Trialectics of Spatiality: The Negotiation Process between Winter Swimmers and the Municipal Government of Beijing

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Abstract: Different cultural groups establish different usage habits while using public spaces and there are contradictions between them. For instance, the issue of whether Beijing's public waters can be used as winter swimming spaces is controversial. Based on Edward William Soja's Trialectics of Spatiality, we analysed the literature analysis, semi-structured interviews and participatory observations to conduct the survey, and the following conclusions were drawn. First, the contradictions between winter swimmers and public water administrators in Beijing are divided into three stages, and the turning points of these stages are based on the changes in Secondspace. Second, after three rounds of gradual progress in the Trialectics of Spatiality, Firstspace not only preserves the winter swimming areas for Beijingers but also avoids the current contradictions due to different usages of public waters between different subjects. Third, winter swimmers and urban managers may not be aware of the potential contradictions of public waters in the future without using Soja's concept of Thirdspace (or Lefebvre's concept of "representation of space").

Keywords: winter swimming; the trialectics of spatiality; open waters; municipal government

1. Introduction

The origin of this study comes from a scene seen in a field survey. It was in the middle of winter and happened in the old city of Beijing. Many swimmers broke the ice surface of Shichahai Lake, and then swan in the lake. And next to it stood a warning sign that said: "no swimming". This is my first impression of winter swimming: I admired the courage of the winter swimmers, not only for their courage to jump into the ice-cold water but also because they continue to keep the habit year after year in this "prohibited and illegal state". There are many activists of winter swimming in Beijing. For a long time, winter swimmers' illegal, repeated swimming activities have been a "hard nut to crack" for the municipal government. In 2020, however, something good happened for the swimmers. The authority lifted the complete prohibition on swimming in public waters and designated several legal sites for winter swimming. I started paying attention to the whole process which has led to this article.

Different people have different usage habits of urban open waters, so there will be conflicts of interest. This paper focuses on the contradictions between winter swimmers, other users and administrators of open waters in Beijing. Winter swimming is swimming in cold water (usually below 10 °C) in open waters (or in open-air swimming areas) in winter [1]. As an extreme activity, it can represent a kind of winter sports spirit of "challenge our own limits" and "challenge nature". Still, winter swimming has several safety concerns. For example, swimmers who swim in water below 16 °C may suffer from hypothermia, resulting in injury or death [2]. Therefore, the government simply banned winter swimming in natural waters, so swimmers resisted the prohibition in various ways. In addition, some residents living near open waters boycotted winter swimming for different reasons. Therefore, the municipal government needs to coordinate the contradictions between the two groups.

The contradictions between different users of public waters in Beijing have turned into contradictions between winter swimmers and the municipal government. Their relationship can be divided into three stages. From the 1950s to 2002, winter swimming flourished in Beijing. At that time, there were no restrictions on winter swimming in open waters, and residents living near waters did not begin to boycott winter swimming. The second stage is from 2002 to 2020. In 2002, Beijing introduced a new regulation of open waters, which completely prohibits swimming in open waters in parks. This is because Beijing is a water-deficient city, and the regeneration rate of the natural waters is slow, so bathing or swimming in waters would pollute them. During this stage, a "cat-and-mouse game" started between winter swimmers and the municipal government. From the autumn of 2020 to the present is the third stage. In 2020, the Beijing Winter Swimming Association and Beijing Urban River and Lake Authority reached an agreement to designate eight open waters as legal sites for winter swimming in the Beijing urban area.

Actually, the contradictions between winter swimmers and the municipal government in Beijing are contradictions between people's habits of using public waters. Including rivers, lakes, artificial canals and adjacent oceans, public waters are both public resources and aesthetic landscapes in the city [3]. In some cases, it can be transformed into a kind of public space. On the one hand, the usage habits of public waters include different forms; on the other hand, they also include the allocation and management of the right to use public water resources [4]. All of these can reflect the complex and subtle interaction between urban waters and cultural, political, social and symbolic environments [5]. As a kind of resource, waters are scarce, and as landscapes, they are subjective [6]. Just like what happens in public space, the subjects of habits with different power relations and different usage requirements often lead to different contradictions of habits inevitably while using the waters [7]. Whether this contradiction can be solved well directly affects the sustainable use of waters. Hence, the governance of different habits is a very important issue in water governance.

We try to apply Edward Soja's Trialectics of Spatiality to analyse the changing process of contradictions between winter swimmers and the municipal government in Beijing. In other words, the contradictions have gone through three stages: from "no contradictions" to "multiple contradictions" and then to "resolving the contradictions". During the process of coordination or opposites of contradictions in these three stages, the results not only helped to promote winter swimming as a "sports for all" habit in the city but also reasonably avoided the negative externalities of winter swimming in public waters. The significance of our research is to emphasise pluralistic negotiations in urban management: There are new contradictions in every city; as long as the government and users of public resources continue negotiating and improving the management regulations of public space, we can manage the urban public space in a better way.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Habit of Practices in Public Space

Whether in Western or non-Western modern cities, public space always plays a central role in social relations and interactions. Here, the term "public space" is conventionally understood as a space that all members of society can enter freely without restriction: Its concrete physical form is a kind of non-enclosed space in the city such as parks, squares, streets, community open space, waterfront, etc. [8–10]. These spaces constitute the framework of urban space and build a stage for social interactions and relations in modern cities. In the traditions of Western cities, expressing democratic aspirations and political ideals has usually been the basic function of public space [11]. Public space is regarded as a presentation of civic cultures [12]. Meanwhile, there are considerable social meanings buried in the physical form of public space: it is a space for encountering, socializing and communicating, which gives the potential to assemble different groups and identities [11,13]. In other words, public space integrates different actions, perspectives, identities and meanings. In essence, public space is a product of everyday politics and broader social and cultural

transformations [14–17]. However, in some non-Western cities (such as cities in China), public space may not have the normative values conceived in the West, but continuous constructions of social relations and meanings are built in extensive uses, possessions and contentions conducted by multiple subjects and social and cultural groups. During these processes, their rights to public space are defined. In short, based on relational histories and mutual implications between cities and places, public space's constitution to its power to affect society has become an important resource for individuals and communities in everyday life [18].

The practice of public space is the process of using and making public space by different subjects. In order to meet their own needs and interests, different cultural groups set specific ways of practical use of public space to meet their own needs and interests. As a result, their ideologies, emotions and meanings are engraved on public landscapes, achieving their purpose of place making. As Christensen and Mikkelsen believe, public space is "always contested and imbued with social meaning" [19]. Sometimes, different practices in the same public space are at peace with each other. Such inclusiveness, accessibility or public ownership constitute the publicity of public space [20]. However, there are also competitions or exclusions in public space: the practice of public space is full of uncertainty and internal contradictions due to conflicting presentations, ideologies or powers of subjects who are taking, using and making the space [21]. Abundant studies on public space emphasise this moment of exclusion, conflict and struggle [22–24], such as the conflict between buskers and pedestrians in the streets [25]; the competitions between square dancers and other square users in community open space, etc. [26]. The social construction of social relations, cultural meanings and powers in public space is constantly produced in coexisting or incompatible practices [27].

When the practice of public space becomes a repetitive pattern, the usage habit of space is formed. Habit touches the core of how we understand the continuity of practice in public space. For subjects who are taking, using and making urban space, habit is not only an immediate action; it is a recurring pattern of behaviour [28,29]. Many scholars associate habits with "behaviour" and believe that automatic, unthinking and repetitive behaviours are habits [30]. However, Dewsbury and some scholars believe that habit is not limited to the "conditioned" type of patterned behaviour, it rather implies a disposition process through which we gain sense, understanding and awareness [31]. Specific habits include all perceiving, cognising, imagining, recalling, judging, conceiving and reasoning [32–34]. The consideration such as "what can we do in public spaces" is a mode of attitude, definition or redefinition process of usage habits that we need to pay close attention to while we are investigating public space. In the perspective of habit, contradictions of spatial practices become contradictions between the usage habits of public space. Then public space is reconfigured and negotiated in the interaction of different subjects through repeated habit conflicts [35].

In some cases, the contradictions between usage habits of public space can be transformed into the contradictions between regulations and habits. It is precisely for the incompatible condition of competition and exclusion happening in public space that the regulatory system is designed by managers and administrators [36]. The goal is to achieve rationalisation and acceptable regulation [11]. Usage habits of public space begin to be restricted under particular regulations and governance: even parks which seem to be apparently free remain under the control of administering authority or street office [27]. At the same time, usage habits of public space are also limited by functions designated by architects, landscape architects and urban planners [37]. Under the neoliberal urban policy, some cities prioritise the profit and financial benefits brought by a space when they are making their public space regulations [38]. For example, motivated by objectives of city beautification, attracting the wealthy class and private investors, "exclusion zones" which are used to keep marginalised groups such as the poor, the homeless or street vendors out of public space have been constructed during the course of construction, maintenance and policing in parks, streets, waterfront and plazas [39–41]. In the competitions of different

subjects for public space, regulators choose their side and decide who is the "winner" by formulating and promulgating regulations and carrying out administrative management accordingly. The habits that meet regulatory requirements are regarded as grounding norms and conventions. However, some preexisting habits or behaviours accustomed to the past, such as street vending [22,42], are regarded as bad habits that cause chaos and undermine the dominant vision of urban dominant visions of security, civility and modernity.

2.2. Public Waters: A Kind of Public Space?

Public waters include open water bodies (areas) with publicness in cities, such as rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs or non-private ponds. They have the function of providing public water supply for residents, so it needs to be managed reasonably. Sustainable water use also focuses on social equity. There are two main decision-making methods for public water management. The use of public waters is closely related to residents' living quality [43]. In a city, if the locations and numbers of public waters are fixed, the main issue that the government has to manage is their quantity and quality. The first decision-making model of public waters management is neoliberal; the private sector should supply the quantity and quality of urban public waters. From the types of people satisfied by the supply side, we can see the relationships between different groups of people in the city. If these relationships are handled well, it can increase the cohesion among residents; otherwise, it will lead to new conflicts between different groups of people. Zwarteveen advocates that the use of urban public waters should be democratic in decision-making, fair in use, and open and inclusive in the concept of utilisation [44]. Mehta studied public waters in Ghaziabad of India, and he concluded that the way urban waters are used is controlled by discourses about society, nature and matter. The mainstream planning set by the government has had a negative impact on the suburban waterscape, which deprives the poor living in suburban areas of the use of waters [45]. In most cases, such as Beijing, the second model follows. In this mode, the government decides the quality standards of public waters and then makes them achieve the standards by restricting the use pattern and purchasing water quality improvement services. Currently, the laws that can be complied with in water pollution control in Beijing include The Water Law of PRC revised in 2016 [46] and the Regulations of Beijing Municipality on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution (2010) [47]. One of the Beijing Municipal Water Authority's businesses tests the water quality of open waters and monitors the effects of sewage treatment of 63 state-owned sewage treatment works with Beijing's Environmental Protection Bureau [48]. In addition, they are also responsible for the governance of the use of waters, including the governance of winter swimming. Regardless, there are contradictions among water users and suppliers. Therefore, it is necessary to explore a new management method to resolve these contradictions.

Public well-being can be enhanced by using urban open waters properly. Public waters can be used in a variety of ways, such as landscaping, boating, sporting, etc. These activities can both enhance the quality of life of city dwellers and benefit people's health [49]. White et al. take open waters as a kind of urban "blue space" and point out that public waters with adequate quality can make a huge contribution to people's well-being both physically and emotionally [50]. Therefore, we divide public well-being which can be enhanced by public waters into three categories. The first type is economic wealth. If people can "take the waters" voluntarily, waters can bring utilities [51]. Then, waterfront space can become a place that brings happiness to people [52]. The second type is social wealth. Waters are spaces for urban residents to engage in social activities. Especially when urban leisure and tourism have developed to a certain extent, the kinds of group activities relying on waters are increasingly rich. As the opportunities for contact and understanding increase in group activities, waters have become a stage for social interaction [53], enhancing the spiritual well-being of the city [54]. Foley investigates swimming in Irish waters and believes that the community of swimmers is a new form of society [55]. Cultural wealth is the third type of well-being. Kinder looks at cultural events such as hippie activities, queer

parties, Pride Parade, Queen's Day pleasure boating and the Canal Festival on Amsterdam's canals. He finds that people enriched their cultural identities by turning public waters into performance spaces [56]. Therefore, cultural vitality is also a dimension to evaluate the sustainability of water use.

In some cases, public waters can be considered a type of public space. On one hand, as stated in the previous paragraph, while gaining social wealth and cultural wealth, encounters, social interactions, identities construction and opinion expressions happen on (or under) the water, which endues with publicness which is "constituted by situated rules, self-management, and rituals of interactions" to public waters [27]. It could be argued that when urban public waters are used in an "accessible" way such as playing, boating, sailing, surfing, swimming or water-partying, these activities bring public nature of public nature into public waters. Different water usage habits in the same water area will produce competitions, conflicts and exclusions inevitably, just as happened in streets and squares. On the other hand, more importantly, public waters can also be a type of place to cultivate, recognise and respect social diversity and democratic civic spirit [57]. As James Joyce, the founder of postmodern literature, writes in his work of *Ulysses*: "its universality: its democratic equality and constancy to its nature in seeking its own level . . . its properties for cleansing, quenching thirst and fire, nourishing vegetation . . . its docility in working hydraulic millwheels, turbines, dynamos, electric power stations, bleach works, tanneries, scutch mills: Its utility in canals, rivers, if navigable, floating and graving docks" [58]. It is a stage for some social or cultural groups to resist the regulations and rules in it, so as to achieve their vision and goal of free public participation and expression [59]. Failure to achieve these goals often led to protests by specific groups fighting for their rights, as in the 1960s, when African Americans protested against segregation of public waters in some US states [60]. Social activists in Kingston, Canada, fight against the privatisation of water by swimming in public waters to achieve the goal of "reclaiming public waters" [61]. Conflicts between habits of different subjects or incompatibility between existing habits and regulations are two main contradictions in the usage of public waters.

To sum up, contradictions in public waters focus on the nature of public supply and public space. One is the competition between the usage habits of different subjects when public waters are used as public spaces. The other is the conflict between the function of public supply and the nature of public space in some cases. In addition, the involvement of administrators and their regulation making leads to incompatibility between habits and rules and governances. Therefore, it is necessary to explore a reasonable way to manage habits in public waters. We use the case of winter swimming in Beijing to illustrate the way.

2.3. The Trialectics of Spatiality

The Trialectics of Spatiality used in our research is proposed by Henri Lefebvre, the father of Marxist critical urban theory [62]. Lefebvre thinks that social ontology and epistemology must be reconstructed, that is, by adding a third dimension of "spatiality" together with historicality and sociality. On this basis, Lefebvre puts forward his famous spatial triad which includes representations of space and representational space in parallel with spatial practices. Lefebvre's epistemology of space has broken the traditional way of thinking about the dualism of material space and spiritual space. It regards the material, spiritual and social space as an integral whole [63]. Furthermore, Edward Soja, Lefebvre's student, develops his Trialectics of Spatiality. Lefebvre divides space into three categories: Perceived Space, Conceived Space and Lived Space. In addition, Soja renamed these three spaces as Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace.

Figure 1 reflects the analysis of three levels of space analyses by the Trialectics of Spatiality. Firstspace belongs to two aspects: perception and action in space. It comes from the direct communication between people and space. Users of space produce and reproduce space through (creatively or conventionally) using, controlling, transforming and other actions. Secondspace belongs to the aspects of conception; it is conceived in the concept of space, resulting from the representation of human's thoughtful consideration of

space in a spiritual or a cognitive form [64]. It manifests as a space in which planners and municipal government distribute their knowledge and power, showing their dominance over social orders. Thirdspace is an aspect of lives and experiences in which realities and imaginations are mixed. It expresses mixed social norms, values and experiences of the users (habitual actors) and governors in the space [65]; it is flowing and vivid and has a kind of either-either openness [66]. In this sense, it is full of contradictions and struggles, emphasising the relationship between governance, obedience or resistance, and has the mystery of the subconscious and the limited knowability [67]. It is a kind of living space that people try to take and make into actual experience.
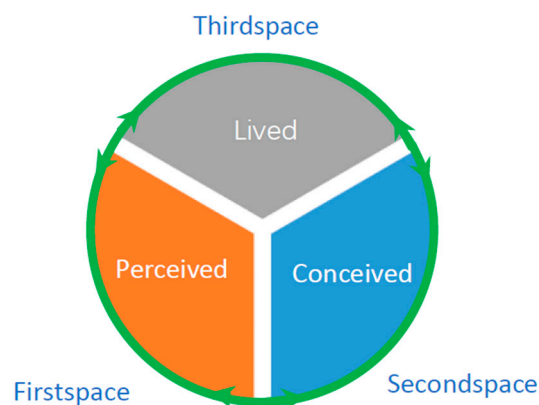
Figure 1. The Trialectics of Spatiality.

The Trialectics of Spatiality provides an approach for understanding the management negotiation process of open waters. There is a dialectical relationship between the three spaces. Firstspace is the transition zone between Secondspace and Thirdspace: Firstspace is the basis for producing Secondspace; conversely, it is controlled by the orders in Secondspace, and it also permeates into Thirdspace [68]. Secondspace always has the dominant power; it controls and influences Thirdspace and Firstspace: the order in Secondspace affects the form of Firstspace through practices, while its ideas penetrate Thirdspace, partly affecting the living space [69]. Thirdspace is the perception and embodiment of the result of a social relationship after Firstspace. David Harvey believes that the role of Thirdspace is to constantly conflict with Firstspace and Secondspace, thus forcing people to change the way of practice in their Firstspace to establish a new conceptual model of Secondspace [70]. In other words, the emerging new ideas in Thirdspace continue to oppose the existing ideas in Secondspace. It contains new contradictions and new forms that constantly appear in our daily life; using resistance or transcendence, it brings deconstructions and tentative reconstructions on Firstspace and Secondspace as a whole. A new open choice that is both similar and different from the former has been created from it. Such an analysis emphasises the struggles and compromises that set the stage. It would show us how the usage habits and regulations of public waters are repeatedly negotiated, and help us explore more public water management possibilities. The dialectical unification relations of Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace are a spiralling transcendence. This "retrospective progress" provides ideas for us to understand the spatial pattern change of winter swimming in Beijing.

3. Research Area and Method

3.1. Research Area

Our study area includes all public waters in the urban area of Beijing. Including natural waters like rivers, lakes and ponds, as well as artificial ones such as canals, moats and pools, these public waters provide drinking, ecological, tourism, landscape, recreational and other functions for different subjects in Beijing.

We picked 12 water areas as our survey sites, mainly including the water areas where winter swimmers swim, partly legal swimming areas, and partly winter swimmers' habitual water spots where swimming is illegal (see Table 1). Since our survey was conducted after 24 September 2020 (the day legal swimming areas were designated), most winter swimming activities were restricted in the eight legal water areas. Therefore, we mainly investigated the winter swimmers in these legal waters. Surprisingly, we still found that there are still a small number of swimmers swimming in some illegal areas. These places have also historically been the site of conflicts between administrators and winter swimmers. So, we also investigated some "illegal" habitual swimming areas. In addition, reservoirs and drinking water supply channels are not within the scope of our investigation. The reason is that these waters, such as the Jingmi Diversion channel, have been surrounded by railings and cannot be accessed. Winter swimming behaviours have gone extinct in these places.

Table 1. Survey sites.

Survey Sites	Category of the Waters	The Legality for Winter Swimming (Legal/Illegal)
South Ruyi Gate of the Summer Palace	Canal	Legal
Dongzhimen Triangle	River	Legal
Beijing Bay	River	Legal
Beizhanhou Lake (Emperor Wharf)	Lake	Legal
East Bayi Lake	Lake	Legal
Moat out of Southeast 2nd ring road	Moat	Legal
Tuancheng Lake in the Summer Palace	Lake	Illegal
Shichahai Lake	Lake	Illegal
Liangma River	River	Illegal
Lishui Bridge	River	Illegal
Yuyuantan Park	Lake	Illegal
Xiaoyue River	River	Illegal

3.2. Research Method

We design a multifaceted approach to investigate the contradictory processes of waters between winter swimmers and the municipal government. We investigated the case sites from January to April 2021, using document studies and semi-structured interviews supplemented by participatory observation.

The first is news analysis. The main data and news of the document study method in this paper come from the retrieval platforms of "Baidu News" and the "National Newspaper Index". They objectively and accurately record the news events of Beijing since the 1950s (Despite censorship and regulations in Chinese media institutions, there is still plenty of news that documents and reported the opposing opinions between the authorities and the swimmers. Furthermore, some winter swimmers have used the media like local newspapers or news websites to claim their needs. This ensures that our sources in news analysis are relatively reliable—we do not just "heed only one side"). Therefore, we consider the records of these two databases to be valuable and reliable, which provide us with useful information related to the research content. Meanwhile, the Beijing Winter Swimming Association also provided necessary historical materials including newspapers, records and video materials for this article.

Second, semi-structured interviews. We conducted in-depth interviews with 26 respondents, including 14 winter swimmers (most of them have years of swimming experience), 6 city managers of different ranks (including those responsible officials in Beijing Urban River and Lake Administration Bureau and administrators of different waters), 3 local residents, 3 tourists from other cities and local residents, etc (see Table 2). The interview methods include face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and interviews on WeChat.

Interviews with winter swimmers include their winter swimming experiences, feelings and suggestions. We focused on interviewing elderly people who have kept their winter swimming habits for decades, in particular, to get oral histories of winter swimming in Beijing. Interviews with administrators and other users of waters included their experiences with winter swimmers, views on winter swimming and public waters. The officials in the Beijing Urban River and Lake Administration Bureau also explained the policy to us which contributed greatly to this article.

Table 2. Basic info of the interviewees.

Interviewees	Age	Identity
S1	57	Winter swimmer
S2	63	Winter swimmer
S3	65	Winter swimmer
S4	66	Winter swimmer
S5	58	Winter swimmer
S6	35	Winter swimmer
S7	64	Winter swimmer
S8	75	Winter swimmer
S9	81	Winter swimmer
S10	83	Winter swimmer
S11	70	Winter swimmer
S12	82	Winter swimmer
S13	77	Winter swimmer
S14	67	Winter swimmer
A1	55	Administrator
A2	52	Administrator
A3	45	Administrator
A4	33	Administrator
A5	39	Administrator
A6	42	Administrator
R1	45	Resident
R2	30	Resident
R3	55	Resident
T1	60	Tourist
T2	25	Tourist
T3	30	Tourist

Third participatory observation. We combined more than 4 months of participatory observation using photography, video, and text recording to observe winter swimmers and their behaviour characteristics, swimming experiences and interactions with other users of waters to obtain a more direct, clearer and more accurate understanding of the unification of public waters in winter swimming.

Figure 2 shows the framework of our research methods.
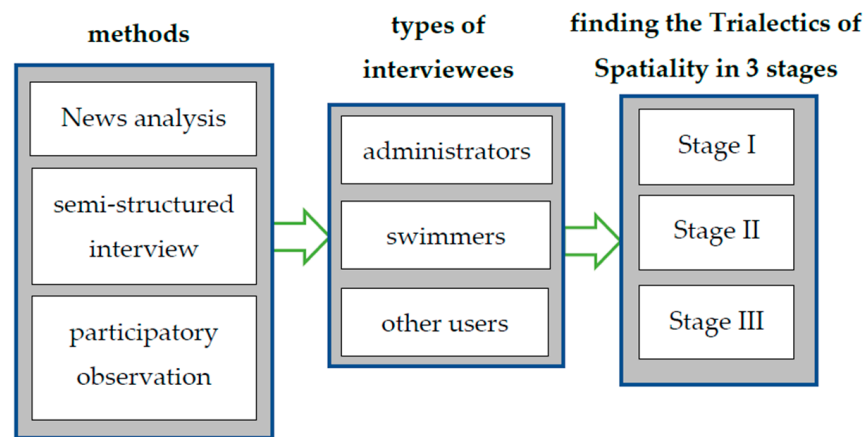
Figure 2. The framework of research methods.

4. Three Stages of the Trialectics of Winter Swimming Space

4.1. Stage I: The Formation and Expansion of Winter Swimming Space (1950s–2002)

In the interaction between Firstspace and Secondspace, the practice of winter swimming is gradually being recognised by Beijingers. The first significant recorded in historical documents was in 1954. Geng Jun, a junior 3 student, read an article in a magazine about an old Soviet doctor who insisted on swimming in icy water for a long time and keeping healthy and free from disease (the agency of Thirdspace). When winter came, he swam in the pond at his school. Then, every day in the winter, he and his classmates used stones to break open the pond's ice and swim [71]. Their winter swimming activities were praised and publicised by school leaders (Secondspace). Since then, winter swimming teams of various regions and work units in Beijing have been established. The municipal government also attaches importance to disseminating the winter swimming spirit (Firstspace) [72]. In January 1958, Chairman Mao Zedong attended a meeting in Nanning, Guangxi Province. Off the agenda, he made a provisional decision to go winter swimming in the Yongjiang River in Nanning. This case can be seen as an agent in Thirdspace [73]. The official promotion of Mao's winter swimming gives Beijing's winter swimmers the right to swim in any open waters in the city (Firstspace). Figure 3 shows the popular locations for winter swimming in Beijing, which include Yuanmingyuan, Kunyu River, Bayi Lake, Yuyuantan, Shichahai, Grand Canal, Yongding River, Summer Palace, Zizhuyuan, Beihai Park, Houhai Lake, Jishuitan, Longtan Lake, etc. During this stage, there are no rules that stipulate where winter swimming could not be carried out.

The explosion in the urban population has increased the demand for more winter swimming spaces. With the growth of the total population and the development of urbanisation in China, Beijing's population is also growing rapidly: in 1953, it reached 2.77 million (Second Census), and in 1960, it reached 4.43 million. In 1964, 7.6 million (Third Census), 1982, 9.23 million (Fourth Census), 1990, 10.82 million (Fifth Census) and in 2000, it reached 13.57 million (Sixth Census) [74]. From the 1950s to the 1960s, swimming facilities opened in some open waters in Beijing, such as Shichahai, Longtan Lake, Taoranting and Bayi Lake. However, with the diversification of utilisation of the water environment in the city, these open-air swimming pools were closed in the 1980s.

Figure 4 shows the Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage I.
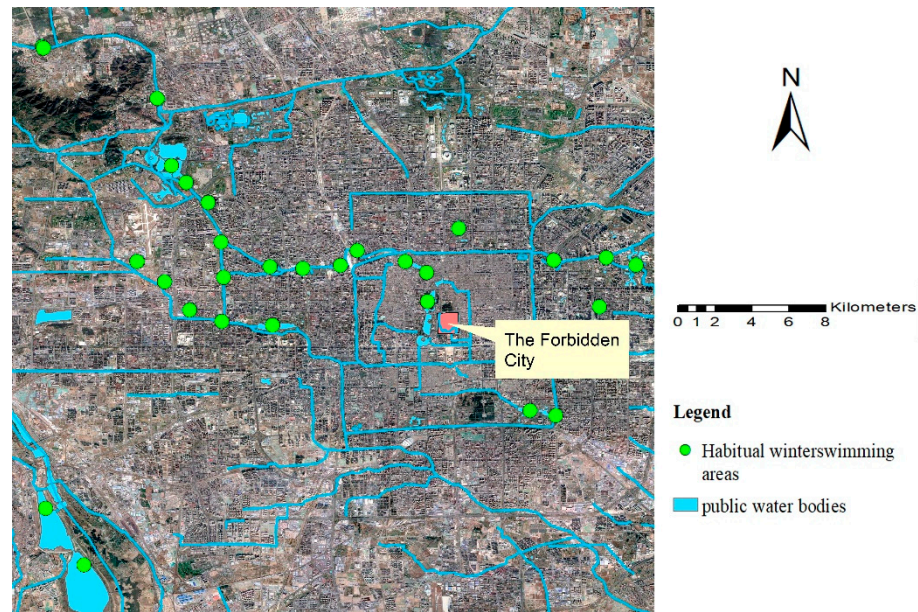
Figure 3. Habitual winter swimming areas in Stage I.
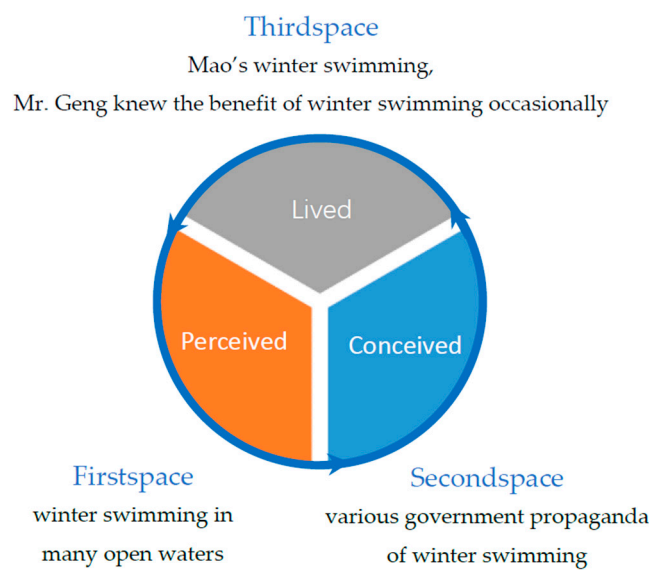
Figure 4. The Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage I.

4.2. Stage II: Complete Ban on Winter Swimming in Open Waters (2002–2019)

This stage starts with the Beijing municipal government issuing documents forbidding people from swimming in public waters. The first reason for the ban is that the waters in the park cannot be used for swimming. According to the Classification Standard of Urban Green Space issued by the central government in 2002 (CJJ/T 85-2002), many winter swimming waters in Beijing are located in historical parks and scenic parks [75]. According to the Classification and Evaluation of Quality Grades of Tourist Scenic Spots issued by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China in 2003, many winter swimming waters are among the important tourist scenic spots in Beijing [76]. To manage parks and scenic spots, the Standing Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress passed the Beijing Municipal Park Management Regulations in 2002, in which article 46 prohibits people from swimming in the waters of parks. In addition, the Beijing River and Lake Protection and Management Regulations revised by Beijingo, revised in 2012, stipulate that swimmers can only swim in designated waters (which have not been designated). The second reason is efforts to protect drinking

water sources in Beijing. Swimming has also been banned in channels that allow winter swimming, especially in the Jingmi Diversion canal. Once illegal swimming behaviour is found, it will be investigated by water affairs and environmental protection departments in accordance with the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law, Miyun Reservoir Huairou Reservoir and Protecting Regulations of Jingmi Diversion Canal Water Source, Regulations of Beijing Municipality on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution and other laws and regulations. These legal documents represent changes in Secondspace.

The changes in Secondspace come from the contradictions in Thirdspace. One of the contradictions is that the demand of urban residents for water quality exceeds the demand of fewer winter swimmers for waters. The second contradiction is that the municipal government has adopted a simplified prohibition approach to reduce the cost of administration. As winter swimming is an extreme sport, drowning incidents are encountered [77] so that the government can mobilise administrative resources, increasing fiscal expenditures. Therefore, in many waters which used to be habitual winter swimming areas, conflicts between winter swimmers and other water users are getting more and more common (see Figure 5).
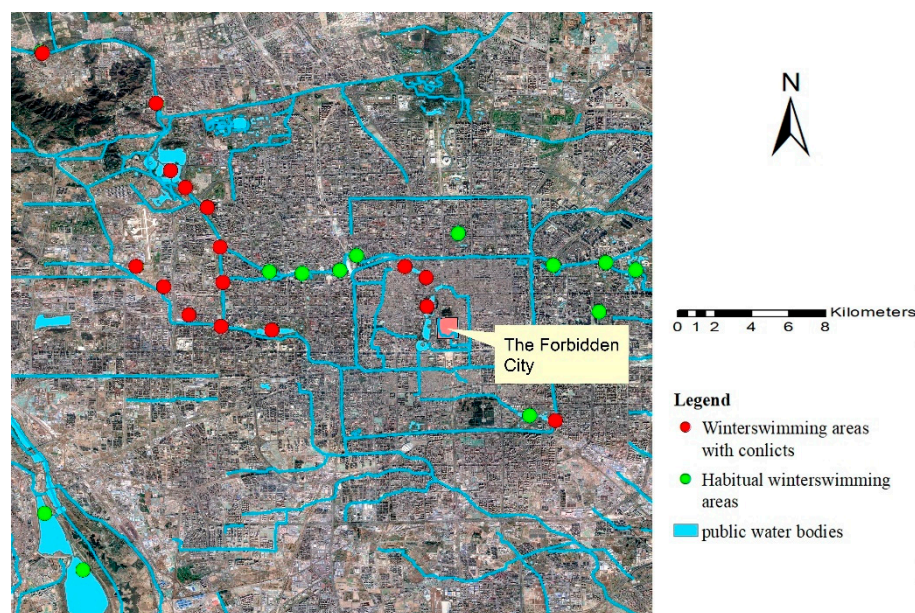
Figure 5. Winter swimming areas with conflicts in Stage II.

"They (winter swimmers) chatted and laughed loudly by Shichahai Lake, built stone steps randomly on the waterfront, and changed clothes without avoiding people. It was so uncivilised . . . I still remember an uncle who came out lake after swimming and was actually naked." (R2)

"It was supposed to be a peaceful place, but they ruined the beautiful scenery . . . in summer, boats have to avoid swimmers so as not to hurt them" (T2)

"Winter swimmers disturb the order of park management and destroy the atmosphere of tourism" (A6)

"Although winter swimming is a good physical activity for the elderly, many rivers in Beijing have muddy river beds, with unstable hydrological conditions, aquatic plants and turbulence, endangering swimmers' personal safety. Going into the water without permission is not only easy to cause drowning incidents, but also increase the difficulty of our management, what's more, some people will jump into the drinking channels to swim, polluting the water." (A1)

A series of administrative measures accompanied the total swimming prohibition (see Figure 6). Beijing's public water authorities have devised various ways to ban and

regulate winter swimming in public waters (Firstspace). Strategies include the following: (1) Isolation. To prevent wild swimming, administrators in Shichahai set up a 2-metre-high tin baffle at the water bank where winter swimmers were active. By doing so, they established a boundary approximately 400 metres long. At the same time, lotus and other aquatic plants were planted near the waterfront, building a "soft barrier" to separate winter swimmers from using their habitual launching point. (2) Warning signs and banners. (3) Removing important spots of winter swimming habit. For example, administrators in Shichahai organised relevant departments to dismantle 6 facilities, 9 launching steps, 1 locker room and 1 stainless steel handrail, which swimmers built without permission. (4) Patrolling and dissuading. For instance, the water administrative staff of The Summer Palace take turns being on duty from 7 am to 11 pm every day. Once violations of winter swimming are found in the scenic area, the staff will stop them in time. (5) Guidance. During this stage, the authorities put forward a suggestion to maintain winter swimming habits by making winter swimmers continue to keep their winter swimming activities in swimming pools, which was not accepted by lots of winter swimmers.

Figure 6. Administrative measures to prohibit winter swimming in Stage II.

Winter swimmers have all kinds of resistance to the new regulations and use Secondspace (media) to make their voices heard. For example, in 2017, China News ran an article titled "Kunyu River banned from Winter swimming: Fans Complain. Why ban swimming in nondrinking Waters?" [78]. They reiterated that outdoor winter swimming is a good habit. Through the Winter Swimming Association, they asked the municipal government to open up more legal swimming areas [79]. However, the government responded tardily. Thus, more resentment accumulates in Thirdspace.

> "Swimming is forbidden in the moat, and our players know it . . . However, for the swimmers who have been swimming here all year round, the water area has become a no-swimming area—a "No Swimming" sign standing on the shore. It is always unpleasant to swim. Moreover, our swimming behaviour is illegal, and we have no justification. So, when swimming here, the team members always tell each other to be careful" (S3)

> "Article 46 in Park Regulation is very unreasonable. This article says visitors are not allowed to swim in the non-swimming area of the park, but none of the parks

has a swimming area. The Summer Palace has a large lake, so why not use a part of the lake as a swimming area?" (S1)

Different groups in the city have launched discussions on whether to open waters to winter swimmers, which reflects the activity of Thirdspace. One of the focal points of this discussion is whether wiping out winter swimming to reduce the cost of city government does more harm than good. Winter swimmers see public water as a public space where they can properly demonstrate their sportsmanship. Winter swimmers believe that winter swimming reflects the courage to challenge themselves, challenge nature, and promote a higher, stronger, together sportsmanship, whose value is far greater than the management cost. The second focus is whether the value of the winter swimming habit can be accepted by other users of the waters. For a long time, the winter swimming habit has not been criticised by others, and the swimmers have taken for granted the way water is used for winter swimming—so they do not accept the regulations, and do not care about criticism towards them. For the question of whether winter swimming hinders visitors' enjoyment of waterscapes hinders visitors' enjoyment of waterscapes. Mr. Zhao, whom we spoke to at Bayi Lake, explained:

> "I don't care about the regulations and people's gossiping. That's the right I should have . . . Winter swimming is an eyesore? It is said that ducks are beautiful when they are swimming in the lake, aren't humans? Swimming, especially winter swimming, is not an ugly appearance; it is rather a very motivating scene. Only brave men would plunge into the icy water!" (S11)

Because winter swimmers believe they experience a connection with nature while swimming in rivers and lakes, it is irreplaceable compared with swimming in swimming pools. Some winter swimmers believe that the water temperature in swimming pools cannot meet the needs of winter swimming. More importantly, as Mr. Mo of Beijing Winter Swimming Club (S4) explains, the core experience of winter swimming habit is acquired from the process by which the swimmer's body harmonises with the changing temperature of natural water. It will express their spirit of "challenging nature" and "harmony between man and nature". That is one of the reasons why they did not accept authorities' suggestions of keeping the winter swimming habit in the swimming pool. Therefore, their behaviour in Firstspace is anti-discipline, challenging the "irrationality" of existing rules.

Figure 7 shows the Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage II.
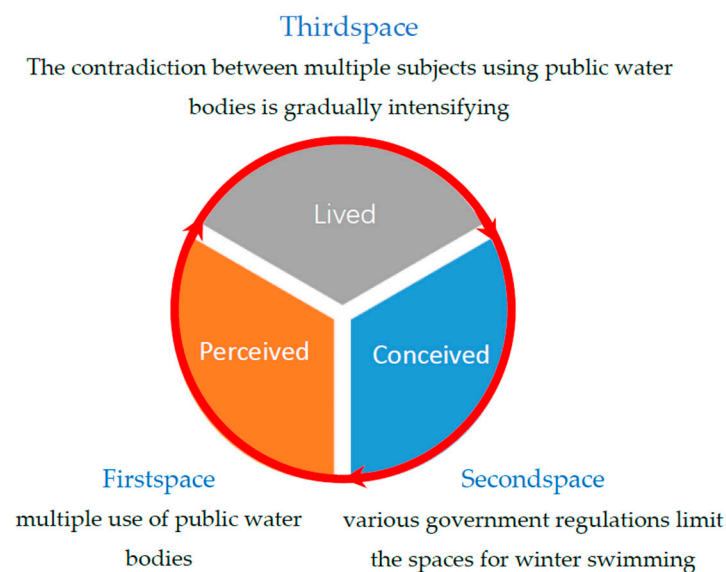
Figure 7. The Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage II.

4.3. Stage III: Differentiated Governance of Winter Swimming Space (2020 to Present)

Due to the continuous contradictions and negotiations of Thirdspace, the discussion on the utilisation of open water space by multiple interest subjects has reached a preliminary consensus since 2020. The most important thing is that the municipal government and winter swimming communities reached a certain understanding. There are two landmark events that demonstrate that the municipal government has reached certain negotiation results with winter swimmers. The first event occurred on 3 January 2020. The Beijing Municipal Water Bureau organised the Beijing Municipal Sports Bureau, Municipal Park Management Center, the Swimming Association and representatives of winter swimmers to hold a symposium to study the problems of swimming in public waters. After several rounds of consultation, two consensuses were reached: one was all subjects work together to publicise the protection of water environments, and swimmers should also contribute to the protection of water resources. Second, it is suggested that relevant departments should open some exclusive swimming areas in the waters with the right conditions. The second event is that winter swimming groups and Beijing's river and lake administration departments set a meeting to communicate about swimming in the natural waters of urban districts in Beijing at the Beijing Municipal River and Lake Administration Office on 24 September 2020. The meeting designated and announced eight official legal swimming areas in the natural waters of Beijing (see Figure 8). These areas are basically the swimming places that Beijing winter swimming communities have long been accustomed to and recognised. The attitude of the interviewees below reflects the agency of the municipal government itself (Thirdspace). The change of many agents in Thirdspace makes the winter swimming space a legal Secondspace in this period.
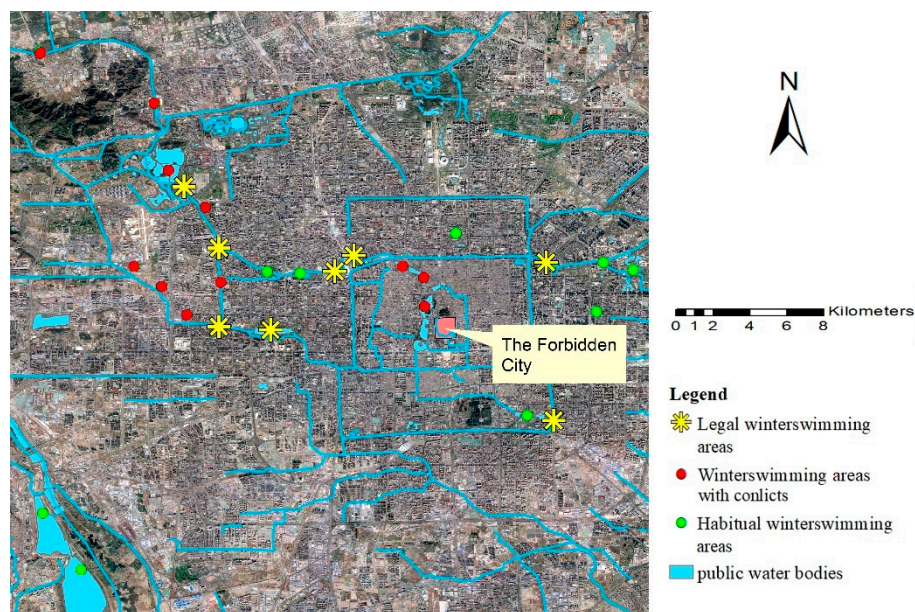
Figure 8. Legal winter swimmingareas in Stage III.

"Our previous policy was a 'one size fits all' ban, only to find that it cannot be forbidden completely, but even increased the costs of law enforcement. We need more detailed management, people have a variety of water activities, some good for people's health, good for sports spirit, they should be kept." (A2)

"For the elderly swimmer, our main method is dissuading, many winter swimmers are nearby residents, some of them are even more than 80 years old. They are stubborn and say that they have been swimming here for decades. It is difficult to persuade them (away from swimming). As Shichahai is an AAAA scenic spot, winter swimming is not allowed here. If the government can set up some

special winter swimming areas elsewhere, I think at least the number of people swimming here can be reduced." (A3)

From 2020 onwards, the Beijing municipal government had been promoting the 2022 Winter Olympics (Secondspace). This becomes a prerequisite for the change in Thirdspace; in turn, it promotes the establishment of consensus between city administrators and winter swimmers. For example, on 6 December 2020, Kunyu Henan Ruimen (legal area) held the winter swimming activity named "Pioneer to welcome the Winter Olympics, Commemorating the 62nd Anniversary of the Beginning of Winter Swimming in Haidian District". More than 500 participants, ranging from 94 years old (Ruiying Zhao) to 10 years old (Zhiping Wang), participated in the event. Many, including winter swimmers, staff of Beijing Municipal River and Lake Administration, officers of Sijiqing police station and staff from other departments, have done a lot of work [80]. These results reflect the understanding and acknowledgement of the authorities for winter swimming. As Mr. Li, a winter swimmer points out:

> "The Winter Olympic Games helped to promote winter swimming activities. My club members are practising what they earnestly advocate to carry forward the spirit of welcoming the Winter Olympics, including many of the old comrades in the association. They are the people who have made great contributions to the PRC. Naturally, the municipal government softened its attitude and was willing to sit down and talk with us." (S8)

After the designation of eight legal winter swimming areas, the municipal government also established a suite of facilities that can service winter swimming in these waters. For example, Dongzhimen Triangle, a sign banning winter swimming, has been replaced with a slogan reading "Civilised water activities". In addition, the municipal government is also responsible for the dredging of winter swimming waters and the construction of auxiliary facilities for winter swimming. For example, there are weekly works organised by the government to clean up water grass and silt, to ensure that the water swimming area is clean and safe for swimming. Special facilities for swimmers to rest, change clothes and bathe were installed to minimise the negative impact of swimmers on other water users. Meanwhile, penalties have been increased for swimming in non-swimming areas. This series of measures will undoubtedly encourage winter swimmers to develop better and more appropriate winter swimming habits (Firstspace). Due to the differentiated management mode, residents' winter swimming behaviours are becoming increasingly standardised. Due to the follow-up of facilities and services, the safety of winter swimming is guaranteed, attracting a large number of winter swimmers and effectively reducing the occurrence of illegal winter swimming in other waters. Legal water areas enhance winter swimmers' place identities and effectively convey the spirit of winter swimming. For example, Mr. Zhao from Bayi Lake described the changes in his experience of winter swimming after legalisation:

> "I used to be afraid of being caught and punished when I was swimming outside, and some people did not understand my behaviour . . . Currently, the water quality management in Beijing in the past two years is greatly fine, the water in lakes is getting more and more crystal clear, real clean water, beautiful environment. The warning signs have changed from no swimming to civilised water activities, and there are also facilities for winter swimmers. So, I do not feel as illegal as I used to. There are more new faces coming for winter swimming." (S5)

The solution to the special contradictions of winter swimming space means establishing a more diversified and subdivided management mode on public waters (Secondspace) [81,82]. There are two manifestations. First, it is possible to open up new legal water areas for winter swimming. For example, Mr. Sun, a winter swimmer, said that based on the practical experience of the winter swimming team, in addition to the stipulated eight water areas, there will be new winter swimming areas, which follow the important principle of being suitable for winter swimming and not having conflicts with other water

users. The second is the formation of the negotiation model between the habit keepers of water utilisation and the municipal government. Except for winter swimming, legal water for fishing, canoeing and other water sports that were previously banned will be designated.

Figure 9 shows the Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage III.
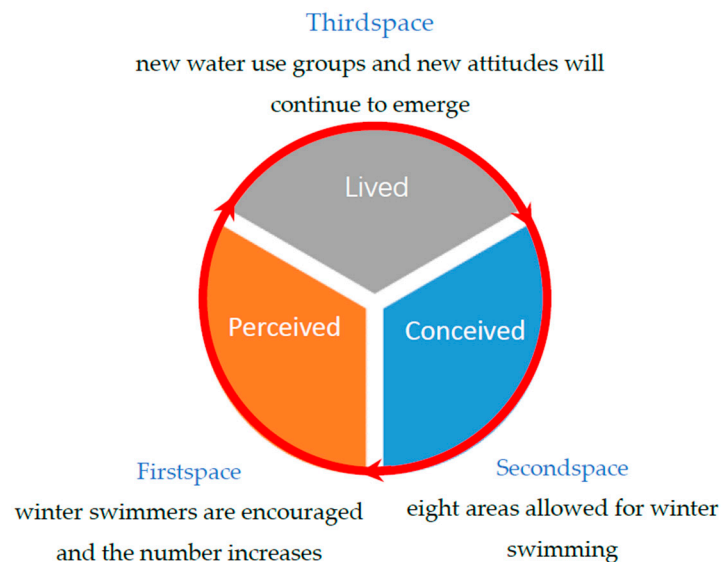
Figure 9. The Trialectics of winter swimming space in Stage III.

5. Conclusions

Based on the research results, this article has reached the following three conclusions:

The first conclusion is that when using the Trialectics of Spatiality as an analysis method, the turning point of the changing of Secondspace is the most obvious one, so it is suitable to be the point of staging in different periods. According to the changes in Secondspace, we divide the contradictions between Beijing's winter swimmers and public water administrators into three stages.

The second conclusion is that after three gradual signs of progress in the Trialectics of Spatiality, Firstspace not only preserves the winter swimming space for Beijingers but also avoids the current contradictions due to different utilisations of the public waters between urban residents. Thus, the efficiency of urban space utilisation is constantly improved. This article enriches the studies on the sustainability of water use: especially in terms of cultural vitality.

We have one more point to draw. Winter swimmers and urban planners may not be aware of the potential contradictions of public waters in the future without using Soja's concept of Thirdspace (or Lefebvre's concept of "representation of space"). Some scholars will take Firstspace as the starting point of analysis when understanding the Trialectics of Spatiality [83]. However, we find that Thirdspace may be the intrinsic starting point of the interactions between Firstspace and Secondspace. We extend this approach: This is a kind of spiral of upwards transcendence that can be converted in a to-and-fro way—both "clockwise" and "counterclockwise". In particular, the managers of space established the governance mechanism of the space through the way of "Thirdspace-Secondspace-Firstspace". Other subjects, such as space users, examine the reasonabilities of space governance through the way of "Firstspace-Secondspace-Thirdspace" and create new contradictions and possibilities. Through the roles of different subjects in the Trialectics of Spatiality, the examination and evaluation of the existing dominant space are completed in a form of going beyond itself. The purpose of triumphing over the shortcomings of the existing governances is constantly sought for us. This cycle rises again and again, looking for a perfect direction for us and finding a win-win solution between the self and the other.

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