



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Tesi Meritoria

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Architettura Costruzione Città

The Chinese Box.

Unfolding Chinese Architectural Practice in Transitional Communities.

Relatore/Correlatore/i

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China appears to be the arena where the great game of globalized architecture takes place, between the appeal of avant-garde designs by world-renowned architects and the vindication of a traditional regional style, as developed by the experimental architects.

However, recently, the Chinese Government has started pushing towards a regeneration signed by the evolution of the “wiping off and replacing” philosophy, in an attempt to undermine the uncontrolled expansion.

Moving on to the background of the recent shift in the conception of developing communities, the present work acts as an exploration, through the design lens, of a residential community in Beijing, the compound of the MOHURD, the Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Development, which is currently an ongoing regeneration project in the city.

The particular problematic node becomes the pretext to explore, through an inductive logic, the complexity of an entangling situation, defining the limits and possibilities of different design actions. Beginning with a reconnaissance of the state of the art that investigates the practices and theoretical assumptions from which the debate on Chinese architecture moves and emphasizing the role of the entities involved, the particular case study, like a hypertext, offers the possibilities to reflect on the changes in approaching this kind of project in the specific geography, China. Meanwhile, it likewise proposes an investigation under the unexplored aspects in order to bring back multidimensional mappings aimed at building negotiating scenarios.

From the original process embedded in public-private dualism, the new urban planning processes are, instead, based on collaborative community design that also considers an evolving spatial negotiation over time. The thesis also proposes an alternative way of looking at the global phenomenon related to Chinese Architecture, pushing it out of its aesthetical border. Imagining the physical space as originated by the deposition and the overlapping process at the intertwining forces between political, social, and cultural mechanisms, the inquiry goes at the core of the built environment, unfolding the apparatus beyond it.

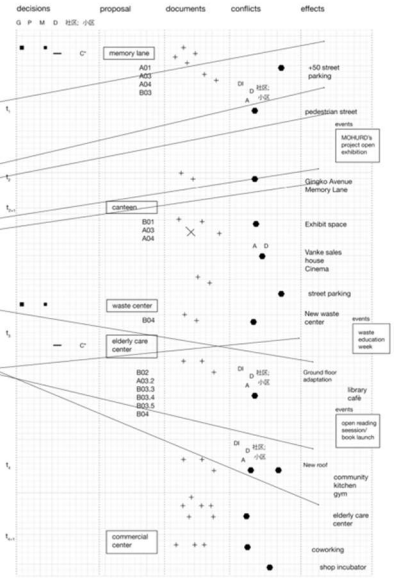
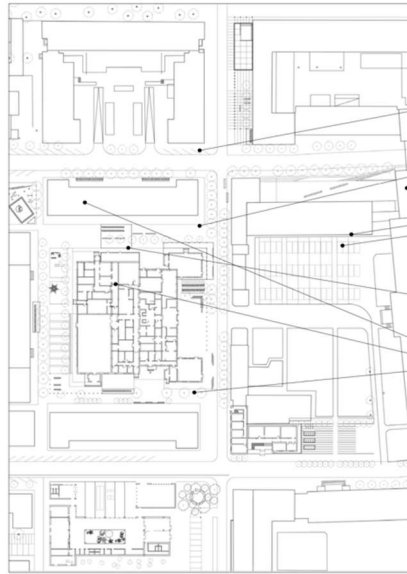
Looking at the area under study not as an object but as a thing, the effort of the design inclination is deposited in the design outcome on the one hand and on the strong cognitive tension on the other. The result is a design proposal that stands as a methodological infrastructure that, starting from the correlations between social and physical reality, investigates the performativity of the design agency as a product of complex negotiations between agents of different natures.

Considering the uncertainty of design as an inherent and constitutive category of the production process of cities, incremental scenarios built at the intersection of human subjects, physical constraints, and financial aspects are hypothesized. The study, therefore, defines the formal and informal negotiations of power emerging among all the different actors taking part in this process. These include conflicts between governments at different levels, the contingency of the market demands, the overlapping roles of design consultants, and dynamics of cultural capital within the academic institutions. The outcome is an open-ended work, an inductive strategy that weaves the networks of a piece of city as a set of implicit relations of a diachronic dimension to subsequently seek a generative model also for other transitional communities. Thus the research does not focus on a pure production of space in absolute terms, but investigates the role of architectural design, both as an interstitial agency performing as a medium. This way, it observes its effectiveness in a context where architecture design, apparently, seems to have played a marginal role.

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PHASE 1

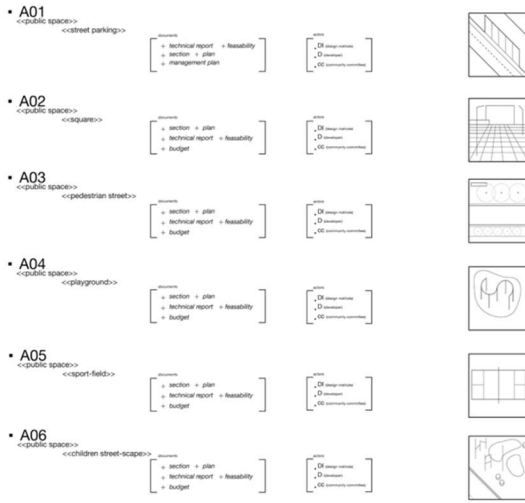
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6.actions

A

<<public space>>



B

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