This study uncovers a character appearing to be the potential power for driving the universal urbanization, by examining the formation of the “Peace City” principle, which is deemed distinctive of post-war Hiroshima. As the theoretical background of this study, Chapter 1 discusses “urban representation and landscape transformation in the process of gentrification” and “criticism and re-criticism of urban cultural perspective”.

Chapter 2 expands this background in the historical context and argues the specifics. It features and arranges the key ideas such as “a place myth” by Rob Shields, the urban imaginary by Sharon Zukin, and a cultural sociology of space by Richardson and Jensen. In addition it presents the three aspects of this study — “media event” “collective memories” “scale of politics” — and clarifies each of definition and theoretical implication.

Based upon this background, this study proposes “the Urban Imaginative Constellation Theory” as theoretical perspective. It takes spatial theory by Michel de Certeau as the target for critical examination. This exposes the problem that time in Certeau’s arguments are subordinated to spatial representation, which introduces dichotomous understanding of space. This study takes on this problem and proposes “the Urban Imaginative Constellation Theory” as resolution.

In Chapter 1, Henri Lefebvre’s spatial theory is reconstructed according to the concepts as the pre-work. In Chapter 2 various methodological theories are presented using a “Third” Wave of Lefebvrian as supporting arguments. The purpose of introducing the theoretical perspective “the Urban Imaginative Constellation Theory” in this study is to not only to break the trap of spatial dichotomous understanding, but also to obtain the perspective for studying spatial production process as well as for recapturing the dynamism of urban representation.

Chapter 3 sets the direction of methodological theories to apply “the Urban Imaginative Constellation Theory” approach to Hiroshima studies. It begins with the question “How can Hiroshima be recognized as space? ”, followed by the arguments of theoretical framework adopted to analyze the production process of spatial representation, development of reconstruction studies in Hiroshima, and problems and resolutions of dichotomy in “Peace City”. The scheme extracted from these arguments are abandonment of the dichotomous view — atomic bomb survivor vs. non-survivors, power elite vs. citizens —, and rejection of the perspective that “Military City” Hiroshima has transformed to “Peace City” Hiroshima.
Chapter 4 analyses the process of how the “Peace City” principle, derived from the reconstruction plan proposed by the then-governor of Hiroshima Tsuneo Kusunose in 1945, turned into “sacred” Hiroshima. It exposes uncertainties and the lack of the definition of “Peace City” from its initial stage through the fact that the “Peace City” image was repeatedly expanded through Hiroshima Peace revival festival and Hiroshima Peace festival, and also through the analysis of the reconstruction promotional magazine “Greater Hiroshima”.

Furthermore, it leads to the logical structure for “Peace City” made up of intense awareness imposed by the eyes from the global, model modern urbanization, and economic development, through Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law movement from 1948 to 1949. The logic considers the perspective of seeing the ground of “Peace City” as Tabura Rasa. It sheds the light on the nature that contributed only to formation of the strong reasoning for reconstruction.

The analysis of Hiroshima Reconstruction Expo in 1958 shows the accomplished “Peace City” image. From this point the whole town was evidently seen as “Peace City”, proven by the city landscape itself and reconstruction of Hiroshima Castle. However, the construction of “Peace City” is further driven by the motion that urges this town to become more “sacred” place. Clearance of “Gembaku slum” is the most evident example. Aioi Street, which was born out of reconstruction process, has been transformed to “Gembaku slum” then targeted for “abandonment”. Ideal of “Peace City” sprouted on the ground had reached to its peak.

“Peace City” process however has its origin to the pre-war period. Chapter 5 demonstrates this through the examination of Showa Industrial Expo in 1929, Jikyoku Expo in 1932, the Hiroshima City Beautiful movement in 1935. The exhibition programme of Showa Industrial Expo that was carried out for building “Greater Hiroshima” strongly reflected the character that motivates the presentation of the latest modern technology and urban industrial technology to the present day and here, as well as the creation of imperialism spectacle. This was the initiation of the original “the Urban Ongoing Spectacle” that has been underlined in the modern history of Hiroshima since then.

Jikyoku Expo in 1932 followed “the Urban Ongoing Spectacle” and became the acquisition opportunity of urban ideology “Military City”. While Showa Industrial Expo represented the desire for urbanization onto the modern technologies, Jikyoku Expo reprogrammed the contents from Showa Industrial Expo to complement the lack of “Military City” representation. And Hiroshima City Beautiful movement in 1935 supports the continuity of desire for urbanization since “Greater Hiroshims”. Hideaki Ishikawa’s visit impacted on the power-elites in Hiroshima, and added the aspect of “City Beautiful” to the existing desire for urbanization. His discourse prolonged to the foundation of “Peace City” represented as “East Venice”, and also proposed to see Hiroshima, namely “limitless vacant land”, the “planned construction site” of the new city after atomic bombing. These “theories” were taken over by the Mayor Shinzou Hamai and prepared the path for reconstruction of “Peace City”.
Chapter 6 examines the nature of “Spatial Practice” (Lefebvre) in Hiroshima—“Peace Tower” in the “Peace City”—through the case studies: Shino-Japanese War Triumphant Monument as known as Peace Tower built in 1895, Peace Tower in 1947 and Peace Bells, and two other Peace Tower plans after 1952. First, by re-tracing back the position of Shino-Japanese War Triumphant Monument, later Peace Tower in 1947, back to 19th Century, it clarifies that this tower embodies the characteristics as “divergence” to “another world” folding the various city representation such as “Peace City” or “Military City.” Secondly, the construction of Peace Tower in 1947 and Peace Bell imposes the spatial contradiction against the sacred “Peace City”. This Peace Tower and Peace Bells had two faces of “disposed from the former navy” or “war trophies” but also seen as the symbol of reconstruction.

Lastly the two projects over Peace Tower (Stupa) in 1950s present the topological contradictions in space. These two Peace Towers were planned under various actors’ intentions, and split — one was built on the top of Mt. Futaba, and the construction for the other was on halt. It also throws the spatial inconsistencies due to the fact that the fortresses equipped on top of the both mountains, but spatial history of atomic bomb experience makes these places act as “Peace Tower” of “Peace Tower” symbol. These three analyses of Peace Tower depict the appearance of “Peace Tower” as “spatial practice” that continuously shakes off the core of urban representation.

This paper is concluded by arranging the theoretical and analytical presence, and perspectives for future arguments.