfashionable and physically imperfect. The imaginary 'landscape' that is evoked through the rockeries, pavilions and waterways is that of the past and not of the globalised future.

It could be argued that the sense of place constructed by older people in Zhongshan Park contests other sites. Their behaviour is resistant to the values of global capitalism outside the park and suggests that other values have a place and importance: social capital; conviviality; group ideology; self-generated entertainment; communication and debate; toleration of difference, illness and disability; remembrance of the past. However, although the park may subvert and disturb and provide compensation for its visitors, there is no hope that the social order that is manifested there could exist outside its boundaries. It is a different space, but it holds no 'promise or space of liberation' from the march of global capitalism that continues relentlessly outside (Johnson, 2006: 87).

Future research

The methodology of this research could be applied to other Zhongshan Parks in different Chinese cities or to different kinds of parks or cultural spaces in China where older people gather. Further research could explore variations in the importance of the park as a heterotopia according to gender. This would improve the validity of the interpretations and offer new and contrasting case studies with further evidence of the importance of cultural spaces in Chinese cities which

empower and meet the social needs of marginalised groups, rather than only those of young and affluent consumers.

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