Exploration of the Renewal of the Aurora Area Based on Heterotopia Theory and Practice

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by

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Abstract

This study is grounded in the learning and interpretation of heterotopic space theory, offering a comprehensive analysis of heterogeneous spaces in contemporary cities from both physical and social dimensions. The research focuses on outdoor urban environments, excluding typical heterotopias that are driven by singular functions. When addressing architectural spaces, particular attention is given to how building façades shape the adjacent streets and squares as part of the public realm. Through methods including literature review, case analysis, and field investigation, the study traces the conceptual development and analytical approaches of heterogeneous space, deepening the understanding of this theory through four interpretive lenses: "Space locality," "subjective presence," "nodes within the network," and "interactive online presence." On this theoretical basis, the research further proposes the application of heterogeneity as a design strategy to enhance urban diversity and distinctiveness. This includes specific spatial tactics such as "multi-pocket structures," "layered juxtaposition," and "networked formation," which offer theory-informed and practice-oriented references for spatial development.

Furthermore, the study takes the urban regeneration project in the Aurora district of Turin, Italy, as a key case, exploring how heterogeneous urban spaces and culturally distinct activities manifest in a context of multicultural interaction. By analyzing both the material morphology and the intangible life patterns of the area, a set of targeted spatial interventions is proposed. Within a holistic spatial framework of heterogeneous nodes, two representative sites—the "Cina Corner" and the "Vercelli Old Railway Segment"—are used to illustrate how point-based and linear nodes can be reconfigured through heterogeneous design strategies. The regeneration project consistently aligns with goals of enhancing local identity, stimulating economic vitality, and fostering social inclusiveness. A design framework of heterogeneity translation is constructed to identify embodied cultural interaction points and facilitate the collaborative transformation of multicultural elements within specific spatial

frameworks.

In addition to rearticulating cultural expressions, the design process also emphasizes relationships with local communities and the continuity of user activities, particularly those tied to Aurora’s prominent tradition of open-air street markets. The research thus aims to balance heterogeneity with coherence, while consciously avoiding the pitfalls of cultural relativism and hegemonic dominance.

Given that the project remains a conceptual design study rather than a real-world implementation, certain limitations are acknowledged. Further in-depth cultural and social research is needed to substantiate the proposals. Nonetheless, this initial exploration into heterogeneity-enhancing spatial strategies as a response to cultural collision and coexistence aspires to provide a reference point for future discourse and practice on urban diversity, spatial distinctiveness, and the creation of resilient, vibrant living environments.

Keywords: Heterotopia; Aurora; Urban Diversity; Collage

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 The Objective Demand for Heterogeneous Development

Under the self-replicating and value-augmenting logic of modern production methods, the functional zoning model that prioritizes efficiency — characterized by grid-like urban morphology — has long dominated urban planning globally. However, this approach has increasingly led to urban spatial homogenization. Since the mid-20th century, scholars represented by the Los Angeles School have begun to re-examine the nature of urban social space. Deconstructing binary oppositions and focusing on spatial difference and diversity has become a growing consensus.

In today's urban practices, mixed-use development models are becoming more prevalent. The integration of commercial and residential functions, along with the blending of diverse industries, continues to enhance spatial efficiency and economic synergy. At the same time, these practices also bring about a new round of model replication and spatial assimilation. On the cultural front, intercultural exchange has become more prominent. From the Age of Discovery to the Industrial Revolution and the era of global economic integration, cross-regional and transnational mobility has fostered interactions and collisions among different nations, regions, and ethnicities — posing both opportunities and challenges. These dynamics have significantly shaped urban spaces through multicultural integration.

Moreover, the rapid advancement of digital technology has intensified the interaction between the digital and physical realms, making it a prominent topic in contemporary discourse. Acknowledging and embracing difference and diversity is now a critical agenda in social governance and urban development. However, how to dialectically embrace heterogeneity — from physical environments to cultural and symbolic realms — while avoiding new forms of spatial assimilation remains an open question for continued exploration and practice.

1.1.2 The Spatial Turn in Social Research

As social mobility and complexity increase, interdisciplinary research has flourished, leading to a significant "spatial turn" in the social sciences. Human thinking has increasingly shifted from time-based to space-based frameworks. Western academia, led by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells, and David Harvey, has progressively integrated spatial analysis into sociology. In China, spatial sociology has seen substantial development since the early 21st century.

Social space theory provides a rich interdisciplinary perspective for analyzing urban complexity and human interaction with space. Michel Foucault emphasized that spatial experience does not unfold linearly but is composed of nodes and intersecting lines. His combination of space and time in analysis led to the conceptualization of heterotopias — spaces where incompatible realities coexist, or where layers of time produce spaces that transcend the present moment. Foucault's heterotopia theory offers a novel approach to understanding the relationship between space and society, highlighting how subjective spatial experiences in turn reshape the objective built environment.

1.1.3 The Urban Renewal Background of the Aurora District

Located in northwestern Italy, Turin (Torino) is the capital of the Piedmont region and possesses a rich cultural heritage spanning from the Roman era to the Middle Ages and the Savoy dynasty. In the early 20th century, Turin emerged as a major industrial hub, symbolized by the automotive giant FIAT. The city's rapid industrialization attracted a massive influx of labor and migrants, resulting in accelerated urban expansion.

With globalization and structural shifts in the economy, Turin experienced painful deindustrialization in the late 20th century, leading to economic decline and mounting social tensions. In response, the local government has been actively promoting economic transformation through cultural tourism and technological innovation. While the city has gradually revived from its industrial ruins, fully restoring its past glory remains a long-term goal.

In addition to the coexistence of industrial and ancient heritage, the presence of immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds adds to Turin’ s distinct hybridity and heterogeneity. In recent years, the city has launched the “ Torino Cambia” initiative,

focusing on green transition, technological innovation, cultural development, and social inclusion. Among the four main projects associated with this plan, two target the Aurora district, located just north of the city center.

Aurora stretches from Corso Regina Margherita in the south to Corso Vigevano and Corso Novara in the north, with Corso Potenza and the Dora River forming the western and eastern boundaries, respectively. As one of Turin's most culturally diverse areas, Aurora is home to the vibrant Porta Palazzo market — the largest and most dynamic trading space in the city. The redevelopment plan, with an estimated investment of €42.6 million [①], includes:

1) Redevelopment of streets, public spaces, and public services to improve the daily lives of residents, workers, and visitors — especially youth — by enhancing openness, information exchange, social welfare, and equality.

2) Active responses to challenges in sustainability, public health and safety, and social image enhancement. Key interventions include social housing projects, and upgrades to the Porta Palazzo market buildings and pavements.

1.2 Research Content

This study is primarily based on existing theories of heterogeneous space, focusing on the investigation of heterogeneity in contemporary urban environments. It examines both spontaneous urban spaces and deliberately designed heterogeneous spaces, encompassing not only the material dimension characterized by functional heterogeneity but also the social dimension that embodies specific cultural consciousness. Special attention is given to cultural enclaves and other unique urban areas born from multicultural collisions.

The research emphasizes translating the theoretical framework of heterogeneous space into concrete, operational urban design strategies, aiming to provide practical references for the development of unique and diverse urban spaces. Due to limitations in resources and scope, the study primarily targets outdoor urban spaces and does not cover singular-function heterotopias such as prisons or traditional schools. In cases where architectural structures are involved, the focus is on how building facades shape urban open spaces.

① data from torinocambia.it.

Building upon this foundation, the study applies the analytical framework and synthesized design strategies to the urban renewal of the Aurora district in Turin. It first dissects the material and immaterial characteristics of the area from a heterogeneity perspective, identifying existing valuable heterogeneous physical spaces and social spaces. Subsequently, it proposes strategies to enhance these unique features, aiming to transform them into recognizable, communicable, and socially functional heterogeneous spaces. This process seeks to contribute to improving the Aurora district's image, economic vitality, and social inclusiveness. The proposed strategies are further explored and tested in the detailed design of specific blocks within Aurora, particularly focusing on achieving a balance between spatial richness and coordination.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 International Research Overview

"Of Other Spaces" [6], published in Architecture-Mouvement-Continuité, offers one of the earliest systematic elaborations of the heterotopia theory. Kevin Hetherington's The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering[8] stands as one of the influential early extensions of Foucault's concept, emphasizing the role of heterotopic sites in challenging conventional social orders and spatial perceptions. Hetherington discussed how royal palaces, Masonic lodges, and factories functioned as spaces of alternative order, articulating how marginalized and dominant groups employed heterotopias to construct different social narratives, and distinguishing between modernity and postmodernity.

Derek Hook and Michele Vrdoljak[9] delved into the concept of "security parks" in post-apartheid South Africa, combining gated community lifestyles with heightened security features. Using the lens of heterotopia, they critically analyzed the social functions, systems of acceptance and exclusion, and revealed how such spaces reinforced privilege, control, and social stratification.

David Grahame Shane[10] proposed the idea of Recombinant Urbanism in 2005, advancing the urban branch of heterotopia research. He creatively wove together heterogeneous spaces with steady-state spaces and flow spaces, arguing that the contemporary urbanization process is underpinned by the dynamic fusion of these three elements[11].

The volume Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society[13], edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter in 2008, compiles diverse research interpreting urban spaces through the heterotopic lens. Derived from the 2005 EAAE conference "The Rise of Heterotopia," the book examines contemporary heterotopias such as museums, theme parks, shopping malls, resorts, gated communities, wellness hotels, and festive markets, further stimulating debates about the privatization of public space and expanding Foucault's theoretical legacy.

Additionally, scholars such as Errol Francis (Michel Foucault's Concept of Heterotopia and Postcolonial Artistic Responses to Museum Spaces [39]) and Charles Villet (South Africa as Postcolonial Heterotopia: The Racialized Experience of Place and Space[40]) integrated postcolonial perspectives into heterotopia theory. Haider Ali Akmal [41] and others explored the interaction between material and digital spaces, proposing philosophical models for spatial interaction in the digital era.

While international studies offer comprehensive theoretical analyses of heterogeneous spaces in cities, relatively few works have directly translated these theories into operational design strategies. Among the few, Samantha Lynn Payne proposed preliminary street design strategies based on analyzing urban voids through the lens of heterotopia.

1.3.2 Chinese Research Overview

In China, discussions around heterotopic space involve the introduction and translation of Foucault's works, theoretical elaborations within sociology and philosophy, and interdisciplinary explorations combining architecture, literature, film, and other cultural phenomena. These studies often examine conflicts, juxtaposition, mutual reflection, and fusion among heterogeneous elements.

Wang Yuan's 2002 article Foucault and "Heterotopia": Inspirations for Architecture in Architectural Journal was one of the earliest domestic studies linking heterotopia and urban space. Wang argued that architecture should be understood as a technique for practicing social relationships—facilitating both the extension of "power" and its resistance—through spatial construction.

At the design level, Wang Hui analyzed the synergy between heterogeneous space theory and trends of heterogenization in contemporary Western architecture, noting that architectural creation has increasingly embraced decentralization, ambiguity, and

emotional atmospheres. Similarly, scholars like Tong Ming and Wang Hui reinterpreted traditional Chinese gardens through heterotopia theory, highlighting features such as wall-enclosure, juxtaposition of special scenes, and introspective reflections as heterotopic characteristics.

Beyond theoretical discourse, many scholars have conducted detailed studies on specific urban spatial issues, producing localized, operational strategies. Research subjects include large-scale historical districts and smaller-scale sites such as schools or industrial heritage sites. For instance, Wang Yong and Xia Jian proposed four strategies for historical district conservation based on the co-structural characteristics of material and social spaces: returning to lived spaces, juxtaposing conflicting spaces, overlapping public spaces, and promoting citizen-led governance. Hu Xiaojun, focusing on old Beijing neighborhoods, emphasized three dimensions: spatial characteristics, spatial strategies, and meaning construction.

At the urban scale, Wang Su applied the concept of heterotopia to interpret Tianjin's colonial-era spatial development, tracing the gradual integration of Western-style villas into the broader urban fabric. Regarding industrial heritage, Yang Ming and Cui Zhanqi respectively explored strategies to transition industrial heterotopias into community spaces or use collective memory to create new spatial values.

In addition, scholars such as Peng Wei and Fan Qingxi extended heterotopic analysis into contemporary issues, including digital experience-based theme resorts and pandemic-era public spaces characterized by broad connectivity and heterogeneous coexistence.

1.4 Research Significance

A review of the literature reveals that international research mainly emphasizes the sociological value of heterogeneous spaces, focusing on abstract issues such as power distribution, social relations, and material systems, with limited direct guidance for urban design practice. In contrast, while Chinese scholars have addressed practical design issues in detail, there is still a lack of systematic methodological frameworks.

Moreover, much research focuses on spaces with strong physical segregation — such as gated schools, security estates, or theme parks — or on entire districts as heterogeneous spaces, like historical areas. However, there is limited study of

smaller-scale urban public spaces—such as markets or open industrial sites—where functions and atmospheres markedly differ from the surrounding environment without strict physical barriers.[①] These ambiguous, fluidly bounded spaces remain underexplored from a heterotopic perspective.

Given these gaps, this research targets small-scale heterogeneous urban public spaces, aiming to further explore the practical applicability of heterotopia theory in urban design.

The strategies proposed align with contemporary needs for urban diversity: on the one hand, providing spatial and procedural solutions for inevitable multicultural frictions; on the other, consciously leveraging heterogeneity to stimulate urban vitality and enhance environmental diversity and uniqueness. These goals are crucial for the present and future development of cities.

Furthermore, this study takes Turin's Aurora district renewal project [②]as an applied example. It offers a detailed heterogeneity-based analysis of Aurora's complex multicultural groups, markets, heritage sites, and built environment, proposing a mixed-block enhancement strategy. It seeks to transform tensions into integration and mutual benefit.

Finally, Aurora's multicultural hybridity grants this research special cultural value, extending the notion of mixed-use blocks into the realm of cultural coexistence. As discussions of mixed-use blocks often focus solely on functional distribution, this study fills an important gap by addressing multicultural spatial integration—an increasingly critical issue in contemporary urban transformation. In recent years, the transformation of immigrant communities such as Chinatowns has created new demands on physical spaces. Meanwhile, with the development of digital communication, public perceptions of foreign cultures have expanded, leading to shifting spatial needs. These changes have

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① Since Of Other Spaces (1967) by Michel Foucault was transcribed and compiled from a radio lecture rather than formally published by Foucault himself, scholars such as David Grahame Shane have pointed out that the text lacks Foucault's usual rigor and systematic coherence. Consequently, later interpretations derived from this work sometimes present internal contradictions. Moreover, Foucault explicitly identified markets and festival spaces as examples of heterotopias, which is why this study does not rigidly require the presence of strict gatekeeping systems in selecting its research subjects.

② This project is a self-proposed topic based on the Turin Development Plan and the author's research.

profoundly influenced the material environment, making the study of this distinctive form of mixed neighborhoods particularly valuable. Drawing upon authentic community life to appropriately express cultural characteristics offers an effective strategy for resisting the homogenization of living environments.

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Research Methods

This study primarily employs literature review, case analysis, and field investigation, supplemented by a design exploration.

Through extensive consultation of library materials, online academic databases, and other information sources, the research systematically organizes existing theoretical discussions on heterogeneous space, focusing specifically on design methodology perspectives. Supplementary materials, such as Google Street View imagery and on-site photographs, were used to gather detailed observations on building facades, ground surfaces, and other material conditions.

For the case studies, a careful selection of domestic and international urban spaces was made, prioritizing uniqueness, representativeness, and enclave-like heterogeneity. Cases cover various types of heterogeneity, such as cultural enclaves and festive enclaves. During analysis, feedback from diverse groups—local residents, scholars, and online users—was incorporated to minimize subjective bias.

Field investigations were conducted by combining personal observations with objective assessments, recording data meticulously from both object-based and event-based perspectives. Finally, the design exploration stage builds on extensive preceding analyses, aiming to propose site-responsive, critically engaged, and inclusive spatial strategies.

1.5.2 Research Framework

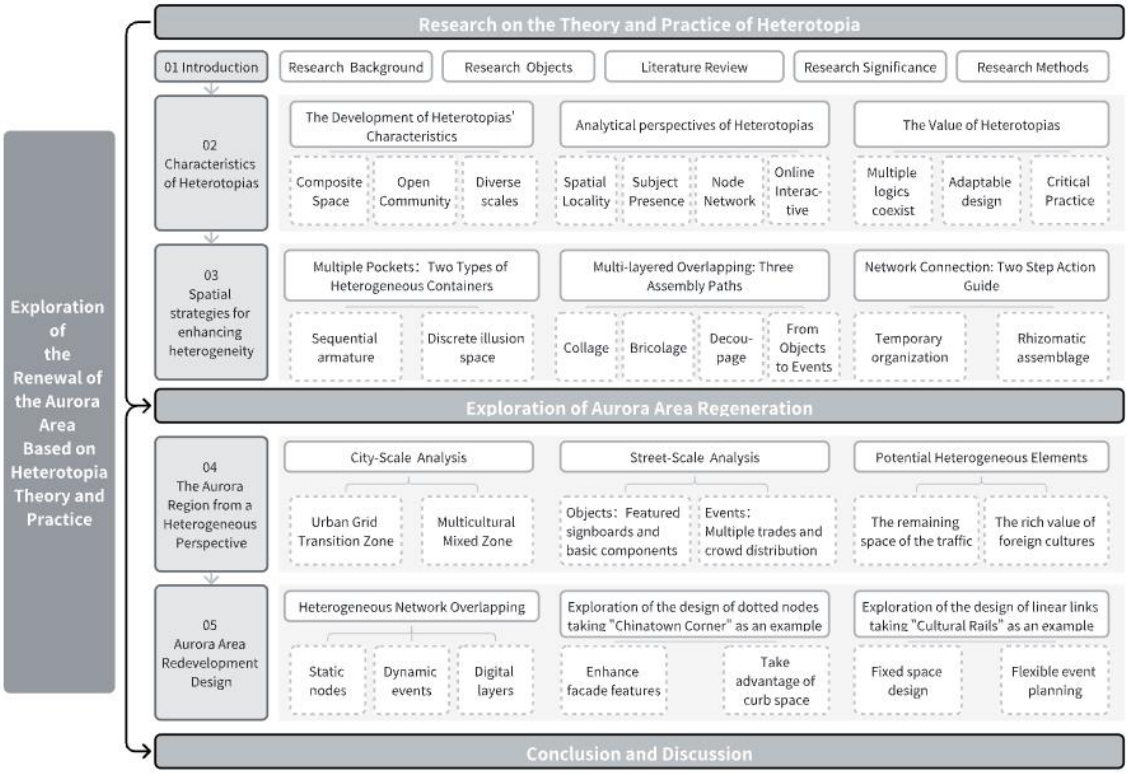

Figure 1.1 Research Framework of the Thesis (Drawn by the Author)

Chapter 2 Heterotopia: Urban Diversity and Uniqueness

2.1 Concept of Heterotopia

The term Heterotopia originates from Greek, combining hetero- (different) and -topia (place, derived from topos). Initially, it referred to a medical phenomenon describing tissues or cell groups existing normally in a location different from their original site. The concept was first introduced into the field of social theory by French philosopher Michel Foucault in 1966.[①] It denotes a "third space" distinct from both real spaces and fictional utopias (Utopias), sometimes translated into Chinese as as "heterogeneous space" or "mutant space."

The detailed articulation of heterotopia appeared in Foucault's essay Of Other Spaces (1984), which is considered a seminal text in postmodern theory. Alongside the works of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, it reflects the increasing complexity of social space and supplements—or even resists—the modernist pursuit of a homogenized, utopian society. It challenges standardized notions of time, modernist unity, and universality.

Foucault defined six key principles of heterotopias: 1) Universality and Specificity: Heterotopias exist in various forms across all cultures. 2) Mutability: The functions and structures of a heterotopia evolve according to changing societal norms and cultural conditions. 3) Spatial Juxtaposition: Heterotopias juxtapose multiple spaces that are otherwise incompatible or unrelated within a single physical location. 4) Temporal Heterogeneity: They compress and accumulate time or exist only for specific periods. 5) Restricted Accessibility: Entry into heterotopias is often regulated, involving specific rites or constraints, thus differentiating them from freely accessible spaces. 6) Polarized Functions: They serve dual roles—either as sites of illusion and freedom or as spaces of discipline, control, and exclusion.

Foucault also classified various types of heterotopias, such as "heterotopias of

① Foucault first mentioned "heterotopia" in The Order of Things published in 1966, and elaborated on this concept in a speech in 1967. The speech was made public in 1986 as an article "Of Other Spaces", which is translated into Chinese as "On Other Spaces" or "Alternative Spaces".

crisis" (spaces designed for people in transitional states) and "heterotopias of deviation" (spaces accommodating individuals outside societal norms).

Kevin Hetherington, in The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering (2002), expanded Foucault's concept by interpreting heterotopias as places of "alternative social ordering." He proposed that modernity itself is shaped by the interplay between utopian ideals and heterotopic spatial practices. Drawing from Walter Benjamin's notion of "phantasmagoric spaces" like arcades and department stores, Hetherington identified these commercial spaces—and early industrial factories—as manifestations of heterotopic practices in the modern urban landscape.

David Grahame Shane was among the first to systematically incorporate Foucault's concept of heterotopia into urban design research. Building upon the ideas of scholars such as Kevin Lynch and Colin Rowe, Shane developed a new conceptual model of the city rooted in the dynamics of postmodern urban development.[①] His work significantly bridged the gap between abstract heterotopia theory and practical urban spatial analysis.

Shane introduced the Morphogenetic Matrix of Possibilities, positioning heterotopias (heterogeneous spaces), enclaves (steady-state spaces), and armatures (flow spaces) as three anchor points of urban spatial elements. Another dimension of the matrix maps urban models anchored in Archi Città (the architectural city), Cine Città (the cinematic city), and Tele Città (the telematic city), corresponding respectively to Kevin Lynch's "City of Faith," "City as Machine," and "Ecological City" frameworks.

These two axes generate nine fundamental spatial categories through their combinations. Shane argued that heterotopias, with their inherent instability and capacity for transformation, are the key drivers behind urban model shifts, providing protective environments for new changes and facilitating dynamic balance between enclave stability and armature fluidity.

Furthermore, Shane outlined three primary characteristics of heterotopias:

1) Mirror-Function: Reflecting broader social realities.

2) Multiple-Pockets: Containing nested, differentiated spaces within a larger system.

3) Miniature Simulation: Representing scaled-down versions of complex realities.

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① Refer to David Grahame Shane's Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modeling in Architecture, Urban Design, and City Theory (2005).

He also proposed seven design tools suited to constructing contemporary heterogeneous urban environments: Collage, Bricolage, Decoupage, Montage, Photomontage, Assemblage, Rhizomic Assemblage (inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizomes).

2.2 Evolution of Heterotopic Space Characteristics

2.2.1 Spatial Hybridization

"Heterotopias are hybrid spaces that are inserted into larger systems, mixing the stability of enclave spaces with the fluidity of armature spaces. They are special enclave spaces where the balance of the two systems is constantly changing, accommodating exceptions to the dominant forces in the urban system and playing a key role in stabilizing urban models and facilitating their transformation."

— David Grahame Shane, Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modeling in Architecture, Urban Design, and City Theory

To some extent, contemporary cities are increasingly exhibiting fragmented, polycentric development patterns. The tensions and synergies among multiple centers have generated ever more complex boundary zones. Additionally, in the information era, "breakthrough" events that cross established boundaries are becoming increasingly frequent, and new nested structures may emerge even within these enclaves. With the rise of mixed-use development concepts, stable hybrid spaces are also proliferating.

As a critical driver of urban model evolution, heterotopic space maintains a dynamic balance between the stability of enclave spaces and the fluidity of armature spaces. It concentrates the most complex urban issues and diverse urban elements, reflecting a broader trend toward spatial hybridization.

Moreover, addressing issues of spatial hybridization requires more flexible and composite approaches. In Shane's Morphogenetic Matrix of Possibilities, the dimensions of urban models and urban spaces are each anchored by three conceptual points, generating nine fundamental categories through pairwise combinations. Beyond a particle-based view, we must also adopt a wave-based perspective to more fully understand the material and immaterial development of cities.

Both Foucault's and Shane's definitions of heterotopic space acknowledge a

degree of fluidity and overlap. Certain sites may simultaneously conform to multiple heterotopia types, and at times the identified features may conflict with those associated with other heterotopias. For example, temporary markets filled with stalls, goods, and performances typically represent heterotopias linked to fleeting time. However, they often lack strict access controls or purification rituals. Although Foucault noted that the apparent openness of some heterotopias is an illusion—suggesting that people may be physically present but symbolically excluded—temporary markets allow passersby to participate freely in transactions or simply engage by observing, thus becoming part of the space.

Of course, those who merely pass through without emotional engagement may traverse the space physically without truly entering it mentally or socially. Therefore, when interpreting Foucault's assertions about access systems in spaces like markets, it is necessary to consider degrees or quantities rather than viewing features as binary or absolute.Similarly, examining museums as heterotopic spaces reveals an evolving trend toward increasing hybridization.

Foucault categorized museums as heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time, noting that since the eighteenth century[①], museums have served as spaces where objects from various times and places are gathered, preserving slices of time within fixed spatial forms.

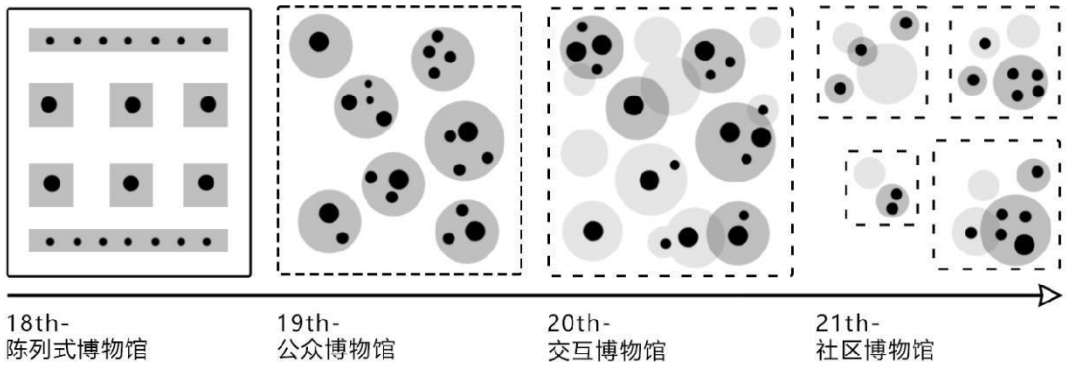


Figure 2.1 Development of the Museum Model (Drawn by the Author)

From the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries, museums were primarily characterized by traditional, closed exhibition formats, displaying artifacts in

① Before the eighteenth century, collections primarily reflected individual preferences, such as royal collections of treasures, art, and religious relics.

glass cases and emphasizing visual contemplation. Early European museums, serving privileged classes, often exhibited items in unordered arrangements, highlighting exclusivity. At this stage, museums as heterotopias were marked by strong enclosure and rigid entry requirements, with relatively pure spatial characteristics.

By the late nineteenth century, museums opened to broader public audiences, shifting toward narrative-enhancing techniques such as reconstructed scenes and textual displays. Although entry still often required purchasing or registering for tickets, accessibility increased significantly, and thematic exhibitions helped balance diversity among visitors while maintaining relative spatial stability.

In the late twentieth century, interactive experience-based museums emerged, fundamentally transforming the purity of traditional museum spaces. Construction and management increasingly emphasized entertainment and participation, integrating workshops, children's areas, and other non-exhibition spaces. Through immersive experiences, digital technologies, and interactive art, the boundary between exhibit and viewer was blurred.

Entering the twenty-first century, community museums and street museums further dismantled traditional access barriers. These institutions focus on local culture and everyday objects, sometimes occupying entire streets or building clusters as open-air museums. Digital platforms have further decoupled exhibitions from physical spaces, shifting the museum concept toward a hybrid of functions, spaces, and times.Nonetheless, even as physical boundaries dissolve, the temporal heterogeneity (*heterochronies*) inherent in museums persists. Regardless of form, they continue to condense, compress, and juxtapose slices of frozen time, creating temporal fractures relative to surrounding spaces.

2.2.2 Community Openness

The existence of heterotopic spaces is closely intertwined with the composition of their user communities. As spatial hybridization advances, it

inevitably coincides with the increasing openness of communities. This evolution manifests primarily in two aspects:

First, the expansion of access groups.As previously noted in the analysis of museums, the history of such heterotopic spaces includes two major shifts in their target audiences. Access expanded from an exclusive aristocratic group to ticket-holding members of the general public, and eventually to all residents interested in entering.Similar trends have been observed in other heterotopic spaces. For example, ethnic enclaves formed through immigration—such as Chinatowns—have transitioned from insular, isolated zones into integrated, distinctive urban districts with active exchanges and interactions with surrounding areas.

This transformation can be attributed to two factors:

1) Changes in economic and livelihood structures in the new era have reduced the necessity for immigrants to form tightly closed communities for survival, particularly under the support of inclusive urban policies.

2) Rising educational attainment and broader worldviews among both immigrant and host communities have fostered greater respect and tolerance for cultural diversity.

As shown in Table 2.1, there is a clear trend toward greater integration among different generations of Chinese immigrants in Italy.The first generation, mainly composed of workers and farmers from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, had low educational levels, lacked Italian language skills, and operated almost exclusively within Chinese social circles, resulting in significant cultural misunderstandings.In contrast, the third generation exhibits higher educational attainment, improved language proficiency, increased exposure through study-abroad experiences, and a growing recognition and acceptance of Italian culture and social values, thereby facilitating smoother integration into local communities.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Chinese Immigrants in Italy[35]

Generation	First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation
Arrival Period	1980s	1990s – Early 2000s	2006 – Present
年龄（岁）Age Range (Years)①	50-65	40-55	25-40
Place of Origin (China)	Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province	Wenzhou and Qingtian, Zhejiang Province	Wenzhou, Qingtian, and other regions
Degree of Integration (with Italy)	Low	Moderate	Moderate – High

The shift toward more open communities has, in turn, accelerated transformations in heterotopic spaces.For example, San Francisco's Chinatown, once characterized by strong physical and cultural closure, has evolved into a vibrant cultural district. Although visitors from surrounding neighborhoods or even other cities can now freely enter and exit, architectural elements such as upturned eaves, vivid colors, and abundant Chinese motifs serve as constant reminders of the enclave's heterotopic identity.

In Copenhagen's Nørrebro district, home to immigrants from around sixty different countries, the local government embraced multiculturalism by initiating the Superkilen project. Designed by BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group), Topotek1, and the artist collective Superflex, Superkilen created a public space that honors and facilitates intercultural dialogue among residents from fifty-seven different cultural backgrounds.

Fragments of foreign spaces and cultural symbols are embedded throughout the park, producing an intense compression of historical times and geographic spaces. Although the physical elements are real, the juxtaposition creates a surreal spatial

① Based on Giorgia Testa's study Cultural and Social Integration of Chinese Immigrants in Italy: A Study on Immigration Perspectives from the 1980s (age ranges updated based on 2017 data).

experience not found elsewhere.

Similar phenomena of community openness can also be observed in historic districts and peri-urban migrant communities.

Figure 2.2 Cross-Cultural Playmates in Superkilen Park (Image Source: Internet)

Second, the diversification of target communities.Emerging heterotopic spaces are increasingly designed not only for broader human populations but also for special user groups or even non-human communities.For example, pet parks featuring specialized amenities such as pools and exercise fields cater exclusively to pet owners and their animals, creating new types of urban heterotopic spaces.Similarly, insect hotels—small structures designed to support wild insect populations—represent micro-heterotopias promoting biodiversity and ecological restoration.

Although these spaces embody the ideal of multispecies justice, they are fundamentally constructed around specific human needs and values, providing dedicated spaces for particular groups with unique requirements.

2.2.3 Diversification of Scales

As urban pores between purely steady-state spaces and purely flow spaces, heterotopias have experienced an expansion in their scale thresholds in tandem with evolving perceptions of, and interactions with, spatial environments. The rapid advancement of productive forces and construction technologies has enabled the emergence of larger heterotopic spaces than in traditional contexts. Simultaneously, renewed attention to the details of everyday life has fostered the appearance of smaller, more intimate heterotopic forms.

With ongoing urbanization, some single-function traditional buildings have been transformed into large-scale complexes, serving as convergence points for diverse

groups and activities. These spaces function as dynamic intersections between flow and stability, offering immersive experiences of cultural and functional interweaving.

For example, early discussions of commercial heterotopias centered on arcades and department stores. Later, with the advent of large shopping malls, heterotopic analysis shifted to these larger alternative order spaces.

Today, the world’s largest shopping mall—The Dubai Mall—further enriches the heterotopic typology. Benefiting from Dubai’s highly open, internationalized policies and advantageous geographic location, the mall not only brings together a vast variety of merchandise but also attracts traders and visitors from across Eurasia and Africa. The Dubai Mall hosts a dazzling array of functions, including the world’s largest aquarium, a gold market, giant cinemas, an oversized ice rink, and integrated facilities for entertainment, dining, office work, and hospitality. It thus constitutes a multi-level, multi-functional heterotopic space.

Furthermore, the internal "mall within a mall" structure exemplifies the increasing complexity of contemporary heterotopias, enhancing the spatial interplay between dynamic flows and stable nuclei, and allowing for even richer mappings between abstract social relations and physical spatial structures.

On another level, urbanization has led to polarization in land use efficiency. While rural areas often experience land abandonment and depopulation, core urban areas exhibit high-density, high-frequency spatial usage. In this context, the heterogeneous occupation of urban "leftover spaces" or the reuse of abandoned micro-spaces has become a widespread phenomenon. Examples include community gardens, street art exhibitions, and temporary tea stalls embedded within otherwise single-functional environments. These relatively hidden, porous micro-spaces can be understood as components of urban heterotopias, adding layers of alternative functions to the existing urban fabric.

In major cities, flexible workspaces such as WeWork and co-working hubs have also emerged as new types of micro-heterotopias. These spaces are designed to accommodate temporary or long-term work needs for individuals from various fields, allowing functions to shift fluidly between offices, meeting rooms, social hubs, and event venues. This kind of micro-heterotopia underscores flexibility and fluidity, aligning with the changing demands of contemporary work patterns.

Figure 2.3 Mmuseumm Micro-Museum in an Elevator Shaft (Image Source: Internet)

Artists and cultural practitioners are often at the forefront of such spatial innovations. Many independently rent, modify, or create small spaces to showcase their works, or use their installations to temporarily occupy urban spaces, thereby generating unique invisible fields of influence. Although located in marginal or inconspicuous urban sites, these micro-art spaces often embody rich creativity and heterogeneity, providing platforms for individual or small-group cultural expression and social interaction, and reflecting the ongoing redefinition of urban spaces and cultural life.

One striking example is Mmuseumm, located in a disused elevator shaft in downtown Manhattan. Measuring approximately six feet (about 1.83 meters) in each dimension, it opens directly onto the street and remains visible even when closed via a viewing portal on the door. Its curators display everyday objects from around the world to explore human experiences and inspire reflection on contemporary events. They envision expanding this model of miniature museums, treating city streets as museum halls, with each Mmuseumm-like installation serving as a core exhibition satellite.

Figure 2.4 ATX RSM Micro-Museum (Image Source: Internet)

Another example is the ATX RSM micro-museum in East Austin, Texas. Installed

on a lawn in the form of a 16×20×12 inch display case, it conveys the idea that "small is big" and aims to revive neighborhood interaction. Such miniature heterotopic spaces, though physically small, act as magnifying glasses for the observation of detailed exhibits. Objects that might be overlooked in larger standard museums are celebrated for their hidden narratives and value here. These small-scale heterotopias subtly transform the way people perceive the world, fostering new perspectives on everyday life and thus potentially contributing to the next wave of urban model transformation.

Finally, another emerging heterotopic form is the Traveling Museum, often housed in mobile container units. These nomadic spaces embody Foucault's notion of the "ship" as a quintessential heterotopia: "The ship is a floating piece of space, a placeless place, existing by itself, closed in on itself and at the same time poised for infinite adventure." Traveling museums, moving from port to port or neighborhood to neighborhood, carry with them the spirit of imagination and mobility.

In Chapter 3, this study will further elaborate on the rhizomatic thinking that underpins such mobile heterotopias.

2.3 Analytical Approaches to Heterogeneous Space

In response to the evolving characteristics of heterogeneous spaces outlined earlier, our analytical methods must undergo adaptive adjustments and systematic refinement. Space and agency constitute the two primary components of heterogeneous space. Space, constrained by its physical existence, cannot be detached from its specific location and thus possesses locality. In contrast, the agency within heterogeneous space is relatively flexible and mobile, capable of traversing various environments. When approaching or entering a heterogeneous space, it forms an interactive field, exhibiting presence. Furthermore, due to the diversified scales, open communities, and spatial complexity of heterogeneous spaces, their connections with other heterogeneous spaces continue to strengthen. Therefore, analyzing a particular heterogeneous space necessitates attention to related heterogeneous nodes, considering the space from the perspective of a holistic network. With technological advancements, the existence and significance of the virtual world have grown increasingly prominent. The interaction between the virtual and the real has become an unavoidable domain in understanding and developing contemporary urban

heterogeneous spaces.

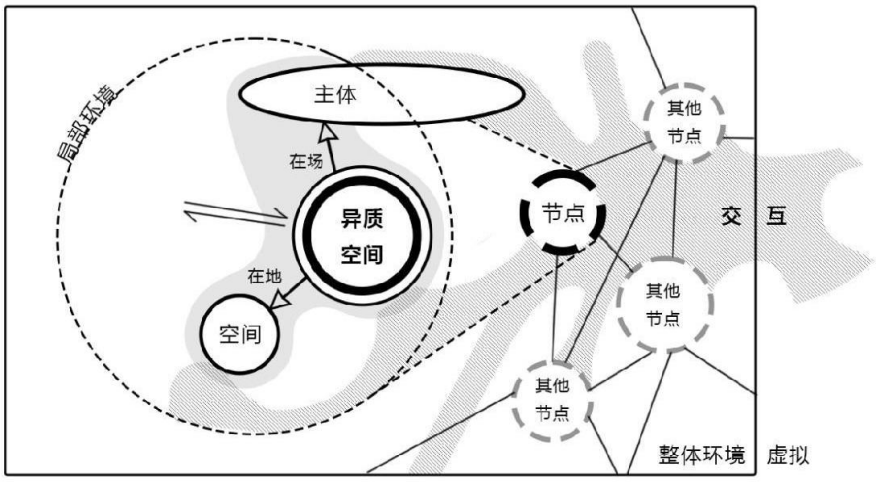


Figure 2.5 Diagram of Analytical Elements in Heterogeneous Space (Drawn by the Author)

2.3.1 Spatial Locality

"A kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. "[6] ——Michel Foucault

Although heterogeneous spaces serve as alternative realms that mirror or invert reality within the city, we must recognize them as real places inseparable from their socio-environmental contexts. Most heterogeneous spaces are bound by specific temporal and spatial constraints. First, the "anti-place" nature of heterogeneous spaces is not manifested in all aspects; real spatial attributes are still evident. Second, the inversion and alienation of reality within heterogeneous spaces are not extraterrestrial impositions but hybrid products of real and idealized spaces. Discussions on these aspects must not disregard local factors.

Concretely, urban morphology can first be employed to conduct foundational research on urban fabric and skeletal development. Understanding the physical form and evolutionary processes of urban space involves more than merely mapping buildings and street networks; it also concerns how different historical periods, social environments, and cultural practices leave their imprints on urban space. For instance, comparing spatial differences between traditional and modern cities can reveal shifts in

spatial usage, functional zoning, and transitions between public and private domains, thereby providing a "physical-structural" perspective on the diversity of heterogeneous spaces.

Urban fabric, the fundamental spatial structure of a city, encompasses both fluid spaces (e.g., road networks) and stable spaces. The "voids" within this fabric are more likely to host heterogeneous spaces—abandoned land from urban renewal, repurposed old buildings, or temporary gathering spaces in emerging commercial districts. The emergence, evolution, and diversification of these spaces are inextricably linked to the formation of urban fabric. For example, East London has undergone multiple waves of urban regeneration, resulting in a historically layered urban fabric interwoven with diverse, fluid alternative spaces. Beyond industrial heritage and large cultural centers, vibrant small-scale informal art spaces and markets (e.g., Brick Lane Sunday Market) thrive, where heterogeneous elements continuously interact.

To excavate and comprehend heterogeneous spaces, we must not only rely on static urban morphological studies but also integrate dynamic social practices, residents' usage patterns, cultural exchanges, and the influences of economic and political forces.

For a nuanced understanding of socio-spatial phenomena, including residents' spatial practices, both material and immaterial dimensions must be examined. For example, when extracting elements from local architectural vocabularies, attention should be paid to internal differentiations within regional architectural languages. A single locality may harbor multiple distinct yet similar cultures, where collisions and exchanges between parent cultures generate new subcultures and further recombination. The Chinatowns in various U.S. cities exhibit strong architectural consistency yet differ significantly from native Chinese architectural features. This "Orientalist" architectural style represents a hybridized cultural otherness—a locally reinterpreted expression that is neither purely foreign nor entirely local. Subsequent spatial interventions based on such subcultures may further spawn secondary forms, amplifying diversity and richness.

The Modernology (考现学) studies initiated by Japanese scholars like Kon Wajirō after the Great Kantō Earthquake, particularly the later Roadway Observation (路上观察学) branch founded by Akasegawa Genpei and others, offer valuable insights for delving deeper into urban environments hosting heterogeneous spaces and uncovering richer details of heterogenous daily life.[①] Modernology emphasizes meticulous

① In 1986, Akasegawa Genpei, Fujimori Terunobu, and Nanishi Bō established the Roadway Observation Society.

observation and documentation of urban life's fragments, followed by unique analyses. Roadway Observation, in contrast, focuses on street-level objects and events, extracting novelty from overlooked details of daily life. Unlike traditional architectural perspectives that prioritize spatial composition, division, and order, this approach centers on urban objects, studying human activities through their interactions with objects rather than abstract space. Shop signs, steps, manhole covers, even cigarette butts and dog feces can become subjects of observation. For instance, Figure 2.6 surveys the usage of street trash bins in a neighborhood, revealing micro-level insights into surrounding human activities and spatial relationships through differential interactions with identical objects.

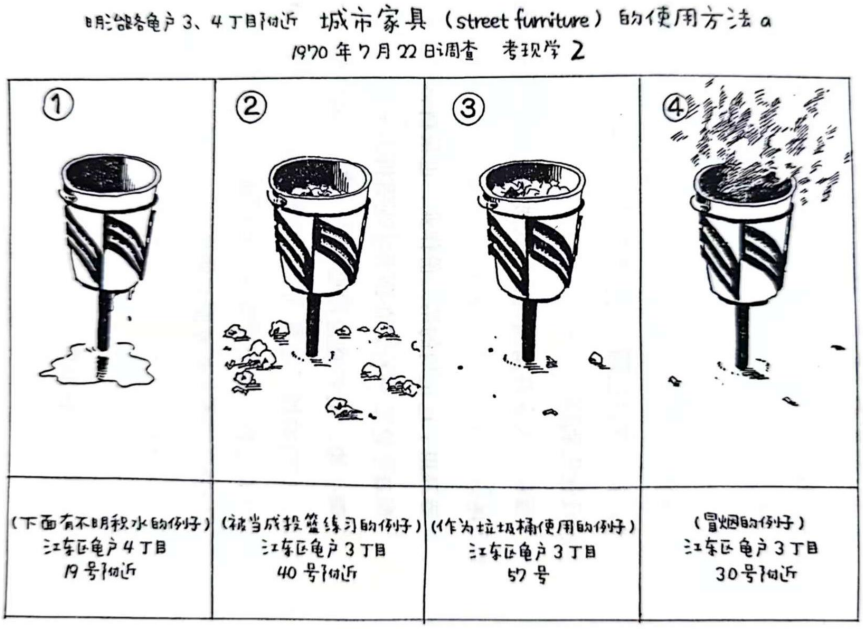


Figure 2.6 Example of Modernological Survey (Source: Introduction to Roadway Observation)

After achieving such comprehensive understanding, the next step is to identify a specific urban area's unique advantages and developmental objectives, clarifying which heterogeneous aspects to enhance or diminish. Leveraging the intrinsic qualities of heterogeneous spaces to amplify interactions among diverse elements can enhance urban uniqueness and vibrancy, contributing to urban diversity. However, approaches to existing heterogeneous elements must align with overarching developmental visions, avoiding generic solutions that ignore local specificity. For example, heterogeneous districts centered on foreign cultures can be categorized into three distinct types: historic concession districts (cultural-tourism focus), embassy districts (political-diplomatic

focus), and ethnic-themed commercial streets (economic-consumer focus). Their spatial positioning and objectives lead to vastly different cultural expressions and modes of heterogeneity, as illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Typological Differences in Heterotopias Shaped by Spatial Positioning

Category		**Historic Concession District**	**Embassy District**	**Ethnic-Themed Commercial Street**
Activity Type		Cultural display, tourism	Politics Diplomacy, international affairs	Business Consumption, cultural experience
Spatial Goal		Heritage revitalization+Integration of culture and Tourism	Diplomatic security and symbolic expression of authority	Economic benefit orientation and commercialized cultural symbols
Cultural Expression		Historical layering, hybrid local/foreign cultures	Political symbols, embassy buildings are different, and neutral architectural symbols express culture	Themed imitation architecture + commercial cultural elements expression
Social Inter-action	Actors:	Tourists/residents/ merchants	Diplomatic staff	Tourists/Merchants
	Public-ness	Semi-open (balancing preservation and development)	Highly closed (single function)	Completely open (mainly business)
Heterogeneity	Sources	Colonial heritage + global consumer culture	Sovereign Space + International Political Rules	Other cultural symbols + commercial capital intervention
	Logic	Cultural Collage	Spatial Isolation	Symbol Copy
	Power Dynamic	Cultural tourism capital reshapes	Direct control by state power	Market logic dominates cultural

			historical narrative (conflict and tension between colonial memory and local identity)		(exclusiveness of sovereign symbols)		expression (the conflict between cultural authenticity and commercial imitation)
Typical Cases			Tianjin Italian Style Area		Beijing Embassy District—Embassy of Pakistan in China		Shanghai Thames Town

Through the analysis of three different types of culturally oriented enclaves, we further recognize the decisive role that spatial positioning plays in cultural expression and in shaping the mechanisms of heterogeneity. Culturally driven heterotopic spaces permit plural coexistence and contradictions, enhancing cultural value through historical layering. In contrast, politically oriented heterotopic spaces tend to exclude pluralistic interaction, using sovereignty and spatial isolation to assert authority. Commercially oriented heterotopic spaces, on the other hand, often simplify and standardize cultural symbols for mass production, aiming to maximize profits by satisfying consumer demands.

In summary, we must adopt a more dialectical view of the meaning of "spatial locality." Maintaining the original state of a site during development is a way to preserve the identity of the local environment, while selectively retaining or strengthening elements of locality becomes the source of project uniqueness. Such an approach is crucial for differentiating a project from other similar physical or cultural places. Moreover, accurate judgment of, and sustained attention to, the development orientation of a space is an essential part of the design and planning process.

In addition, we must remain vigilant against false forms of "locality."

Some claims of diversity and local distinctiveness in spatial production may, in fact, conceal underlying processes of homogenization disguised under the rhetoric of "localness."

The concept of "subjective presence" offers a potential solution to this issue, as articulated by Li Jiewen and Wang Hongyang.[①]

① For further discussion, see the viewpoints of Li Jiewen and Wang Hongyang.

2.3.2 Subjective Presence

Urban subjects refer to urban actors—various individuals or collectives that exert influence within the urban environment. These include residents, governmental and non-governmental organizations, enterprises, planners, and more.

From the idealist traditions of Eastern philosophy—such as "there is no reality outside the mind" or "the universe is my mind, and my mind is the universe"—to Western thoughts like "to be is to be perceived" or "the world is a representation of the will," the characteristics of things are believed to rely on human perception. From this perspective, the existence and nature of heterotopic spaces are profoundly shaped by human perception.

From a materialist standpoint, most stages of heterotopic space formation involve human participation—ranging from planning and decision-making prior to formation, to design and construction during formation, and ultimately to operation and use after completion. Even in the case of less intentional, spontaneously formed heterotopic spaces, such processes can be observed.

This subsection focuses on the roles played by various urban actors in the production, use, and reconstruction of heterotopic spaces, as well as the impact of interactions among these actors. It especially emphasizes the increasingly diverse and in-depth involvement of urban residents in decision-making and space-making processes, and explores how this participatory trend, in turn, reshapes heterotopic spaces.

To analyze heterotopic space, we may employ social ecology to reveal the complex relationships among actors and examine how these subjects endow space with heterogeneity and meaning through everyday behaviors and practices. Social ecology views space as a nested system composed of individual, community, and urban levels, emphasizing the co-evolution of subject behavior, social relationships, and physical environments. Heterotopic space should not be regarded as a static container, but rather as an ecological system where spatial structures and human practices evolve in tandem.

The ultimate aim of urban development is to provide a livable and enriching environment for its residents. In analyzing the subject dynamics of heterotopic spaces, we must acknowledge the shift of decision-making power toward residents.

First, this shift is evident in policy-making processes that now increasingly respect the agency of everyday street users—vendors, residents, pedestrians—allowing them

space for self-expression. This human-centered approach has given rise to street renovation strategies that reflect contemporary values. For example, Minhang District in Shanghai introduced an "Environment Experience Officer" system, inviting citizens and business representatives to participate in policy formulation, thereby transforming urban planning from unilateral government decision-making into a tripartite negotiation structure of government–market–society.

Second, residents are also playing an active role in the construction and usage of heterotopic spaces. Under the guidance of the "Clover Nature School" organized by Professor Liu Yuelai of Tongji University, over 100 community gardens have been planned and built throughout Shanghai. Through co-design, co-governance, and co-sharing among residents of all ages, these gardens have created ideal heterotopic spaces that foster ecological vitality and neighborly warmth within the resource-scarce and emotionally distant urban fabric.

The Superkilen park project previously mentioned exemplifies civic participation taken to the extreme. Designers conducted in-depth interviews with local residents from various countries. Not only were residents' ideas respected, but they also selected installations and cultural elements from their homelands—some of which were directly purchased or replicated in Denmark. Furthermore, community members actively participated in implementing these ideas. For instance, drawing from a Pakistani tradition of carrying a handful of native soil to a new land, two Palestinian residents were invited to bring back soil from their hometowns and mix it with Danish earth inside the park.

Such acts of material relocation intertwined with personal memory and emotional connection have woven diverse traditions into the Danish urban fabric. Resident participation instills a sense of belonging and functions as a powerful form of emotional empowerment.

Figure 2.7 Palestinian Residents Participating in Construction (Image Source: Internet)

Heterotopic spaces often respond to the general needs of minority groups or to the special needs of majority populations. Therefore, understanding these spaces requires a deep investigation of subject needs. On one hand, in-depth interviews and participatory observations can shed light on behavioral patterns and subjective perceptions; on the other hand, theoretical approaches such as phenomenology of perception or comparative analysis of other heterotopic practices may help reveal latent needs.

Embodied perception is essential here. Bodily engagement in space functions as a conduit for rich cultural information, further reinforcing heterogeneity.

Markets are the most vivid example—through the interactions between vendors and buyers, information-rich commodities like local delicacies or handicrafts are exchanged, while people of diverse cultural backgrounds and languages bring dynamic heterogeneity into the space through their exchanges. In festive celebrations, visitors imitate performers through song and dance, internalizing culture via bodily actions and becoming part of the spatial experience. In such heterotopic spaces, the body is not merely a passive receptor of cultural meaning, but also an active medium that generates new forms of heterogeneity through practice.

2.3.3 Nodes Within the Network

Firstly, heterotopic spaces must be understood as nodes within the broader urban network. They should be analyzed not as isolated entities, but rather as embedded within the larger urban or regional spatial framework—this represents a higher-level extension of the concept of spatial situatedness discussed earlier. A heterotopic space is influenced by, and in turn influences, both its immediate neighborhood and the broader

urban system to which it belongs.

Secondly, heterotopic spaces often maintain forms of interaction and connection with one another. These connections may be forged through shared cultural backgrounds, similar functions, or comparable spatial experiences, thereby constructing a more intricate urban spatial network.

When analyzing an individual heterotopic space, a comparative approach can be taken by linking it to other heterotopic spaces that share commonalities. For instance, ethnic-themed streets across different cities can be compared to observe how they express spatial heterogeneity under varying cultural and societal conditions. Similarly, within a single metropolis, different cultural enclaves shaped by immigrant communities — such as Little Tokyo, Chinatown, and the Mexican neighborhoods surrounding Boyle Heights in Los Angeles—can be analyzed for their similarities and differences in spatial identity, sociocultural impact, and interaction with the urban fabric.

In addition, drawing inspiration from modular open-source platforms, it is increasingly valuable to explore the possibility of constructing replicable heterotopic space networks. One compelling example is the MICRO project, a micro-museum network based in San Francisco. Utilizing identical miniature museum units, this initiative deploys a "fleet" of compact museums throughout the city, integrating them into a wide range of public settings — such as hospital waiting rooms and vehicle inspection stations. These micro-museums are capable of rotating their exhibitions and content on demand, and their implementation involves partnerships with community organizations and public institutions, empowering citizens to participate in both spatial construction and curatorial storytelling.

This modular and decentralized deployment of heterotopic units across various urban locations facilitates the formation of a more flexible and diverse spatial network. In this manner, heterotopic space transcends singular geographic points and becomes a replicable and scalable urban cultural element, promoting urban cultural diversity and enhancing civic interaction across the city.

2.2.4 Interactive Online Presence

Although David Grahame Shane’s morphogenetic matrix of possibilities presents a seemingly comprehensive framework of six spatial and urban model anchors and nine

intersectional typologies, it cannot fully encapsulate the multifaceted, ever-evolving reality of contemporary urban space. Each dimension within the model has the potential for further expansion. For instance, within the dimension of urban models, Shane briefly mentions the New Net City as an emergent evolution beyond the Tele-Città (Information City).

With the latest wave of the information revolution, technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things are not only reshaping modes of production but also fostering new industries and urban lifestyles. In addition to providing intelligent and convenient urban experiences, novel interactional modes — such as remote work, online education, and telemedicine — are rapidly developing. Urban spatial planning is undergoing a paradigm shift from static blueprints to dynamic systems. The integration of digital technologies now offers not only analytical tools for evidence-based planning and design but also enables the reconfiguration of symbiotic relationships among humans, space, and the city through interactive devices and smart networks.

Data-driven spatial generation increasingly involves the design of intelligent and interactive scenes: augmented reality (AR) navigation systems overlay real-time traffic data and historical-cultural tags; immersive VR experiences such as “Eternal Notre-Dame de Paris” allow users to explore architectural restoration and heritage virtually.

As a result, urban spatial analysis can no longer be confined to the examination of static relationships and real-world physical spaces (Real Space); equal attention must be paid to digital spaces and the interactive dynamics between digital and physical realms. Scholars Haider and Paul, drawing on Foucault’s heterotopia — particularly the metaphor of the mirror — proposed a philosophical interactional model to dissect the complex interplay between digital and physical spaces. They conceptualize Digital Space (DS) as a subset of Real Space (RS), and further divide both realms into private and public domains, resulting in four spatial quadrants: Private Real (e.g., a personal bedroom), Public Real (e.g., parks and plazas), Private Digital (e.g., private phone content or hidden social media posts), and Public Digital (e.g., online forums, Weibo, or Xiaohongshu). These quadrants form the foundation of eight new heterotopic zones (h1–h8) and a central “u” space, where interactional complexity increases toward the center. Transitions among these heterotopic zones are mediated by permissions, trust

mechanisms, and access-control protocols.[16]

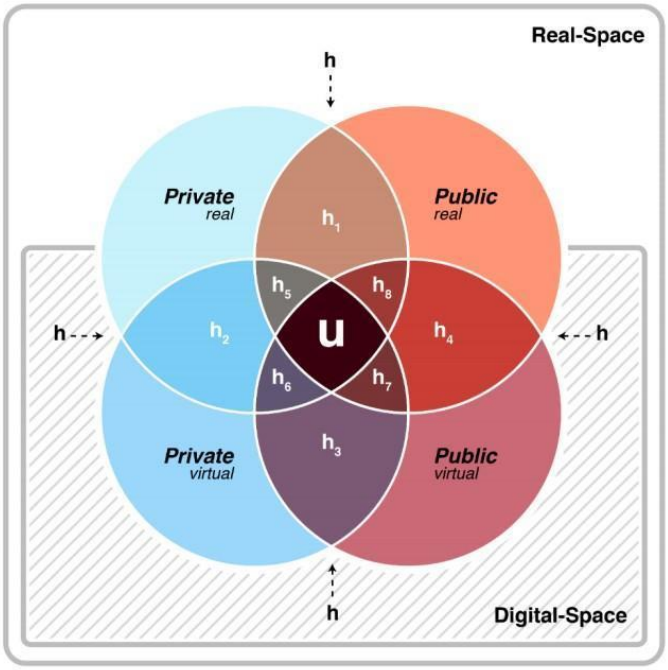


Figure 2.8 illustrates this philosophical model of space interaction (source: literature[16])

The now ubiquitous phenomenon of livestreaming vividly demonstrates this interactional structure. Suppose an individual streamer initiates a Douyin livestream using their private mobile phone within a real-world festive heterotopic public space. In this scenario, Public Real space becomes mediated through Private Digital permissions, thereby activating an h3 heterotopic space—somewhere between the private and public. As the event being broadcast enters the livestream, a form of h7 heterotopia emerges. With an increasing number of viewers, the stream's public dimension intensifies, gradually shifting toward h4. Should viewers begin interacting (e.g., voice calls, co-streaming), even Private Real spaces are drawn into the livestream via digital mediation, creating a highly complex spatial web. If some viewers are also physically present in the same real-world festive space, their own bodies become embedded in the recorded feed, generating nested heterotopias through intelligent digital devices.

In such virtual-real hybrid scenarios, spatial boundaries are increasingly compressed, and urban actors are drawn into closer proximity. Carlos J. Gómez de Llarena's Urban Speaker project exemplifies this: remote participants call a telephone number to project their voices into New York's Tompkins Square Park, altering the park's sonic environment without being physically present. Similarly, Tobias Klein's

Virtual Sunset project allows people from around the world to upload sunset photos, which are projected onto on-site PVC tubes, creating a three-dimensional simulation of a global sunset—fusing distant strangers into a collective experiential heterotopia.

Figure 2.9 "Virtual Sunset," an interactive digital installation (source: online image)

Moreover, information technologies and social media have paved new virtual pathways for cultural expression. In Italy, second-generation immigrants use digital platforms to reconnect with ancestral cultures while navigating their current societal context. This dual belonging facilitates active identity construction, as noted by Mariangela Giusti in her study of 30 second-generation immigrants from Chinese, Arab, Romanian, and Albanian backgrounds. Her 2013 paper " The Web as a Channel to Connect the Current and Traditional Cultural Consumptions" highlights how such digital tools support long-distance cultural communication—both in spatial and temporal terms.

While traditional graffiti once archived localized human activity in public streets, the density and diversity of that information remain limited. Today, interactive technologies offer pathways to enrich urban information layers and preserve the memory of diverse street users, reflecting a growing need to adapt to evolving communication habits and information formats in urban life.

2.4 The Value of Heterotopic Spaces

2.4.1 Coexistence of Multiple Logics

As the material embodiment of urban hybridity, heterotopic spaces serve as core nodes for diversity production through the overlay of functions, cultural hybridization, and social blending. Within the framework of the "Hybrid City," heterotopic spaces,

along with armature space (e.g., transport hubs, digital platforms) and enclave spaces (e.g., axis-based sequences, institutional sites), together constitute the city's first level of multiplicity. Through cross-scalar hybridity—from micro bodily practices to macro structural co-shaping—and cross-temporal accumulation—from historical memory to future imagination—heterotopic spaces facilitate the transition of urban space from static pluralism to a dynamically evolving complex system.

Due to their spatio-temporal distortions, heterotopic spaces also embody a second level of multiplicity. On the one hand, spatio-temporal collapse enables the layering of material and cultural elements from various historical periods and distant locales. On the other hand, spatio-temporal expansion alters users' perceptions—for instance, participants in music festivals may lose track of time, their temporal experience slowed within the heterotopic space.

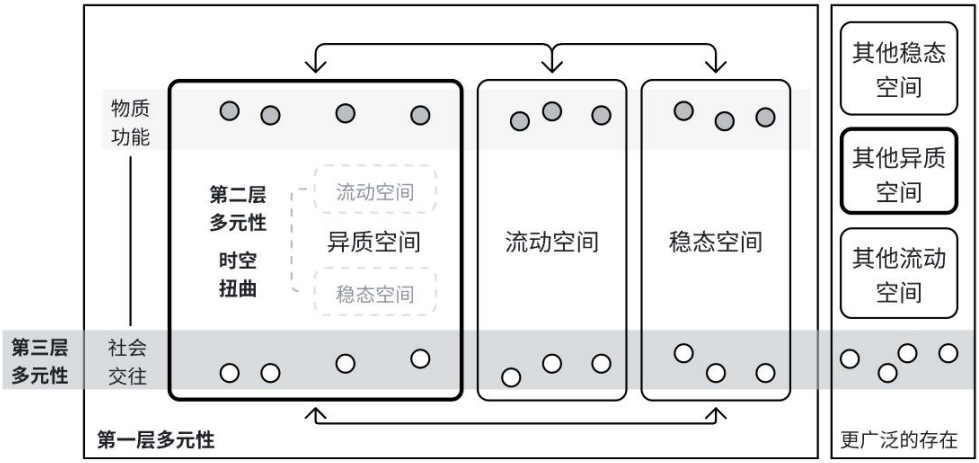


Figure 2.10 Multiple Logics in Heterotopic Space (drawn by author)

The third level of multiplicity lies in social interactions. For both long-term local residents and newcomers such as migrants, job-seekers, or students, culturally hybrid heterotopic spaces often serve as sites of reflection and broadened perspectives. For instance, San Francisco's Chinatown is a key site for the Chinese-American diaspora. Buildings like the Sheng Chang Building bear strong Chinese symbols and serve as markers of group identity and cultural heritage, offering Chinese communities a relatively independent yet interconnected space to maintain language, customs, and traditions. At the same time, Chinatown attracts Americans and other ethnic groups, becoming a space for economic exchange and cultural interaction. This demonstrates the spatial heterogeneity through the convergence and fusion of cultures.

By embracing multiple logics, heterotopic spaces enrich urban diversity and, crucially, contribute to enhancing the resilience of urban systems.

2.4.2 Adaptive Design

"Heterotopic spaces serve as reflective and distanced transition grounds within the urban system, increasing the city's capacity to adapt to change."

— David Grahame Shane

Shane noted that heterotopic space is not a single, homogenous area or a container for fixed functions. Instead, it is composed of multiple pockets — independent yet interrelated subspaces. This multi-chambered structure allows for functional, temporal, and social flexibility, offering numerous possibilities for adaptive transformation. The adaptive design of heterotopic spaces is a critical strategy in addressing the complexities of modern society and can be reflected in three aspects:

1. Organic Renewal of Urban Heterogeneous Patches.

As industries evolve, some obsolete sites become urban voids that clash with surrounding communities. However, these sites provide fertile ground for mixed-use redevelopment. Adaptive design in such heterotopic spaces transforms conflict-laden uses into synergistic opportunities, promoting organic urban growth. Abandoned infrastructure (e.g., old factories) can be treated as "spatial fossils," where contrasting functions are implanted to activate dialogue between historical and contemporary needs. For example, after Fiat's Lingotto Factory in Turin was abandoned in the 1980s, Renzo Piano transformed it into a mixed-use complex, preserving industrial trusses and tracks while inserting cultural and commercial programs—creating a dynamic spatial tension between past production and current consumption. Similarly, Amsterdam's Bijlmerbajes prison was redeveloped into a hybrid urban complex with social housing, creative workspaces, and public green areas, shifting from a disciplinary to an inclusive space of public life.

2. Ephemeral Heterotopias with Temporary and Mobile Structures.

Pop-up heterotopic spaces using demountable and mobile structures can meet temporary needs such as pandemics, disasters, or festivals. These "Instant Cities" avoid spatial ossification and resource waste, responding to urban fluidity and uncertainty with flexibility. London's Pop Brixton, for example, is a container-based temporary community that can be relocated after its lease. Wuhan's Hongshan Stadium

was transformed into a 800-bed emergency hospital within 24 hours using prefabricated modules—demonstrating pandemic-resilient logic and rapid reusability.

3. Enhancing Urban Resilience through Diversity Redundancy.

Some heterotopic spaces, due to their functional hybridity, social diversity, and morphological variety, become critical anchors of stability. These spaces create diversity redundancy within the urban ecological system. When one subsystem fails, others can compensate. During COVID-19 lockdowns, for instance, community gardens provided basic food supply and open-air markets mitigated the risks of indoor contagion. New York’s High Line Park—converted from an abandoned elevated railway—offered a vital outdoor corridor for social life, buffering the social isolation of indoor space and enhancing the city's adaptive capacity.

2.4.3 Critical Practices

“ The novelty and instability of heterotopic spaces—and the transitions they enable—are the fundamental drivers behind the transformation among the three standard urban models.”

—David Grahame Shane

In the process of urbanization, heterotopic spaces accommodate alternative social orders and spatial forms, serving as experimental grounds for emerging phenomena and potential future transformations. For example, early factories during the Industrial Revolution, as heterotopic spaces, disrupted traditional modes of production and social relations. They gave birth to the modern industrial order and shaped labor-capital relations, divisions of labor, and other social systems.

Later, as industrial restructuring reshuffled the urban economy, these once noisy, machine-filled factories were left behind, becoming new types of “ heterotopic wastelands.” Yet these new heterotopias also nourished emerging forms of urban vitality. A case in point is the 798 Art District in Beijing, which emerged from an abandoned factory complex. Its low costs and unusually high, wide-span spaces provided ideal conditions for artistic regeneration. The heterogeneity of the site preserved the latent possibility for future economic development and the cultural transformation of the surrounding community.

Figure 2.11 Graz Art Museum (Image source: Internet)

The Graz Art Museum, designed by architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier and heavily influenced by the experimental avant-garde movements of the 1960s – 70s such as Archigram, initially sparked major controversy. Located in the historic Lend district of Graz, a city filled with Baroque and medieval architecture, the museum's biomorphic form starkly contrasted with its surroundings. In rejecting traditional architectural norms, the designers redefined the spatial mode of cultural exhibition. The building manifests a utopian vision of architecture as a living organism, projecting a futurist manifesto in physical form. Although such ideals have not entered the architectural mainstream, the museum ' s experimental use of interactive media façades has fueled ongoing exploration in architecture and digital design. Its organic exterior continues to leave a lasting spatial impact on the city.

Figure 2.12 PARK PARK – Parking Lot Park (Image source: Internet)

The PARK PARK project demonstrates how critical experimentation can challenge the boundaries of conventional urban enclave spaces, creatively transforming

a typical parking lot into an unconventional heterotopic environment. In response to the land waste and visual dullness of surface-level parking lots, designers introduced playful spatial divisions and vibrant graphic patterns, converting the space into a leisure and social venue—a hybrid form between a parking lot and a park. Although its limited parking capacity hinders widespread adoption, the project offers an alternative use path that contests prevailing land-use logics and exemplifies the pioneering spirit of heterotopic innovation in promoting urban change.

Beyond their physical manifestations, heterotopic spaces also conceal latent currents of social transformation. They embody alternative—and often oppositional—orders that diversify the normative frameworks of modern society. This pluralism emboldens the emergence of new ideas and highlights the dynamic, rather than static, nature of social order. Positioned at the urban margins, heterotopic spaces often reflect overlooked or suppressed needs and interests, serving as reminders for more inclusive governance and spatial justice. Their material presence functions symbolically, offering protection for marginal demands and representing cultural or social power.

For example, San Francisco's Chinatown—marked by structures like the Sheng Chang Building and the traditional gateway arch—symbolizes the cultural power of the Chinese diaspora. Through its spatial representation, Chinese identity and heritage have been preserved and asserted within a foreign context. This acts as both a supplement to and a challenge against mainstream cultural dominance, demonstrating how spatiality can express cultural agency. Furthermore, the existence of Chinatown results from ongoing power negotiations between Chinese business groups, local government, and other stakeholders. Despite facing pressures from urban expansion and cultural conflict, the heterotopic qualities of Chinatown, along with community efforts, have enabled its preservation and growth.

Heterotopic spaces possess a degree of freedom outside normative constraints. Their existence and evolution have been integrated into the collective cognition and evaluative systems of society, becoming key expressions of the multiplicity and richness of modern social order.

In an interview regarding Superkilen Park, Jonas Hjort stated: " Diversity should come first." While issues such as racism and cultural clashes may be inevitable in multicultural cities, embracing urban heterogeneity requires the provision of highly

diverse spaces that foster respectful dialogue. Rather than avoiding conflict by retreating into homogeneity, we must proactively cultivate settings that support constructive, reciprocal engagement—thus guiding urban futures toward richness, inclusivity, and resilience.

Chapter 3 Spatial Strategies for Enhancing Heterogeneity

Building on the previous chapter’s theoretical overview and analysis of existing heterotopic spaces—their features, typologies, and spatial value—this chapter shifts the focus toward design strategies for enhancing heterogeneity. Grounded in the study of real-world cases, the goal is to explore how spatial interventions can actively foster and maximize the diversity potential of heterotopic spaces. Through the distillation of strategic design tools, this chapter seeks to offer actionable guidelines for architects and planners to apply in practice.

3.1 Multi-Pocket Structures: Two Types of Heterotopic Containers

Heterotopic space theory highlights that such spaces are not defined by fixed or uniform forms; rather, their physical manifestations vary greatly. What unites them is a high degree of independence from their surrounding environments. In urban contexts, this manifests as a range of cavity-like spaces—what Shane refers to as multiple pockets—which serve as critical components of urban resilience. To expand the functional capacity of these “multi-pocket” structures, it is not enough to simply redevelop urban voids awaiting construction or renewal. A finer spatial lens is also needed—to detect and activate subtle substrates of urban heterogeneity.

For example, Design in Progress (CACP) in central Chengdu transformed a disused bicycle shed tucked into a corner of the dense city core into a vibrant public art and community space. The project now hosts a furniture repair workshop, neighborhood meetings, and exhibitions. This adaptive reuse demonstrates the potential of informal edge spaces to become hybrid anchors for both spatial and social engagement.

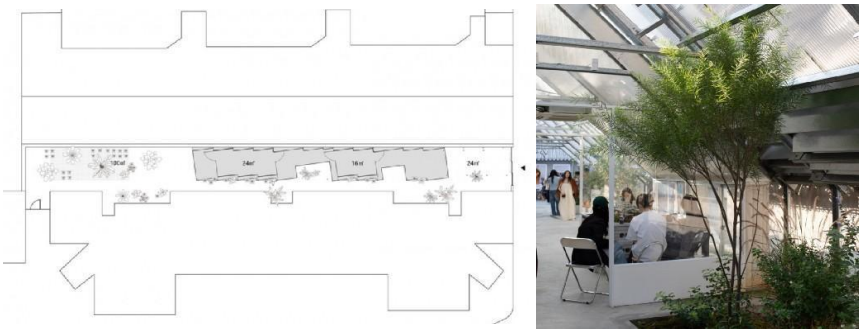


Figure 3.1 “ Design in Progress” (image source: online)

This section classifies multi-pocket structures into two spatial categories: Linear, continuous heterotopic spaces, and Point-like, discrete heterotopic spaces. We begin with the latter.

3.1.1 Discrete Heterotopic Spaces Between Enclaves

As dispersed and autonomous nodes within the multi-pocket structure, discrete heterotopic spaces contrast with surrounding enclave spaces (i.e., stable spatial forms) in both visual and functional terms. These sites often maintain localized heterogeneity — whether in function, power relations, or cultural significance — thereby balancing stability with spatial exceptionality. Among these traits, functional heterogeneity is the most common. Based on the original use condition of the site, heterogeneity-enhancing development can be classified into three types:

1) Blank Spaces

These are small, irregular plots of land often left unused due to planning voids, awkward geometry, or unresolved ownership. One example is a roadside shack in Osaka, located on a sliver of triangular land (4m at its narrowest, 59m at its longest) leftover between a misaligned road and a residential building (see red box in Figure 3.2). The location’s high visibility and resident foot traffic nurtured a micro commercial node: a tent-covered convenience stand and snack vendor. As an improvised heterotopic space, the informal visual contrast to surrounding formal infrastructure is stark—yet its social role is meaningful, offering both material sustenance and emotional comfort.

Later, a professionally designed micro-building featuring timber and metal cladding was constructed on this oddly shaped plot. It now hosts a barber shop, café, and office—demonstrating how even ultra-constrained spatial conditions can yield fully functional urban micro-complexes.

Figure 3.2 Osaka Triangular Micro-Site (image source: online)

Another example is the Caffè del Popolo in Córdoba, Argentina (see Figure 3.3), which occupies only 4m² between two apartment buildings. Despite its minute footprint, the café offers locals a space to pause and interact. Designed as an urban prosthesis, the project blends fixed concrete-and-metal seating on the sidewalk with a service window and street-facing bar. The collective choreography of patrons, passersby, and sellers turns this residual void into a heterotopic site of social exchange.

Figure 3.3 Caffè del Popolo, Córdoba (image source: online)

2) Abandoned Spaces

These spaces typically retain industrial or architectural remnants after original functions are vacated. At TANK Shanghai, a group of decommissioned aviation fuel tanks was transformed into an art center, with new programs including music, dining, and exhibitions inserted into the hollowed industrial forms. The fusion of "old bottles with new wine" overlays multiple historical layers. People now experience radically different activities in spaces previously inaccessible, blending industrial and cultural vocabularies into a new typology.

Figure 3.4 TANK Shanghai (image source: online)

3) Underutilized Spaces

Here, the original function remains in place, but temporal or spatial surplus allows for hybrid insertion. In Shenzhen's Carbon Neutrality Laboratory Campus, the "Bergs" climbing wall was organically attached to the steel framework of an office-research building. The new recreational function, both visually and programmatically distinct from the site's scientific core, introduced a performative layer to the architectural experience. It also subtly opened the gated campus to public interaction, creating opportunities for cross-sector engagement — such as youth programming for nearby MESA Academy students.

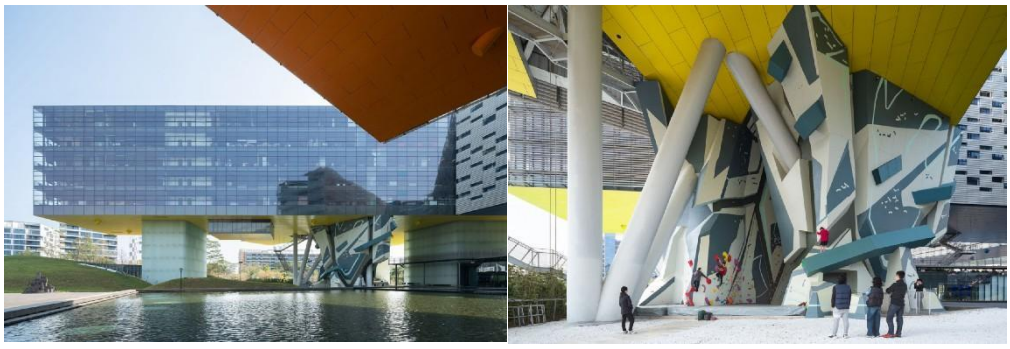


Figure 3.5 Bergs Wall, Shenzhen (image source: online)

Discrete heterotopic spaces vary dramatically in scale—from large urban districts like Beijing's Universal Studios (approx. 4,000,000 m^2) and Los Angeles' Chinatown (approx. 2,740,000 m^2), to building-scale complexes like Singapore's Tampines Hub (approx. 120,000 m^2), down to small private dwellings like Sou Fujimoto's House N (150 m^2), and even micro-sites like the aforementioned café (4 m^2) or the 52 m^2 Hu Huishan Memorial Pavilion.

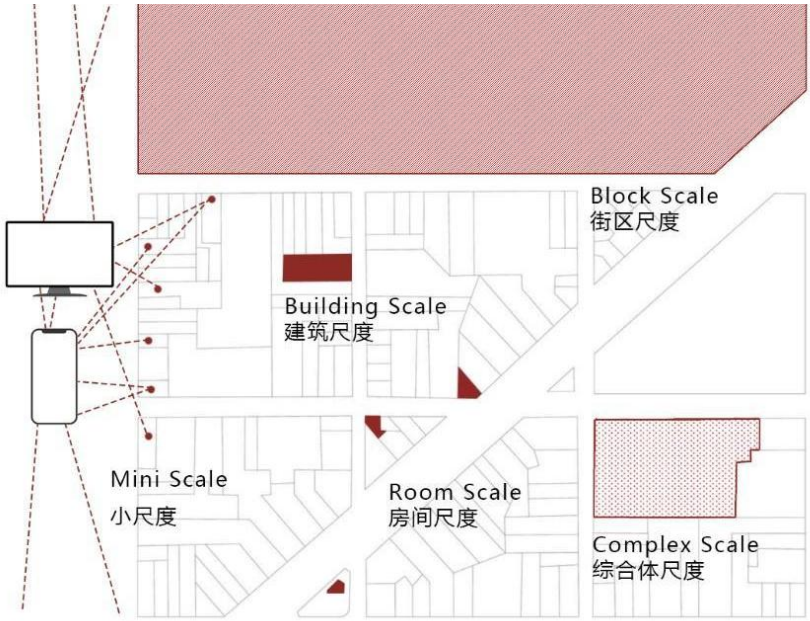


Figure 3.6 Spatial Scales of Discrete Heterotopic Spaces (drawn by author)

At even smaller scales, heterotopic logic persists. Foucault's original example of the mirror—a miniature heterotopic object—demonstrates that illusion heterotopias (Heterotopia of Illusion) can exist at micro dimensions. According to Shane, electronic visual displays such as television or digital screens are typical micro heterotopias of the information city. They project scenes from other places and times onto the present, compressing time into digitized fragments. The interactive BIX media façade of the Graz Art Museum is one such screen—it detaches from the museum's architectural integrity at night, becoming its own heterotopic image field. Through internet platforms, these screen-based illusions can also be interconnected in the virtual realm, transcending material boundaries entirely.

In terms of spatial distribution, discrete heterotopic spaces between enclaves often arise organically and are thus randomly dispersed—though some cluster around "high-energy nodes" or eventually constitute such nodes themselves. In contrast, government-led infrastructure such as community service centers in China exemplify grid-embedded heterotopic spaces. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this model extended to include uniformly distributed nucleic acid testing stations and temporary quarantine facilities, both of which carried traits of heterotopias of deviation.

3.1.2 Continuous Heterotopic Spaces within Armature Networks

Shane classifies streets, central corridors in shopping malls, and similar linear formations as armature spaces—urban assemblages that "gather people along axial spaces, prompting encounters, commercial transactions, entertainment, and formal or informal public activities." [11] As such, armature spaces are not only the conduits for urban actors' movements and practices, but also the containers and connective tissues that host or link heterotopic experiences. On one hand, these linear spaces interconnect the various "magnetic poles" of the city, including the discrete heterotopic spaces mentioned earlier. On the other hand, the supporting framework of armature spaces—originally meaning "a sculptor's armature used to shape an external mold"—provides a structural grid in which continuous heterotopic "pockets" can organically emerge.

This concept aligns with Kevin Lynch's The Image of the City, in which paths such as streets and railways form the backbone of urban perception. Nodes, edges, and other elements are organized around these paths, making the armature not only a circulation spine but also a semantic anchor. [43] Heterotopic spaces embedded in linear structures serve to diversify and enrich movement-based experiences by embedding interactive activities and unique functions. Based on form and spatial location, such continuous heterotopic cavities can be categorized into four main types, as illustrated in Figure 3.7.

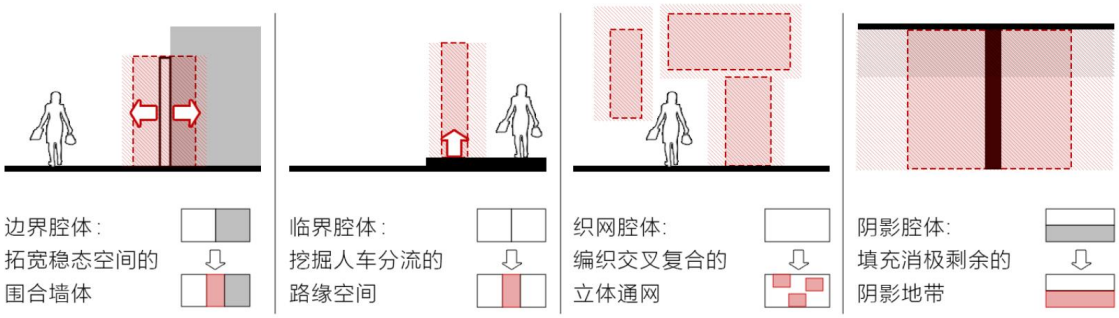


Figure 3.7 Diagram of Continuous Heterotopic Cavities (drawn by author)

1) Boundary Cavities

These occur along the hard edges between armature spaces and adjacent enclaves—typically walls or fences. Transforming such linear boundaries into volumetric, interactive zones creates liminal spaces that absorb heterogeneity from both sides. For instance, the "Wall Museum" project on Haidian Road in Beijing reimagined a

dilapidated wall with solely isolating function into a semi-transparent exhibition boundary featuring alternating glass vitrines, narrow slit windows, and laser-etched luminous bricks engraved with historic place names. This "thickened" wall now engages passersby with periodic exhibits, historical narratives, and nighttime illumination—turning it into a hybrid of museum, seating area, and memory device. Small recesses with benches further encourage social interaction, making this minimalist transformation a "mini-park" embedded within street infrastructure.

Figure 3.8 "Wall Museum" in Haidian (image source: online)

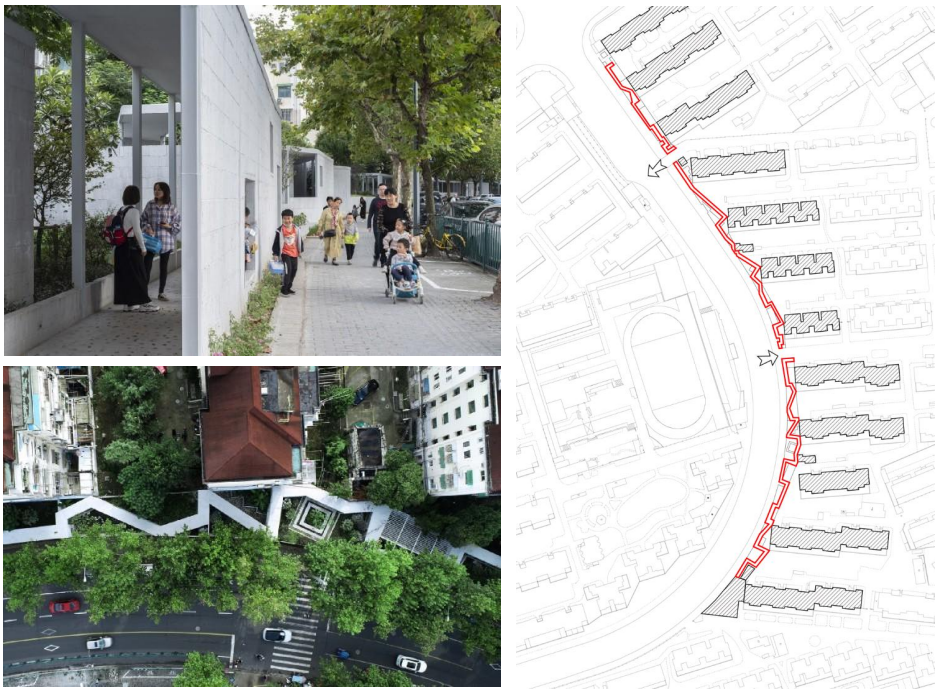


Figure 3.9 Garden Wall at Changliyuan, Shanghai (image source: online)

A more extensive application is found at Changliyuan, a linear intervention along Nanmatou Road in Shanghai. Following the demolition of illegal shops, a 350-meter concrete wall and adjacent underused green belt were transformed by Ziyunzai Architecture into a sinuous "garden corridor." Drawing inspiration from classical Chinese gardens, the design offers variable-width meandering paths (6–8 meters),

dynamic spatial sequencing, and multiple programmatic insertions such as playgrounds and gathering areas. This linear heterotopic strip reconciles the rigidity of public housing and the monotony of street-facing walls with a soft, culturally nuanced interface that enhances both aesthetic quality and everyday liveliness.

2) Threshold Cavities

Sidewalks represent the differentiated speeds of urban mobility and, beyond enabling pedestrian movement, often host multiple secondary activities. Threshold cavities utilize the spatial "leftovers" of armature edges—e.g., tree pits, seating, and decorative barriers — to generate heterotopic functions. In Hangzhou, for example, ironwork planters inspired by local landscapes (like West Lake) double as visual separators and cultural markers.

In Asheville, North Carolina, a craft market located along the southern edge of the Grove Arcade occupies two iron-framed shelters (each approx. 16 meters long and 3 meters wide). These canopy-covered stalls host vendors selling jewelry, paintings, clothing, soap, musical instruments, and even honey. Positioned between the pedestrian and vehicular realms, the market establishes a semi-permeable heterotopic cavity, dynamically defined by the shadows of its canopy and the kinetic interplay of materials and voices.

Figure 3.10 Makers Market at Grove Arcade, North Carolina (image source: online)

3) Interwoven Cavities

These involve layered spatial organization that redistributes pedestrian and vehicular flow across vertical or horizontal planes. In Shanghai's Caoyang Baixi Park, a former railway and wet market corridor was successively transformed into a temporary parking lot and finally a dynamic linear park. A woven pedestrian spine, likened to "a vine bearing gourds," links multiple sub-spaces: stepped seating, stages, semi-sunken

basketball courts, art galleries, and gardens. During Shanghai's Urban Space Art Season, this zone became a node for cultural exhibitions and civic activities—an infrastructural armature turned cultural heterotopia.

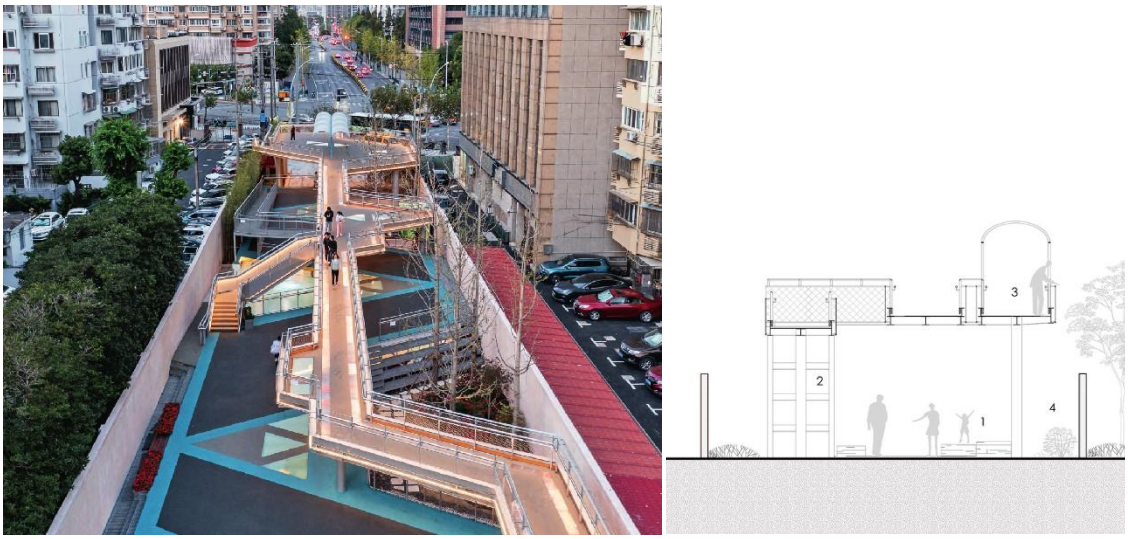


Figure 3.11 Caoyang Baixi Park (image source: online)

4) Shadow Cavities

Elevated highways and bridges often create negative spaces beneath them—dark, noisy, underutilized voids that may become heterotopic through spontaneous or planned interventions. At the multilevel intersection of Wuning Road and Guangfu West Road in Shanghai, there lies a bridge-under node station. The upper Wuning Road carries heavy traffic, and the constant vibrations of passing vehicles impose negative effects on the space below. Although the traffic volume on the lower Guangfu West Road is relatively light, the area suffers from poor lighting and persistent noise. Under the joint efforts of municipal departments and designers, this previously undesirable void has been transformed into a vibrant, multifunctional heterotopic venue that accommodates spontaneous activities and adaptive uses.

In addition to the standard public amenities such as restrooms and lounges, the site now features open stepped bleachers, roadside benches, a rotating vertical exhibition wall, and a mini café. The users of this space range from nearby residents and passing foreign tourists to more niche urban subcultural groups. These subcultures, in particular, are drawn to this unconventional heterotopic space: events such as African drum-sharing sessions and outdoor club meetups are frequently held here. The everyday urban rhythms—such as electric scooters whizzing by, residents exercising, and people

commuting home from work or school—intertwine with these non-daily, exceptional events, producing a layered spatial experience. The node station at the heart of the space imbues it with a distinctively local, street-level vitality, marking it as a uniquely atmospheric under-bridge heterotopia.

Notably, this shadow cavity played an irreplaceable compensatory role during the pandemic. When conventional public venues like parks and shopping malls were closed, people spontaneously gathered here for social interaction. During the transitional phase as the city gradually reopened, this under-bridge space served as a temporary shelter for delivery riders and couriers. In this context, the shaded, marginal space beneath the bridge—once seen as undesirable—unexpectedly offered a sense of safety and refuge. The adaptive capacity and unique spatial qualities of this heterotopic zone have thus become an essential element in supporting the resilience of the urban system.

Figure 3.12 Under-Wuning Road Bridge Station (image source: online)

In all these examples, linear armature-based cavities serve as incubators for heterogeneity. Unlike discrete heterotopic spaces, continuous ones benefit from enhanced exposure, greater reach, and faster information flow, thanks to their embeddedness in mobility infrastructure. The interaction between armature elements and heterotopic insertions fosters spatial hybridity, dynamic feedback, and networked

continuity—enabling heterotopic logic to spread and evolve across the urban landscape.

3.2 Layered Juxtaposition: Three Assemblage Paths

After identifying spatial cavities that can harbor and activate heterogeneous elements, this section focuses on how to utilize multiple assemblage paths to layer and combine heterogeneity, elaborating on spatial expression strategies within multi-cavity structures. Three primary approaches are discussed: collage modeling, bricolage construction, and decoupage ornamentation.

3.2.1 Collage Modeling

The term, “collage”, derived from the French word coller (meaning “to glue”), originally referred to an artistic technique of cutting and pasting diverse materials—such as fabric, printed matter, and photographs—to transcend the boundaries of traditional media and create visual compositions beyond reality. It is closely associated with modernist art movements such as Cubism and Dadaism, with Kurt Schwitters being a pioneering practitioner.

Figure 3.13 Collage Art (image source: online)

In a broader sense, collage also includes the use of a single medium to depict a juxtaposition of elements impossible to coexist in reality. The Greek-Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico, for example, created surreal architectural dreamscapes by juxtaposing classical architecture and sculpture with distorted scales, flattened perspectives, and long shadows under ominous skies. These symbolic and illusory scenes form powerful, “painterly heterotopias.”

In architecture and urban space design, the concept of collage is further abstracted and materialized. Architectural theorists and designers have used its inherent hybridity to challenge the utopian uniformity of modernist planning and functionalist architecture. In the book Collage City, Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter propose the use of collage as a way to reconcile historical and contemporary elements, emphasizing coexistence of multiple narratives. They extract from Picasso's compositional logic three key methods: (1) retain original functions of components, (2) alter structural relationships, and (3) blend old and new symbols to expand meaning.[50] Walking through Rome offers abundant examples of how historical ruins and modern buildings are juxtaposed, forming a dynamic and vibrant urban heterogeneity.

In postmodern architecture, collage is used to hybridize historical references. Venturi's "Mother's House," for instance, integrates classical motifs into a modern frame. The postmodern embrace of popular culture further encouraged collaged aesthetics—often exaggerated and symbolic—particularly visible in compensatory or illusionary heterotopic spaces such as theme parks or cultural enclaves.

San Francisco is the second-largest city of Chinese population in the United States, with a rich history of cultural hybridity. The Chinatown located in the northeastern part of the city is a quintessential enclave of foreign cultures in America. In the late 19th century, the residential buildings in San Francisco's Chinese quarter were mainly of traditional wooden structures, featuring arcaded lower floors and pitched roofs above. These were destroyed in the great fire of 1906. Today's Chinatown was rebuilt on the original site with the aim of creating a tourist destination showcasing Oriental characteristics. Designed by Western architects and based on modern architectural forms, the new buildings incorporated "Oriental cultural symbols" that conformed to American aesthetic preferences and orientalist imagination, diverging from the authentic traditions of the East. Over time, this cultural enclave gradually evolved into a local tourist attraction, with its district image being continuously reinforced.

The SING FAT Building and SING CHONG Building, located at the intersection of California Street and Grant Avenue, were designed in 1906 and completed in 1907 and 1908 respectively. They were among the first iconic constructions in the rebuilt Chinatown, designed by Scottish-American architect Thomas Ross.

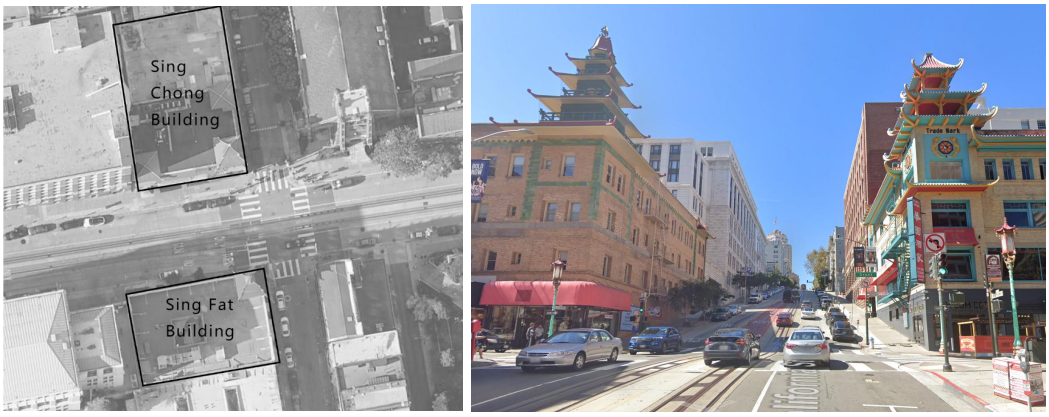


Figure 3.14 The SING FAT Building and SING CHONG Building (Source: Internet)

In terms of form, both buildings are essentially four-story modernist boxes with brick façades and reinforced concrete structures. At the street corner, each features an additional two to three levels of decorative Chinese pagodas on the rooftop. Rather than being genuine East-West hybrids, these structures are fundamentally Western modern buildings with Chinese decorative elements added in a stylized, reinterpreted fashion to appeal to Western tastes. The combination of Eastern and Western elements forms what is perceived as an "Oriental style."

The Chinese decorative elements reflect the southern architectural traditions brought by early Chinese immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong. One can trace the influence of Minnan vernacular architecture—red brick walls, gracefully curved eaves reaching toward the sky, green glazed tiles, and dark red wooden components—at this very intersection in San Francisco. However, the intricate craftsmanship of carved beams, painted rafters, and the delicacy of dougong bracket sets are absent. Instead, simplified overhanging eaves, exaggerated curves, and vivid color blocks provide a stylized representation. The high-saturation red and green tones generate a strong visual impact through the collage of heterogenous elements.

Figure 3.15 Architectural details of the buildings (Source: Internet)

These "Oriental style" buildings are products of cultural compromise under political influence. In the late 19th century, Chinatown was perceived as a blighted and disorderly area of the city. There were government plans to relocate the community to the suburbs. However, due to the significant economic contributions of Chinese merchants and multi-party negotiations among interest groups, the area was preserved. The post-earthquake rebuilding offered an opportunity for architectural experimentation. A new architectural style emerged—Western modernist buildings adorned with Oriental elements based on Western interpretations.

This phenomenon was driven partly by political motives and partly by epistemological limitations. Ross, the lead architect, lacked a deep understanding of traditional Chinese architecture. The local Chinese community also lacked professional architects and had limited knowledge of their architectural heritage. Even within China at that time, systematic studies of traditional architecture were scarce, and few textual or visual records existed. As a result, the cultural subjectivity of Chinese architectural expression lost its authenticity.

Subsequent renovations further highlighted the theme park-like aesthetic with bright blue, crimson, and yellow hues — colors largely inconsistent with traditional Chinese architecture. The pagoda roofs were stripped of their original religious meanings and transformed into cultural symbols, used as large-scale signage to attract customers. The SING CHONG Building features a four-sided pointed roof, while the SING FAT Building's top resembles a giant wax apple or possibly a simplified version of a Liao dynasty stupa, or even a reinterpretation of a Buddhist finial (xianglun). Whatever the inspiration, the large, smooth, octagonal "hat" atop deeply overhanging eaves appears slightly comical.

At the top of the wall, a crest featuring the traditional motifs of "dragons playing with a pearl" and the Eight Trigrams is prominently displayed in gold, red, and black—a visual assertion of cultural identity by Chinese merchants.

Notably, Ross's "Pagoda Style" architecture gained widespread popularity in the early 20th century and soon became a standardized Western interpretation of Chinese architectural aesthetics. It spread from San Francisco to other major American cities and even influenced Chinatowns worldwide, establishing itself as a dominant model of "Oriental style." In effect, these two buildings represent a new kind of cultural heterotopic space created through collage. Today, Chinatown’ s low-rise buildings,

typically ranging from two to four stories, starkly contrast with the surrounding high-rise modern structures. The district continues to reinforce its identity as a cultural enclave through the use of high-saturation colors and stylized architectural imagery.

Figure 3.16 Piazza d’ Italia in New Orleans (Image source: online)

Piazza d’Italia in New Orleans, USA, is a cultural heterotopic space designed with a bold and radical application of collage techniques. Designed by American postmodern architect Charles Moore and completed in 1978, it stands as a seminal example of postmodernist practice. The project reassembles the quintessential Italian urban plaza and classical architectural elements into the American urban environment. The city of New Orleans built this space to honor its Italian-American community, celebrate their contributions, and encourage their continued involvement in urban development. Moore, through this design, recognized the limitations of abstract geometry and functionalist symbolism in conveying the project’s layered heterogeneity. He thus adopted an expressive, accessible language by combining traditional and popular symbols in a lively, whimsical presentation—embodying his concept of “inclusive architecture” and emphasizing emotional and sensory experiences.

The plaza’ s northern and southern urban edges are marked by “temples” constructed of modern steel gabled roofs and concrete colonnades, and a simplified “triumphal arch” clad in marble, which collectively draw visitors inward. The arch’s twin columns are entirely metallic, with entablatures painted in the tricolor of the Italian national flag—green, white, and red. The absence of a keystone in the central arch signals the superficiality of the formal structure. The central fountain design subtly alludes to Italian geography and architectural heritage: a boot-shaped water feature mirrors the national outline of Italy, while three fountains and a striped podium pointing to the “toe” symbolize the country’s three major rivers—Po, Tiber, and Arno—as well as Sicily. The gradually elevated terrain at the opposite end represents the Alps of northern Italy, while uneven, patchwork “islands” constructed of various materials

suggest the mountainous valleys of the Italian peninsula.

In addition to the aforementioned “temples” and “triumphal arch,” the eastern side features a concentric colonnade composed of eclectic variants of five classical Roman orders—Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite—along with fountains, arches, flying buttresses, bell towers, and Latin inscriptions, all forming a symbolic homage to Italian architectural culture.

Figure 3.17 Detail view of Piazza d’ Italia (Image source: online)

Modern elements such as neon lights and stainless steel respond to contemporary public life. The vivid yellow and dark orange colonnades stand out against the plaza’ s gray tones, yet visually harmonize with the pale yellow modernist box buildings in the background. At night, the vibrant neon lights transform the atmosphere, evoking the bustling nightlife of American metropolises while simultaneously resonating with the exuberant character of southern Italy. This approachability and embrace of the vernacular have been viewed as a rebellion against the monotony of modernist orthodoxy—an assertion that architecture need not be bound by dichotomies of high and low culture, or objective aesthetic judgments.

Embedded in this exuberant Italian style and American popular culture are architectural references for the initiated: echoes of Hadrian’ s Villa and the fragmented ruins of Roman cities, spatial sequences, and proportions attuned to the site context all point to professional architectural rigor beneath the playful surface.

Design-wise, the plaza exemplifies eclectic collage. Classical motifs from Italian streetscapes — façades, thresholds, and landscape fixtures — were abstracted and recombined. Rather than faithfully reproducing historic forms, the design extracts fragments, simplifies profiles into geometric masses, and applies novel materials. During modeling and coloring, two-dimensional thinking interweaves with three-dimensional spatial effects. For example, column bases are sliced into planar

profiles and painted in dark brown or rendered in green marble, simulating material exposure as a form of "fake honesty." Walls feature color only on the side facing the fountain, while adjacent surfaces remain white—offering an architectural drawing-like reading. These fragments are joined by pure white geometric connectors, accentuating spatial transitions, as shown in Figure 3.17.

The juxtaposition of Italian historic forms and American pop culture imbues the space with both aesthetic wit and a spirit of play. Moore even installed a sculpture of his own face spouting water—an ironic, self-referential flourish that elevates the playful tone. This use of conventional forms with inverted meanings highlights the postmodern embrace of pluralism.

While traditional elements were simplified, others were made more complex. Diverse materials, sculptural forms, and intricate detailing increase the density of visual information and textural contrast. Notably, the five classical Roman orders were reinterpreted into at least eight "modern orders" using three primary strategies: 1) modern materials like polished steel, neon, and painted metal; 2) abstracted geometries—triangular faces, perforations, linear and planar reductions; and 3) dynamic features such as fountains with parabolic jets, variable lighting effects, and reflective surfaces. As time and lighting conditions shift, so too does the perception of these forms. Each passerby becomes part of this "heterotopia of time."

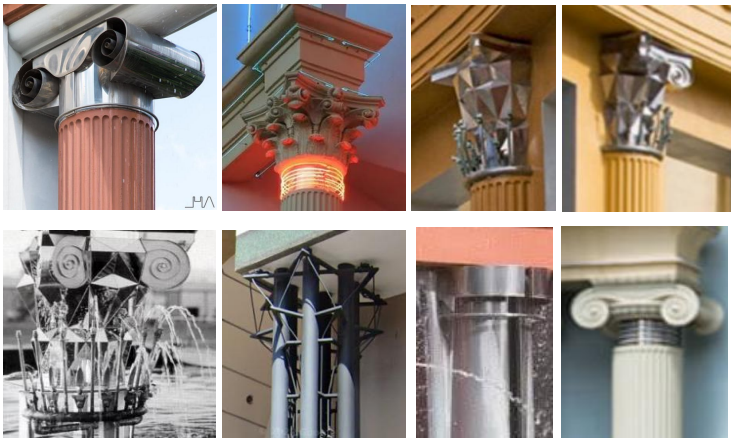


Figure 3.18 "Modern Orders" in Piazza d'Italia (Image source: online)

Similar columnar collages appear in San Francisco's and Los Angeles' Chinatowns, where dougong (bracket sets) from traditional Chinese architecture are stylized through outline extraction, structural reinterpretation, and hybridized layering of old and new elements, as shown in Figure 3.19.

By collaging elements from different periods, styles, and cultural contexts, these designs produce a heterogeneous aesthetic that defies modernist purity. Contrasts in materiality and exaggerated proportions intensify symbolic communication, especially during initial cultural encounters. Such superficial symbolizations often dominate early cross-cultural recognition. Nevertheless, these acts of collage give rise to innovative heterotopic expressions.

Figure 3.19 “Modern Columns” in Chinatown (Source: Internet)

Since the early 21st century, the architectural design community has seen a return to minimalistic forms as the prevailing trend. Consequently, the use of collage as a means to enhance spatial heterogeneity has increasingly involved cases that thoroughly strip away authentic materials and radically distill original forms. One example is the Mansio project built near Hadrian’s Wall in northern England by London architect Matthew Butcher and his collaborators Kieran Wardle and Owain Williams. Drawing formal references from the region’s historical and industrial architecture, the designers created a purely white structure that starkly contrasts with its surroundings.

Similarly, the Chess Park in Glendale utilizes a narrow alley between buildings to define a distinctive space using five large sculptural beacons inspired by chess pieces (e.g., king, queen). These abstract geometric forms, combined with warm yellow lighting, effectively convey a symbolic message. In daylight, they exhibit the same ethereal whiteness as Mansio, highlighting the theme of “chess” while also acting as visual markers that distinguish this micro-urban park from its surrounding context.

In another case, a bright red traditional Chinese character “門” (meaning "gate" or

“door”) appears in bold blackletter font on a Paris street. This highly abstracted symbol abandons the elaborate ornamental features of typical Chinatown archways. Instead, its oversized and simplified presence defines the spatial boundary with a single typographic gesture. Although these symbols no longer result from a fusion of multiple stylistic elements, they still reflect a fragmented narrative approach typical of collage thinking.

Figure 3.20 Abstract Heterotopic Symbols (Source: Internet)

3.2.2 Bricolage Constructing

The concept of bricolage, introduced by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, originally refers to the improvisational use of available or discarded materials, emphasizing functional achievement and the creative reuse of resources. In architecture, this approach is commonly applied in sustainable building practices. It highlights the raw qualities of materials and draws uniqueness from locality, bypassing conventional pathways and reducing construction costs. As bricolage involves the reorganization of existing materials, the unconventional combination often results in distinctive heterogeneity, making it an effective spatial strategy for enhancing heterotopic qualities.

A common application of bricolage in architectural space-making is the use of local materials, forming distinctiveness from other regions. In the construction of the exterior walls of the Ningbo Museum, architect Wang Shu utilized over a million reclaimed bricks and tiles salvaged from demolished buildings in Ningbo. These included grey bricks, broken tiles, fragments of jars, and even pieces bearing original craftsmen’s marks from the kilns. This “瓦片墙” (scrap-tile wall) technique was a traditional adaptive building method in eastern Zhejiang, initially used by commoners who repurposed discarded materials from wealthy households to build simple dwellings. In the Ningbo Museum—144 meters long, 65 meters wide, and 24 meters tall1—this

technique is reborn at a modern scale. While the fragments appear randomly layered on the walls, the composition achieves visual coherence. The resulting texture invites closer inspection, enriched with historical and cultural significance. Combined with irregularly placed windows, the assemblage generates a local specificity that is subtle and elusive—an ambiguous fusion of history and modernity.

Figure 3.21 Resource reuse in the Kamikatsu community bar (Source: Internet)

Figure 3.22 Private residence in Mumbai (Source: Internet)

Similarly, a community bar in Kamikatsu, Tokushima Prefecture, Japan, was built entirely with reused materials collected by residents. The 8-meter-high façade features windows salvaged from various buildings in the area, while the interior is filled with discarded objects contributed by locals. By repurposing personal items into collective memory, the bricolage approach created a space imbued with the unique identity of the community. In Mumbai, a private residence applied a similar strategy on its

public-facing façade. Recycled materials — such as old windows, bricks, wood, and furniture — were assembled alongside aluminum panels and blue glass. This bricolage façade responded to the fragmented construction history of old neighborhoods constrained by limited resources (Figure 3.22). These examples are not just about material reuse—they reflect a recomposition of memory and history.

In the examples above, the original functions of materials remained unchanged. However, in some cases, functions are redefined during the process of bricolage. Materials need not always be discarded; they may also be easily accessible items that align with the intended spatial character. For instance, in the design of a skewer restaurant on Liangdao Street, Wuhan, the architectural studio Qing Weishe repurposed everyday plastic baskets and beer crates as building elements. As shown in Figure 3.23, the team inserted these industrial objects into an iron frame without additional finishing. The original blue and green colors of the baskets became integral to the façade, and internal lighting revealed their unexpected visual effects. The designers sought a balance between abstraction and symbolism — steering away from overly literal representations like bamboo skewers or cooking pots — while still referencing local dining culture. The ease of assembling these plastic items made them a unique cladding material that was both cost-effective and visually distinctive. The result was a highly recognizable heterotopic space that contrasted with its surroundings yet resonated with the everyday bustle and warmth of the local urban context.

Figure 3.23 Façade of "Qian Qian Hui" skewer restaurant on Liangdao Street (Source: Internet)

Low-cost objects compatible with local themes need not be manmade; natural materials can also be transformed through simple modifications. The Liyuan Library, designed by Li Xiaodong Studio in Beijing's Huairou District, used bundles of firewood stacked along the façade, reinterpreting the local tradition of storing firewood.

The transformation of everyday wood—from forest branches, to domestic kindling, to architectural "curtain" — infused ordinary materials with layered significance and heterotopic presence.

A project in India known as The Bricolage House[①] further demonstrates the potential of this approach by narrowing the scope of material sourcing while enriching the layers of construction. First, it reused bricks and components from the former structure on site, maintaining the owner's emotional connection to the previous house. Wooden elements became door and window frames; steel components were repurposed as gate structures. Second, the architects incorporated salvaged items from local second-hand markets and demolition sites, including old louver panels and flooring, integrating them into the new architecture. Though non-local in origin, these fragments contributed to a richly heterogeneous built form.

Baker and Nelson have studied how resource-poor companies reorganize resources rejected or ignored by other companies to create something from scratch, and pointed out three dimensions of entrepreneurial resource assembly: Make doing, Resource at hand and Combination of resources for new purposes.[54] Referring to this theoretical framework, the author further sorted out the above-mentioned cases.

Table 3.1 Comparative Analysis of Bricolage Construction Cases

Aspect	Action Approach	Existing Resources	Material Integration for New Purposes
Ningbo Museum	Traditional Craftsmanship – Reviving Heritage – Increased Recognition	①瓦片墙 construction technique ②Designer ③Urban waste materials	Urban museum to preserve historical memory and regional characteristics; Refer to the traditional way to arrange and integrate, and keep the original functions
Kamikatsu Communi	Community Tradition – Unique Utilization	①Community's "zero waste" tradition with 80% recycling rate ②Designer	Community cultural center to encourage recycling traditions; Densely arrange similar

① Source：Archinet.The Bricolage House[EB/OL].(2025-3-3). https://archinect.com/firms/project/150208335/the-bricolage-house/150208336

ty Bar	– Promoting Tradition	③Community's own material recycling center	materials to maintain original functions
Liangdao Street Skewer Restaurant	Referencing precedents of using standard industrial products as building envelopes – Experimenting with new materials	①Catering business experience ②Designer	Unique storefront with low cost and high recognition; Densely arrange similar materials, reconstruct meaning, and change original functions
Liyuan Library	Active experimentation	①Natural materials from forests ②Designer	Elegant library as a unique public building rooted in locality; Densely arrange similar materials, reconstruct meaning, and change original functions
"The Bricolage House" in India	Extensive resource search, building while sourcing materials	①Materials from old house ②Urban second-hand materials ③Designer	Low-cost construction; Some keep the original functions, some change the original functions

From the analysis of these cases, it's evident that bricolage construction necessitates immediate action, adhering to a "build and adjust" practice logic. During construction, continuous trial, iteration, and refinement are possible. Inspiration can also be drawn from existing practices, altering scales or substituting materials to achieve unique heterogeneity. When selecting resources to enhance heterogeneity, multiple factors should be considered. Beyond local community resources, a broader geographical perspective is beneficial. Resource types encompass not only physical materials and usable spaces but also human resources and social networks, such as industry-specific operators and skilled craftsmen. Fully exploring potential heterogeneous resources is crucial. In material integration, breaking free from original uses and combination methods, cross-combining, and reassigning functions to serve

new spatial creations is emphasized. This process highlights the heterogeneous connections and meaning reconstruction of materials. Furthermore, the anomalous aggregation of similar elements emphasizes and elevates these elements, creating new cultural or emotional values, resulting in heterogeneous spaces distinct from their surroundings.

Most of the aforementioned bricolage construction cases are designer-led projects. However, untrained residents often excel in resource integration and expressive assembly. For example, in Florianópolis, Brazil, the "Cabana Floripa" cabin was intuitively built by its owner using reclaimed wood, glass, mirrors, and other materials, becoming a popular Airbnb accommodation. In Hujiaying Village, Weifang, Shandong, an elderly man constructed a seven-story earthen building by hand using wooden boards, bricks, and construction debris, starkly contrasting with the surrounding orderly white-walled, red-roofed houses. Many visitors come specifically to see this unique structure. These bricolage constructions create spaces vastly different from their environments and social orders. The unconventional use of materials and the randomness of manual construction are key sources of their uniqueness.

3.2.3 Decoupage Decoration

"Decoupage" originally refers to the art of cutting out patterns from paper materials and layering them onto objects to achieve decorative effects. In the context of postmodern design, scholar Shane categorized Aldo Rossi's concept of the "Analogical City"—which treats the city as an archaeological layering of fragments—under the term "Decoupage." In this section, "Decoupage" refers to the direct use or creative adaptation of existing patterns and images in architectural and urban design to decorate surfaces enclosing spaces, thereby enhancing ambiance and emphasizing heterogeneity.

Figure 3.24 North Wall of Mariachi Plaza in Los Angeles (Source: Internet)

The most common form of "Decoupage Decoration" is wall graffiti, which is also one of the most cost-effective and expressive methods. In multicultural areas, people often express their cultural identity by painting iconic figures and symbols on walls. For instance, in the Mexican community of Los Angeles, the north wall of Mariachi Plaza features images of mariachi bands and people in traditional Mexican attire, vividly showcasing Mexican cultural characteristics. Similarly, in London's Brick Lane, the Bangladeshi immigrant community blends Islamic patterns with punk graffiti, creating a space rich in heterogeneity that reflects the second-generation immigrants' exploration of cultural identity.

Figure 3.25 Park Under the Overpass in Toronto (Source: Internet)

In Chongqing's Huangjueping Graffiti Street, walls are adorned with diverse graffiti artworks, forming a unique urban landmark. Unlike the spontaneous graffiti in cultural enclaves, this project was initiated by artists aiming to revitalize old streets through fashionable graffiti art, supported by the government and Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, as part of a planned urban renewal and heterogeneity enhancement initiative.

Figure 3.26 Dijon Innovation Telecom Center (Source: Internet)

The graffiti under Toronto's overpass demonstrates the layering characteristic of "Decoupage Decoration." Initially organized by the local government and StreetARToronto, the first round of graffiti activated the underutilized space. Subsequent layers added by artists and residents accumulated cultural memories, revitalizing the entire bridge structure. In France, MVRDV's renovation of the Dijon Innovation Telecom Center involved covering the exterior walls with QR codes related to the company's activities, showcasing "Decoupage Decoration" as an interactive medium and a cost-effective visual communication strategy.

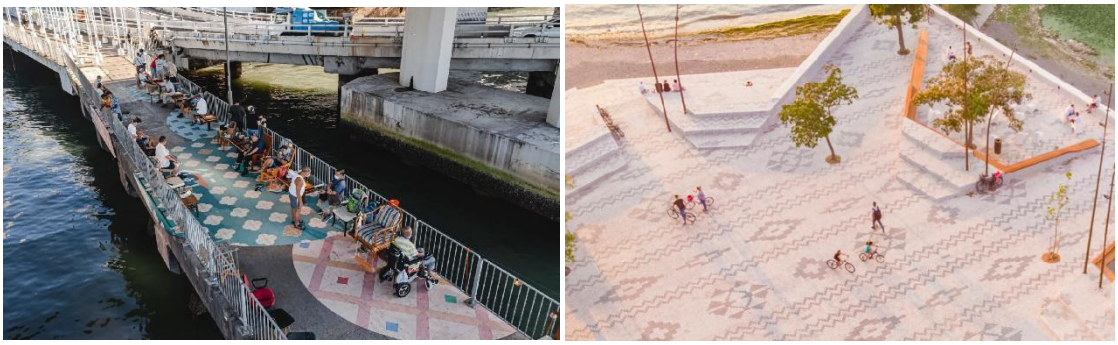


Figure 3.27 Ground-Level "Decoupage Decoration" in Public Spaces[①](Source: Internet)

"Decoupage Decoration" can also be applied to ground surfaces. For example, the North Point Public Pier in Hong Kong features painted patterns inspired by traditional Hong Kong tiles, with adjusted colors and scales to enhance the local ambiance. In Shiroka, Albania, the "Albanian Carpet" project uses dark gray and white stone tiles to create traditional carpet patterns on the ground, establishing a space with a strong sense of national identity distinct from the surrounding coastline.

Figure 3.28 Ground-Level "Decoupage Decoration" Breaking Spatial Boundaries

Ground-level "Decoupage Decoration" can also disrupt conventional spatial

① Left: Public Pier Renewal Project; Right: Albanian Carpet Project

divisions and guide public behavior. In Salou, Spain, the Prova Pilot project expanded pedestrian space by painting continuous polka dot patterns that unify sidewalks and parts of the roadway, transforming the street into a "city living room." Similarly, in Aachen, Germany, a light-colored elliptical paving pattern overlays a four-lane road in front of the station, creating a centralized public space that contrasts with the surrounding urban environment, adding layers and tension between stationary and dynamic spaces.

In summary, "Decoupage Decoration" is a powerful method for enhancing ambiance and effectively altering the nature and function of urban spaces.

3.3 From Objects to Events

The previous sections discussed three methods of assemblage—Collage, Bricolage, and Decoupage—each illustrating the potential for transposing imagery across form, construction, and surface, as summarized in Table 3.2. These methods involve reorganizing existing images to create new spatial environments. Sometimes collectively referred to as "Collage," these approaches can be integrated in practice, transitioning from single-layer assemblages to layered compositions, collectively crafting heterogeneous spaces through combinations of color, texture, lighting, and tactile elements.

Despite encompassing material construction and decoration, Collage, Bricolage, and Decoupage fundamentally enhance heterogeneity through scenographic staging, focusing on tangible objects. Participation in Collage and Decoupage is often limited to specific groups. However, the core aim of enhancing heterogeneity is to create unique spaces for human activity. Therefore, beyond focusing on object-centered layering, it's essential to emphasize event-centered functional accumulation, concentrating on the activities and psychological characteristics of space users.

Table 3.2 Comparative Analysis of Three Assemblage Methods

Dimension	Collage	Bricolage	Decoupage
Material Source	Existing formal materials (e.g., historical architectural motifs)	Discarded or existing physical materials (e.g., waste tiles)	Decorative planar graphic materials (e.g., wall graffiti)

Technical Means	Cutting, pasting, planar and spatial composition	Connecting, three-dimensional assembly	Cutting, shaping, multi-layer pasting
Spatial Goal	Form—visual impact, symbolic meaning	Construction—functional realization, ecological value	Surface—atmospheric rendering, narrative function
Participants	Architects, artists, academic groups	Community residents, architects, construction experts	Artists, muralists, graphic enthusiasts

One method of enhancing heterogeneity through events involves extracting activity fragments from other geographical or historical contexts, reorganizing and reshaping them to continue prototype events in new spaces. For instance, the "Albanian Carpet" project not only applies cultural Decoupage to new paving but also incorporates U-shaped seating inspired by traditional Albanian "Oda" rooms, embedding memories of hospitality, negotiation, and celebration into a foreign space, thus endowing it with unique event characteristics.

In the Superkilen Park, designers cleverly incorporated existing urban furniture from various geographical locations without altering them to showcase cultural features. Instead, they authentically replicated everyday objects, establishing connections between public spaces from different regions. These daily facilities are arranged and experienced like exhibits, complemented by Decoupage techniques on the ground to delineate space. The red area's color blocks and the black area's winding lines define exhibition zones, guiding visitors' attention while maintaining pedestrian friendliness, effectively creating an open public museum.

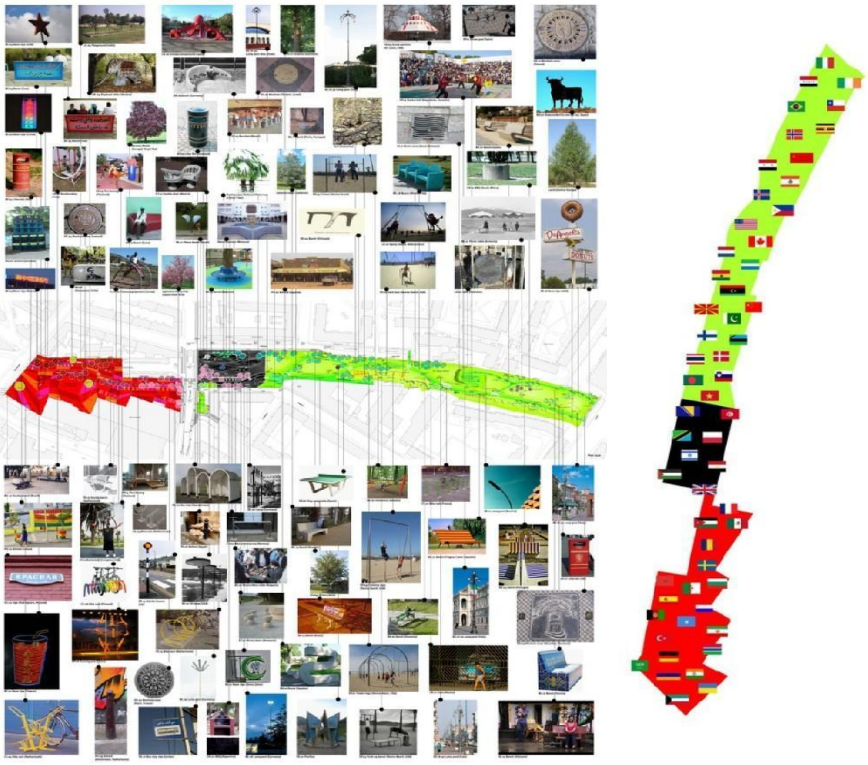


Figure 3.29 Diverse Event Combinations in Superkilen Park (Source: Internet)

These facilities, carrying historical memories centered on events, include street installations (e.g., Chinese beauty salon neon signs, Russian hotel billboards, Moroccan fountains), unique sports equipment (e.g., Iraqi swings, Japanese octopus slides), plant landscapes (e.g., Japanese cherry blossoms, Chinese palms), and street infrastructure (e.g., manhole covers from Zanzibar, Gdańsk, Paris; public benches from Slovenia, Ethiopia, Portugal), totaling 108 special items from 60 cities worldwide, showcasing Nørrebro's remarkable cultural diversity.

Figure 3.30 "Exhibits" Within the Park (Source: Internet)

Figure 3.31 Rich Sporting Activities (Source: Internet)

This approach transcends the previous three assemblage methods, extending from visual and tactile stimuli to event-centered physical movement and multisensory experiences. Consequently, it fosters broader participation and recognition through cross-cultural and cross-community activities. In Superkilen, this shared experience is evident in efforts toward sports (exercise equipment), entertainment (musical events), and leisure (seating). The integration of diverse cultural practices with everyday universal behaviors mitigates strong confrontations between heterogeneous elements, easing the relationship between this heterogeneous space and surrounding urban areas. Designers demonstrate a cautious and egalitarian multicultural perspective, expressing various cultures' uniqueness and resonating with corresponding groups while minimizing offense to other cultures, especially Danish native culture, ultimately

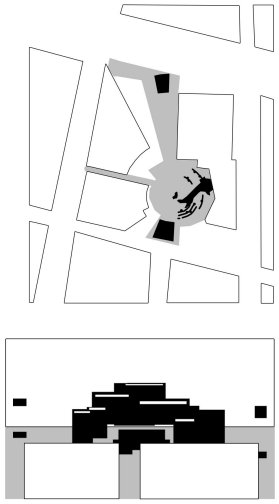
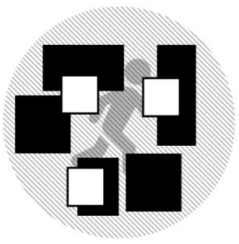
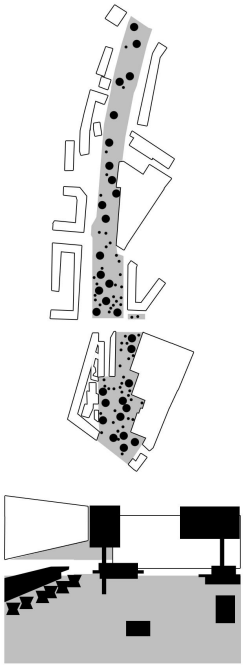
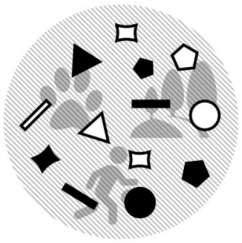
presenting a harmonious and diverse environment akin to a world's fair.

Figure 3.32 Public Activities in New Orleans' Italian Piazza (Source: Internet)

Similarly, New Orleans' Italian Piazza is a cultural heterogeneous space concentrating foreign culture within the city, transplanting the atmosphere of Italian city squares into the American urban environment, achieving an exploratory feel akin to Italian old towns. Built in 1978, the Piazza d'Italia was designed by Charles Moore as a social gathering center for the Italian community. Despite its initial acclaim as a postmodern architectural landmark, the piazza faced challenges due to funding shortages and maintenance issues, leading to periods of neglect and underutilization. However, it has undergone restorations and continues to serve as a unique urban space that reflects the complexities of cultural integration and public space utilization .

These two cases exemplify cultural heterogeneous spaces within cities, differing in cultural composition and specific functions, as detailed in Table 3.3. Both reflect urban spaces' inclusivity, using movement-inducing facilities and everyday foundational scenes, along with distinctive objects' embellishment and combination, to evoke cultural subjects' memories and sense of belonging. Simultaneously, they stimulate cross-cultural interaction and understanding, reducing geopolitical barriers between different cultures.

Table 3.3 Comparative Analysis of Cultural Heterogeneous Spaces

Case	Construction Information	Spatial Composition Analysis	Cultural Composition Analysis	Function
Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans	Designed by American architect Charles Moore; completed in 1978		 Neutral spatial base + binary cultural installations + limited event types	A venue for community residents: speeches, gatherings, strolling, play
Superkilen Park, Copenhagen	designed by Danish local design teams BIG,Topotek1,and Superflex; co-planned and built with citizens from diverse cultural backgrounds in the community; completed in 2012		 Neutral spatial base + pluralistic cultural installations + diverse events	A venue for community residents: Red Square (coffee + music + sports); Black Market (classic leisure plaza); Green Park (picnicking + sports + dog-walking)

In cultural heterogeneous spaces, beyond the evident cultural symbols and latent

multi-cavity spatial configurations shaped by unique spatial forms, groups or individuals with distinct cultural traits also assert spatial ownership through bodily presence. The human body engages not only visually—through skin color, age, and clothing—but also via movement, language, and emotion, disseminating and receiving spatial information through multisensory interaction. These interactions construct unique power dynamics within space.

Behavioral norms are shaped by both individual habits and collective cultural codes. A classic example is Muslim cultural norms around social distance and private space. Compared to the other four senses (sight, hearing, smell, and touch), taste is more private and intimate. In the 1990s, Denmark experienced the so-called "Meatball Controversy," in which traditional Danish pork meatballs were removed from kindergarten menus out of respect for Muslim dietary customs—an act that was interpreted by some as breaching cultural boundaries. [56] More common, however, are cases where cities host ethnic restaurants reflecting various cultural themes. These establishments, without imposing behavioral mandates, nonetheless encourage a degree of voluntary spatial segregation by cultural groups.

Whether through the heterogeneity of physical objects or the insertion of culturally specific events, these phenomena are underpinned by dynamic cultural and social undercurrents. In Collage City, Rowe and Koetter advocate for embracing the openness and possibilities of postmodern urbanity, arguing that urban design should respect pluralistic dialogue and experimental innovation while accommodating the needs of diverse groups. "Collage" is not only an architectural method—it is also a strategy for addressing social issues: reconciling traditional customs with contemporary society, local identity with global influence, to shape a more inclusive social structure.

3.4 Network Formation: A Two-Step Action Guide

As critical experimental fields, urban heterogeneous spaces must undergo a process of networking to expand their influence and drive broader urban transformation.

Since the 1970s, Barcelona's urban renewal efforts have demonstrated a foundational model for network formation. This model includes cultivating discrete heterogeneous spaces, promoting linear connections among these spaces to spread heterogeneous characteristics, and achieving systemic transformation through point-to-surface diffusion.

For example, the inner courtyard renovation program initially selected six courtyards for pilot updates, transforming them into heterogeneous places that starkly contrasted with traditional enclosed blocks—such as the Manzana courtyards. After refining the strategy, the program was gradually extended to 104 courtyard blocks, ultimately enhancing the quality of community life across the entire city. [58] Similarly, the Superblock Plan, launched in 2015, began with a pilot transformation in Poblenou. After optimizing the design and implementation strategies, the plan was rolled out to ten additional neighborhood units, including Sant Antoni.

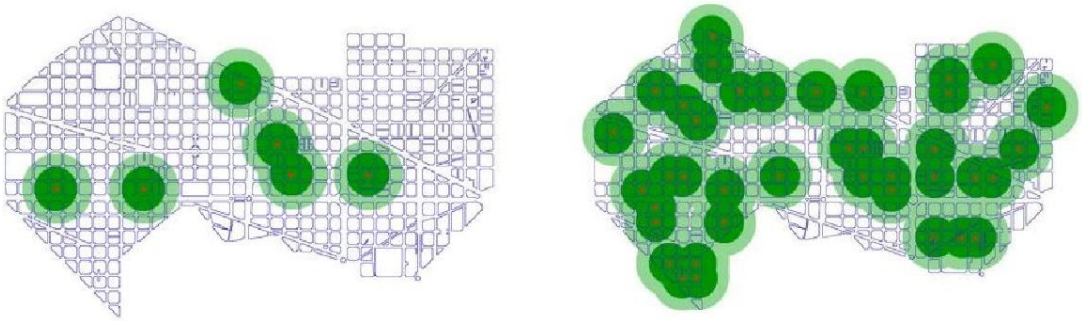


Figure 3.33 Progressive Renovation of Inner Courtyards in Barcelona (1995–2008)

(Source: Internet)

In addition to the courtyard- and block-based approach to spatial networking, two other strategies—"temporary organizations" and "rhizomatic assemblages"—represent further means of enhancing heterogeneity following the "layered juxtaposition" strategy.

3.4.1 Temporary Organizations

Temporary organizations refer to short-term uses of space, materials, and other resources in urban spatial practices. This concept mainly encompasses two specific approaches: (1) adapting permanent but structurally flexible facilities to meet temporary needs through state changes; and (2) conducting temporary "construction" based on specific goals, which can be dismantled or removed at will.

On one hand, temporary organization empowers heterogeneous spaces with strong creative inclusivity, enabling them to break conventional limitations and fully unleash heterogeneity's potential. On the other hand, some temporary heterogeneous space practices have evolved into well-developed practical manuals, allowing these short-lived, guerrilla-style tactics to be reproduced across different times and locations

— effectively turning the manuals into carriers for the social networking of heterogeneous space.

As previously discussed, the storefront design of the Liangdaojie Skewer Shop took into account its interaction with surrounding street events at different times of day. During evening rush hour, when the adjacent road space is underutilized, the movable fence can be folded back; at quieter times, the fence can be opened up, converting the pedestrian sidewalk into a semi-enclosed, temporary commercial zone (see Figure 3.34). This kind of temporary organization maximizes underused street spaces and regulatory grey areas, resulting in a nighttime atmosphere dramatically different from that of the day.

Similar informal street occupations are common in marketplace scenarios, such as early-morning markets typical in Northeastern Chinese cities, or in street-level dining setups in Italian cities where restaurants occupy sidewalks and even parking spaces. In Valletta, Malta, the temporary street occupation by restaurants creates a vibrant nighttime street scene — tables and chairs often spill onto stairs, turning circulation zones into pop-up guerrilla heterogeneous spaces. These self-organized behaviors treat parts of the urban fabric as “smooth spaces”, used freely and diversely, as a compensatory counter to more regulated “striated spaces”.[①]

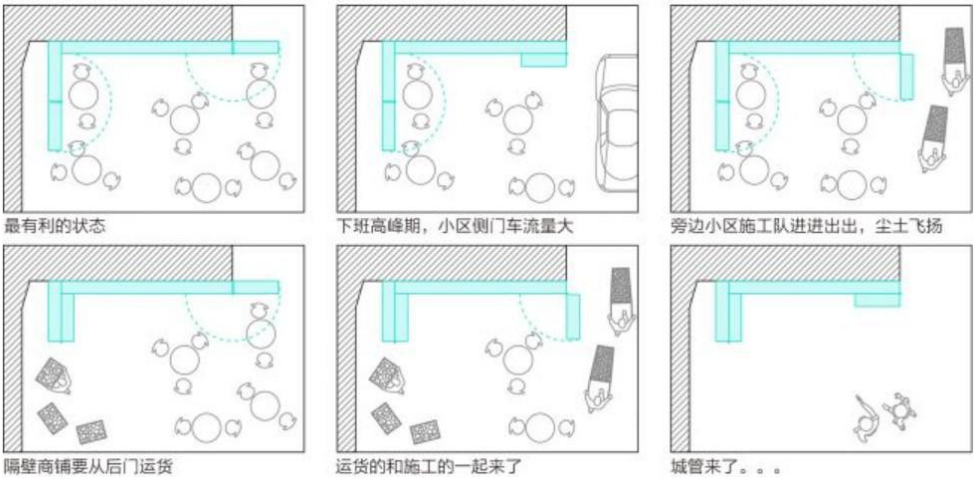


Figure 3.34 Streetfront Use of the Liangdaojie Skewer Shop (Source: Internet)

While commercial temporary occupations like these are long-standing, bottom-up self-organized practices, Tactical Urbanism showcases a more innovative rethinking of street functionality. Tactical Urbanism advocates low-cost, temporary, small-scale

① Note: The concepts of “smooth” and “striated” spaces are borrowed from Deleuze's A Thousand Plateaus.

interventions, emphasizing public participation, rapid prototyping, and flexible adaptation. It offers an agile solution to challenges posed by traditional urban planning—long cycles, high costs, and poor adaptability—and introduces spatial configurations with marked heterogeneity.

One of the most impactful expressions of Tactical Urbanism is the Parklet—a temporary or semi-permanent transformation of street parking spaces into mini parks, exercise zones, cafés, or galleries. These mini public spaces re-humanize the mechanical city and host diverse activities. Often equipped with planters, (real or artificial) lawns, and seating, they create micro-environments that stand out from their surroundings. Some Parklets also offer primarily visual and symbolic value, beautifying streets with green installations or curated displays.

Figure 3.35 “Micro-Park” on Yangmeizhu Xiejie Before and After (Source: Internet)

During the 2014 Beijing Design Week, Yangmeizhu Xiejie in Dashilar successfully hosted a Parklet experiment that demonstrated the strategy’s value for dense historic neighborhoods. The design team transformed three parking spots into a vibrant “micro-park” using wooden seating, moveable tables, games, and a small food stand. Artificial turf, bougainvillea planters, a bicycle-friendly blue rack, and a triangular canopy completed the experience—offering green, interactive relief from the grey environment. [59] The result was a highly active and widely welcomed pocket of heterogeneous space.

Originally, the Parklet was an unofficial urban space experiment led by the San Francisco design group Rebar. It began with a single parking space and grew into an annual initiative called PARK(ing) Day. By 2010, with growing public interest and government support, Parklets were formalized into semi-permanent urban facilities, and many cities—including San Francisco, Vancouver, Minneapolis, and Milan—published

official Parklet Manuals. These guides detailed procedures for application, site selection, design, construction, and use, while retaining flexibility for creative interpretation. The initiative marked a major step in institutionalizing temporary space creation, turning it into a citizen-driven urban infrastructure network.

Figure 3.36 Milan's Open Squares Program (Source: Internet)

In 2019, Milan launched its Open Squares Program, another tactical urbanism project. In its first phase, "Decoupage" ground-painting techniques (referenced earlier) were used to activate or newly establish open plazas. For example, volunteers painted polka-dot patterns over a former parking lot in Piazza Dergano, effectively transforming it into a vibrant civic square (see Figure 3.36). This program, initiated by the government and supported by citizens and social institutions, illustrates the potential for temporary organizations to evolve into formal urban renewal strategies.

3.4.2 Rhizomatic Assemblage

"Rhizomatic assemblage merges individual narrative trajectories with collective networks and shared information, forming a group consciousness rooted in collective experience—an experience constructed through individual exchanges."

— David Grahame Shane

Deleuze's theory of the rhizome challenges traditional binary logic, positing that the real world is decentralized, dynamic, non-linear, and composed of heterogeneous multiplicities. Rhizomatic connections are unrestricted in direction and quantity; they are always in motion and lack a fixed origin. In Recombinant Urbanism, Shane preliminarily explores the specific implications of "rhizomatic assemblage." Unlike the three previously discussed spatial collage strategies (collage, bricolage, decoupage),

rhizomatic assemblage grants each spatial fragment the right to construct its own microcosmic system—operating outside the centralized or overarching organizational discourse—while emphasizing the importance of multi-narrative design in urbanism.

Heiduk's Berlin Masque exemplifies one possibility of rhizomatic assemblage. In it, urban actors are symbolized as discrete structures, and the traces left behind by their free movement and episodic interactions evolve into new narratives. Similarly, the Parklet examples mentioned earlier reflect rhizomatic propagation, where small-scale, iterative interventions influence larger systems, exhibiting a logic akin to open-source software.

Figure 3.37 Crowd Canopy, by People's Architecture Office (Source: Internet)

The Crowd Canopy project by People's Architecture Office embodies this idea through a transformable structure that can be folded for cycling or unfolded to cover a street. By breaking away from the static nature of traditional architecture, the canopy reflects the "infinite extensibility" of rhizomes—its path is not predetermined but continuously redefined through participatory engagement. Functionally, the structure supports multi-symbolism (as Deleuze describes), allowing the same space to be recoded in different contexts. The canopy can serve as a transport device, a temporary theater, or a platform for cultural activities. Users are encouraged to engage with it in unanticipated ways—hosting gatherings, markets, performances, and more. In Preston, the urban street—once a car-dominated striated space with fixed functions—becomes a smooth space filled with diverse, heterogeneous events through the canopy's spatial occupation. This deterritorialization dissolves previous spatial rules and unlocks public

space’s latent potential.

Importantly, the temporary overlay does not erase the striated space but enables a dynamic coexistence between the two through its fold–unfold mechanism. For example, during the day it functions as a mobile canopy while preserving traffic flow; by night it opens up into an event platform—an example of reterritorialization, or what Deleuze calls spatial hybridization.

Additionally, rhizomatic thinking facilitates cross-cultural grafting of heterogeneous elements. The Crowd Canopy merges Chinese street-top structures with British urban settings, exemplifying rhizomatic hybridization across cultures. Originally derived from informal retractable awnings in southern China, this spatial logic is transplanted to Preston and reconfigured in line with the city’s historic district renewal efforts. This “deterritorialization–reterritorialization” cycle exemplifies how “rhizomes grow new forms in different soils.” From its prefabrication in Beijing, to assembly in Preston, and later adaptive reuse in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Biennale, the Crowd Canopy is recoded in each urban context. While preserving its core modularity, it integrates local culture, manifesting the differentiated repetition characteristic of rhizomatic systems.

The Jinlvcheng Sihai Chinatown project[61] in Xi’an offers another interpretation of this “deterritorialization–reterritorialization” process. As a commercial development within a historically rich city, the project replicates spatial elements from multiple overseas Chinatowns—including gateways and Orientalized façades. Given that Chinatowns themselves are already reconstructions of Chinese cultural identity abroad, this “return to China” represents a double-layered recoding—closing a geographic loop while producing nested heterogeneous spaces in both form and cultural expression.

The rhizomatic decentralization and non-linear systems logic are embodied more fully in the Parc de la Villette project, where spatial layering and multi-narrative generation break with traditional hierarchical urban planning. The park's design incorporates three independent yet interwoven systems in a non-hierarchical topological structure:

The surface system serves as a base for large-scale activities—its openness akin to rhizomatic smooth space, allowing events to occur spontaneously.

The line system consists of both geometric and meandering paths—a network of

lines of flight that offer direction while encouraging exploratory wandering.

The point system, composed of 26 red follies, acts as discrete connection nodes, activating localized events through modular functionality.

Together, these systems dissolve conventional zoning and foster nonlinear interactions among heterogeneous elements. In a different example, Peter Eisenman's Cannaregio project in Venice exhibits a rhizomatic layering more tightly connected to historical context. By overlapping Le Corbusier's unbuilt 1960 hospital grid with the site's actual 1978 urban fabric, and adding his own fractal structures, Eisenman constructs a multi-temporal narrative—blending conceptual pasts with speculative futures. His mechanical superimposition of these layers strips away function and meaning, exposing spatial intersections devoid of utility but rich in interpretive potential.[①]

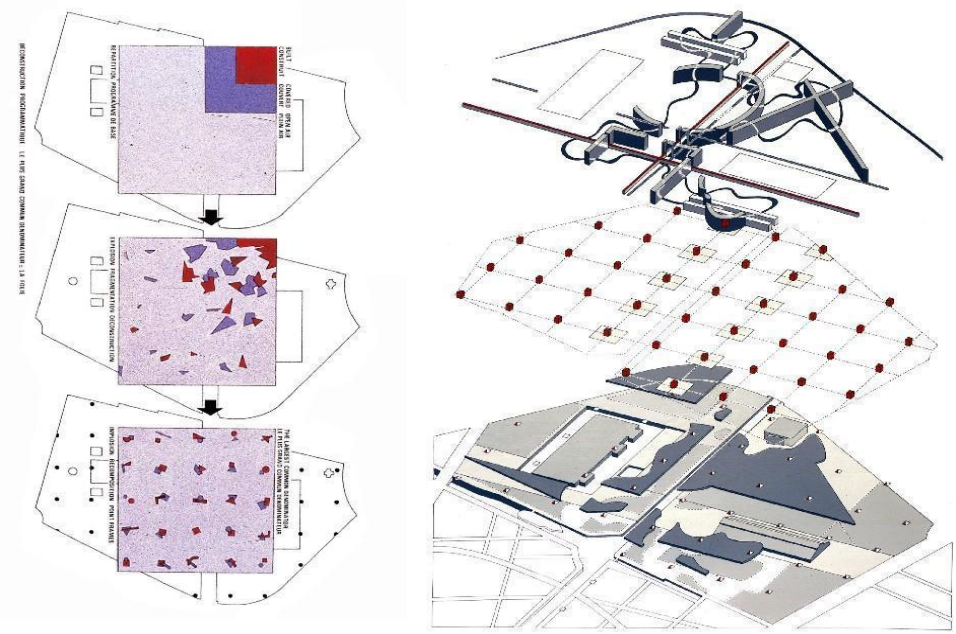


Figure 3.38　Parc de la Villette (Source: Internet)

① See Felipe Lanuza's critique of Eisenman's Cannaregio Ovest project for more detail.

Chapter 4 The Aurora District from a Heterogeneity Perspective

Beginning with this chapter, the author delves into specific site analyses and neighborhood renewal designs to further explore the previously discussed methods of analyzing heterogeneous spaces and strategies for enhancing heterogeneity. Drawing from experiences and investigations conducted during an exchange period at Politecnico di Torino, the focus is placed on the Aurora district located in the northern part of Turin's city center (Centro), aiming to provide a reference pathway for activating urban spaces through the lens of heterogeneity.

4.1 Urban-Scale Analysis

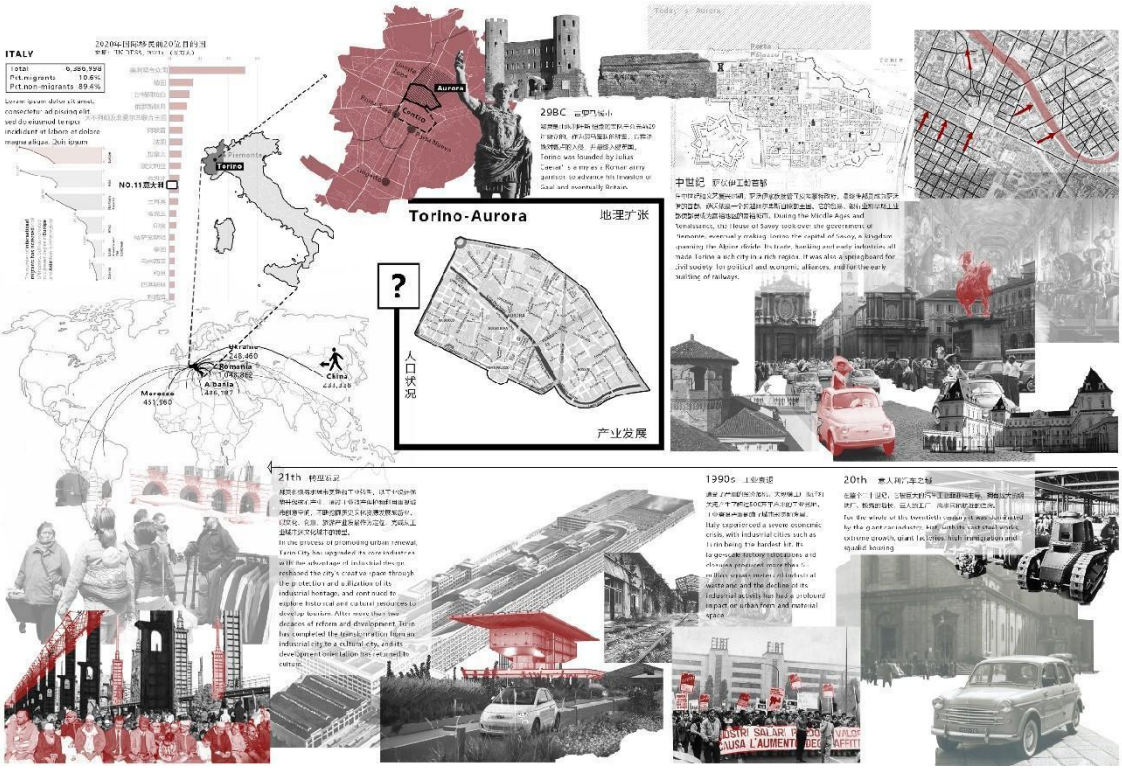


Figure 4.1 Regional Overview (Drawn by the Author)

4.1.1 The Turning Boundary of the Urban Grid

Turin was originally established by Julius Caesar's army in 29 BC, serving as a

Roman military camp named Julia Augusta Taurinorum to support further invasions into Gaul and eventually Britain. The initial urban area was enclosed by defensive walls, forming an approximate quadrilateral rotated about 25 degrees from the true north-south axis.① This layout featured four city gates and two main roads connecting them, exemplifying typical Roman urban planning. Remnants of this period are still visible in streets like Porta Palatina and Via San Tommaso.

Subsequent expansions during the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque periods largely adhered to this foundational grid, reinforcing the highly regular structure of Turin's city center. Urban development primarily extended eastward, westward, and southward, influenced by geographical constraints such as rivers. Notably, during the Renaissance, the House of Savoy designated Turin as the capital of the Duchy of Savoy, leading to significant developments like the Royal Palace (Palazzo Reale di Torino), which had a profound impact on the city's spatial organization.

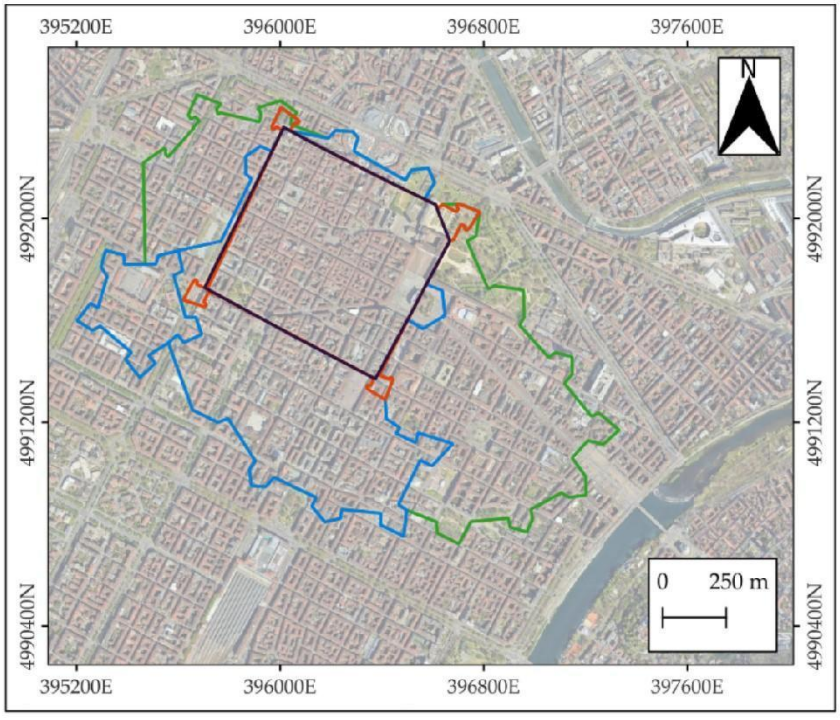


Figure 4.2 Evolution of Turin's City Walls② (Source: Reference[64])

From the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, Turin underwent rapid industrialization, significantly influencing urban spaces. Suburban urbanization

① More precisely, the northwest-southeast wall is slightly longer than the southwest-northeast wall, and the square outline of the city is missing in the northeast corner.

② Base map sourced from Google Satellite; colored lines represent different historical periods: Roman era [black], Late Middle Ages [red], Baroque period [blue], Renaissance period [green]

accelerated, extending beyond the traditional south and east expansion paths to include the northern areas, notably the Aurora district and the banks of the Dora Riparia River. This industrial boom led to the establishment of numerous factories and workers' housing, causing a sharp increase in the local population. The development of railways in Aurora strengthened connections between Turin and major cities like Milan, further accelerating northern urban expansion.

Figure 4.3 Location of the Aurora District (Drawn by the Author)

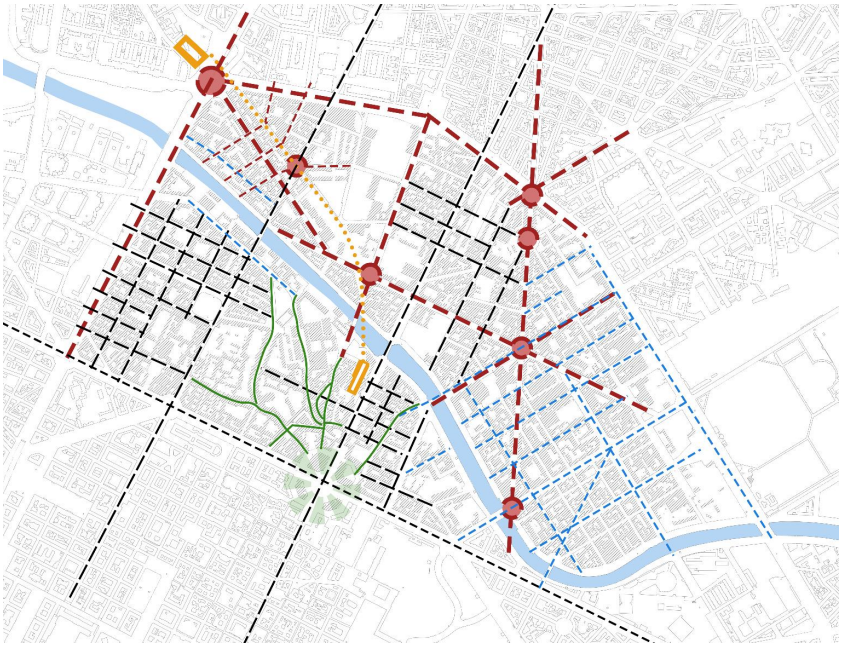


Figure 4.4 Road Network System of the Aurora District (Drawn by the Author)

As the urban grid expanded outward from the city center, it became increasingly dispersed and irregular. A transitional zone emerged where the regular grid of the city center intersected with the more organic, secondary rural road networks from the periphery. These were connected through major roads extending from the city center, such as Via Milano, Corso Valdocco, and Via Francesco Cigna. The Aurora district, situated along both banks of the Dora Riparia River, lies precisely at this intersection of inner and outer grids. The Porta Palazzo square, located at the boundary between Aurora and the city center, serves as a pivotal urban space and a key node where Via Milano extends northward and intersects with Corso Regina Margherita, an east-west thoroughfare. Historically, this area was near a heavily fortified northern gate of Turin. Additionally, the meandering course of the Dora Riparia River has significantly influenced the irregular urban morphology of Aurora, resulting from the interplay of human and natural geographical factors.

Specifically, the road network in Aurora comprises three interacting systems:1) Orthogonal Grid System (Black): Extending from the city center, rotated approximately 25 degrees from the north-south axis. 2) River System (Blue): Aligned parallel or perpendicular to the Dora Riparia River. 3) Radial Road Network System (Red): Developed in the 20th century in the outer areas.

These systems reflect the transportation modes and societal needs of different historical periods. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, cities relied on walking and slow-moving vehicles, necessitating dense road networks and small blocks for high accessibility, fostering close-knit communities. The orthogonal grid system catered to these requirements. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, faster transportation methods emerged, and cities required efficient routes for rapid movement. Radial road layouts provided swift access across urban areas, emphasizing efficiency. In Aurora, this is evident in roads like Corso Palermo and Via Antonio Cecchi. Notably, between Via Antonio Cecchi and the parallel Via Saint Bon, the former "Turin-Ceres" railway line once thrived, underscoring the demand for rapid transit in the area.

Rivers, as natural geographical elements, also play a crucial role in urban layouts. To maximize land use, urban development often aligns parallel or perpendicular to rivers. However, the placement of bridges can restrict cross-river traffic, influencing the organization and growth direction of urban spaces, contributing to the formation of the river system.

In summary, the urban morphology of Turin's Aurora district results from the interaction of multiple factors, including transportation modes, natural geography, and societal needs, collectively shaping the city's dynamic spatial and structural characteristics.

Beyond these prominent integrated road networks, a distinctive local secondary free-form system (Green) has emerged under the influence of the orthogonal grid and river systems. This is particularly evident in the Borgo Dora① neighborhood north of Porta Palazzo square. Historically, Borgo Dora was a village outside Turin's defensive walls, strategically located near a major northern transportation node. Over time, it evolved from a sparsely populated area into a dense small town, with roads radiating from Porta Palazzo towards the river. Historical records indicate that until the mid-19th century, a winding tributary of the Dora Riparia River flowed through Borgo Dora, directly influencing building orientations, forms, and road alignments. Although this tributary is no longer visible in today's streetscape, the intricate and winding street patterns established under its influence have been largely preserved.

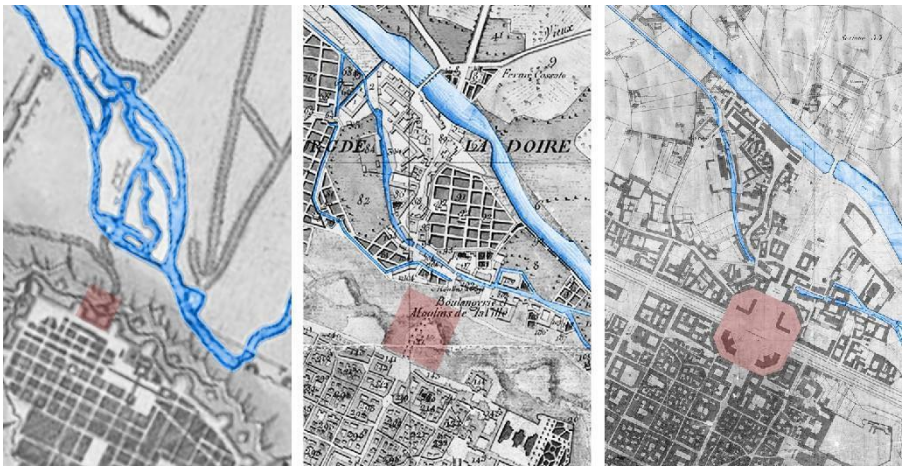


Figure 4.5 Development of the Borgo Dora Area from the 18th to Early 19th Century②

In the 1920s, the area where Corso Giulio Cesare extends northward to intersect with the Dora Riparia River, known as the Dora village, had become a traditional industrial hub in northern Turin. Over the following five decades, Turin's industrial expansion continued northward along the Stura River.[63] However, during the 1970s

① "Borgo Dora" was originally a village on the Dora River, and its name also comes from this river. Before that, it was also called "Borgo del Pallone" ("Borgh dël Balon" in Piedmontese dialect), which means "Ball Village", which is why the flea market in the area is also called "Gran Balôn".

② Three maps corresponding to the early 18th century, mid-18th century, and early 19th century. Red areas indicate the current location of Porta Palazzo square, while blue areas depict the river's position in each period. Base maps sourced from online materials; analysis and production by the author.

and 1980s, the widespread adoption of Fordist production models became outdated, and the city faced significant challenges due to economic globalization. Turin's industrial development suffered, leading to deindustrialization in areas like Dora, with many industrial sites abandoned. Some of these industrial remnants have been preserved or repurposed in urban renewal projects, such as the large-scale Parco Dora. Others, like the former Officine Grandi Motori (Great Engine Works) located between Corso Vercelli and Via Generale Luigi Damiano in Aurora, covering approximately 66,000 square meters, remain underutilized and await effective redevelopment.

The name "Aurora" originally derived from an old farmhouse (Cascina Aurora) in the area, which has long since been demolished. Until the early 21st century, the site housed the headquarters of the Gruppo Finanziario Tessile (GFT), a Turin-based textile company. It was later redesigned by Aldo Rossi into what is now known as Casa Aurora (Aurora House).

From a rural village beyond the city walls to a dense urban district, the Aurora area—located at the transitional edge of the city’s shifting grid—contrasts with the uniformly planned city center by exhibiting a more diverse and heterogeneous spatial structure. This heterogeneity grants Aurora a distinctive vitality and adaptability within the urban development process, making it an important case study for understanding the dynamic evolution of urban space.

4.1.2 Multicultural Convergence Zone

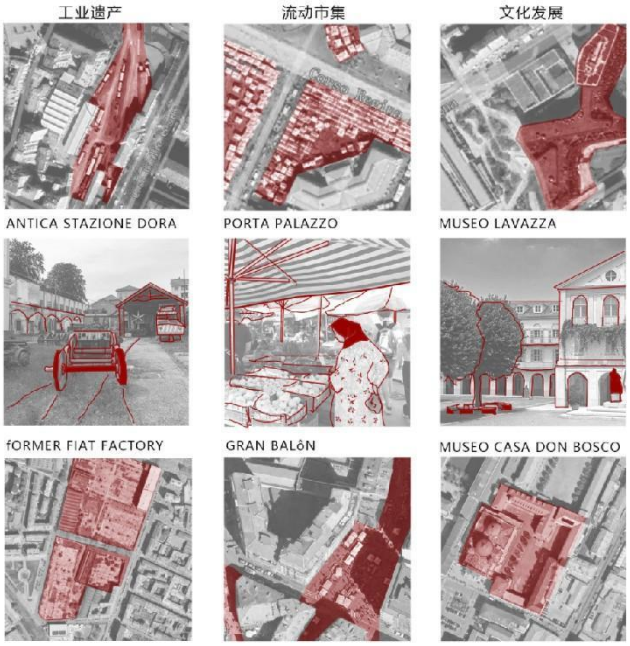


Figure 4.6 Cultural Spaces in the Aurora District (Drawn by the Author)

The heterogeneity of the Aurora District is not only manifested in the diversity of its spatial forms but also reflected in the complex interweaving of its social structure, functional zoning, and cultural landscape. Turin's industrial transformation has led to a mixed distribution of industrial heritage spaces and cultural and creative spaces in the Aurora District. This represents the first layer of multicultural convergence, where different historical periods have left distinct cultural imprints on the city, and these cultural traces have accumulated to form the current urban spatial appearance.

Located on the riverside boundary of the Borgo Dora neighborhood, the Cirie-Lanzo railway station (Stazione della Cirie-Lanzo), built in the nineteenth century, was gradually abandoned in the late twentieth century as the industry along the Dora River declined. A new Dora railway station was established approximately 1.27 kilometers northwest along the railway line near Piazza Generale Antonio Baldissera. The original site, after protective restoration, now serves as an office space for Turin's public transport company GTT. Through the fence, one can still see overgrown tracks and some rusted old locomotives. The railway line between the old and new stations remains abandoned, enclosed by concrete retaining walls, iron fences, and metal panels, becoming a north-south scar left by industrial pains in the Aurora District. In comparison, the impact of the former Officine Grandi Motori (OGM) engine

manufacturing plant on the urban space of Aurora is even more profound. The headquarters of Lavazza Coffee Company, named "Nuvola" (Cloud), along with its affiliated museum and street-side park, injects a more modern spatial vitality into Aurora. These, together with older buildings such as the Cortile del Maglio, the Don Bosco House Museum (Museo Casa Don Bosco), and the SERMIG Arsenal of Peace, collectively constitute the urban impression nodes of Aurora.

The second layer of multicultural convergence in Aurora is characterized by its distinctly multiethnic resident population. The influx of immigrants has introduced a myriad of complex foreign cultures. Italian culture continuously intersects and interacts with these diverse cultures within Aurora's urban spaces, manifesting in various forms such as friction, conflict, mutual embedding, and integration.

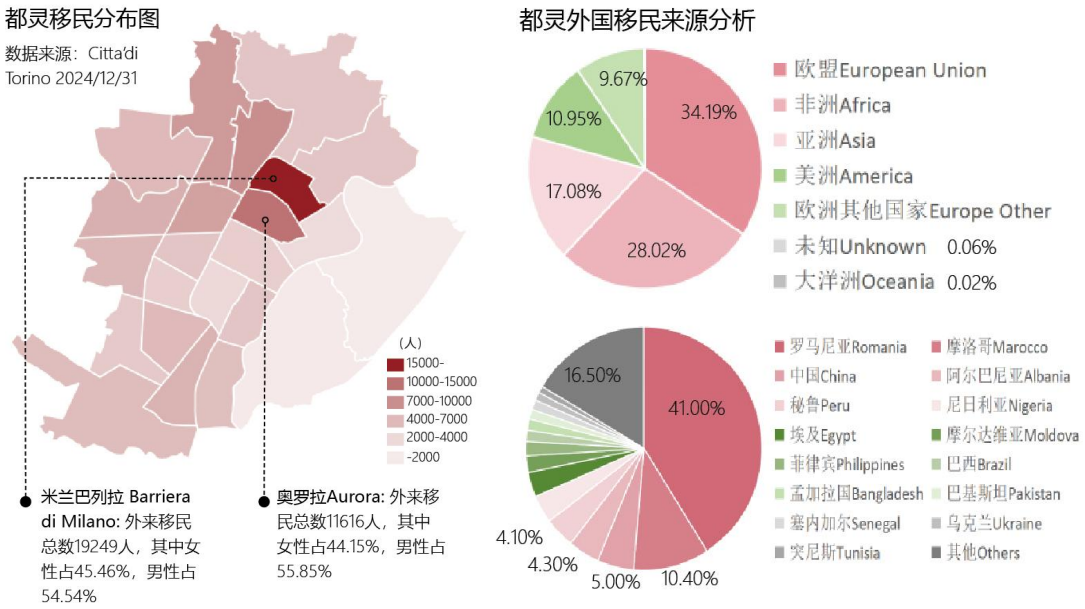


Figure 4.7 Distribution and Origins of Immigrants in Turin (Drawn by the Author)

Foreign residents constitute approximately 8.9% of Italy's total population, including immigrants from countries like Romania, Albania, Morocco, and China. When categorized by nationality, China ranks as the fourth-largest source country, with 308,984 immigrants. [①] In Turin, foreign residents make up about 16.5% of the total population, surpassing the national average. Among Turin's foreign immigrants, 41.0% are from Romania, 10.4% from Morocco, followed by China (5.0%), Albania (4.3%), and Peru (4.1%). These immigrants predominantly reside in the northern, western, and

① Data source: ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics), 2024 data.

southern parts of the city. Aurora has consistently been one of the most concentrated areas for immigrants in Turin, second only to the Barriera di Milano district to the north. Historically, it hosted large communities of migrant workers. According to the 2024 data from the City of Turin's Statistics Office[①], 11,616 foreign residents live in Aurora, with women and men accounting for 44.15% and 55.85%, respectively. Additionally, the Informa Stranieri e Nomadi, a government agency serving foreign citizens and nomadic populations, is also located in Aurora.

Since 2000, Aurora has faced increasing challenges such as economic decline, cultural conflicts, and the emergence of slums. These multicultural interactions have continually posed difficulties for the area, leading to complex issues in social management and street aesthetics. However, under proactive government guidance, the ensuing cultural integration has, to some extent, revitalized the urban space, giving rise to new ambiguities and richness. Notably, on the southern bank of the Dora River, vibrant spaces like the Porta Palazzo Market—the largest outdoor market in Europe—and the bustling Gran Balôn flea market exemplify Turin's inclusivity and dynamism. In these open-air markets, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds communicate in Italian. Immigrants often play dual roles as both buyers and sellers, and it's common to hear Italian interspersed with English, Chinese, Arabic, and other languages. The goods sold here hail from all over the world.

① Data source: CITTA ' DI TORINO, Ufficio di Statistica, Turin City Statistics Bureau, 2024 data. http://www.comune.torino.it/statistica/dati/stranieriterr.htm

Figure 4.8 Distribution of Shops from Different Cultural Backgrounds (Drawn by the Author)

Entrepreneurial immigrants have established permanent shops on the ground floors of buildings throughout Turin, with signs in both Italian and their native languages. Some storefronts feature decorations with ethnic motifs, and their window displays often showcase exotic products, such as Middle Eastern fabrics. Among these, Chinese shops with Chinese characters and shops with Arabic script are particularly prominent. Language serves as a rapid and vivid marker of heterogeneity in the streetscape. Shops with Arabic signage may be operated by individuals from Morocco, Lebanon, Sudan, or Iran, using Arabic or Persian. While these shops use Italian and English to attract a broader clientele, they also employ their native languages to subtly affirm and promote cultural identity within specific communities.

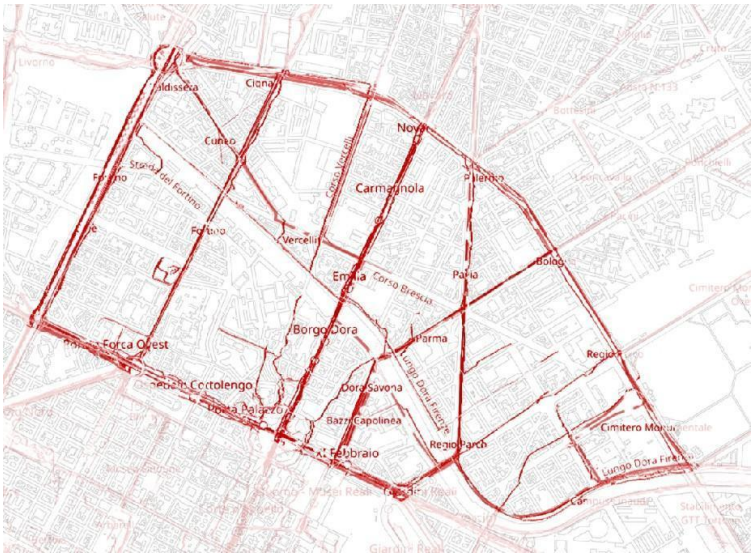


Figure 4.9 Traffic Density Distribution Map (Drawn by the Author[①])

Based on shared information from platforms like Google Maps and firsthand street observations in 2024, the distribution of shops from various cultural backgrounds in Aurora has been mapped, as shown in Figure 4.8. Due to limitations in knowledge and resources, the focus was primarily on street-level shops, excluding those within commercial complexes or open-air markets. The shops were categorized into Italian, Chinese, and other immigrant-owned establishments, including those run by Iranians, Palestinians, and Filipinos. Overall, immigrant-owned shops are concentrated around Porta Palazzo and along both sides of Corso Giulio Cesare. Scattered shops in other areas follow commercial optimization principles, mainly situated along major roads or near squares. Shops from the same cultural background tend to cluster together. For instance, the southern section of Corso Giulio Cesare and its northern end near Aurora's boundary predominantly feature shops with Arabic signage. Chinese shops are densely located in the northeastern blocks of the Porta Palazzo Market and along Corso Regina Margherita. Compared to other immigrant shops, Chinese establishments have a more confined distribution, possibly due to classification biases. Overall, the distribution of shops aligns with areas of high traffic density, with immigrant shops concentrated in Aurora's central region.

The multiculturalism in Aurora extends beyond commerce and trade, permeating religious and educational activities. Figure 4.10 illustrates the network of religious buildings in and around Aurora. Religious structures are predominantly clustered on the

① The data comes from Public GPS Traces of OpenStreetMap.

western side, with most of the area east of Corso Giulio Cesare lacking such buildings, except for a Catholic church, Chiesa di San Gioacchino, and four mosques near the avenue's eastern edge.

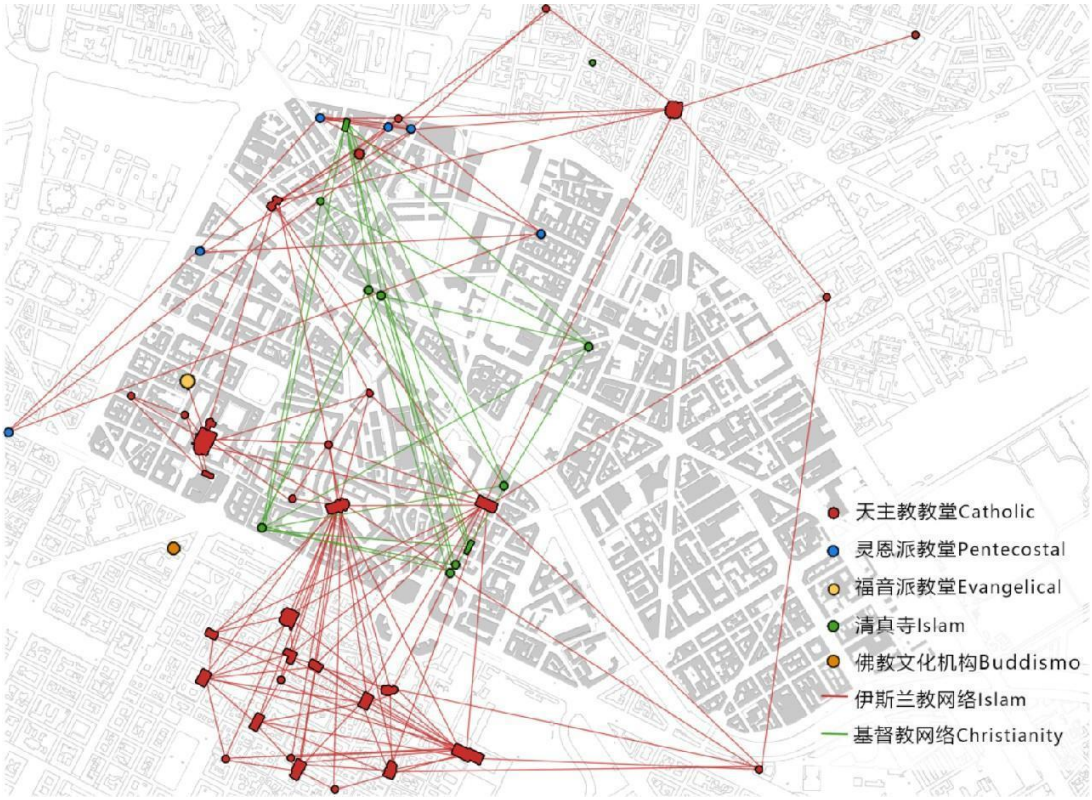


Figure 4.10 Distribution of Religious Buildings (Drawn by the Author)

Figure 4.11 Christian Church Established by Chinese in Turin (Source: Internet)

From a broader perspective, the predominant religions in Aurora are Christianity and Islam. Specifically, Christian denominations in Aurora include Catholicism, Pentecostalism, and Evangelicalism. The southern part of Aurora, near Turin's historical city center, is home to a large number of historic Catholic churches, which exert a magnetic influence on the distribution of Catholic churches in Aurora. Larger churches

are generally found closer to the center, while smaller ones are scattered across local neighborhoods.

The only Evangelical church in the area was established by the Chinese community and is located in the southwestern corner of Aurora, in the courtyard of a residential building on Via Salerno. It opens directly onto the street, and its congregation is primarily composed of Chinese believers. The entrance bears the Chinese characters for "Christian Church," and its identity is marked externally only by a cross and inscriptions, as shown in Figure 4.11.

Aurora also contains five Pentecostal churches, mainly concentrated in the northwest. In contrast to the prominent structures of Catholic churches, these churches often lack distinct architectural features, making them hard to locate from the street. They are typically housed within ordinary buildings, occupying a few rooms as their primary worship spaces.

Figure 4.12 An-Nur Mosque in Aurora (Source: Google Maps)

Similarly, mosques in Aurora are discreetly embedded within the urban fabric. From the street, their presence is almost imperceptible. These spaces are created through the religious activities of the faithful and minimal interior arrangements serving as spiritual symbols. For example, the An-Nur Mosque, located in a residential building at Via Piossasco 10, bears no visible religious or cultural markers on its exterior. Inside, red velvet fabrics adorned with mosque-style colonnade patterns decorate the floors, walls, and columns. The mosque also features a simple mihrab, religious items, doctrinal boards, and books that reinforce the spiritual ambiance. These mosques form a concentrated distribution axis within Aurora, as shown by the green lines in Figure 4.10, spreading outward from a central diagonal.

Buddhist spaces in Turin are very limited and are typically integrated with other

functions, similar to the religious spaces mentioned above. They often occupy a few rooms within a building and are not easily recognizable from the street. Their Buddhist character is only visible through interior decorations. For example, the Centro Buddha della Medicina in the Cenisia district, the Hokuzenko Association in the San Donato district offering meditation and yoga classes, and the Soto Zen Buddhist temple near the city center all fall into this category. Although referred to as a temple, the Soto Zen site is housed in a typical 20th-century building in Turin and lacks the architectural features of a traditional temple. It is open to beginners for zazen instruction on the first Sunday of every month.

Despite the high concentration of Chinese-owned shops in Aurora, there are no Buddhist cultural institutions for congregation in the area. The closest such facility is the Soto Zen Buddhist temple near the border between Aurora and the city center.

These religious spaces illustrate how multiculturalism is intertwined with local historical events and cultural features in the process of transmission. For instance, Soto Zen Buddhism, originally founded by a Tang dynasty Chan master in China, was introduced to Japan during the Kamakura period and became the largest Zen sect in Japan. Today, it has branches across Europe and America, including the temple in Turin. Similarly, the Christian church established by Chinese residents in Turin exemplifies the cyclical journey of religion: Christianity was introduced to China by missionaries in the early 19th century, and in the late 20th century, it was brought back to Europe by Chinese believers. This recontextualization reflects a unique form of religious reinterpretation, such as the extensive use of Chinese-translated scriptures to adapt to the Chinese language environment.

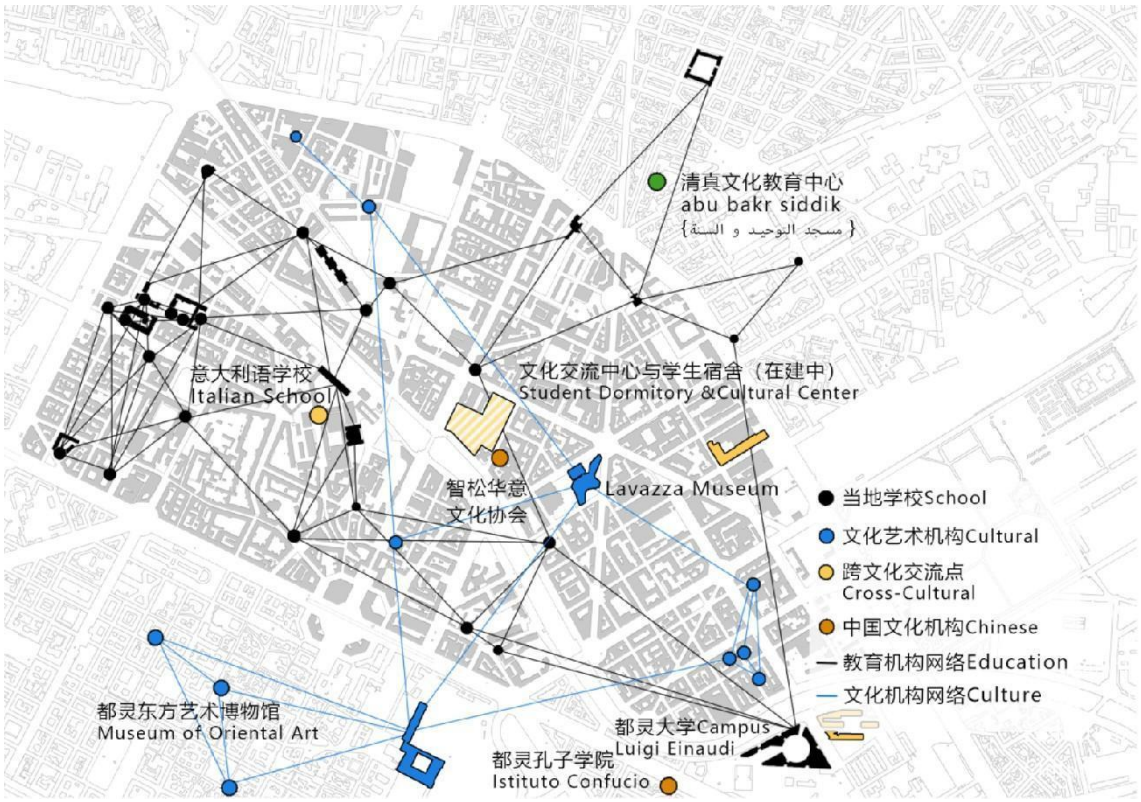


Figure 4.13 Distribution of Educational and Cultural Institutions in Aurora (Drawn by the Author)

In addition to religion as a distinctive cultural form, Aurora also hosts a wide range of other educational and cultural spaces. As shown in Figure 4.13, these spaces do not display a particularly prominent spatial pattern, but they serve as inclusive venues for the complex phenomenon of multicultural integration. These institutions generally fall into three categories:

First, foreign-initiated organizations that serve as venues for the promotion and education of non-native cultures. Examples include the Zhisong Chinese-Italian Cultural Association and the Confucius Institute in Turin, which not only promote Chinese culture to Italians and people from other countries but also provide cultural education for Chinese immigrants in Italy, especially second-generation immigrants. The Islamic Cultural Education Center in northern Aurora also belongs to this category.

Second, local organizations in Turin that act as platforms for intercultural exchange, promoting Italian culture while helping individuals from other cultural backgrounds integrate into local society. A prominent example is the SERMIG Arsenal of Peace, a former weapons factory—Italy's first in history—which was abandoned after World War II and has since been repurposed into a cultural venue for the

promotion of peace. It now serves as a convergence point for different cultures, religions, and ideologies, offering space for dialogue, reflection, and personal growth. Other such venues include Italian language schools and other cultural initiatives.

Third, local schools and cultural institutions where students from various backgrounds interact, particularly at the university or even high school level. In some cases, cultural curriculum in social schools also plays a role in fostering intercultural understanding. Institutions such as the MAO—Museum of Oriental Art—represent additional heterotopic sites of multicultural integration.

During the investigation of educational and cultural institutions, student dormitories were also categorized under the second type. Facilities such as the EDISU dormitory in eastern Aurora and the student housing project under construction in the central district host a high proportion of international or short-term exchange students. These dormitories often serve as important spaces for multicultural interaction and influence nearby public urban spaces. For example, cultural markets are often held in the public space between the EDISU dormitory and the Luigi Einaudi Campus of the University of Turin.

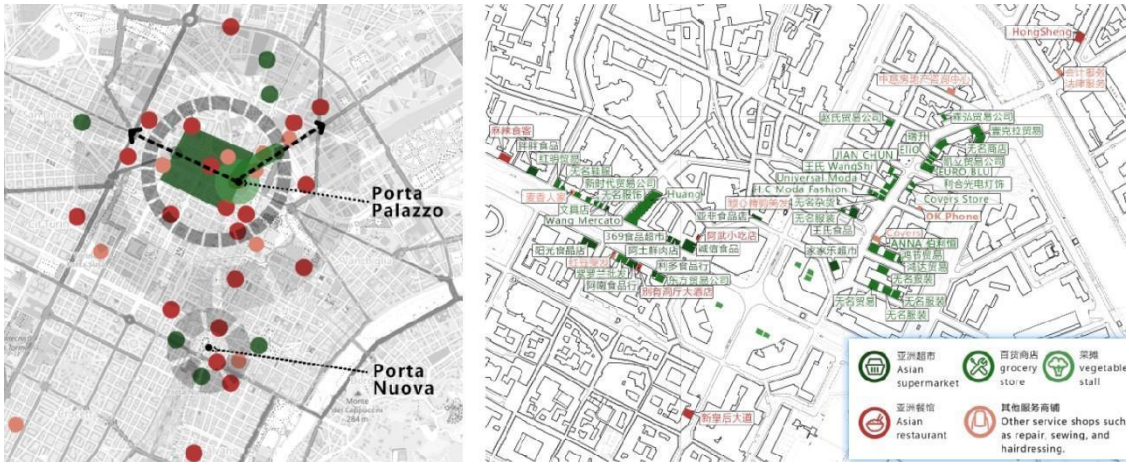


Figure 4.14 Distribution of Chinese Commercial Activities in Turin (Drawn by the Author)

In addition to the general activities of different cultural groups, each immigrant community in Turin also displays unique behavioral patterns. Taking the Chinese community as an example, Chinese-owned businesses in Turin include Asian supermarkets, general stores, vegetable stalls (retail), Asian restaurants, tailoring shops, hair salons, mobile repair shops (service), as well as a few real estate agencies, accounting firms, and legal offices catering primarily to the needs of Chinese

immigrants.

Most Chinese businesses are clustered around Porta Palazzo Market. Some shops are also scattered near Porta Nuova station and across other urban areas, following the general distribution of commercial zones. Around Porta Palazzo, Chinese businesses are primarily distributed along the western section of Corso Regina Margherita and on both sides of Via Clemente Diamiano Priocca (hereinafter referred to as Priocca Street). The former is dominated by Chinese supermarkets, while the latter is more diverse in retail type and forms a wing-like pattern around the market.

Despite the evident spatial clustering, the Chinese business community in Turin lacks civil associations like those found in Milan (e.g., Zhejiang Business Association), which offer platforms for conflict resolution and rights protection. The influence of Chinese businesses in Turin is therefore relatively limited and largely the result of spontaneous commercial agglomeration, although place-based networks similar to those in Milan are present. Most Chinese entrepreneurs in Turin originate from Wenzhou, Zhejiang, and some have opened their shops through mentorship or assistance from established store owners.

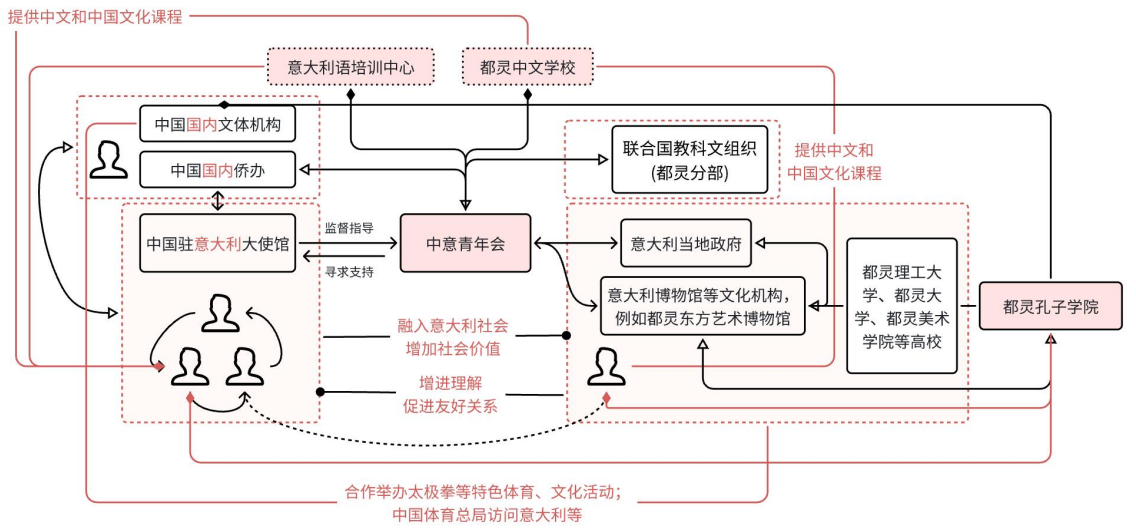


Figure 4.15 Network of Chinese Cultural Activities (Drawn by the Author)

Beyond fulfilling basic needs such as labor and consumption, migrants in Turin actively engage in cultural activities in their own ways. The Chinese community in particular shows a degree of organizational capacity in hosting cultural events, thanks in part to institutions like the Sino-Italian Youth Association (headquartered in Turin) and

the Confucius Institute. Figure 4.15 illustrates a cultural activity network centered on these two institutions. On one hand, they cooperate with official Chinese organizations such as the Embassy of China in Italy and domestic cultural agencies like the General Administration of Sport and the Harbin Tourism Bureau. On the other hand, they collaborate with local Italian entities such as the Turin municipal government, the MAO (Museum of Oriental Art), and higher education institutions like the Polytechnic University of Turin.

Together, they have successfully hosted a range of vibrant cultural exchange activities, including Tai Chi workshops, Chinese paper-cutting exhibitions, and literary lectures by Chinese author Yu Hua. Traditional Chinese stories such as The Butterfly Lovers and Tang Seng's Journey, as well as festivals like the Spring Festival, have been introduced to Italians through culturally hybrid narratives and celebrations. They have even cooperated with the UNESCO branch in Turin to promote Sino-Italian exchanges on a broader platform.

In addition to these special events, ongoing efforts are being made to foster two-way knowledge sharing and mutual understanding. Language training programs at Chinese schools, Italian-language centers, and the Confucius Institute offer Italian language classes and cultural orientation for Chinese migrants, while providing Chinese language and culture education to Italians. These programs help build mutual trust and support integration, allowing Chinese immigrants to demonstrate their social value in Italian society.

Other cultural groups in Turin also exhibit distinctive forms of cultural activity. For instance, Muslim communities organize gatherings in Parco Dora, engaging in cross-cultural interactions within the industrial heritage landscape. Figures 4.16 and 4.17 depict examples of recent Sino-Italian cultural events held in Turin.

Figure 4.16 Landmark in Turin Celebrating Chinese New Year (Source: Internet)

Figure 4.17 Design Drafts of East-West "Santa Claus" Ice Sculptures (Source: Internet)

These cultural exchanges between China and Italy reflect not only Turin's respect and tolerance for multiculturalism but also enrich the urban experience and deepen the city's heterogenous cultural heritage. As a unique zone of multicultural integration, Aurora holds numerous cultural treasures yet to be uncovered. A strategic and inclusive approach to integrating these cultural assets could become a crucial driver in the district's urban renewal and further industrial transformation.

4.2 Street-Level Analysis

To further interpret the heterogeneity of the Aurora district, this section focuses on Via Priocca, a street known for its concentration of Chinese-run shops. The analysis is

conducted from two perspectives—objects and events—addressing distinctive signage, heterogeneous artifacts or structures, and the social interactions and commercial behaviors occurring behind these physical features.

4.2.1 Objects: Distinctive Signage and Street Components

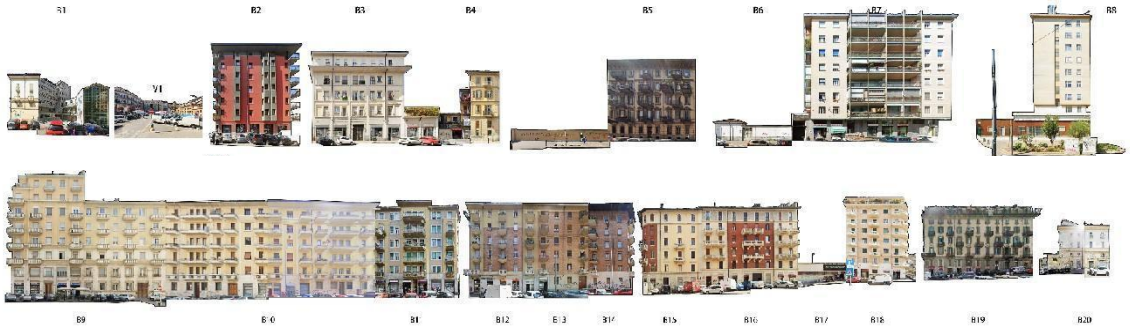


Figure 4.18 Street Elevation (Surveyed and Drawn by the Author)

Figure 4.19 Openness Analysis of Streetfront Buildings (Drawn by the Author)

As mentioned earlier, Via Priocca is the product of the intersecting influences of the river system and the spatial magnetism of Porta Palazzo. The buildings on the eastern side of the street display a strong sense of continuity in their facades and are mostly six stories high with consistent floor heights, as shown in the second row of the elevation in Figure 4.17. In contrast, the buildings on the western side (first row) exhibit greater variation in scale and facade design, with architectural styles differing significantly from south to north. On both sides, the buildings are visibly divided into upper and lower zones, with the ground floor featuring different heights and materials than the upper stories. Portions of the ground floors serve as residential entrances, while others open to the street as commercial spaces. Materials used for the lower levels include gray or beige stone, light-colored paint, or stucco, while upper floors are typically rendered or built with red bricks. Ornamentation is generally centered on

windows and balconies. This facade composition aligns with typical twentieth-century architectural practices in Turin.

Figure 4.20 Multicultural Symbols on Facades (Photographed by the Author)

Figure 4.21 Cultural Information in Shop Windows (Photographed by the Author)

Despite these commonalities, multicultural elements are evident in ground-floor signage, window displays, and even balcony decorations. For example, one balcony features both the Italian national flag and a patchwork flag of various national flags—including China, the UK, the US, Argentina, Germany, and Brazil—demonstrating either a personal commitment to multiculturalism and peace or, in other cases, signaling openness to international guests, as seen at the nearby hostel CASA M&M BORGO DORA. These elements reflect both the district's cultural hybridity and residents' conscious engagement with it.

Several Chinese-run shops display Christian phrases like "Immanuel" and "Jehovah Jireh" in Chinese characters on their windows, along with calendars of activities from the "Chinese Christian Church in Italy," all marking the intersection of cultural and religious influences. One store even features lyrics from the Chinese song "Uncommon Words," promoting Chinese character culture: "Let the world know our

Chinese characters—every stroke tells a story," expressing cultural pride. These window displays allow immigrant residents to quietly express cultural identity through their limited shopfront spaces.

Language and script, as vital cultural markers, play a crucial role in identity construction. The signage of Chinese businesses on both sides of the street reflects this symbolic significance. The author surveyed 30 Chinese-run shops along the street, categorizing their signs based on condition and content (see Appendix B for the full list).

Figure 4.22 Sample Chinese Shop Signs (Compiled by the Author)

Among the 30 shops, seven had severely damaged or missing signage due to age or reduced business activity, relying instead on window displays. Of the remaining 23, 17 included Chinese characters in the signage—13 of which prominently displayed Chinese names such as "Chenbo Trading," "Wang's Foods," and "Wang's Trading Company." Others used smaller characters or complex designs, diminishing the visibility of Chinese text. Typeface styles included bold sans-serif (35%), clerical, regular, and cursive script; a few used Song or Wei styles, and two adopted informal handwritten fonts. Color schemes were mainly red or blue with white, green, or black accents. Most signs were simple in layout, relying solely on text. Structural compositions involved

welded steel frames with printed fabric or metal boards inserted into existing door frames, though some were mounted externally. A standout was the wooden signboard of "Jianchun Trading," which harmonized with the Italian stone facade while using distinctive brown wood to stand out modestly. Overall, Chinese characters served as the primary cultural marker, though some businesses omitted them altogether, diminishing distinctiveness.

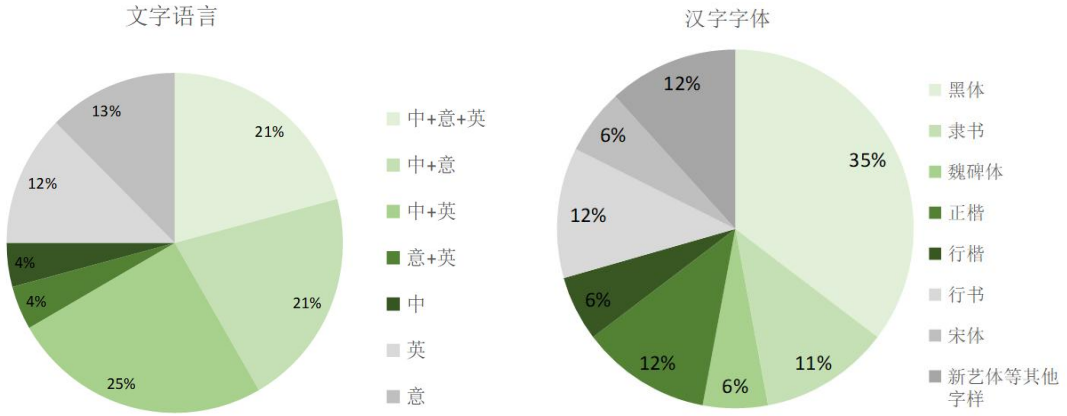


Figure 4.23 Sign Language and Typeface Analysis (Drawn by the Author)

These signboards generally use economical methods that respect the original Italian streetscape and reflect the practical ethos of merchants who prioritize product quality over decorative excess. Despite their modest size, these signs reveal rich cultural hybridity, both in linguistic content and symbolic meaning. The most common configuration is Chinese-English bilingual signage, followed by Chinese-Italian-English trilingual and Chinese-Italian bilingual signs. As customer bases have diversified, many businesses use only English or Italian. Conversely, few use Chinese exclusively. Some names — like "Bethlehem" and "YIKELA"—carry foreign meanings despite being in Chinese. "Bethlehem" refers to a central city in Palestine revered in Christianity, but the sign omits its original Hebrew term; "YIKELA" phoneticizes "carat," a unit of gem weight derived from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern carob tree seeds. These examples suggest misunderstandings or indifference to cultural origins but also reveal vibrant historical processes of cultural migration, reinterpretation, and hybridity.

Other migrant-owned shops also exhibit strong cultural traits in their

signage. Persian or Arabic scripts appear prominently, often in combination with Italian or English. The term "Bazar" (from Persian بازار) frequently appears in store names, signifying traditional Middle Eastern markets. Some signs also include exotic product illustrations, and windows display ethnic fabrics with rich patterns. Figure 4.23 (top left) shows a shop combining Italian, English, Persian, and Arabic: "Bazar" and "Biancheria" (household linens) in large print, Persian مانتو ر بازا ("mantle bazar"), and Arabic زرابي و أثواب انواع جميع بيع ("selling all kinds of robes and carpets").

Figure 4.24 Signs of Shops Run by Other Immigrant Groups (Photographed by the Author)

Some street objects also reflect multicultural blending — for instance, a black lacquered cabinet outside an antique store features Chinese motifs with subtly European facial features, likely produced by Italian Chinoiserie artisans in the late 17th or 18th century. Placed among postmodern artworks and European-style furniture, it fits seamlessly.

Figure 4.25 Chinese-Style Lacquer Cabinet (Photographed by the Author)

In addition, street objects such as restaurant outdoor tables and road poles that are used in a variety of ways are also interesting. Outside Hongsheng Restaurant, which occupies a space of about 3 parking spaces, is placed with prefabricated restaurant outdoor iron frames and unique diagonal grilles made of wooden strips to demarcate the boundaries of the space. From the color of the wooden strips, we can judge the newness and oldness of the objects and get the information behind them. The sofa under the "Ristorante" sign has changed the function of this door frame, transforming the pass-through space with a depth of only about 30 cm in the doorway into a stay space. This worn-out dark brown sofa hints at the possible activities here and the history of space changes, as shown in Figure 4.24. The outdoor space of the Italian cafe "BRASSERIE CAFFETTERIA" uses cement flower pots and ground elevation as hints for space division. The shelves made of wooden poles and ropes are unique. The owner seems to want to plant some climbing plants here as a "dividing board" with a larger area and more distinct shape. This practice of occupying parking spaces on both sides of the road as outdoor seating for restaurants is very common in the Aurora district and other areas of Turin, and effectively forms an interaction with various events on the street. For example, during the World Cup, the impact of the images on the TVs in the stores is expanded, and the entire street becomes a celebratory gathering place.

Figure 4.26 Hongsheng Restaurant (Photographed and Annotated by the Author)

Figure 4.27 Café Outdoor Seating (Source: Internet)

Other examples include a café's outdoor zone delineated by cement planters and an improvised trellis built with wooden poles and string, likely intended for climbing plants. Converting parking spaces into temporary seating is a common practice in Aurora and elsewhere in Turin, often enhancing interaction. During the World Cup, these extended areas magnify television visibility and turn entire streets into celebration zones.

Miscellaneous street objects also capture moments of daily life. A one-meter pole had a traffic sign and trash bin crudely attached. Bicycles were chained to signposts, improvising docking stations. These objects crystallize the street's daily rhythms and reflect the lived needs of its residents and workers.

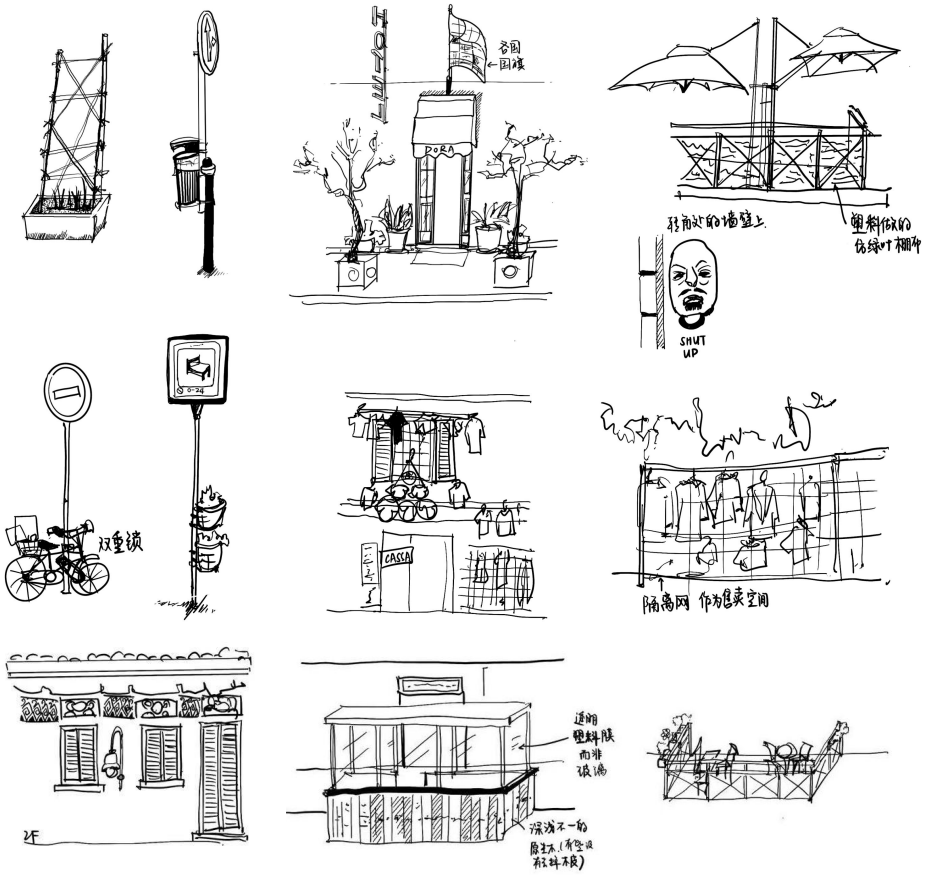


Figure 4.28 Street Object Observations (Drawn by the Author)

4.2.2 Events: Diverse Transactions and Crowd Dynamics

Turin's commercial activities are notably diverse, encompassing shopping malls, retail stores (including supermarkets), and open-air markets. Large-scale shopping centers are typically situated in suburban or peri-urban areas where land costs are lower, such as Shopville Le Gru in Grugliasco[①] and Torino Outlet Village in Settimo Torinese[②]. Due to the dense network of small streets and historic buildings in the city center, there is limited space for large shopping complexes. Consequently, only the main train station (Porta Nuova) and its surroundings host some sizable indoor commercial areas. Retail stores predominantly occupy the ground floors of street-facing buildings, with upper floors serving as private residences, as illustrated in Figure 4.18.

① Grugliasco is a municipality in the Metropolitan City of Turin, Piedmont, Italy, about 9 km west of Turin. In the 20th century, it became an industrial center for the automotive industry due to its proximity to the Fiat factory.

② Settimo Torinese is another municipality in the Metropolitan City of Turin, Piedmont, Italy, located about 10 km north of Turin. It is now one of the municipalities with the highest concentration of industrial plants in Turin.

Markets, particularly open-air ones, are among Turin's most distinctive and vibrant trading venues, playing a crucial role in residents' daily procurement of goods. These traditional trading spaces, composed of numerous stalls, are integral to the city's supply chain. Beyond basic transactions, they foster interpersonal interactions that reinforce the connection between street spaces and the community.

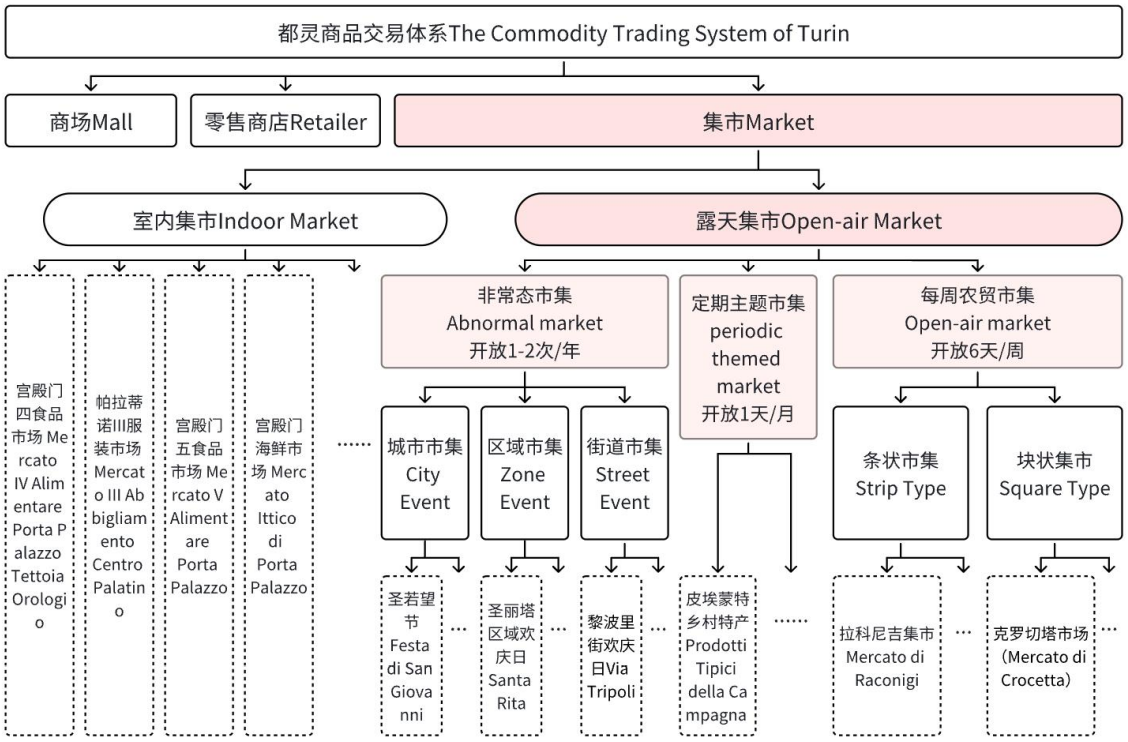


Figure 4.29 The Commodity Trading System of Turin (Drawn by the Author)

Figure 4.30 Turin open-air markets map(Drawn by the Author)

Turin's markets are mainly divided into open-air and indoor markets, with this study focusing on the former due to their close association with street life. Open-air markets can be further classified based on their operational schedules and organizational structures into weekly farmers' markets, regular thematic markets, and occasional markets. Occasional markets coincide with special festivals and celebrations, occurring 1–2 times annually, each lasting from two days to a week, with some extending longer, such as Christmas markets.

Depending on the scale of the festivities, occasional markets can be categorized into city-wide, regional, and street-level markets. For instance, Via Tripoli hosts its own festival every year on the second Sunday of March and the first Sunday of October[①]. During these events, the section of Via Tripoli from Via Baltimora to Corso Cosenza is closed to vehicular traffic from 9:00 AM to 7:30 PM, with public transportation routes adjusted accordingly for the "Via Tripoli in festa." The street transforms into a bustling market filled with diverse goods, including freshly grilled meats, specialty hams, chocolates, bags, ornaments, and handicrafts. Local shops extend their merchandise

① For example, October 6, 2024 and March 9, 2025.

onto the sidewalks, and community-organized performances enliven the atmosphere. Entertainment facilities such as trampolines, karaoke setups, and face painting stations are set up at Piazza Montanari and various intersections, inviting residents from across the city to partake in the street festivities. Figure 4.31 depicts this celebratory scene.

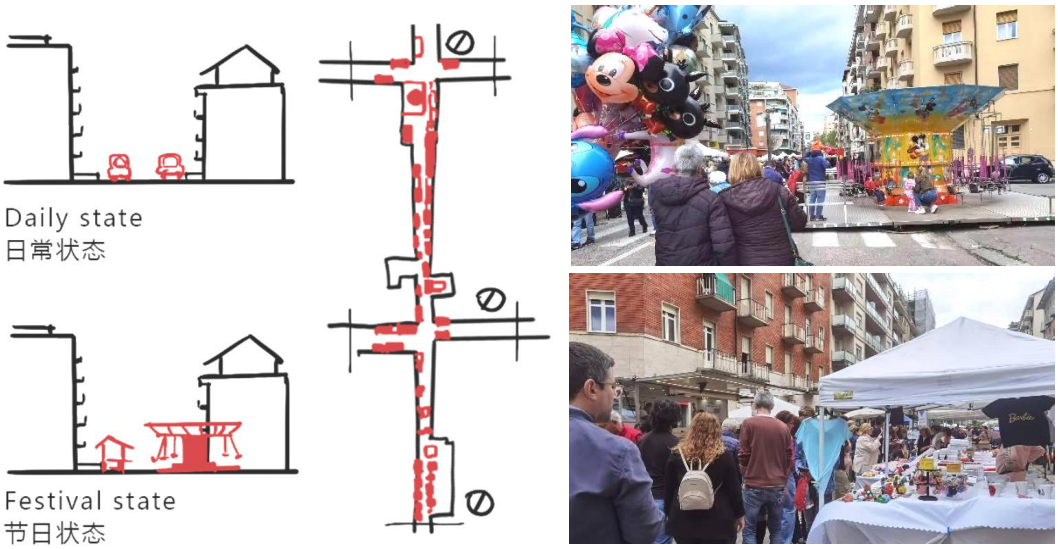


Figure 4.31 Via Tripoli in festa (Photographed and drawn by the Author)

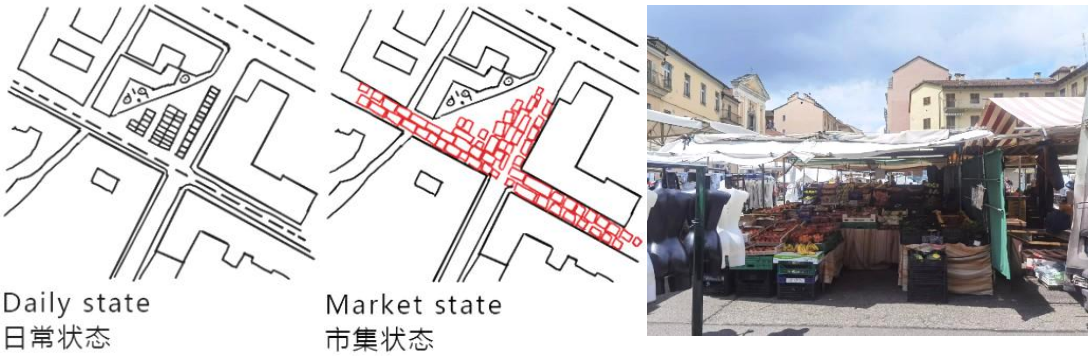


Figure 4.32 Mercato di Crocetta (Photographed and drawn by the Author)

Figure 4.33 Market at Piazza Madama Cristina (Photo from the Internet; Draft drawn by the Author)

Weekly farmers' markets serve as essential venues for the daily supply of goods, especially food and ingredients, though they also offer clothing and household items. Most operate six days a week. These markets can be further categorized by their spatial configurations into linear markets along streets and block markets situated within open squares or courtyards. The Mercato di Raconigi, located between two one-way streets, exemplifies the former.

Block markets include those situated in street-side squares, such as the flower market at Piazza Madama Cristina, and those occupying inner courtyards of blocks, like the Mercato di Crocetta in a triangular parking lot.

Additionally, thematic markets in Turin's street spaces offer unique attractions. Table 4.1 presents the city's main regular thematic markets, typically held on specific Saturdays or Sundays each month, focusing on specialty products like wine, flowers, seasonal fruits, and old books. Their names are often creatively themed; for example, the farmers' market at Piazza Palazzo di Città, held on the third Sunday of each month, is titled "Every Fruit Has Its Season." Some of these markets pause during July and August to align with Italians' summer vacation habits.

Table 4. 1 Thematic Markets in Turin

No.	Name	Theme	Address	Frequency
1	Oasi dei Prodotti Tipici	Prodotti Tipici	Piazza Palazzo di Citta'	First Sunday of every month
2	Mostra Mercato delle Lavorazioni Artistiche e Artigianali	Artigianato	Via Cesare Battisti	The first Sunday of every month (except July and August)
3	Extravaganza	Moda Vintage e Modernariato	Piazza Carlo Alberto	The second Saturday of every month (except July and August)
4	Gran Balon	Antiquariato	Borgo	Every second

			Dora e vie limitrofe	Sunday
5	Prodotti Tipici della Campagna Piemontese	Prodotti Tipici	Piazza Madama Cristina	The third Sunday of every month (except August and December)
6	Eccellenza Artigiana	Eccellenza Artigiana	Piazza Palazzo di Citta'	The third Sunday of every month (except July and August)
7	Oltre Mercato	Prodotti Biologici	Piazza Palazzo di Citta'	The fourth Saturday of every month (except July and August)
8	Ogni Frutto ha la sua Stagione	Alimentare - Artigianato	Piazza Carlo Alberto	The third Sunday of every month (except July and August)
9	Il Libro Ritrovato	Libri Usati	Piazza Carlo Felice	First Sunday of every month
10	Mercato Vintage	Premium second-hand goods	Piazza Gran Madre	The third Sunday of every month (except July and August)
11	Fera d'la Leja	Usato	Balconata di Via S.Donato	The third Sunday of every month
12	Antiquariato minore 1	Antiquariato minore	Piazza Vittorio Veneto	March to May, first Sunday of October to December
13	Mondo Artigiano	Artigianato	Via di Nanni	The fourth Sunday of February to May, September to November

14	Antiquariato minore 2	Antiquariato minore	Piazza Abba	The fourth Sunday of every month
15	Prodotti tipici della campagna	Prodotti tipici della campagna	Piazza Martini Benefica	The fourth Sunday of every month (except December)
16	Vini Tipici Piemontesi	Vini Tipici Piemontesi	Piazza Statuto	Second Sunday in March, June, October and December

Among Turin's various market types, the most popular themed markets in the Aurora district are the weekly Balôn Antique Market held every Saturday and the Gran Balôn Flea Market, which takes place on the second Sunday of each month. Both markets are located in Borgo Dora, the historical site of the former Dora village, specifically along Via Vittorio Andreis and its surrounding alleys. However, the Gran Balôn is larger in scale compared to the weekly Balôn. As the largest flea market in Turin, the Gran Balôn attracts bustling crowds whenever it opens. From 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, over 300 stalls and 50 shops offer a wide array of antiques, including furniture, ceramics, paintings, sculptures, and jewelry, as well as numerous vintage items like retro clothing, accessories, and electronics. Additionally, second-hand books, handicrafts, and various other goods are available, making it a treasure trove for visitors. The market also features live music performances and art exhibitions, allowing attendees to enjoy artistic experiences while shopping and to immerse themselves in a vibrant multicultural atmosphere. This event serves as a unique monthly celebration for the city's residents.

Figure 4.34 Gran Balôn Flea Market (Photographed and Illustrated by the Author)

Furthermore, the Aurora district boasts the largest open-air market in Turin, and even in Europe—the Porta Palazzo Market located in Piazza della Repubblica. This area also marks the boundary between Turin's central district and the Aurora district. In the 19th century, Piazza della Repubblica was lined with trees and served as a crucial northern gateway for the city. Since 1835, it has hosted a regular open-air market from Monday to Saturday. Today, the historic Porta Palazzo Market remains a vital shopping destination for Turin's residents. As a key node in the city's goods circulation network, the market facilitates the trade of various products, including fruits, vegetables, meats, seafood, and clothing, while also serving as a space for daily interactions and cultural exchanges among diverse ethnic groups. The current market layout features a relatively clear spatial distribution, with four market buildings situated at each corner of the intersection. The northeast corner houses the traditional Italian food market, Mercato IV Alimentare Porta Palazzo Tettoia Orologio; the southeast corner is home to Mercato V Alimentare Porta Palazzo, which primarily sells daily necessities and agricultural products; the northwest corner contains the Centro Palatino (formerly Mercato III Abbigliamento), which includes numerous restaurants; and the southwest corner, previously dedicated to seafood as Mercato Ittico di Porta Palazzo, is now defunct. Although the outdoor stalls surrounding these market buildings have designated areas for different product categories, as shown in Figure 4.34, they exhibit greater flexibility and diversity compared to the indoor stalls. Vendors from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and other regions sell a variety of food ingredients, clothing, and small goods, making this area one of the most vivid representations of Turin's multiculturalism. The diversity

of transaction languages, bargaining methods, and the immigrant networks behind the stalls collectively create a dynamic yet orderly urban daily landscape, showcasing Porta Palazzo Market's local response and cultural integration capabilities in the context of globalization.

Figure 4.35 Porta Palazzo Market (Photographed and Illustrated by the Author)

Most stalls in these open-air markets are temporary, typically set up around 6:00 AM and dismantled by approximately 3:00 PM. Some vendors leave behind tables made of iron pipes and wooden boards to mark their spots, while various colored and styled awnings are removed along with the goods like fruits, vegetables, and clothing, all transported away by trucks. Vendors with limited financial resources often use smaller modified vehicles to transport their goods and equipment, sometimes requiring multiple trips. These modified vehicles lack driver cabins and consist mainly of metal boxes, with the vendors sitting at the front using simple steering mechanisms to drive. Such vehicles are commonly seen in the northwest corner's shoe market, where vendors directly use the metal boxes as part of their display space. Additionally, some parked trucks along the roads have been modified to serve as sales stalls. Various manually operated carts also play a crucial role in the operation of these open-air markets. After the vendors leave, the square is left in disarray, with the municipal authorities responsible for cleaning up the garbage. The market rapidly appears in the morning and disappears by the afternoon, leaving the area empty at night and on Sundays, although occasional gatherings may still occur. The high flexibility and adaptability, as well as

the temporary and spontaneous nature of these open-air markets, align closely with the principles and spatial practices of tactical urbanism, which emphasizes low-cost, short-term interventions to quickly transform urban spaces to meet immediate community needs and test the feasibility of long-term planning. The swift setup and dismantling of these markets not only optimize the utilization of urban space but also provide flexible trading platforms for citizens and vendors, reflecting a bottom-up spatial autonomy and community participation. This phenomenon has become a unique feature of the Aurora district.

Within Aurora's trading system, there exists another category of informal vendors who establish their temporary shops using just a piece of cloth laid on the ground or over a chair. Although the stalls in the aforementioned open-air markets are temporary, most are registered with the government's market management agencies, require the payment of certain site rental fees, and possess awnings or tables and chairs to form their stall spaces. In contrast, these informal vendors adopt a more straightforward approach, allowing for greater mobility and adaptability. They are scattered across street corners, making full use of any available items on the street. For instance, in Figure 4.35, a vendor uses the anti-theft window bars of a street-facing building as a shelf to display goods. These informal stalls, centered around individuals, form dynamic and non-standard heterogeneous spaces that are constantly in motion and continuously generate new connections.

Figure 4.36 Informal Vendors in Borgo Dora (Photographed by the Author)

The pedestrians traversing Aurora's streets are also integral components of the urban space. They not only reflect the usage patterns and rhythms of the space but also reshape the perceptual structure of urban life through their physical presence and movement paths. Figure 4.36 presents some observational notes by the author on

pedestrians in Aurora's streets, showcasing diverse character types and behavioral patterns. These include elderly individuals walking dogs, youths carrying backpacks or pushing fully loaded bicycles, two vendors collaboratively pushing carts to transport goods, men from different countries conversing while sitting on discarded wooden frames from the market, citizens resting at street corners or on steps after shopping, and informal vendors setting up umbrellas and hanging clothes racks for temporary transactions. The postures of the individuals in the images vary, encompassing both static interactions and waiting, as well as typical dynamic daily activities like walking and transporting goods, presenting a cityscape full of elasticity and tension.

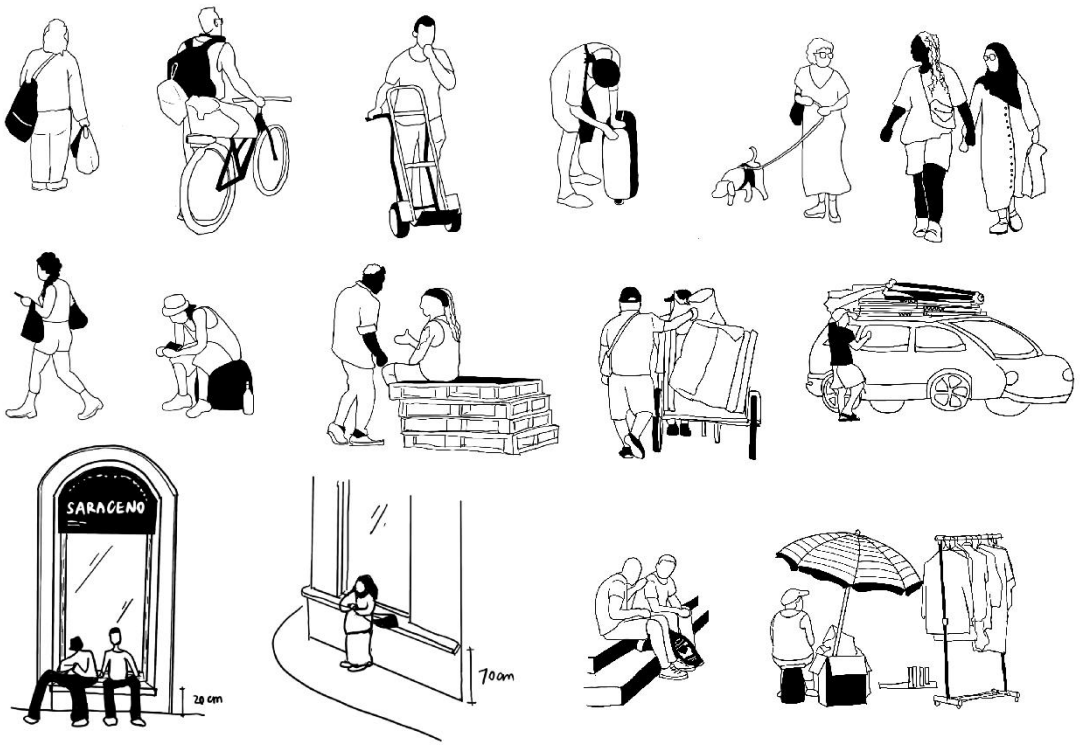


Figure 4.37 People on Aurora's Streets (Illustrated by the Author)

Notably, these street fragments reveal a strong multicultural character. The crowd features a mix of ethnicities, religions, and clothing styles, including Muslim women wearing headscarves, dark-skinned African immigrant youths, and Asian and African vendors with their families. Together, they compose a dynamic scene of "multilingual, multi-rhythmic, and multi-purpose" flows in the Aurora district. These cultural subjects participate in market transactions, public interactions, and spatial occupations, transforming urban space into a continuously generated and negotiated platform for

cultural symbiosis. In this process, space ceases to be a neutral container and becomes a living carrier of cross-cultural interactions; the movement and pauses of bodies translate into concrete expressions of identity, economic activity, and cultural exchange. Consequently, Aurora's street spaces exhibit an "order within multiplicity." Unlike homogenous spaces shaped by strict planning, the mixed flows of people in this area do not signify disorder; on the contrary, they reflect a social order maintained through daily practices. For instance, informal vendors often concentrate on the edges of squares to avoid obstructing main thoroughfares; mobile vendors rely on lightweight carts for quick setup and dismantling, forming a spatial rotation mechanism synchronized with traffic rhythms; multilingual conversations, diverse religious attire, and dietary habits coexist in the same space, highlighting both cultural interweaving and the everyday accommodation of differences.

The numerous daily events unfolding in Aurora exemplify Turin's strong local cultural resilience and integration capacity amidst urban globalization and the transformation of immigrant societies.

4.2.3 Interview Records

The previous analysis mainly focused on the objective collection of heterogeneous spatial data and the author’ s subjective interpretation. However, the existence of heterotopic space is inherently reliant on the interrelation among its physical form, constituent subjects, and experiential agents. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural heterogeneity in this area, this section presents in-depth interviews with members of the Chinese community—one of the most representative migrant groups in Turin. These interviews serve as an entry point to outline the collective and individual events occurring around commodity exchange and multicultural gatherings in Aurora.

Figure 4.38 Jianchun Trading Company (Photographed by the Author)

Interviewee I: Mr. Wang, shop owner

(Operates Jianchun Trading Company and Wang's Trading Company at Via Clemente Damiano Priocca 11/C, 11/D, and Via Carlo Antonio Porporati 6)

Interview Summary I[①]: My hometown is Wenzhou, Zhejiang. Most Chinese shops in Turin—including supermarkets and those engaged in general trading like mine—are run by people from Wenzhou. There is no Chinese chamber of commerce in Turin, nor any central activity center. Our connections are relatively limited. At the beginning, our business network mainly involved relatives and friends. Occasionally, we have small private gatherings among familiar families. Our shop was founded around 1998—probably in January or February, but I can't remember exactly. Initially, we opened only Jianchun. As business improved, we rented the adjacent space and opened Wang's Trading Company. We later roofed over the courtyard between the two units to create a continuous space.

We sell a wide range of products: daily goods, hardware tools, home decorations (vases, curtains), clothing, electronics—you name it. We're not specialized in categories like clothes or electronics, so the stock is smaller, but I try my best to source anything customers request. Our clientele includes Chinese, Italians, and many others. Chinese and Italians each account for around one-quarter, while other foreigners make up about half. We open from 9 AM to 7 PM every day and only close on Chinese New Year's Eve and Day, the Mid-Autumn Festival, and Italy's Easter. Some Chinese stores

① For the sake of brevity, this interview record omits the interviewer's questions and integrates the interviewee's answers in the first person. The language used is a combination of the interviewee's more colloquial language and written language to ensure that the language is relatively concise while retaining the characteristics of the interview.

follow the Italian custom and close on Sundays.

We restock about nine times a month, using small trucks that deliver directly to our shopfront. The first signboard for "JIAN CHUN" was made before we opened in 1998, designed by an advertising company. It mainly features Italian with the pinyin name. "Wang Shi" also includes Chinese and Italian text. The "JIAN CHUN" sign is still in good condition and was updated just a couple of years ago. "Wang Shi" has faded, but I haven't had time to replace it—it doesn't affect business much. When making a new sign, the most important thing is visibility. Aesthetic or cultural design elements aren't really a priority. Our signage isn't tailored for any specific customer base either—our clientele is broad.

I'm generally satisfied with the street's pedestrian flow and logistics. Waste management, building façades, and public safety could be improved, with sanitation being the most urgent issue. I'm happy with our current business and have no major changes in mind—though more street activity would be welcome. If I were to showcase Chinese culture to foreigners, I think lanterns and chopsticks are the most iconic symbols.

Figure 4.39 Ms. Shanhu's Family Vegetable Stall (Photographed by the Author)

Interviewee II: Ms. Shanhu, vegetable vendor

(Operates a family-run stall in the farmers' canopy section on the northeast side of Porta Palazzo Market, Piazza della Repubblica 30)

Interview Summary II: I'm originally from Wenzhou, Zhejiang. I came to Turin with my parents about ten years ago and attended school here. After finishing high

school, I started working with my parents selling vegetables. We lease large plots of farmland in the suburbs and bring fresh produce into the market around 8 AM every day. We usually close around 4 PM, sometimes as early as 2 PM.

While attending Italian school, my Italian became fluent—basically like a native speaker. My parents can also manage basic conversations in Italian. Most of our customers are non-Chinese, so we mainly speak Italian in the stall. Interestingly, my parents and I now struggle more with Chinese writing. I can type in Chinese easily, but handwriting is hard. They mostly use voice messages in our Wenzhou dialect when talking to friends or relatives.

In my spare time, I mostly hang out with other Chinese friends. There's no formal Chinese community center or chamber of commerce in Turin, but most of us in the younger generation stay connected via WeChat. Every few years, I return to Wenzhou with my parents. Life in Italy is generally comfortable, although social integration isn't always easy. Since I didn't attend school in China, I think I'll probably stay in Italy long-term. If I had to name something that represents Chinese culture, I'd say traditional clothing like qipaos, or festive activities like lion and dragon dances.

Figure 4.40 Chinese Variety Store Recommended by Ms. Peng (Photograph by Ms. Peng)

Interviewee III: Ms. Peng, student

(Master's student at Politecnico di Torino and frequent shopper in the area)

Interview Summary III: I'm from Henan and came to Politecnico di Torino for a two-year master's degree—now I'm in my second year. The vegetables and fruits at the outdoor markets here are incredibly cheap—you can get a huge bundle for just one euro.

Many items are sold by weight, at €1 or €2 per kilogram, or by piece. The meat prices in the indoor market with the clock tower sign are also quite fair.

When I first came here, I sometimes felt uneasy seeing groups of foreigners loitering on the sidewalks and staring as I passed by. But I've gotten used to the multicultural atmosphere. One vivid memory is of several Black vendors at the southeast corner of the produce market yelling "xiangcai, xiangcai" ("cilantro, cilantro") whenever they spotted Chinese shoppers. Their pronunciation was surprisingly accurate! Their cilantro is messier than what you'd find in Chinese supermarkets, but it's cheaper and their enthusiasm is amusing.

That said, you need to be cautious in this area. It's easy to get pickpocketed in the crowded markets. While most Chinese supermarkets and shops are clustered here, the better Chinese restaurants are closer to the city center. Turin doesn't have a centralized Chinatown like Milan. I'd love to see a dedicated venue for cultural events abroad. Last year, during Spring Festival, I didn't go home, and when I saw the character "福" lit up on the Mole Antonelliana, I was genuinely moved.

By the way, the owner of Pangpang Supermarket writes Spring Festival couplets with a calligraphy brush and sells them in the store, although he once joked that nobody appreciates them. From talking to classmates at school, I've realized that many foreigners—including Italians—misunderstand Chinese culture. But I also recognize I may misunderstand theirs. Friendly, equal exchanges are truly rewarding. I've made lots of friends here, and many have grown quite interested in our traditions. If I had to choose something to represent Chinese culture, I'd say it's hard to narrow it down—there's just so much. Maybe traditional architecture, Chinese color schemes, and ink painting are easier to share. But cuisine is definitely the best cultural bridge.

The three interviewees play very different roles in the street life of Aurora. Their life experiences and personal perspectives influence how they perceive urban space and relate to cultural diversity. Although Chinese shops and market stalls cater to the entire Turin population—and in some cases, foreigners make up the majority of their customers—there is a noticeable gap between work/study environments and private life. Whether it is middle-aged shopkeepers, second-generation migrants, or international students, they tend to socialize more with those who share their cultural background.

However, younger shop successors and students show a greater interest in engaging with peers from other cultural contexts, including Italians, and express both enthusiasm and ambivalence about integration. This perhaps signals an evolving trend toward intercultural blending.

4.3 Potential Heterogeneous Elements

4.3.1 Residual Value of Armature Space

As discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the multi-chamber structures that host heterogeneous elements, the armature space often contains spatial pockets such as boundary chambers, critical chambers, mesh chambers, and shadow chambers. In certain urban roads of Turin, a linear non-traffic space exists between lanes of opposing directions. This kind of multi-chamber configuration allows for a more composite relationship between pedestrian and vehicular flow, between mobility and static functions. The central chambers naturally evolve to accommodate diverse uses.

Figure 4.41 Cross-section of Corso Racconigi (Photographed and Drawn by the Author)

Taking Corso Racconigi as an example, the street section diagram in Figure 4.41 illustrates how a multifunctional central space, approximately 20 meters wide, is

embedded within a typical urban road. The peripheral portions of this chamber, adjacent to the roadway, function as parking zones. Due to the minimal difference in height—around two centimeters—and a curb strip of about six centimeters, these parking spaces often serve as overflow driving lanes during peak hours or when vehicles travel in parallel.

Although Corso Racconigi is designated as an E2-level urban street, each directional lane is only about six meters wide. Parked vehicles along the sides further compress the already limited space (as indicated by the white car in the plan view of Figure 4.41), making mobility a secondary attribute in this corridor. However, mobility is flexibly supported through the use of the central chamber as auxiliary space.

At the core of the chamber lies a homogeneous space approximately nine meters wide. Due to the large spacing between street trees, the area lacks the intimate atmosphere needed for true respite from traffic. From Monday to Saturday, until about 2:00 p.m., this area serves as the site of the Racconigi Market. Vendors loosely align their stalls along the ground-marked booth boundaries. Outside of these operational hours, however, the space is mostly deserted—occasionally traversed by pedestrians or used for skateboarding.

A comparable structure exists on Corso Sebastopoli near Via Tripoli. While its spatial configuration mirrors that of Racconigi, its chamber space is almost entirely occupied by parked vehicles during non-market hours. This particular mode of street utilization creates a unique market experience through the adaptive reuse of armature space.

Figure 4.42 Corso XI Febbraio (Photographed and Drawn by the Author)

A similar spatial condition exists in the Aurora district, with even greater potential for the enhancement of heterogeneous value. Corso XI Febbraio — parallel to Corso Giulio Cesare — is a southwest-to-northeast oriented arterial road located on the eastern edge of Porta Palazzo. Classified as an E2-level street, it is second in prominence only to Corso Regina Margherita within the Aurora district.

A seven-meter-wide linear pedestrian park occupies the center of Corso XI Febbraio. In summer, the leafy trees on both sides provide a degree of separation from the traffic, and some residents can be seen walking their dogs. However, during winter, the same space turns bleak and desolate. The southern section is well-paved, while the northern section is covered with bare soil, where overgrown weeds have engulfed the narrow path, transforming it into a natural heterotopia in stark contrast to its urban surroundings.

The street-edge zone is another concentrated locus of heterogeneity. Backed by building façades or bordered by railings and street trees, these transition areas host chats and informal trades between people of different cultural backgrounds. Bicycles and trolleys are left unattended, while people enjoy lunch amid a soundscape composed of overlapping street noises.

Figure 4.43 Edge Space in the Aurora District (Photographed and Drawn by the Author)

Figure 4.44 Abandoned Railway Line in Aurora District (Source: Google Maps)

Beyond current armature spaces in use, some urban transport corridors that were once vital but are now abandoned also hold potential for heterogeneous spatial redevelopment. Industrial relocation in the Aurora district caused the local train station to shift from its original location on the south bank of the Dora River—just west of Corso Giulio Cesare—to a new position on the north bank near Piazza Generale Antonio Baldissera.

This relocation left the railway section between the old and new stations unused. Tracks still visible on the ground and sunken corridors stand as reminders of the area's former vibrancy. The depressed rail segments have become overgrown wastelands,

while sections of track level with the surrounding streets are barricaded off, visible yet unengaged—heterogeneous voids within the urban fabric.

4.3.2 The Enriched Value of Foreign Cultures

Compared with the most prosperous central district, the Aurora area is home to a more diverse and larger population of foreign residents. While the Barriera di Milano district to the north has an even greater number of foreign populations, it lacks the tourism and commercial assets of Aurora—such as the Porta Palazzo Market and the Balôn Flea Market — and is geographically less connected to the city center. Furthermore, social conflicts are more severe and complex in Barriera di Milano. Aurora, by contrast, has the potential to draw tourist flows from the south and to seek multicultural support from the north. As such, it serves as a buffer zone for transforming diverse foreign cultures into economic value, easing social tensions, and enhancing social inclusivity.

Milan’s Chinatown has undergone a long and turbulent history of development—from cultural clashes to mutual understanding. Although stereotypes and disputes between ethnic groups have not been entirely resolved, street renovation projects and annual Chinese New Year events have shown signs of increased societal inclusiveness and the gradual release of multicultural potential. The history of Chinese immigration to Milan dates back to the 1920s and 1930s, when immigrants from Wencheng, Wenzhou, Zhejiang settled in Via Canonica, primarily operating small-scale textile and leather workshops. In the 1980s, a new wave of immigrants rapidly expanded the size of the Chinese community and diversified its economic activities, extending into trade and fashion-related services. During this period, Milan’s Chinatown also established a sister-city relationship with Shanghai, which not only enhanced economic and cultural exchange between the two cities but also boosted Chinatown’s international reputation and encouraged its multicultural development.

Figure 4.45 Celebration of Chinese New Year at the Peace Arch in Milan[①] (Source: Internet)

Today, most of Milan's Chinatown is pedestrianized and rich in oriental ambiance. Chinese-style decorations are ubiquitous, and Chinese-character signage abounds. Walking through the neighborhood, one encounters hair salons, high-end boutiques, silk and leather shops, as well as libraries, travel agencies, medical clinics, and massage parlors. Most restaurants specialize in Zhejiang cuisine, but other regional dishes are also widely available—such as hand-pulled noodles, Chinese burgers, and steamed buns — which are especially popular among locals and tourists alike. In addition, some Sino-Italian joint ventures have set up headquarters here, including the editorial office of Europe China Daily. Nearby streets such as Via Bramante, Via Giovanni Battista Niccolini, and Via Aleardo Aleardi have all been influenced by the economic magnetism of Chinatown.

However, in recent years, due to its culinary appeal, Milan's Chinatown has seen an influx of tourists, which has resulted in over-tourism, neighborhood congestion, and waste management issues — causing some local residents to protest. Nevertheless, it remains an integral part of Milan's urban culture, showcasing substantial economic value and bearing witness to the historical integration of Chinese and Italian communities, while continuing to emit its unique charm.

In a comparative analysis of the Chinese communities in London and Milan, scholars Panos Hatziprokopiou and Nicola Montagna observed that, unlike Milan —

①The person performing the dragon dance at the front is Italian.

where Chinatown has stirred more cultural and economic controversy—London's Chinatown has developed under a "multiculturalism" framework rather than one based on "race relations." It has thus become a symbol of urban diversity. Its development has been closely linked with urban renewal and regeneration, with stakeholders ranging from community organizations and developers to government authorities leveraging the "Chinatown brand" to achieve various goals. As a result, Chinatown has become a key site for leisure and consumption, reflecting spatial revalorization and cultural transformation in the city.[66]

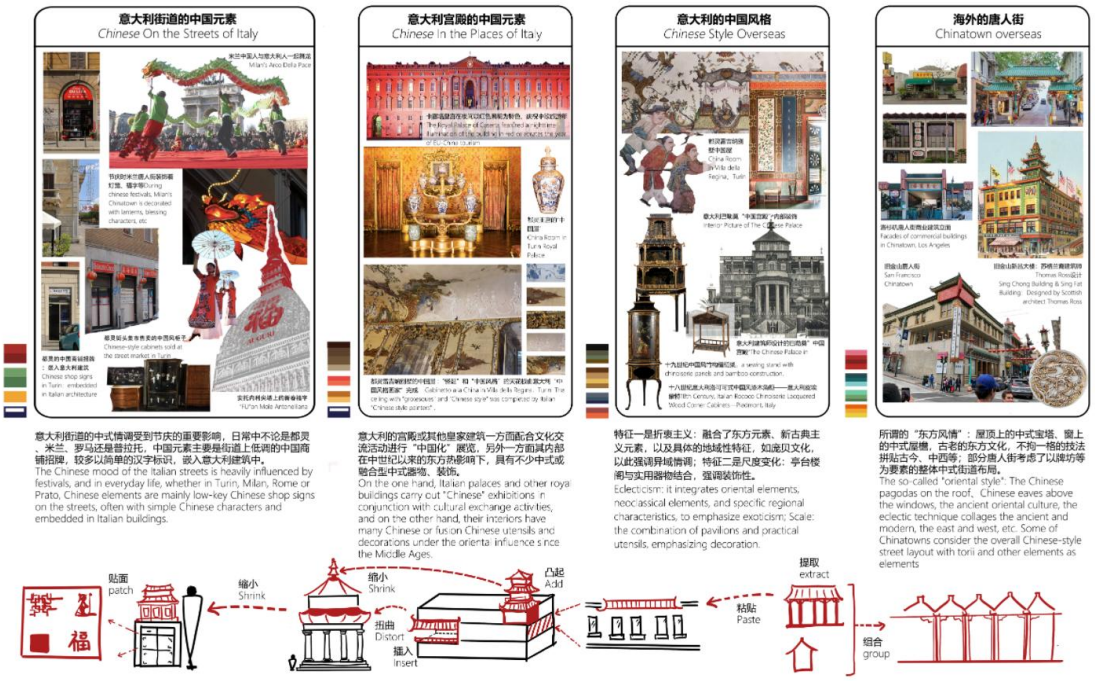


Figure 4.46 Chinese Elements in Italy and Other Countries (Drawn by the Author)

In addition, many existing palaces and streets in Turin already feature rich Chinese elements. Beyond the Chinese cultural references in shop signage, the Balôn Market displays many furnishings painted with Chinese stories in chinoiserie style. The Chinese Room (Sala Cinese) in the Royal Palace of Turin (Palazzo Reale di Torino) and the Chinese Room in Villa della Regina vividly illustrate the Savoy royal family's fascination with chinoiserie when Turin was the capital of their kingdom. These interiors, adorned with wall paintings or lacquered panels depicting oriental landscapes, figures, and floral motifs, and complemented with porcelain and lacquered furniture, once served as venues for leisure, hospitality, and the display of exotic taste. The style was popular among European nobility and served to showcase both refinement and

cultural exchange.

It is important to note that this "Chinese style" stemmed more from 18th-century European fantasies about China than from authentic Chinese court aesthetics. Both the furniture and paintings were created by Italian chinoiserie painters and craftsmen. They merged these exotic motifs with the gilded and intricate features of the Baroque or Rococo styles, creating a hybridized decorative language. These historical examples fully demonstrate the enriched value of foreign cultures and offer a historical foundation for the contemporary presentation of exotic culture within a multicultural context.

4.4 Vision for Urban Regeneration

Based on the preceding analysis of the Aurora district and its urban context in Turin, this study further explores the possibilities of urban regeneration from a design perspective. Focusing on cultural diversity as a starting point, the project takes the street spaces of the Aurora area as an experimental field, aiming to provide a potential path for inclusive cultural development within Turin's post-industrial revitalization agenda. In the transformation of industrial cities into innovative and pluralistic modern cities, such an approach could support the growth of the tourism economy and convert immigration-related social issues into advantages for the development of localized economic characteristics.

The transformation of micro-urban spaces through culturally specific interventions serves two key purposes: on the one hand, it facilitates the openness and socialization of isolated communities, thereby contributing to social cohesion and integration; on the other hand, it encourages the hybridization and decentralization of urban space, leading toward a more organic pattern of urban development.

For both long-time local residents and newcomers—immigrants, workers, students—heterotopic spaces marked by cultural hybridity may serve as places that stimulate reflection and broaden perspectives. These exotic material urban spaces offer platforms for diverse communities to gather and interact. Here, Chinese residents can preserve and transmit their language, cultural practices, and traditions. Due to the openness of street space, these pluralistic communities are more likely to find a balance between independence and integration, thereby showcasing the diversity and uniqueness of social groups within heterotopic environments.

Moreover, such heterotopic spaces can function as open platforms for cultural

exchange—not only enhancing a sense of identity and belonging within individual communities but also promoting mutual understanding and integration between immigrant groups and Italian locals. The envisioned model of a "street museum," blending Chinese and Western spatial elements, seeks to support the Chinese community in engaging more openly with the host society, dismantling barriers, and strengthening the social cohesion of Italian cities.

Today, many second-generation immigrants in Italy grow up under the dual influence of Italian schooling and Chinese cultural education at home or in immigrant communities. They are shaped by both Italian and Chinese traditions and may be seen as "intermediaries" between the two cultural spheres. These second-generation youth often find themselves navigating between two communities, and their search for belonging leads many to congregate in online spaces to explore cultural identity and share experiences.[①]

This quest for a "third identity" may find spatial resonance in a hybrid Sino-Italian urban environment—what could be described as a third kind of street. Through localized regeneration, the city can foster spatial hybridization and reconfiguration, making optimal use of existing space while also addressing the tensions around cultural empowerment. This may ultimately help immigrant communities form new, mixed self-identities.

Though incidents of violent conflict driven by racism are difficult to completely prevent in multicultural cities, embracing a richer and more diverse urban future demands the creation of spaces with a high level of cultural plurality. Such spaces would facilitate constructive dialogue, encourage mutual respect, and preemptively reduce the risk of conflict—not through isolation, but through openness and engagement.

On the basis of visual documentation of foreign cultural expressions, the author aims to conduct deeper research into how these cultures are represented in their original public environments. This will help uncover the often-overlooked dimensions that lie behind more overt forms of visual communication. At the same time, the study seeks to ground multicultural representation in care for specific groups and individuals.

The next chapter will elaborate on how to promote incremental urban public space

① Source: Giusti, Mariangela, The web as a channel to connect the current and traditional cultural consumptions, which details the Associna.it online platform—an Italian-Chinese community space created by second-generation immigrants.

transformation through the design of urban furniture and infrastructure. The goal is to integrate multicultural elements as subtle highlights within the urban landscape—revitalizing public nodes without overwhelming their context—and to ignite the spark of shared civilization through these micro-interventions.

Chapter 5 Exploration of Aurora Urban Regeneration

5.1 Overlapping Heterogeneous Networks

The Aurora district is situated in a transitional area of Turin’ s urban grid, where the orthogonal system, the river system, and the radial road network intersect. This spatial overlap has produced several residual pockets and urban voids—such as the corner plaza near Via Bologna No. 5. Additionally, the disused railway tracks that diagonally cut across the urban fabric have left behind redundant spaces, generating patches of morphological heterogeneity. On a symbolic level, the area’ s cultural plurality forms a network of virtual heterogeneity that manifests physically through culturally marked shops—featuring unique iconography and linguistic elements—as seen, for instance, along Via Clemente Damiano Priocca with its Chinese-owned storefronts. In the streets, people of different skin tones, clothing styles, and spoken languages further reinforce this visible multicultural layering.

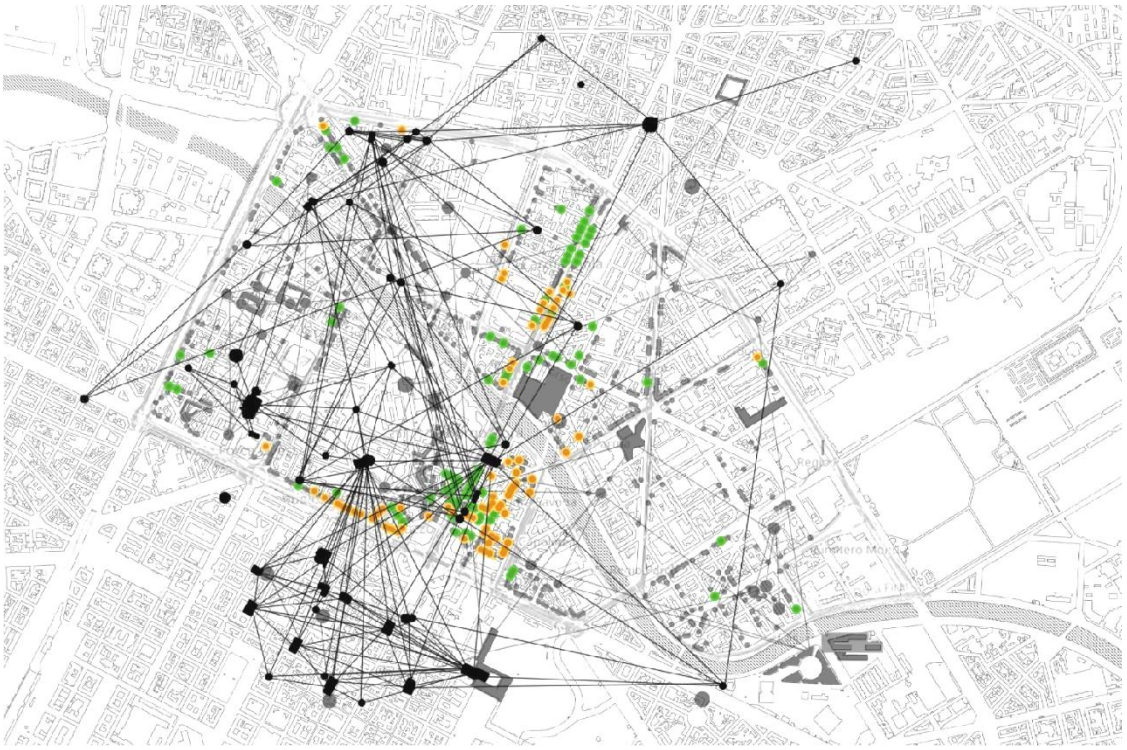


Figure 5.1 Map of Overlapping Cultural Heterogeneous Spaces (Drawn by the Author)

By superimposing the heterogeneous elements analyzed in Chapter 4, a composite map of Aurora’ s cultural heterogeneity emerges (Figure 5.1). The district’ s cultural diversity is most strongly concentrated near the southern central area and along the major

axis of Corso Giulio Cesare. One can also observe a distinct diagonal axis connecting the Porta Palazzo Market to the northwestern edge of Aurora, closely aligned with the trajectory of the disused railway line.

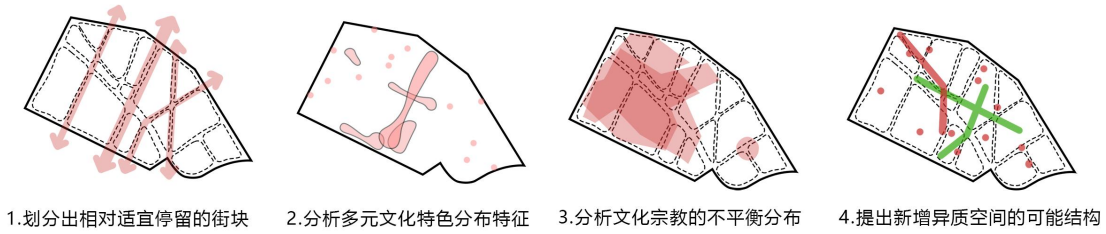


Figure 5.2 Analysis Diagram of Aurora Regeneration Strategies (Drawn by the Author)

Table 5.1 New Heterogeneous Systems

No.	Network Layer	Spatial Narrative Mechanism	Effect of Heterogeneity Amplification	Frequency
1	Static Nodes	Topological reinterpretation of cultural symbols (layered Juxtaposition)	Defamiliarization stimulus that alters spatial perception	Continuous
2	Dynamic Events	Cultural energy transmission (temporary assemblies, rhizomatic activation)	Instantaneous high-connectivity cross-cultural interactions	Monthly Annually
3	Digital Stratification	Dimensional extension of cultural memory (interactive and online)	Immersive cognitive revolution blending physical and virtual	Continuous

Building upon previous traffic flow analysis, this study proposes a new heterogeneous system composed of three interrelated networks.

First, a set of culturally themed heterogeneous cultural nodes are embedded within the Aurora streetscape. Residual spaces—such as the abandoned railway line shown in red in the fourth image of Figure 5.2— are repurposed as linear venues for intercultural exchange, forming connective threads between existing and newly added cultural nodes. In alignment

with the demographic distribution of immigrant communities, these interventions are context-sensitive. For instance, in areas with a high concentration of Chinese businesses, a specific intersection is enhanced with elements inspired by Chinese culture. Drawing on classic architectural motifs and cultural symbols, these features are translated through a locally integrated design strategy based on the layered translation method discussed in Chapter 3. The goal is to strike a balance between rootedness and otherness. In the streets surrounding these static nodes, transitional "neutral" spaces use more subdued design language to extend the impact radius of the core intervention. These spatial insertions comprise the first heterogeneous network, illustrated in red in Figure 5.3. By offering spatial experiences that differ markedly from conventional Turin streetscapes, they create a sense of defamiliarization for both residents and visitors.

The second heterogeneous network is event-based and comprises ephemeral cross-cultural links generated by dynamic programming. During select holidays or festivals, streets with relatively low traffic volumes — such as Corso Brescia, marked with green diagonal arrows in Figure 5.3 — are temporarily pedestrianized and transformed into vibrant multicultural markets, animating open public space throughout Aurora.

Figure 5.3 Proposed Plan for New Heterogeneous Interventions (Drawn by the Author)

The second heterogeneous network is event-based and comprises ephemeral

cross-cultural links generated by dynamic programming. During select holidays or festivals, streets with relatively low traffic volumes—such as Corso Brescia, marked with green diagonal arrows in Figure 5.3—are temporarily pedestrianized and transformed into vibrant multicultural markets, animating open public space throughout Aurora.

This network is not flat; it is structured into two distinct tiers:

Monthly events: Each month, a selected linear street corridor connects multiple static cultural nodes, with activities that rotate thematically. For example, Chinese New Year celebrations could be held on the third Sunday of February, while Persian New Year events could take place on the third Sunday of March.

Annual multicultural festival: Once a year, a city-scale event links multiple linear spaces simultaneously. Planned and executed collaboratively by the Turin municipality, Aurora's community organizations, and both local and international cultural institutions, this "supermarket of cultures" aims to activate broader urban zones by combining spatial nodes and linear connectors. The green-shaded market areas shown in Figure 5.3 are designed to link up with existing markets—such as Balôn and Porta Palazzo—transcending traditional commercial functions and transforming into urban fields of continuous social exchange.

These initiatives aim to: Generate tourist interest and support Aurora's economic transition; Function as "event-based marketing tools" that bolster Turin's global cultural profile and economic competitiveness. The third heterogeneous network, listed in Table 5.1, is a hybrid digital-physical interactive system. By establishing online platforms for intercultural exchange and embedding real-world sensor-based interactive installations, this network stratifies cultural narratives through augmented reality (AR), enabling immersive storytelling about local history, street memory, and community rituals. The digital layer complements physical interventions and further facilitates cross-cultural encounters.

The following sections will elaborate on two specific nodal design proposals that embody this newly proposed heterogeneous network: "Cina Corner" intervention, centered on Chinese cultural themes; "Vercelli Railway Corridor" regeneration project, drawing from Moroccan and Romanian cultural heritage.

5.2 Design Exploration: The "Cina Corner" Prototype

The previous chapter examined the Chinese community as a highly representative ethnic group within Turin's multicultural fabric and analyzed their influence on the spatial

landscape of the Aurora district. This section focuses on a key intersection where Chinese-owned shops are concentrated — at the crossroads of Via Clemente Damiano Priocca and Via Carlo Antonio Porporati — to explore spatial strategies for enhancing heterogeneity. The aim is to strike a balance between expressing Chinese cultural identity and respecting the existing Italian urban fabric.

Figure 5.4 Aerial View of the Chinese-Owned Shops Intersection (Source: Google Earth)

Via Priocca serves as a typical urban living street within the Aurora district. Spatially, it offers a pleasant sense of enclosure and a pedestrian-friendly scale. The width-to-height ratio (D/H) of the street is approximately 0.9, meaning the width of the street is slightly less than the height of the buildings flanking it — close to the classic 1:1 ratio for human-centered street design. This proportion fosters a comfortable sense of enclosure and psychological safety. Moreover, the street has limited vehicular traffic, easing transportation pressure and leaving room for pedestrian activity, street commerce, and possible market functions. In traditional Italian urban morphology, streets with such D/H ratios tend to have higher accessibility and social interaction potential, supporting informal uses such as neighborhood interactions and temporary stalls.

On both sides of this 18-meter-wide street, there are sidewalks approximately 2.3 meters wide and a row of parking spaces (see Figure 5.5). While these provide convenience for nearby residents, they sometimes reduce the comfort of the pedestrian experience and hinder visual and social connectivity between the two sides of the street.

Figure 5.5 Existing Conditions of Via Priocca (Drawn by the Author)

Figure 5.6 Master Plan of the “Chinatown Corner” (Drawn by the Author)

Drawing on the cultural heterogeneity analysis from Chapter 4, the design in this section focuses on three strategic directions: enhancing Chinese cultural expression, adding urban furniture, and cultivating a more walkable atmosphere. Guided by the principles of minimal intervention and heterogeneity enhancement, the “Cina Corner” project involves

improvements to building façades and edge-space utilization. The master plan is illustrated in Figure 5.6.

5.2.1 Enhancement of Façade Character

Façades play a crucial role in shaping the spatial character of urban streets. From the perspective of spatial encoding, façades function as enclosing surfaces, defining spatial boundaries and establishing environmental atmosphere. Façade improvements primarily focus on storefront signage and the decorative treatment of walls and gates.

Figure 5.7 Existing Façades of Chinese Shops (Photographed by the Author)

The signage of many Chinese shops along Via Priocca has aged or deteriorated. Most façades are composed of glass panels and aluminum frames. Some shopfronts have large, undivided display windows, often resulting in a cluttered appearance. The current signage expresses cultural identity only through text choices. To maximize display area within the limited façade openings, many shop owners use a narrow glass door (approximately 70–80 cm wide) alongside a full-width display window. The bottom portion—about 50 cm high—is typically made of metal for durability.

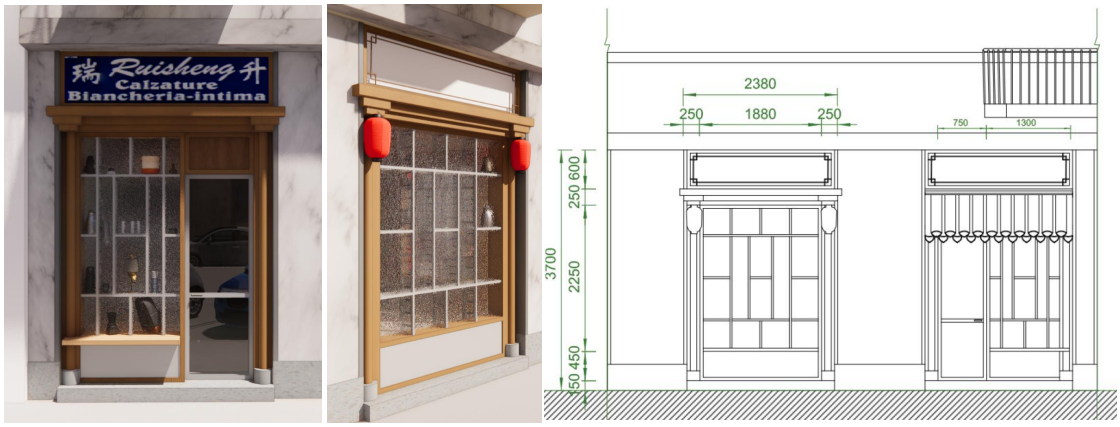


Figure 5.8 Shop Façade Renovation Type I (Drawn by the Author)

The proposed redesign maintains this functional layout while adding cultural expression through the side and top elements of the storefront. Inspired by universally recognizable components of traditional Chinese timber architecture—such as base stones, dougong brackets, and eaves — the design abstractly reinterprets these elements in geometric language. The material palette retains the combination of stone and wood. To suit the limited façade space and the fact that these components are non-load-bearing, the proportions are minimized. During traditional festivals, lanterns and couplets can be added to the columns to evoke the symbolic image of a Chinese household entrance.

Figure 5.9 Shop Façade Renovation Type II (Drawn by the Author)

To further intensify the heterogeneity of the site, the southeast corner of the intersection features a second design strategy reflecting the local Wenzhou origin of most Chinese residents in Turin. This façade draws inspiration from aluminum window patterns commonly seen in self-built homes in Wenzhou, integrating these with another symbolic street element—exposed red brick—often found on unplastered houses in Chinese rural

towns. The juxtaposition of these memory fragments generates an intentionally hybridized and nostalgic aesthetic. Notably, while the red brick façades on the eastern side of Via Priocca are refined decorative treatments, in Wenzhou, exposed brick is often a result of budgetary constraints. This contrast enriches the cultural narrative embedded in the material.

The lattice patterns used for the glass window dividers resemble traditional Chinese wood windows but are, in fact, derived from the existing metal security grilles on Via Priocca 16/G. The design incorporates mirrored surfaces and stylized red-green coloring—exaggerating stereotypical "Oriental" visual tropes to provoke visual interest.

Beyond visual interventions, the "Cina Corner" also aims to transform two-dimensional façades into event-based and spatially layered elements that host heterogeneous activities. Interviews revealed that some shops—including Kaili Trading Company—installed simple awnings to shield products from sun damage. Responding to this functional need, the design retains awnings where necessary, stylized as tiled Chinese eaves to enrich cultural meaning.

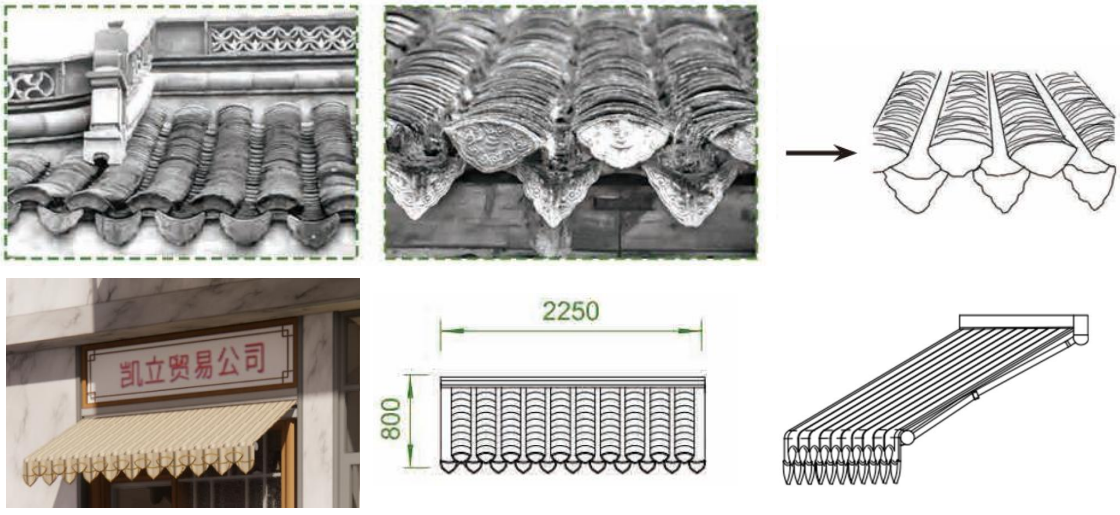


Figure 5.10 Awnings Design (Drawn by the Author)

Some storefronts feature narrow wooden benches beneath the signage, offering visitors a spot to rest or arrange their belongings. These benches also serve passersby, such as market shoppers, but their narrow design discourages prolonged occupation, preserving the display function of the shopfront. Meanwhile, the lattice frames—appearing as decorative screens—function as product display shelves. Made of wire mesh and iron frames, they allow flexible arrangements for merchandise and improve upon existing cluttered arrangements using stacked boxes or basic two-tier racks.

Figure 5.11 Practical Functional Design (Drawn by the Author)

The façade design also includes elements that allow for customizable and replaceable cultural expression. For example, wooden story panels above the doors and moon gate-inspired display windows along the wall can be updated by shopkeepers, ensuring the active presence of cultural agents within heterogeneous spaces.

Figure 5.12 Swappable Cultural Displays (Drawn by the Author)

Figure 5.13 Lightweight Retrofit Treatments (Photographed and Drawn by the Author)

In addition to new installations, lightweight modifications were made to existing urban elements. For instance, the metal security grilles on the façade of Via Priocca 16/G resemble traditional Chinese lattice patterns. Repainting them in vermilion, a classic Chinese color, subtly transforms the street into a multicultural open-air museum. Other

elements—such as balcony railings at Via Priocca 17 or the second-story window beside the doorway at Via Porporati 6—also hold potential for such low-cost, high-impact enhancements.

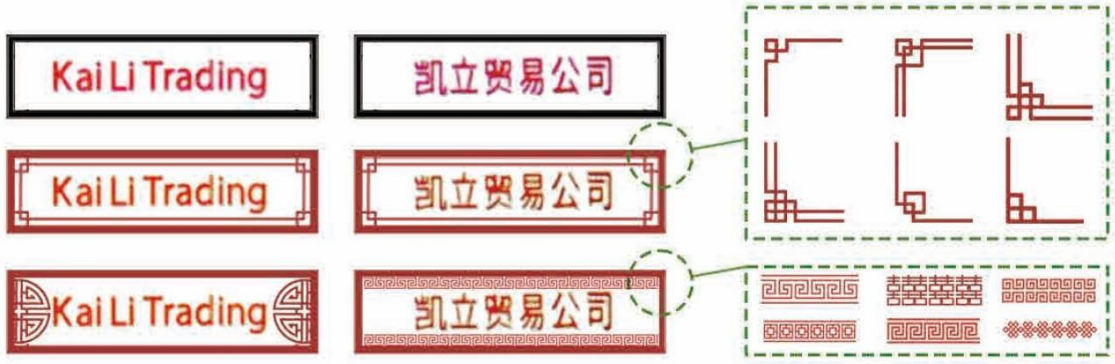


Figure 5.14 Renovated Shop Signage (Drawn by the Author)

To ensure visual legibility within limited signage areas, new shop signs follow a simplified strategy, incorporating subtle Chinese motifs. Based on the signage survey in the previous chapter, three strategies were applied: 1) For shops lacking signage: newly designed signs with distinct Chinese features. 2) For shops with existing signs but weak cultural visibility: additions of Chinese visual elements (see Figure 5.14). 3) For shops with well-maintained and recognizable signage: no intervention — for example, the wooden signboard of Jianchun Trading Company remains untouched.

5.2.2 Utilization of Edge Space

Due to the early construction dates of most Italian residential buildings, the number of private vehicles per household was often underestimated, resulting in only a few parking spots being reserved within interior courtyards. Meanwhile, centralized parking facilities remain limited. As a result, large numbers of private vehicles must be parked along the street. In small-scale urban interventions, it is impractical to remove or substantially reorganize such street parking practices, which await more comprehensive city-level planning and regulation. Given this constraint, the present design aims to fully utilize the curbside space — viewed as a micro-scale spatial cavity — by introducing cultural and functional heterogeneity enhancements to create more walkable, diverse, and engaging public space.

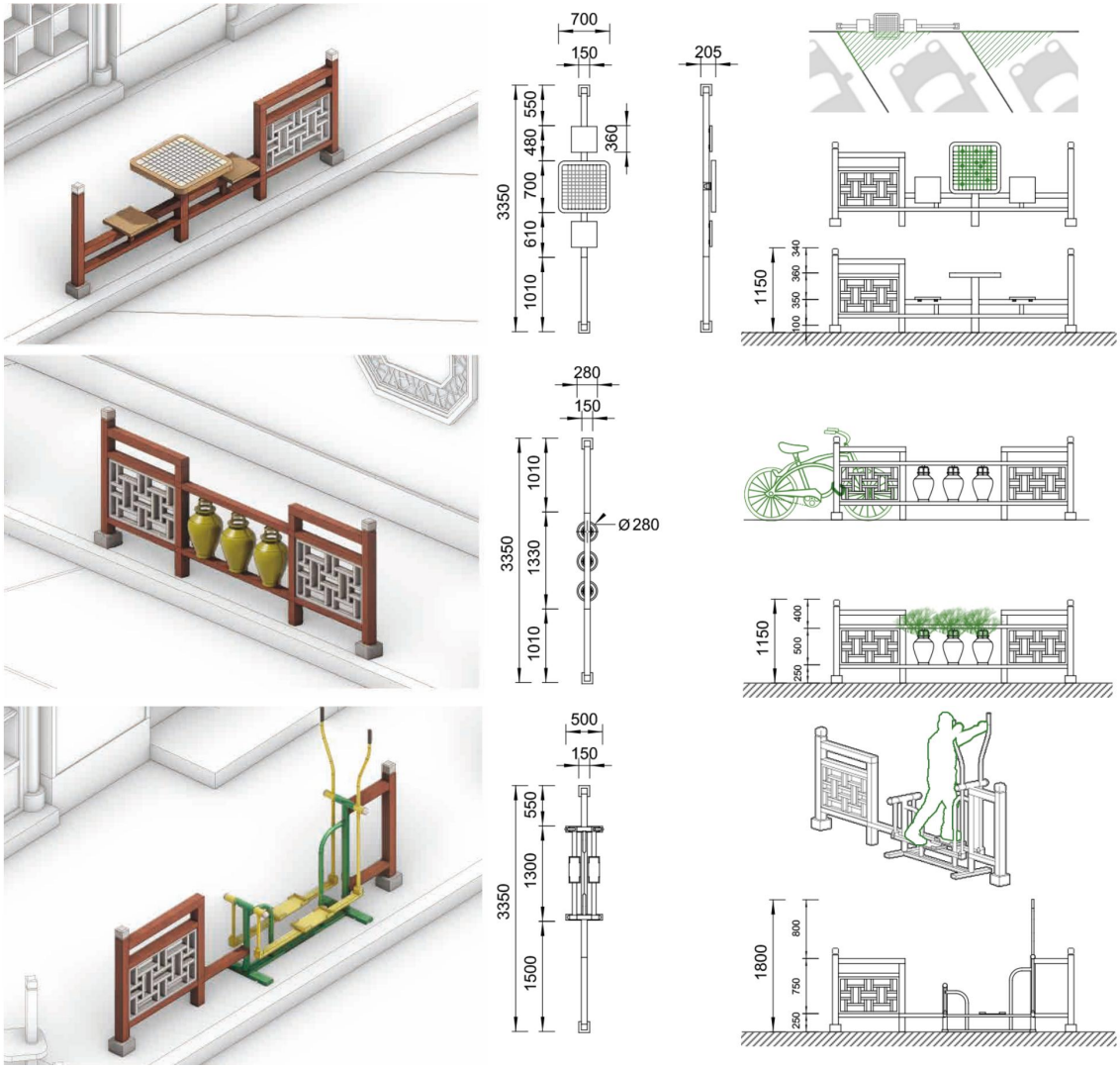


Figure 5.15 Curbside Separation Installations (Drawn by the Author)

The potted separation installations draw inspiration from Chinese lattice windows and urban median barriers commonly seen in Chinese cities. By reassembling traditional garden motifs into modular openwork panels and adopting vase forms and colors reminiscent of the Chinese Room in Turin’ s Royal Palace, a new syntax of Neo-Oriental streetscape interface is established to protect pedestrian space. Alternatively, elements of public games such as Chinese chess or Go can be integrated into these barriers: when idle, the game boards can be rotated down and stored vertically without obstructing circulation; when in use, they repurpose the area in front of parked vehicles to create a low-impact activity zone. Beyond cultural activities, sports functions can also be integrated to animate the street. For example, as illustrated in Figure 5.15, a fitness barrier combines parallel step bars—commonly seen in Chinese parks—with street infrastructure, activating curbside space and resonating with Chinese community memory. This hybrid approach breaks the

mono-functional logic of traditional street furnishings, reconstructing a dynamic heterotopic cavity across material, event, and memory dimensions. It provides an innovative solution for the cultural reactivation of dense urban spaces.

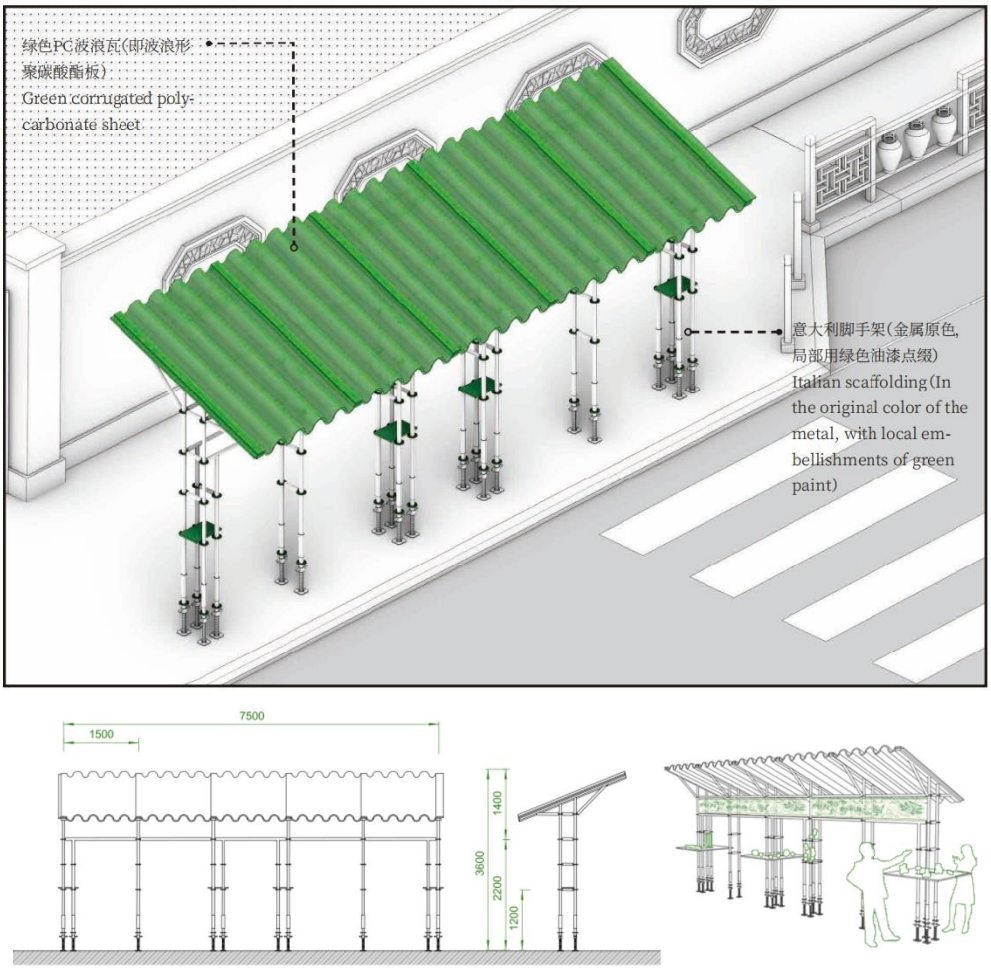


Figure 5.16 New Pavilion (Drawn by the Author)

Given the relatively low traffic at this intersection and the absence of peak pedestrian flow, the design further activates street corners without disrupting circulation. At the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners of the junction, three installations are proposed: the “New Pavilion”, offering shade and exhibition space; the “Beauty Corner”, enabling leisure and play; and the “Bracketed Heart”, integrating planting and seating functions.

The “New Pavilion” draws on the façade composition language of the “main hall” (堂屋) in traditional Chinese residences. Through abstraction and reinterpretation, the horizontally layered spatial logic is encoded into a contemporary expression embedded in the Italian urban context. The main structure employs modular scaffolding systems commonly used in local façade renovations, retaining their raw metallic finish, with selective green paint accents. This layered bricolage construction explores temporary and

modular public space solutions that reinforce local identity while remaining economical and adaptable.

The roof is covered in green polycarbonate corrugated panels, offering shade, rain protection, and visual transparency while echoing the undulating silhouette of traditional tiled eaves and the tone of glazed green tiles. The design refrains from literal reproduction of foreign typologies, instead embedding symbolic references to Chinese architectural culture via metaphor. The pavilion seeks to blend with Turin's streetscape while retaining a degree of heterogeneous cultural tension.

Functionally, the New Pavilion serves both shading and exhibition roles. Its supporting structure and partitions can host banners, artworks, community announcements, and craft displays by ethnic minority artists. It may also serve as infrastructure for temporary vending stalls, as illustrated in Figure 5.16.

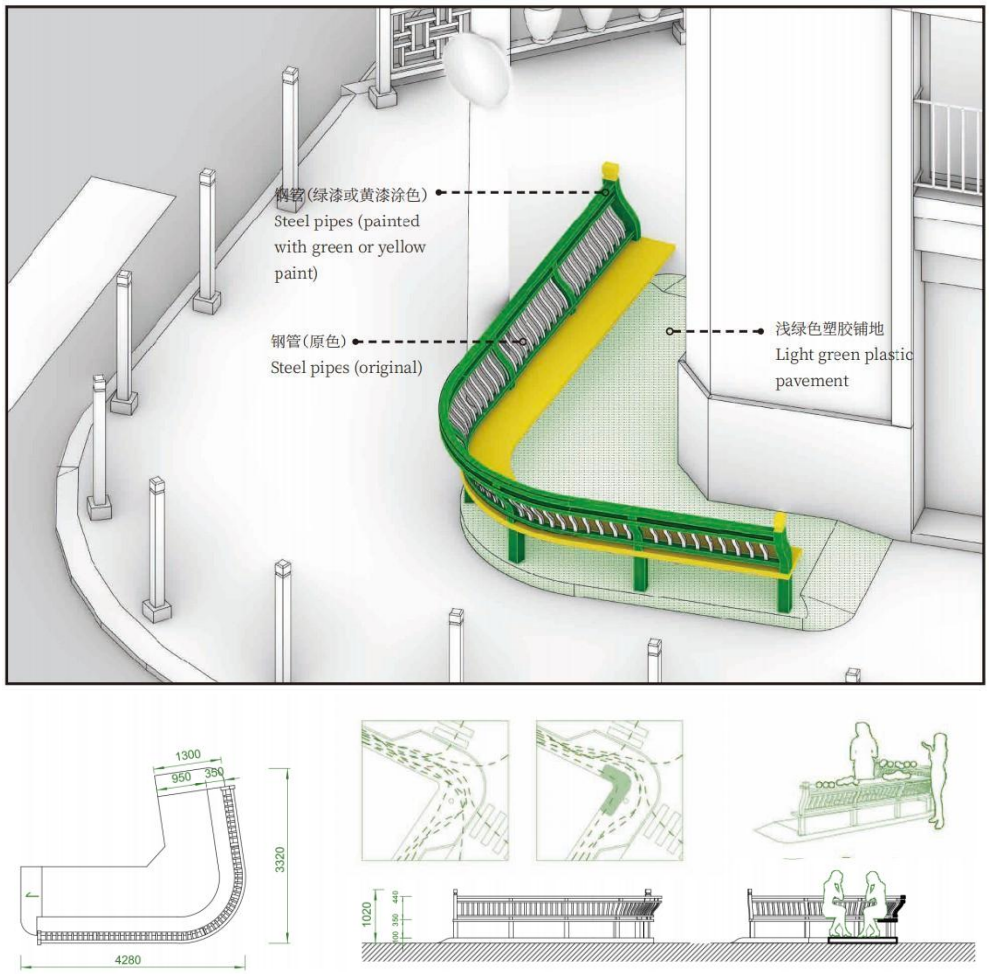


Figure 5.17 Beauty Corner (Drawn by the Author)

The "Beauty Corner" makes use of the narrow interstitial space between concrete columns and buildings, outlining the shape of a "beauty leaner" (美人靠)—a traditional

form in Chinese garden furniture—using steel tubing. Rather than replicating the original wooden form, this intervention adopts a "collage-sculpting" approach, reassembling material and cultural languages into a recontextualized icon. The use of bold yellow and green spray paint allows the structure to stand out against the gray urban background, drawing attention to this micro-space.

Rather than faithfully reconstructing traditional objects from Chinese gardens or streetscapes, the design engages in abstract reinterpretation and spatial displacement, producing a sense of ambiguity and estrangement. This aesthetic vagueness helps avoid cultural appropriation or symbolic dominance in the translation process. In terms of function, the Beauty Corner activates an otherwise overlooked dead zone, transforming it into a micro-node for rest, observation, or temporary use—injecting new public potential into the interstitial fabric of the city.

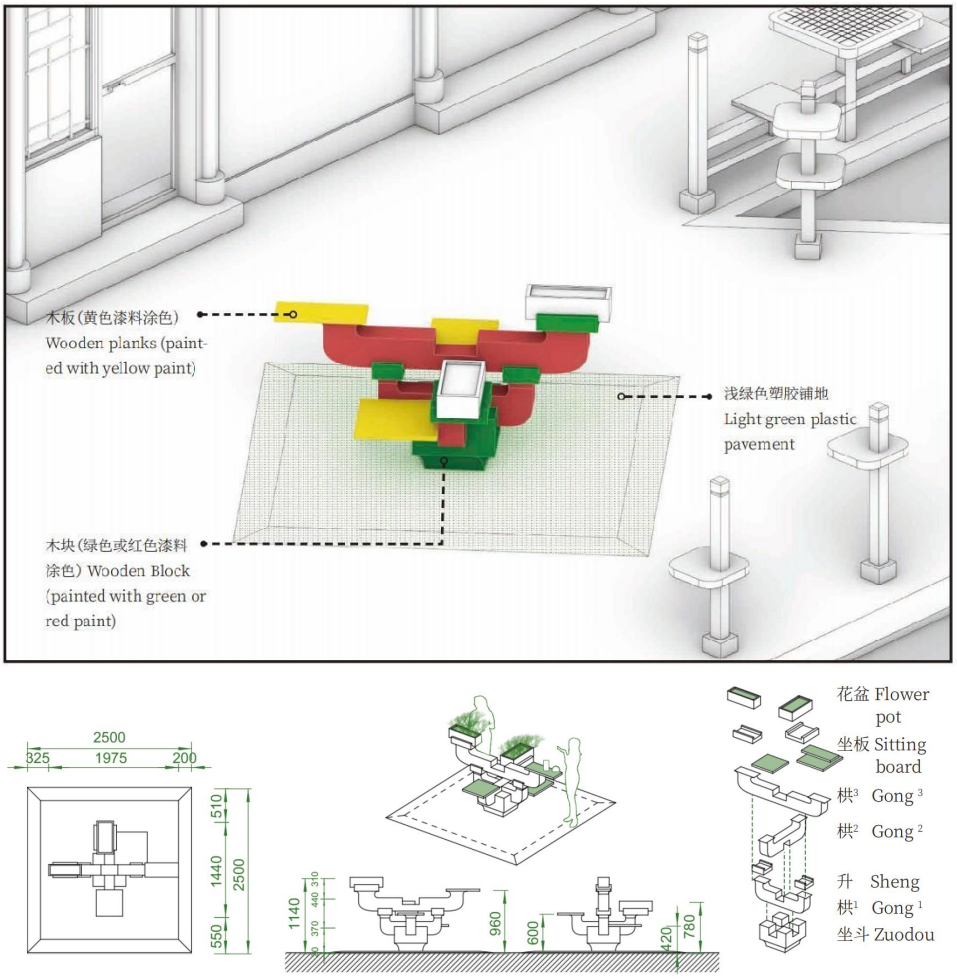


Figure 5.18 Heart of Dougong (Drawn by the Author)

Located at the southeast corner, the “Heart of Dougong” is a multifunctional street installation based on the architectural form of dougong—the iconic interlocking bracket system in Chinese timber construction. As a structurally and aesthetically rich element, dougong embodies the technical ingenuity and symbolic order of traditional Chinese architecture.

This design extracts the bracket set from beneath the eaves and repositions it into the urban realm. Enlarged and materialized as a freestanding street object, it gains new significance and context. As shown in the exploded diagram in the lower right of Figure 5.18, the structural logic seeks to replicate the layered load transfer of traditional dougong: beginning with the dou as the base, followed by successive layers of gong, sheng, and additional gong—preserving the multi-directional interlock and tiered transmission of force.

Constructed mainly from steel and board, the structure is painted in red, green, and yellow, typical colors in Chinese architecture, which visually clarify the logic of the assembly. The combination of color and structural expression sparks curiosity and encourages interaction. Yet, the Heart of Dougong is not a mere cultural display or replication of a traditional component—it seeks to establish a new intersection between symbolic form and street activity.

The transformation of its scale, from enlarging architectural details to human scale furniture, gives it specific functions such as resting, leaning, and storing items. The flower pot module and horizontal tabletop embedded in the device not only provide ornamental value, but also respond to the local social behavior patterns observed by the author in the field: some bars in Turin Simple mesas will be installed on street poles or other places to form micro communication gathering points. "Heart of Dougong" is the response and re interpretation of the behavioral logic of "city is the social stage". Without the need for users to understand the origin of the building, this device has effectively connected with the environment through material, scale, and function, thus achieving a dual integration of cultural translation and urban practice.

As street installations located in a diverse immigrant gathering area, these designs maintain a tension between imitation and recreation of authentic culture - they can be seen as an exotic manifestation of Eastern imagery or as a new type of urban furniture without specific semantics. The collage style expression of local materials and heterogeneous components not only facilitates a cross-cultural dialogue at the micro level, but also makes the overlooked corners, crevices, and transition zones in the city a real field of life. This

approach avoids excessive construction and cultural consumption, and its "uncertainty" gives the object the possibility of multiple interpretations, thereby achieving flexible reconciliation at cultural boundaries, resolving explicit cultural conflicts, and providing a reference method for creating public objects that are both familiar and thought-provoking in daily life. Starting from the micro scale and generating a "heterogeneous cultural collage" through component recombination, it not only responds to the multicultural reality of Aurora District, but also provides a local and cautious path for exploring the expression and coexistence of non mainstream culture in urban space.

5.2.3 Street daily and market scenes

The above design exploration presents fragmented spatial features, including dispersed street installations and heterogeneous facade transformations of multiple element collages. In order to present a more comprehensive street space effect, the author has achieved a certain degree of unity in color control, using various saturation levels of red and green as the main visual colors, and using local bright yellow as color accents. This restrained color expression is aimed at enhancing the recognition of spatial themes and endowing cultural heterogeneous nodes with more communicative language. On the other hand, the red and green color scheme is coordinated with the green louvers, red bricks and other facade colors around the intersection, while also blending with the Italian national flag color scheme, providing a space for exploration of composite understanding.

Public infrastructure such as road poles, traffic signs, and streetlights have also undergone a certain degree of heterogeneous cultural shaping without affecting their functionality and standards. The gray black road poles have been transformed into red poles resembling the "column foundation", and traffic signs have also incorporated the red green color scheme of massage sticks in Chinese street parks. In addition to the lantern style of red polycarbonate lampshades on the top of the street lamps, the steel poles below have also been sprayed with green, white, and red with alternating stripes. These designs together create a visually unfamiliar heterogeneous street space.

Figure 5.19 Cina Corner (drawn by the author)

In addition, the author also conducted a survey on the road conditions of the street. According to the investigation of the urban road conditions provided by the Turin municipal government and the author's on-site observation, the road quality of Via Clemente Diamiano Priocca is poor, and it is an old concrete road with relatively repaired traces that needs to be updated and optimized. Considering the previous assessment that Via Priocca has the potential to be transformed into a pedestrian space, the design of the "Cina Corner" renovation also includes modifications to the road surface. Firstly, the road surface within the demonstration area shown in Figure 5.6 will be changed to a more slow-moving atmosphere with beige square outdoor tiles. This will not hinder normal vehicle traffic in daily street conditions, but will provide a certain spatial definition for pedestrian experience and promote the probability of citizens' stopping behavior. Moreover, customized Chinese style patterns are used on the ground of the street parking spaces in the area, with a consistent color of beige.

The second heterogeneous network manifests as a dynamic system of street-level events. In daily contexts, localized segments of the street—particularly former parking areas—can, under the guidance of the previously discussed Parklet concept, be endowed with new cultural functions. This gives rise to a "Parklet+" model—a series of temporary cultural nodes. Through the insertion of micro-installations and the hosting of cultural events, these spaces are transformed from passive functional zones into active platforms of social interaction, further enhancing the multicultural urban ambiance of the Aurora district.

Figure 5.20 Diagram of the "Parklet+" Model (Drawn by the Author)

As shown in Figure 5.20, the design defines a visually distinct space within a roadside parking spot using plastic turf as surface treatment. On this base, low-threshold participatory street events—such as book sharing or impromptu guitar performances—are introduced. These activities exemplify "tactical urbanism" in practice: low-cost, reversible, and rapidly deployed interventions that activate micro-urban spaces and foster civic participation and cultural identity formation. The street furniture and installations constituting these temporary spaces are embedded with visual symbols and craftsmanship reflecting Eastern cultural aesthetics, such as Chinese lattice patterns or traditional red lacquer tones—serving both as a form of cultural translation and a trigger for visual recognition.

Moreover, these spaces can host activities that embody specific cultural content, such as a Chinese paper-cutting workshop, immigrant family book donation program, or exhibitions

of traditional foreign artifacts, ensuring that heterogeneity is not only “seen” but also “experienced” within the urban environment.

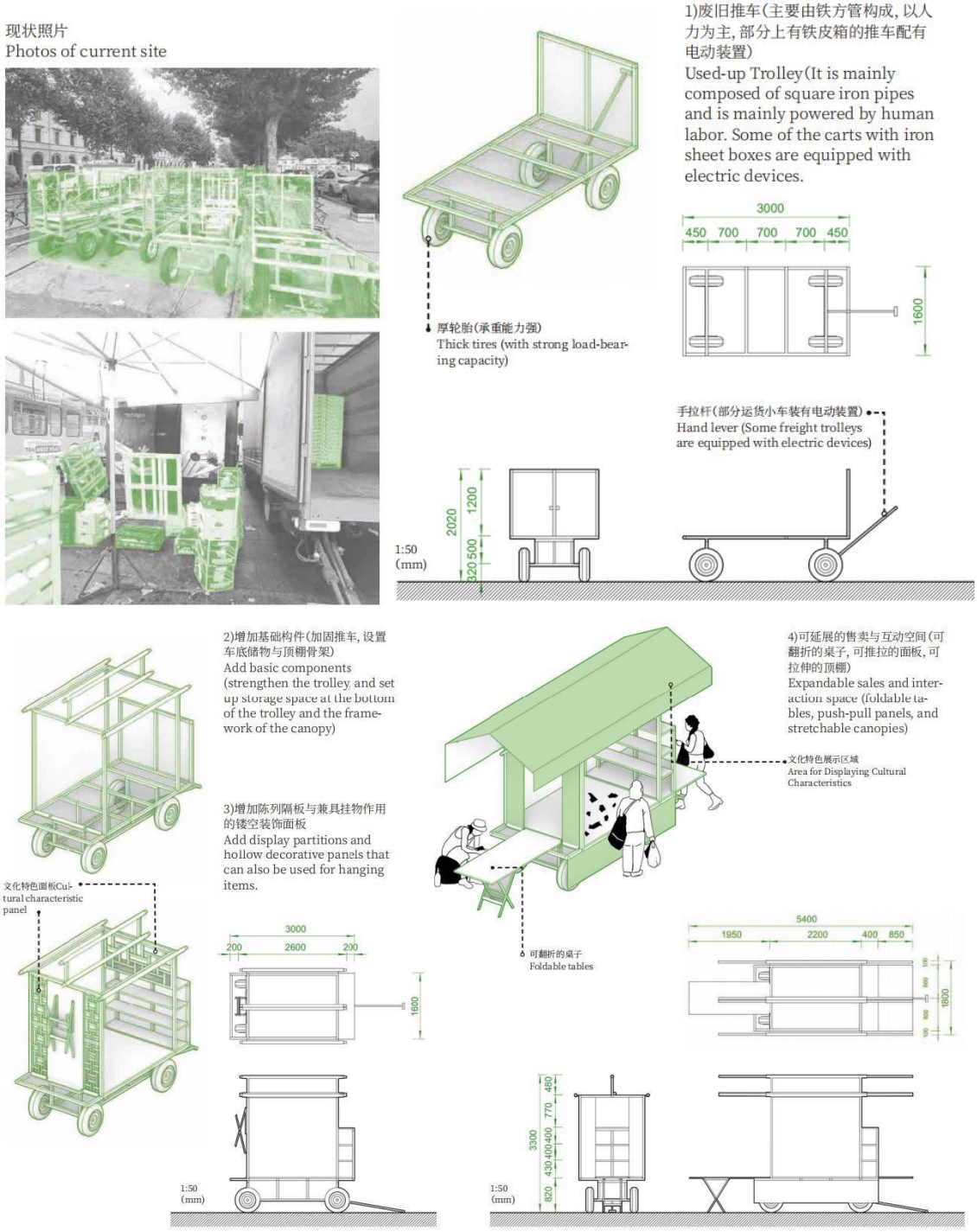


Figure 5.21 Mobile Stall Design (Drawn by the Author)

During culturally significant celebrations—such as Chinese New Year events held monthly as part of Aurora’s event programming—these “Parklet+” installations expand into culturally themed street markets. Inspired by Aurora’s local marketplaces, the design

repurposes waste materials from commercial activity at Porta Palazzo Market and its surroundings — plastic crates, wooden partitions, metal trolleys, and carts — to construct temporary stalls and festive infrastructure.

Figure 5.21 illustrates a mobile stall adapted from a four-wheeled pushcart. This stall not only reuses existing materials but also reserves space for cultural displays. Its two vertical side panels can accommodate interchangeable decorative elements — such as Chinese latticework wooden panels, Islamic geometric perforated metal screens, or Southeast Asian rattan curtains. The retractable canopy atop the stall can be fitted with culturally themed fabrics, changeable according to the specific event. It may also serve as a hanging rack for items.

Some carts may be anchored at key urban nodes and function as "Cultural Memory Corners", exhibiting old photographs and oral history audio from local migrant communities. They may also focus on specific cultural themes — such as Teochew Tea Week or Diwali Festival Week — with QR codes linking to multilingual audio content, integrating the third heterogeneous network of virtual-physical interaction into street heterotopias.

Figure 5.22 Market Scene at “Cina Corner” (Drawn by the Author)

Out of respect for Italian street culture and urban heritage, the daily design strategy for the street concentrates objects with foreign cultural traits at the ground level of buildings. These are distributed in scattered, low-density arrangements to ease visual tension and minimize potential cultural conflict, without disrupting the continuity of the streetscape. This “embedded expression” strategy maintains a restrained and flexible presence in daily life, effectively integrating heterogeneous features into the local urban fabric.

In contrast, during market-mode events, cultural expression becomes more prominent and ceremonial. Along the street façades, Chinese knots, tassels, and lanterns are temporarily hung, enriching the festive atmosphere. Elevated platforms or lion dance poles (Meihuazhuang) are erected at the center and northeast corner of the intersection, providing staging for performative activities. These cultural flash events inject vibrancy and diversity into the urban landscape.

Such event-driven spatial use transitions cultural expression from static ornamentation

to interactive, shareable urban practice, forming a dynamic network interwoven between physical space and social action. This strategy exemplifies a measured release and strategic integration of cultural heterogeneity: moderate and diffuse in daily use, but intense and expressive at key moments. It respects the city's existing spatial order while also facilitating proactive cultural co-construction. Event-driven interventions reposition culture not merely as decorative identity markers, but as integral components of urban life in action. In this way, they establish heterogeneous cultural networks connecting daily routines, symbolic visibility, and co-constructed meaning.

This process—from temporal dislocation and symbolic revelation to participatory collaboration—reflects the author's response to the multicultural context of the Aurora district, envisioning a strategically open and culturally resilient public space.

5.3 Design Exploration: The Former Vercelli Railway Segment

In the late 20th century, Turin experienced a massive wave of industrial decline and relocation, which significantly impacted both its transportation infrastructure and public spaces. In the Aurora district, this is primarily manifested in the relocation of Dora Station and the resultant abandonment of a former railway line approximately 1.25 kilometers in length. The width of this linear space varies from 5 to 11 meters, with the southern segment flush with the ground level, while the northern portion lies within a sunken rail trench, partially overpassed by vehicular roads.

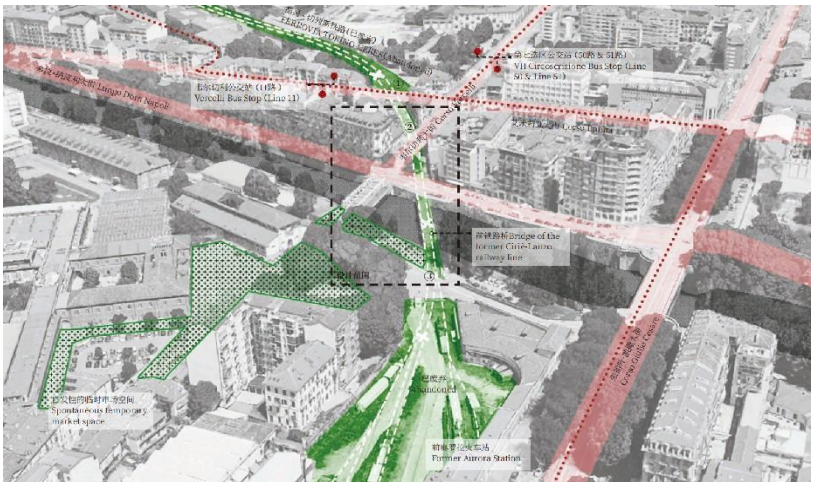


Figure 5.23 Current Conditions of the Former Vercelli Railway Segment (Drawn by the Author)

This section primarily presents the author's design exploration of urban renewal along

the southern segment of this abandoned railway line. The selected site lies near Corso Vercelli, specifically between the former railway bridge of the Ciriè-Lanzo line and Corso Emilia, as indicated by the dashed black box in Figure 5.23. The green dotted area at the northern end of the figure represents part of the Balon Market. Compared to the southern portion, this area of the market exhibits a more spontaneous organization, with highly diverse types of stalls and an ethnically heterogeneous group of vendors. The remaining green-marked areas are all part of the abandoned railway, including the old Dora Station to the south, which currently houses numerous decaying locomotives and rusting train cars. At street-level intersections, two parallel steel tracks remain visible, and the former railway bridge still preserves complete structural components such as sleepers, ballast, tie plates, and rail fasteners. The red-marked zones denote the main vehicular routes in the area, which divide the green space within the black dashed box into three segments. These three segments can be independently utilized as pocket parks during regular conditions.

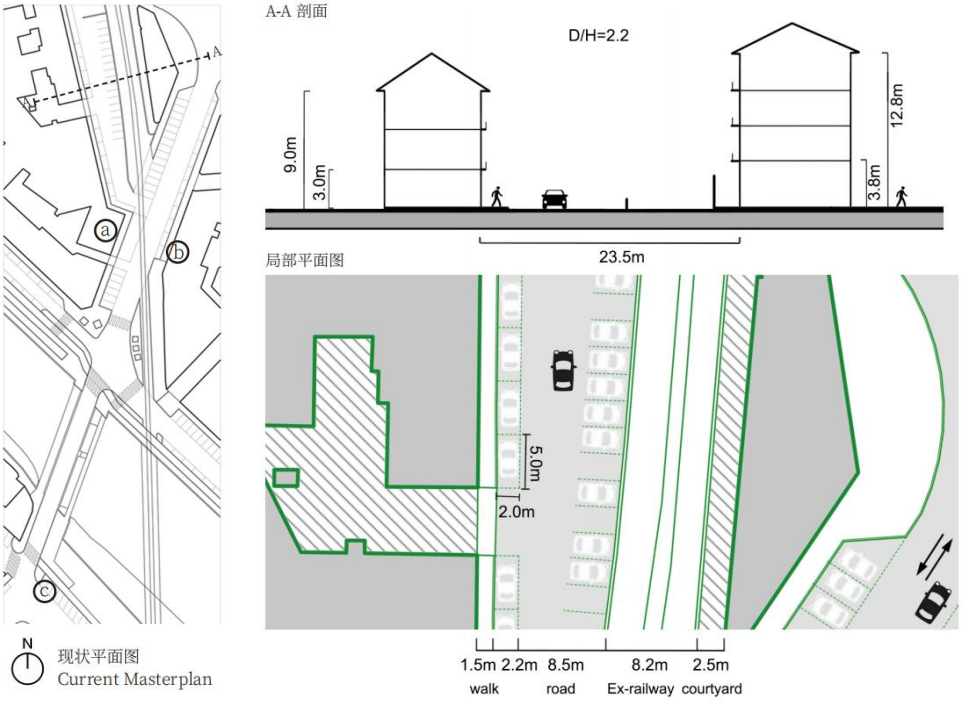


Figure 5.24 Street Condition Analysis (Drawn by the Author)

For the northernmost segment of this former railway line, the author conducted further analysis at the street scale. As shown in Figure 5.24, compared to Via Priocca, the cross-street of Corso Vercelli presents a higher width-to-height ratio (D/H = 2.2). While the street is approximately 23 meters wide, only about 11 meters are dedicated to vehicular lanes, with the remaining 8.2 meters occupied by the abandoned railway. Currently, this railway segment is blocked off at both ends with circular concrete barriers that prevent

automobile access but do not obstruct pedestrian movement. Occasionally, people walk their dogs along the tracks. The space is open and holds great design potential. However, with a residential fence on the east side and few shops on the west, the area currently lacks a robust activity base. Therefore, the author proposes a design oriented around static uses.

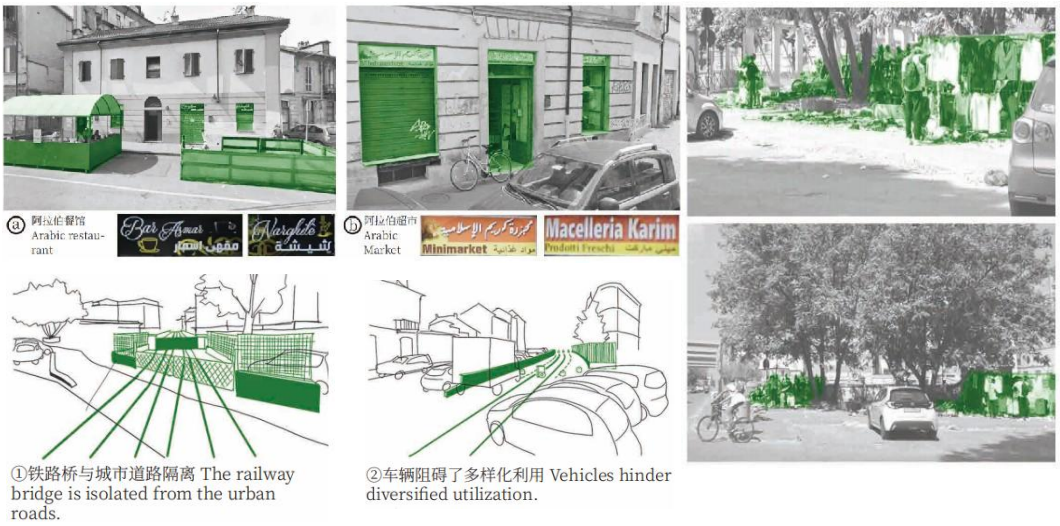


Figure 5.25 Street Detail Analysis (Drawn by the Author)

Figure 5.25 reveals additional characteristics of the urban space along the abandoned railway. In the vicinity are an Arabic restaurant with two outdoor seating areas and a small Arabic supermarket, which may introduce further activity potential to the site. Near the former railway bridge, African immigrants frequently gather under the trees or sit along the stepped walkway on the eastern side of Ponte Domenico Carpanini, engaging in conversation or eating simple meals. Some even utilize the metal mesh of the roadside barrier to hang clothes, or spread a cloth on the ground to lay out goods, forming impromptu market stalls. People from similar cultural backgrounds often lean against or sit on the riverside embankment, chatting animatedly. The Dora River banks in the Aurora district have effectively become an informal hotspot for multicultural congregation.

Unlike the "Chinatown Corner" project which focuses on Chinese culture, this design draws on Romanian and Moroccan cultures to demonstrate how other heterogenous elements can be integrated into the shaping of urban heterotopic spaces. Immigrants from Romania and Morocco make up 41% and 10.4% respectively of Turin’s foreign-born population, representing the two largest foreign communities in the city. As the author currently lacks deep field knowledge or cultural literacy regarding these two groups, the design proposed herein is primarily aimed at offering spatial support for the presentation and exchange of heterogenous cultures. It also serves as a speculative exploration of spatial

strategies that may trigger heterotopic activities, rather than a comprehensive representation of the cultural practices of these specific communities.

5.3.1 Place-making in Response to the Railway Tracks

This design aims to transform the closed and forgotten old railway line into a lively urban space. The first step involves removing the wire fences and concrete walls at both ends of the railway bridge, as well as the concrete piers at both ends of the northern section of the railway line, to reconnect these blocked sites with the city's pedestrian network. The reopened tracks are not intended for the return of transportation but to create a "cultural line" with multiple overlapping meanings through the integration of heterogeneous cultural modules.

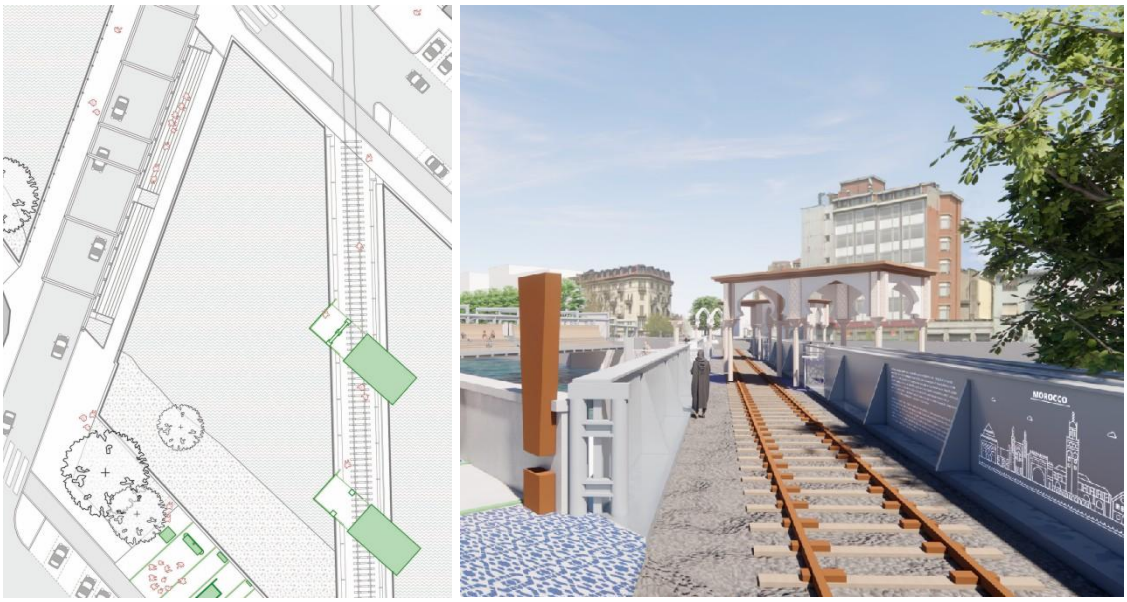


Figure 5.26 Renovated Railway Bridge (Drawn by the Author)

The first type of heterogeneous cultural module responds to the existing environment by introducing newly built cultural pavilions into the urban space, aiming to provide specific cultural groups with iconic spaces for expression while integrating into the local spatial system to construct a diverse and coexisting public interface. The "Moroccan Heterogeneous Box" shown in Figure 5.26 is located on the railway bridge deck, adopting a simple rectangular geometric volume. Its positioning and orientation align with the existing two bridge piers to minimize construction interference and difficulty. This installation faces the stepped viewing platform of the Domenico Carpanini Bridge on the west side, forming a visual and potential behavioral interaction, especially during special festivals or folk activities, serving as a visual and spatial medium between performers and audiences,

releasing a rhythmic urban ceremonial space. In terms of construction language, the "Heterogeneous Box" incorporates various Moroccan cultural elements but does not directly replicate traditional architectural forms; instead, it undergoes certain translation and simplification. Its base uses pavement panels with ethnic geometric patterns to define spatial boundaries, guiding stops and stays, and enhancing spatial recognition. Three enclosed sides borrow from Moroccan colonnades, using rhythmic columns and arched openings to create both visual penetration and cultural symbolism. The riverside side features iron railings outlining classic patterns, ensuring safety while maintaining architectural language consistency.

Inside the pavilion, U-shaped benches guide communication and stays, with seating surfaces covered in traditional patterned fabrics, providing users with a direct cultural touch. Between the two western columns, metal rods outline a pointed arch contour, forming a light and transparent portal image, making the overall structure symbolic without overly occupying the bridge deck space. The entire installation is appropriately scaled, embedded into the existing site system in a transparent and lightweight manner, reducing confrontation with the original urban interface, showcasing a low-interference, high-recognition heterogeneous cultural space strategy. Similar to the "Chinatown Corner" street installation, this node design reflects respect and translation strategies for different cultures, responding to the multiple relationships between cultural expression, behavioral participation, and local context through simplified forms, abstract symbols, and functional integration, achieving flexible negotiation and spatial symbiosis of cultural embedding at the micro-urban scale.

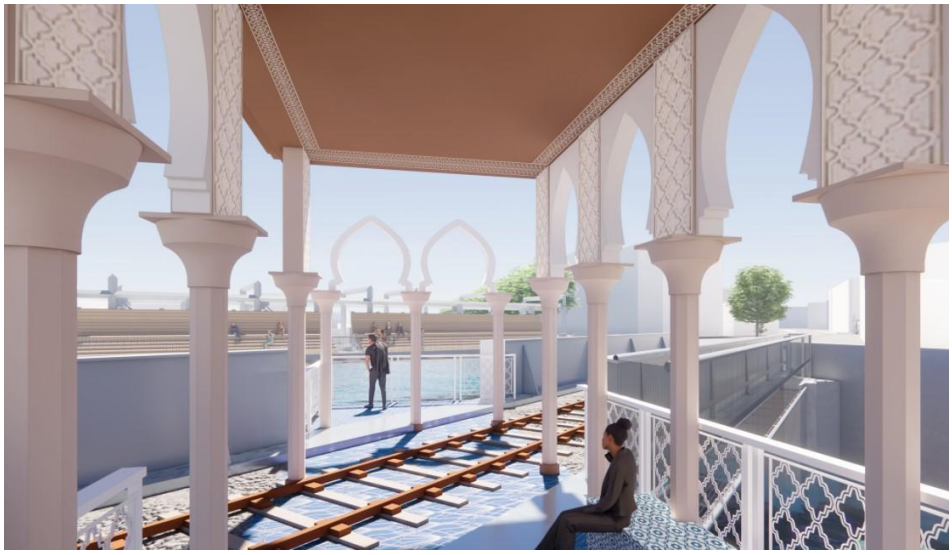


Figure 5.27 Moroccan Heterogeneous Box (Drawn by the Author)

The railway bridge's guardrail is relatively high, with a height difference of about 1.4 meters from the bridge deck, offering potential as a carrier for cultural expression and public dissemination. Through flexible intervention and an updatable mechanism, it guides foreign cultural groups to express their identity and presence in a non-intrusive manner. Specifically, a strip-shaped information display band can be set up on the guardrail to regularly change and display cultural posters, festival introductions, activity previews, and other content from different ethnic groups, forming a "flowing cultural bulletin board." These visual displays not only help enhance the visibility of marginalized cultural groups but also achieve multifunctional use of infrastructure without requiring additional land. The bridge guardrail and the heterogeneous box can also integrate audio-visual interactive modules, setting up small interactive devices such as touch-sensitive players or QR code-based "Listening Bridge" systems to play language clips, traditional music, or oral histories from different ethnic groups, endowing the guardrail with a new auditory interface dimension, enhancing the site's immersion and cultural recognition. These digital micro-devices can be combined with solar power systems and low-brightness night lighting to ensure environmental protection, energy saving, and all-weather usability. Embedding a multicultural dissemination system on the railway bridge not only enhances the social readability of urban spaces but also helps foreign cultural groups gain more visibility and a sense of belonging in the public domain.

In the northern section of the railway track, the shops on the east side have been closed for some time, while the Arab supermarket at point b in Figure 5.24 is still bustling. The renovation design aims to revitalize this area by introducing authentic Moroccan restaurants, Argan oil experience stores, and other exotic businesses. Dishes like tagine and couscous, originating from the Maghreb region of Africa, are not only staples in Arab cuisine but also represent cultural dietary habits of other North African countries. Food, as one of the simplest mediums for cultural exchange, also holds potential for social interaction. The facade of this two-story building can be decorated to reflect the characteristics of the corresponding businesses and cultures, such as using Moroccan pointed or circular windows, complemented by exquisite carvings, integrating ethnic geometric patterns, plant motifs, and Arabic script into the overall facade design.

Figure 5.28 Mid-section Railway Line Design (Drawn by the Author)

Additionally, the renovation project places a set of heterogeneous cultural modules converted from abandoned train carriages on the railway space, defined in this article as "Cultural Carriages." This installation continues the dual focus on industrial heritage reuse and multicultural expression in the Aurora district's spatial intervention strategy. Based on the need for high transparency and open interaction, the cultural carriage does not adopt a traditional enclosed renovation approach but undergoes strategic cutting and reorganization of its structure—retaining the chassis and roof parts of the carriage, while the originally enclosed side walls are entirely opened to form a spatially continuous, visually penetrating, and behaviorally flexible cultural container. The reconstruction between the top and bottom of the carriage adopts the previously mentioned "heterogeneous colonnade" structural language, constructing a distinctive outer frame through collage and extension, establishing a new formal relationship between industrial relics and Moroccan architectural elements. This "elevated + spliced" treatment strategy not only provides greater spatial flexibility but also effectively avoids potential issues related to traditional enclosed carriages in street management, visual obstruction, and security. In terms of materials, some carriage components retain their original rust marks as visual evidence of industrial memory, while new components and some original parts are coated with brighter colors, forming an organic contrast with heterogeneous cultural decorative elements, enhancing spatial recognition and cultural tension.

Functionally, the cultural carriage is endowed with multiple possibilities: it can serve as a temporary exhibition space, community gathering place, or be flexibly transformed into a platform for music performances, immigrant lectures, or cultural workshops. Notably,

this node forms a potential spatial synergy with the adjacent Moroccan restaurant. Their physical proximity and cultural atmosphere complementarity transform the originally desolate and functionally ambiguous side of the railway into an important venue for multicultural convergence and social behavior incubation, becoming a micro-catalyst for activating neighborhood publicness and cultural vitality.

In the northern section of the Vercelli branch, a cultural carriage module is also set up, but with Romanian cultural elements introduced in its component language and symbolic expression, responding to different groups' identity recognition and spatial needs with differentiated cultural characteristics. This carriage continues the existing open structure treatment strategy, reflecting different cultural semantics while maintaining spatial transparency through formal translation and decorative reconstruction. This culture-variable operation based on structural templates provides a unified framework for diverse interpretations of multicultural expressions in the neighborhood.

In addition to setting up cultural carriages, the renovation project also redesigns the previously used concrete low walls separating the railway and the street. Some sections of the walls are transformed into public interfaces with connectivity and participation. Specific approaches include adding continuous wooden seats on the low walls to provide rest and social functions, or embedding semi-transparent information display boxes to publish community activities, cultural introductions, historical images, and other content, making them a medium for urban information dissemination. This strategy effectively breaks the isolating role of traditional "hard boundaries," transforming originally inaccessible and non-stayable linear structures into "traversable, usable, and readable" multifunctional interactive interfaces, achieving the regeneration of participatory public spaces with event depth and cultural bearing capacity.

Figure 5.29 Romanian Market Scene (Drawn by the Author)

Spraying scaffolding with red paint symbolizing courage and sacrifice, a "Cultural Gate" is constructed to fix slogan banners, totems, and mascots, such as the bear costume hanging on the scaffolding on the right side of Figure 5.29, showcasing the Romanian "Bear Dance" festival custom. Above the market, blue, yellow, and red flags are hung, matching the colors of the Romanian national flag, where blue symbolizes the sky, yellow represents rich natural resources, and red signifies bravery and sacrifice. Most stalls continue the stall module from "Cina Corner," mainly replacing cultural features on some panels and canopies.

When this section of the street transitions into the Romanian market mode, the space is instantly activated by a festive atmosphere. Aromatic food stalls, an array of handicraft booths, and crowds singing and dancing together compose a dynamic, multisensory cultural landscape. As people and events intertwine, the street space is transformed from a passageway into a temporary stage for cultural expression and social interaction.

In terms of spatial components, the design continues the low-cost, high-variability construction strategy of tactical urbanism by constructing a “Cultural Gate” using red-painted scaffolding frames as a visual marker and functional support structure for the market entrance. Red, one of the three colors of the Romanian national flag, symbolizes courage and sacrifice. The use of color here not only carries decorative significance but also reinforces the symbolic expression of national identity. As shown in Figure 5.29, the bear skin prop hanging on the right side of the scaffolding represents the iconic element of Romania’s traditional winter “Bear Dance Festival”—a ritual in which the bear is regarded as a sacred figure with the power to ward off evil and bring blessings. Placing this figure

within the urban streetscape not only conveys cultural meaning but also evokes emotional resonance among spectators with respect to foreign cultural festivals.

Moreover, blue, yellow, and red flag ribbons—corresponding to the Romanian flag—are suspended above the entire market space. Blue symbolizes the vast sky, yellow represents abundant natural resources, and red continues the tribute to courage and sacrifice. These chromatic symbols are used at a high frequency throughout the space, constructing a coherent aerial visual rhythm and extending the cultural atmosphere, allowing the urban interface to present a highly recognizable and culturally immersive image during festive periods.

The market stall system continues the modular stall system developed in the earlier "Chinatown Corner" design, maintaining consistency in structure and volume to enable flexible reuse across different cultural festival activities. In the Romanian market scenario, cultural features are reassembled and re-expressed mainly through changes to canopy fabrics, decorative panels, and textual patterns. This strategy of structural uniformity and surface variability not only reduces construction and organizational costs but also provides shared yet differentiated platforms for cultural expression among diverse groups.

5.3.2 Indirect Expressions of Cultural Identity

In the area between the railway bridge and the Domenico Carpanini Bridge, on the southern bank of the Dora River, the author attempts to further explore subtle expressions of foreign cultures through a set of public installations inspired by Berber alphabetic symbols.

During preliminary research on Moroccan culture, it was noted that both Arabic and Berber (Tamazight) are official languages of Morocco. Unlike Arabic, which is widely spoken and standardized, Berber is primarily spoken in the northern Sahara region of Africa. Despite its long history, the language lacked formal codification and widespread promotion due to centuries of Arab and Ottoman imperial control, resulting in various dialects across North African countries, including Morocco. Nonetheless, Berber is spoken by approximately 12 million people [according to the Encyclopedia of China] and serves as a key medium for transmitting myths, poetry, and music—an important facet of North African cultural diversity. Introducing Berber into the design of public installations thus enriches the granularity of the Aurora District's heterogeneity-oriented renewal project.

In addition to Latin characters, the official script for Berber in Morocco includes the Tifinagh alphabet. As a writing system with deep Mediterranean cultural roots, Tifinagh

letters not only convey linguistic content but also possess pronounced visual features and symbolic significance. As shown in Figure 5.30, the top annotation illustrates the Tifinagh spelling for “Hello” in official Moroccan Berber. From a typographic perspective, Tifinagh letters are highly geometric and abstract, composed primarily of basic graphic elements—straight lines, circles, cross shapes, dots, and angles. This clean and orderly structure makes them visually akin to graphic symbols, giving them strong ornamental qualities. Many characters (such as “+”) serve not only as linguistic markers but are also widely used as ethnic totems, textile motifs, or architectural ornaments in Berber culture, reflecting the high integration of script and cultural identity.

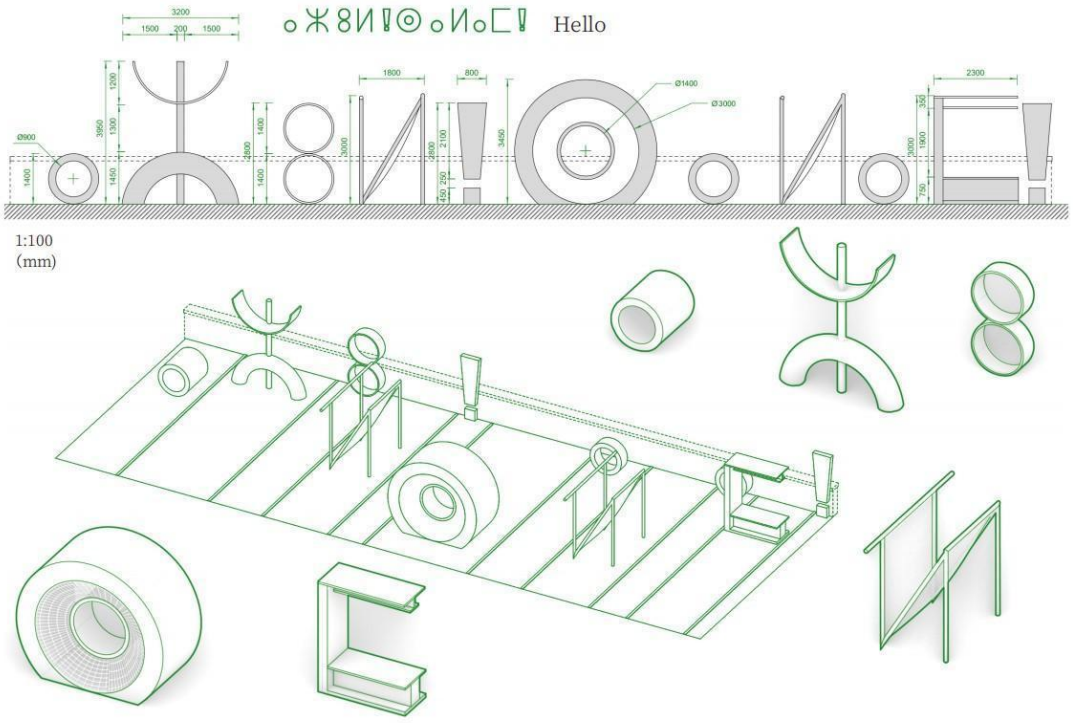


Figure 5.30 Berber Language Installation (Drawn by the Author)

Building on the decorative nature and constructive logic of this graphic system, the author attempts to translate Tifinagh letters from two-dimensional script into three-dimensional functional components, exploring a series of creative street installations. A typical greeting phrase in Berber is selected, and its component letters are reinterpreted as spatial elements: some letterforms are transformed into three-dimensional play structures made of bars and climbing nets, suitable for children’s interaction; others are designed as curved tunnels that offer exploratory passage spaces. Additionally, letter-shaped components are adapted into multifunctional tables and benches, interactive sculptures, or

digital touchscreens, preserving cultural recognizability while meeting daily urban usage needs.

Through the spatialization of Tifinagh letters, this design not only expands the modes of expression for written systems in public space but also renders heterogeneous culture tangible, usable, and participatory. This transformation from script to urban element constitutes a coordinated restructuring across three semantic layers—language, culture, and space—establishing a cross-cultural, participatory street vocabulary.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and Discussion

The enduring vitality of Foucault’s concept of heterotopia lies in its rejection of utopian perfection and its embrace of the inherent hybridity of urban space. This theoretical shift reminds us that the contemporary city is not merely a physical construct of concrete and steel, but a dynamic process of continuously overlapping social relations and negotiated cultural meanings. Building upon existing theories of heterotopic spaces, this research attempts to explore two interrelated questions through case studies in both Chinese and foreign urban contexts: how can the model of heterotopia be applied to concrete spatial analysis, and how can it guide urban development that values diversity and specificity?

The urban regeneration explorations proposed for the Aurora district in Turin reveal that when Chinese-operated shops are given Chinese cultural elements embedded into Italian architectural façades, and when urban street installations — collaged with foreign cultural imagery and modern expressions — are integrated into the local street fabric, heterotopic spaces demonstrate unique value dimensions. This project first re-examines residual urban spaces in Aurora — such as underutilized intersections, abandoned railway corridors, and narrow edge spaces — laying the groundwork for precise design interventions through meticulous street-level observation. Second, by recording and analyzing street life and behavioral patterns in both the Aurora district and the broader urban context, the design proposals gain greater legitimacy through alignment with real spatial activities and event continuity.

With universally functional urban furnishings and culturally distinctive marketplace scenarios as intervention devices, the proposed regeneration design for Aurora deploys mechanisms of compositional recombination and temporary organization to avoid excessive construction and rigid conflict. The deliberate "indeterminacy" of design imagery allows for interpretive openness and fosters soft cultural interactions. The goal is to explore, through site-sensitive and measured design strategies, the possibilities for non-mainstream cultural groups to achieve self-expression and mutual respect in urban space, ultimately nurturing new models of urban community based on coexistence in diversity.

The heterotopic space's inclusive nature—its capacity to accommodate multiple logics and diverse elements, to adapt to urban transformations, and to promote critical spatial practice—demonstrates its irreplaceable value in contemporary cities.

Debates around multiculturalism remain unresolved. However, it is crucial to recognize that different cultures are objectively becoming integrated into broader social developments, and that the boundary between East and West is becoming increasingly blurred through transregional interactions. This study's analysis of heterogeneity in the Aurora district and the proposed regeneration strategy reflect a relatively gentle form of pluralistic equilibrium—one that respects local cultural primacy while initiating spatial interventions from shared foundations such as daily life and embodied experience. The power of heterotopic space does not lie in the superficial patchwork of cultural elements, but in constructing a framework for cultural translation, finding embodied and interactive design interfaces through which multiple cultures can undergo mutual transformation within specific spatial skeletons—thus avoiding the traps of relativism and the perils of cultural hegemony.

In an era of deep digital penetration, heterotopic space reveals new cross-dimensional possibilities for innovation. When such spatial cavities become "cultural reactors" for urban development, the diversity they unleash not only counteracts the erosion of homogenization but also offers innovative solutions to urban ailments such as aging populations, immigrant integration, and post-industrial transformation. Whether in its theoretical articulation or in the proposed enhancement strategies, this study revolves around a central objective: to allow heterotopic elements to stabilize and enrich the city within specific frameworks, fostering urban growth through the amplification of diversity and specificity, and responding to increasingly complex challenges by resisting compressed, homogenized urban environments and lifestyles.

Nonetheless, this research has its limitations. Firstly, in the theoretical section, while the existing body of heterotopic theory encompasses various urban dimensions, the author was unable to produce a more comprehensive theoretical synthesis due to time and capacity constraints. Secondly, in analyzing heterogeneity in the Aurora district, the research focused more heavily on the activities of the Chinese immigrant community while lacking adequate investigation into immigrant groups from Romania, Morocco, and other countries. This shortcoming is reflected in the "Old Railway

Section in Vercelli" project, where the design lacks deeper engagement with these cultures. Regarding the "Chinatown Corner" design, although the author consulted extensive literature on overseas Chinatowns and traditional Chinese street renewal, the cultural imagery selection and visual reconfiguration still bear strong personal bias. The proposed regeneration designs remain conceptual and have yet to undergo practical implementation or evaluation.

Given these limitations, future work should be supported by deeper cultural and social research. It is advisable to establish a communication and feedback platform focused on multicultural communities in urban regeneration, collecting diverse perspectives and experiences. Through broader participation mechanisms involving a wider range of people, areas, and levels of engagement, we may work toward implementing truly human-centered and locally adaptive design solutions. Though this study's exploration of urban heterotopic space remains a preliminary attempt, it is hoped that it can contribute a reference point for future practice and discussion on the realization of urban diversity and uniqueness.

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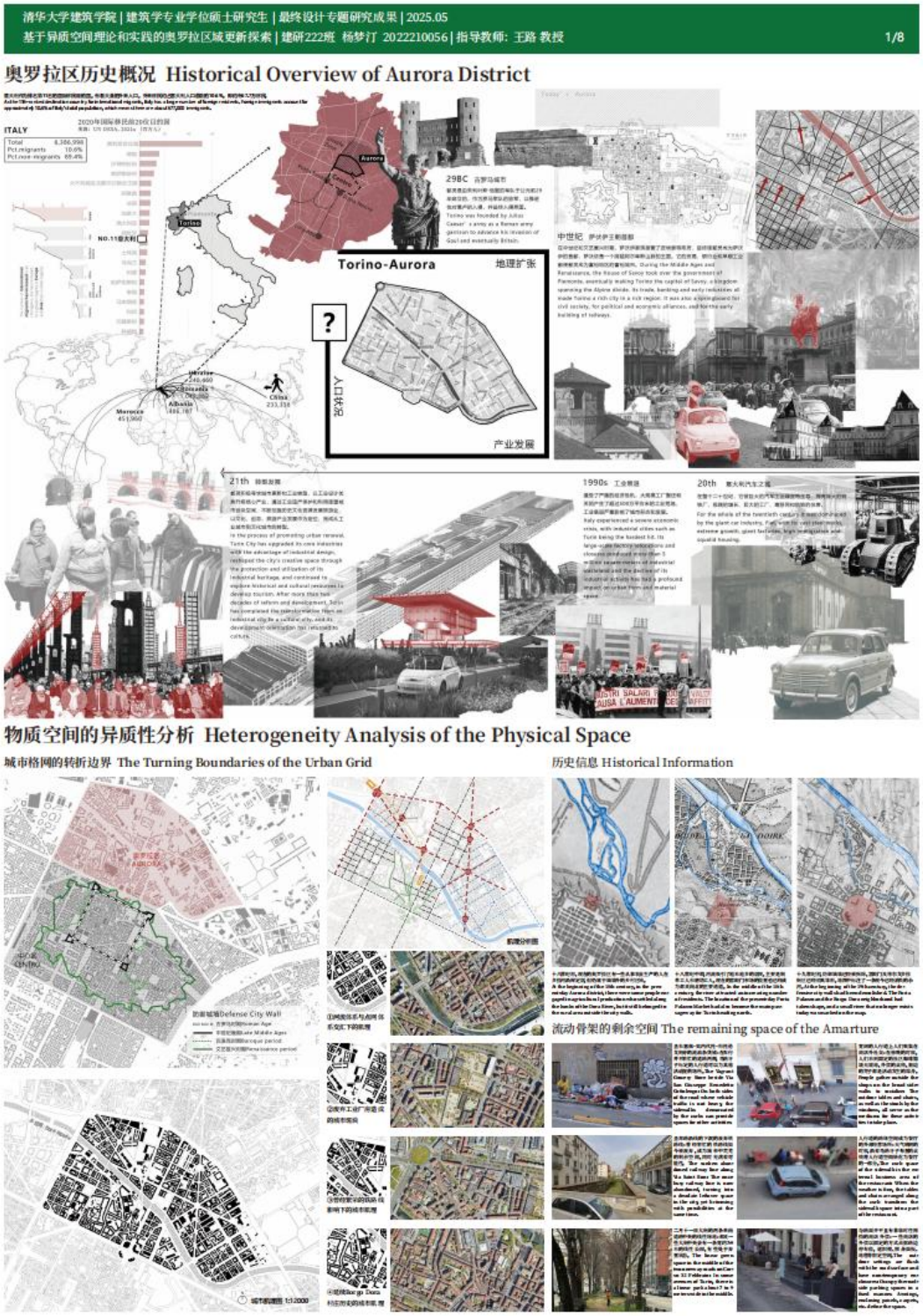
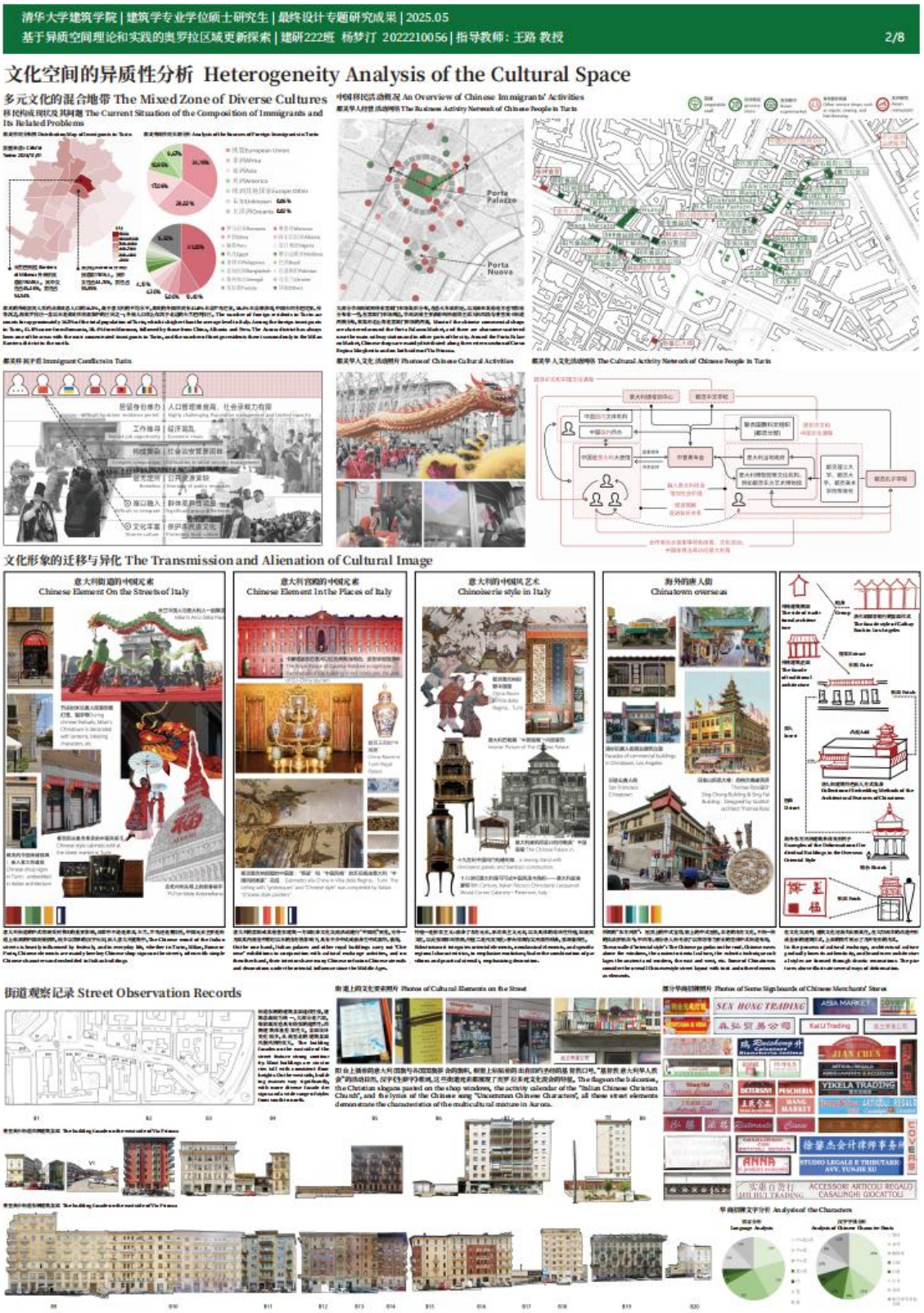
Appendix A

Drawings

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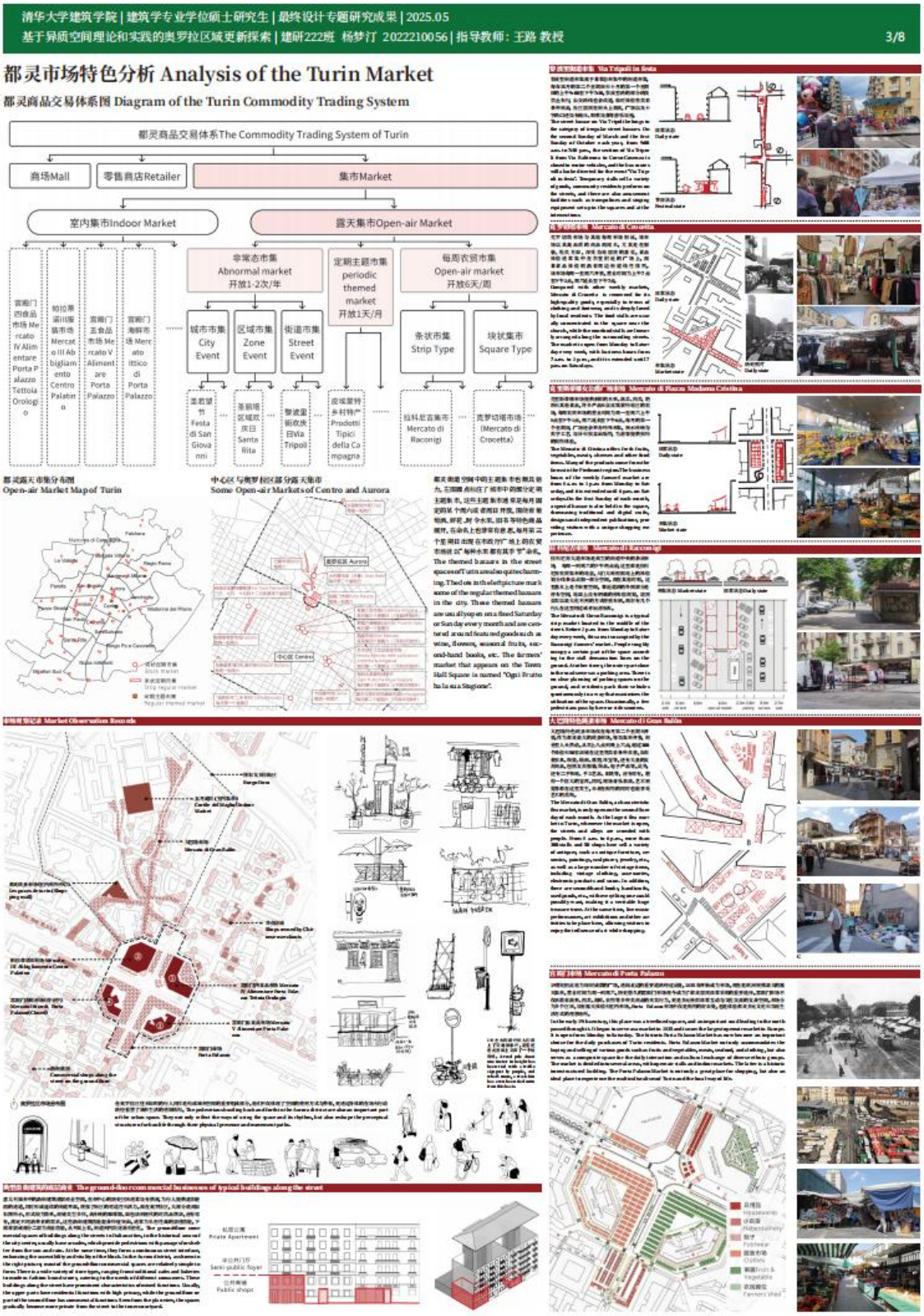
2/8
文化空间的异质性分析 Heterogeneity Analysis of the Cultural Space
多元文化的混合地带 The Mixed Zone of Diverse Cultures
移民构成现状及其问题 The Current Situation of the Composition of Immigrants and Its Related Problems
中国移民活动概况 An Overview of Chinese Immigrants' Activities
都灵华人经营活动网络 The Business Activity Network of Chinese People in Turin
Porta Palazzo
Porta Nuovo
都灵移民矛盾 Immigrant Conflicts in Turin
都灵华人文化活动照片 Photos of Chinese Cultural Activities
都灵华人文化活动网络 The Cultural Activity Network of Chinese People in Turin
文化形象的迁移与异化 The Transmission and Alienation of Cultural Image
意大利街道的中国元素
Chinese Element On the Streets of Italy
意大利宫殿的中国元素
Chinese Element In the Places of Italy
意大利的中国风艺术
Chinoiserie style in Italy
海外的唐人街
Chinatown overseas
街道观察记录 Street Observation Records
街道上的文化要素照片 Photos of Cultural Elements on the Street
部分华商招牌照片 Photos of Some Signboards of Chinese Merchants' Stores
SUN HONG TRADING
ASIA MARKET
JIAN CHEN
YIKELA TRADING
ANNA
华商招牌文字分析 Analysis of the Characters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都灵市场特色分析 Analysis of the Turin Market
都灵商品交易体系图 Diagram of the Turin Commodity Trading System
都灵商品交易体系The Commodity Trading System of Turin
商场Mall
零售商店Retailer
集市Market
室内集市Indoor Market
露天集市Open-air Market
非常态市集 Abnormal market 开放1-2次/年
定期主题市集 periodic themed market 开放1天/月
每周农贸市集 Open-air market 开放6天/周
城市市集 City Event
区域市集 Zone Event
街道市集 Street Event
条状市集 Strip Type
块状集市 Square Type
都灵露天市集分布图
Open-air Market Map of Turin
中心区与奥罗拉区部分露天集市
Some Open-air Markets of Centro and Aurora
Via Tripoli in festa
Mercato di Piazza Madama Cristina
Mercato di Corso Giulio
Mercato di Porta Palazzo
Market Observation Records
The ground-floor commercial businesses of typical buildings along the street

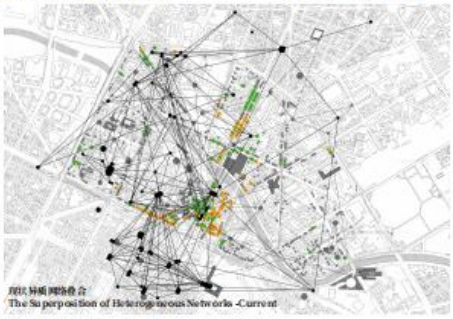
异质空间网络构建 Construction of Heterogeneous Space Network


交通密度分布图(Traffic Density Map)


商业分布图(Commerce Map)


宗教建筑分布图(Religious Places Map)


教育 文化 机构分布图(Culture and Education Facilities Map)


现状异质网络叠合
The Superposition of Heterogeneous Networks -Current


新增的异质网络叠合 (The Superposition of Heterogeneous Networks -New)

区域更新策略 Regional renewal strategy

1)挖掘流动空间中的异质载体：废弃铁道与路缘空间

2)发扬露天市场中的异质特色：临时集市中的文化交流

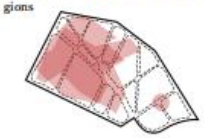
3)探索多元文化中的异质源泉：异国风情的节庆活动

区域更新初步规划 Preliminary Planning for Regional Renewal

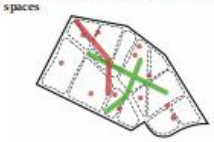
1)划分出相对适宜停留的街块 Identify the street blocks that are relatively suitable for staying

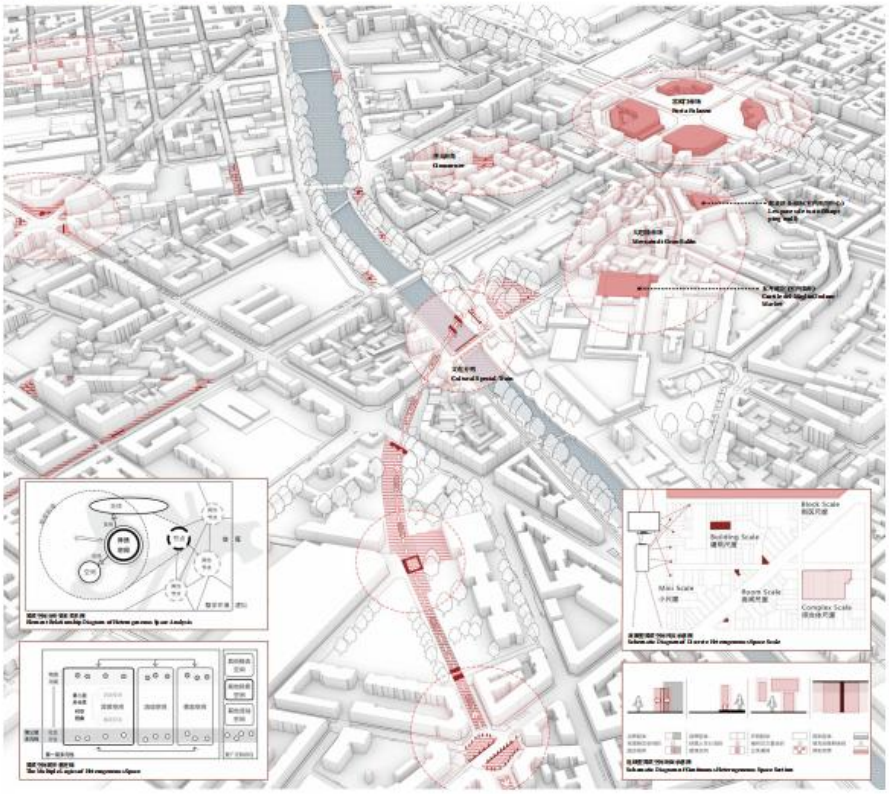
2)分析多元文化特色分布特征 Analyze the distribution characteristics of multicultural features

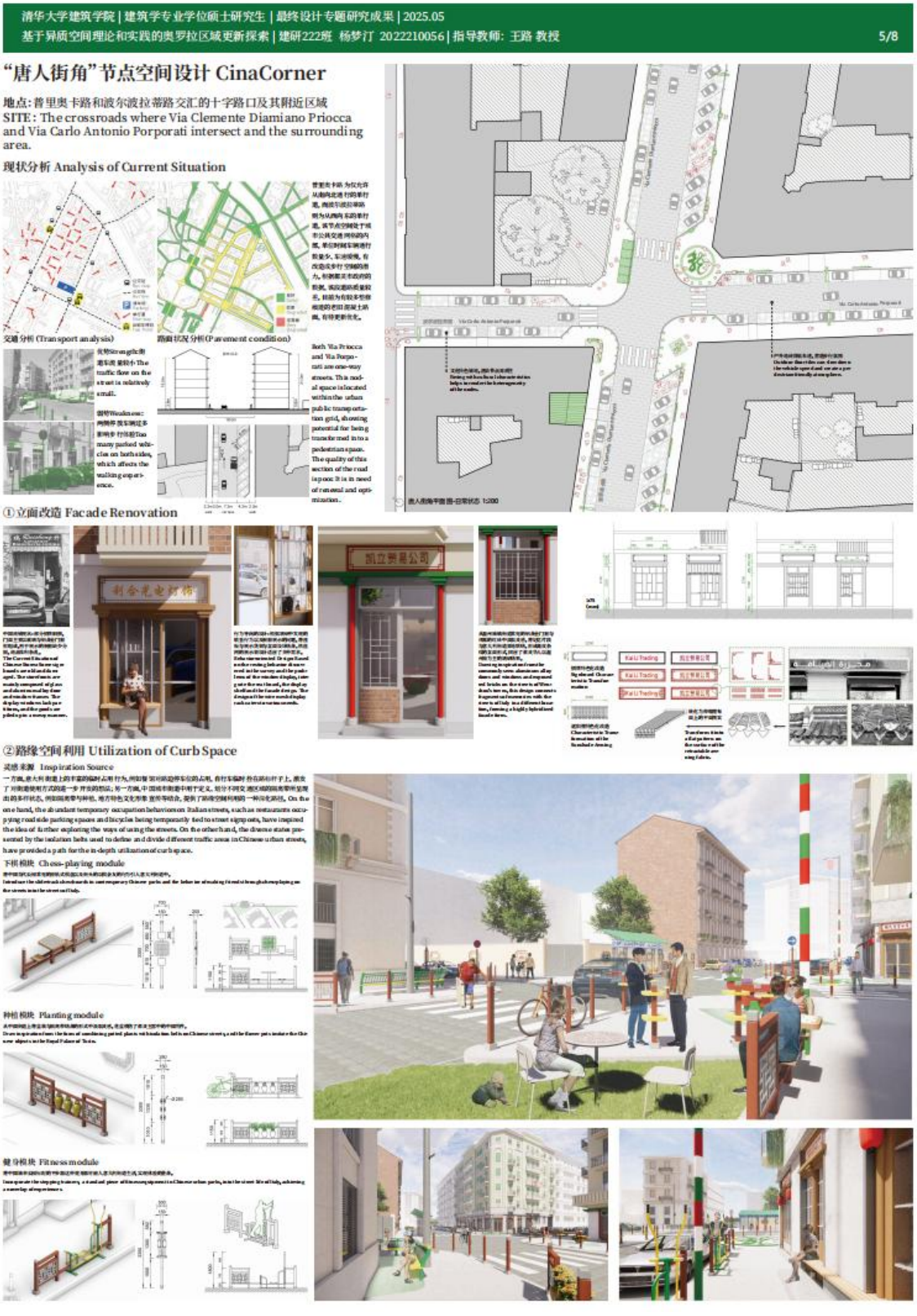
3)分析文化宗教的不平衡分布 Analyze the unbalanced distribution of cultures and religions



4)提出新增异质空间的可能结构 Propose the possible structure of new heterogeneous spaces



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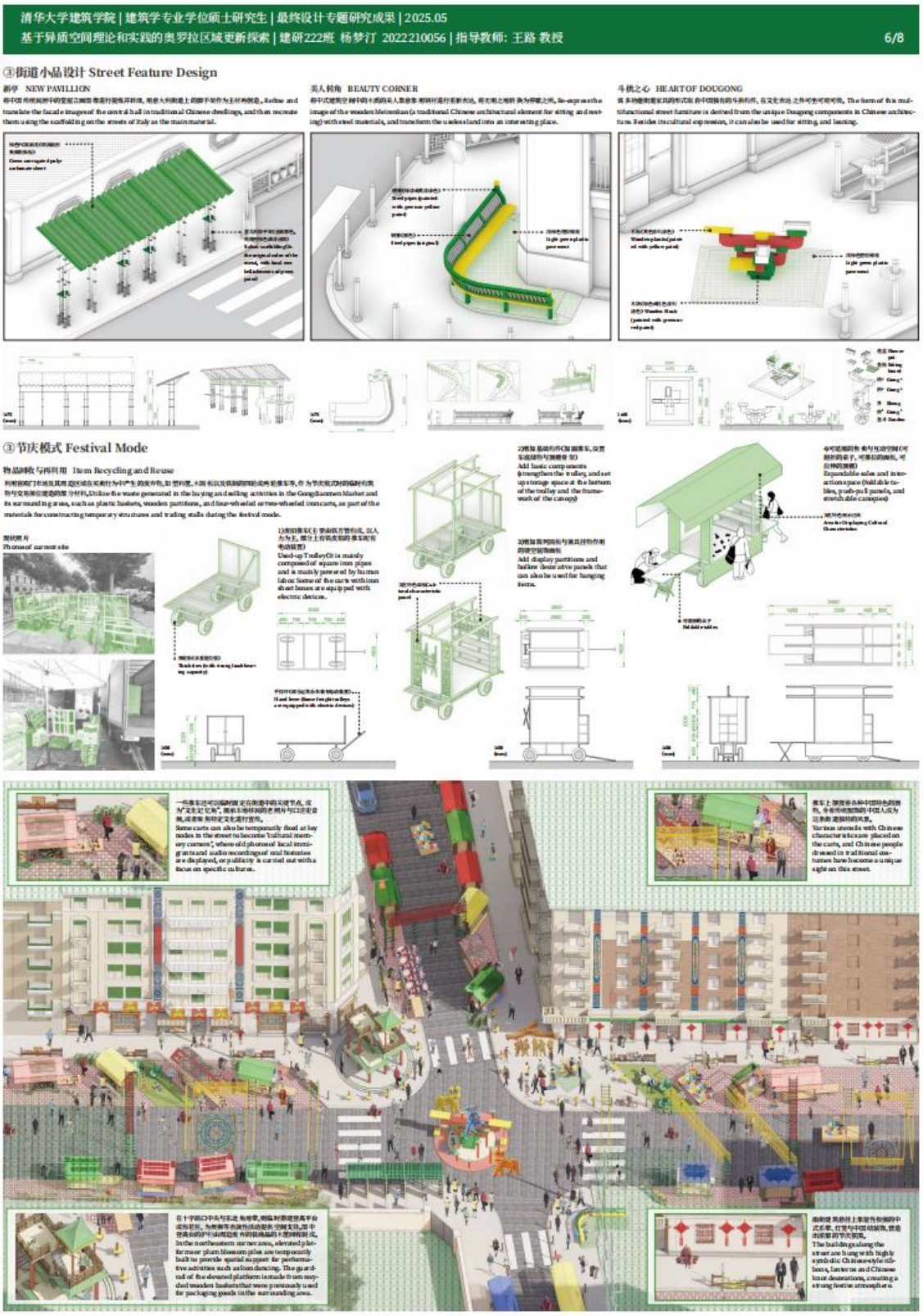
5/8
“唐人街角”节点空间设计 CinaCorner
地点：普里奥卡路和波尔波拉蒂路交汇的十字路口及其附近区域
SITE : The crossroads where Via Clemente Diamiano Priocca and Via Carlo Antonio Porporati intersect and the surrounding area.
现状分析 Analysis of Current Situation
交通分析 (Transport analysis)
路面状况分析 (Pavement condition)
Both Via Priocca and Via Porporati are one-way streets. This modal space is located within the urban public transportation grid, showing potential for being transformed into a pedestrian space. The quality of this section of the road is poor. It is in need of renewal and optimization.
①立面改造 Facade Renovation
②路缘空间利用 Utilization of Curb Space
灵感来源 Inspiration Source
下棋模块 Chess-playing module
种植模块 Planting module
健身模块 Fitness module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6/8
③街道小品设计 Street Feature Design
新亭 NEW PAVILLION
美人转角 BEAUTY CORNER
斗拱之心 HEART OF DOUGONG
③节庆模式 Festival Mode
物品回收与再利用 Item Recycling and Reuse

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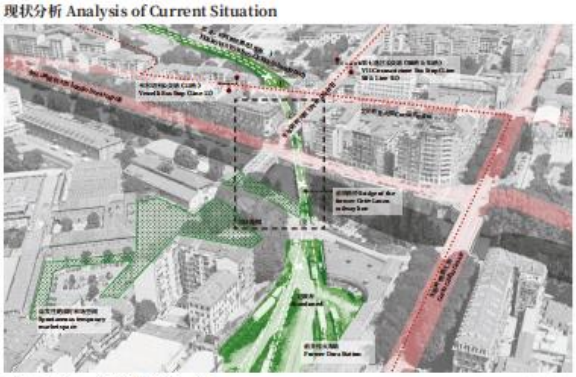
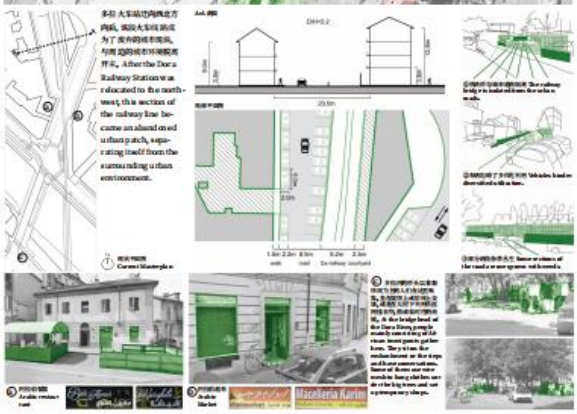
“文化专列”线性空间设计 Cultural Special Train

地点：韦尔切利大街(Corso Vercelli)附近的废弃铁路段，从前铁路桥(Bridge of the former Ciriè-Lanzo railway line)到艾米利亚大街 (Corso EmiLia)。

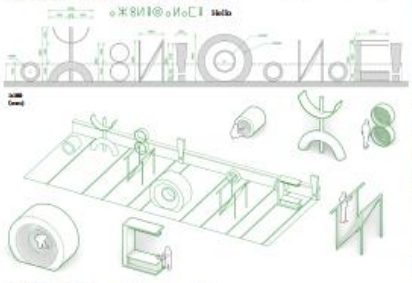
现状分析 Analysis of Current Situation



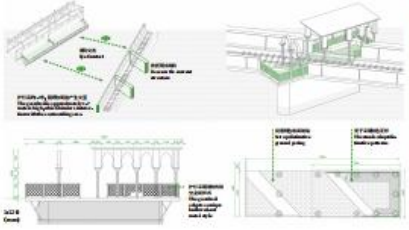


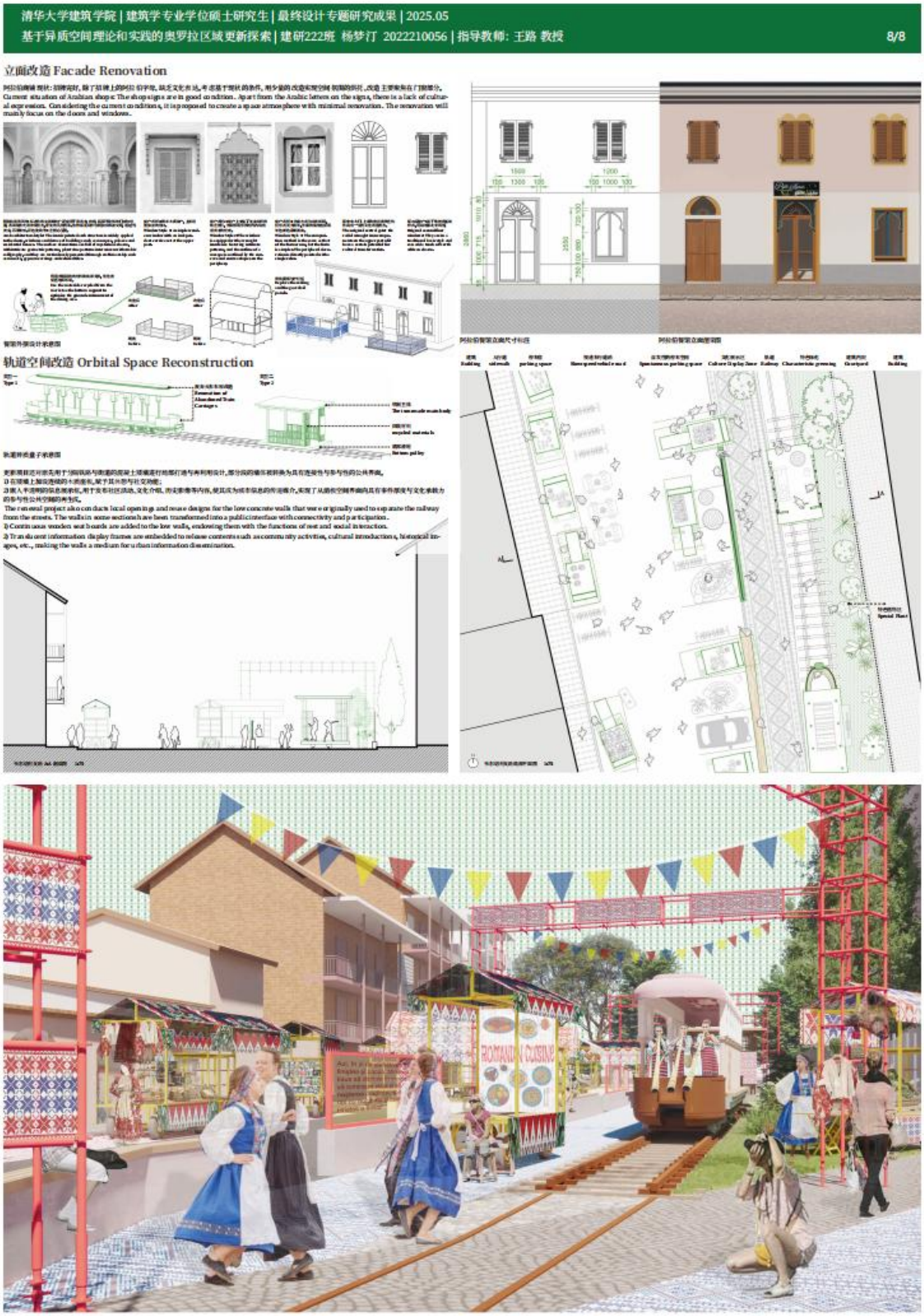
城市异质空间设计 Urban Heterogeneous Space Design

柏柏尔语言装置 Berber Language Installation



摩洛哥异质盒子 Moroccan Heterogeneous Box

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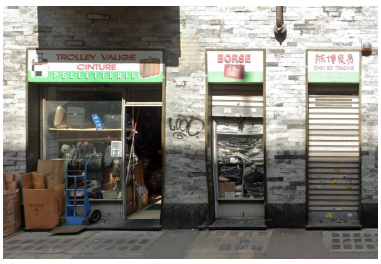
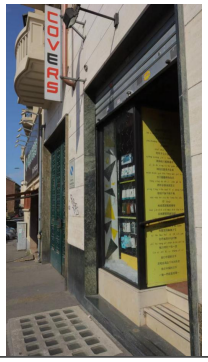
立面改造 Facade Renovation
轨道空间改造 Orbital Space Reconstruction

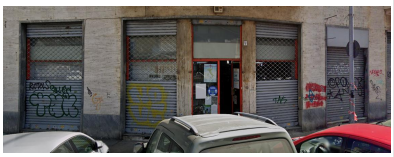
Appendix B　Chinese business signboards around Priocca Street

No.	Chinese store name (font)	Italian/English store name (font)	Color	Installation	Photo
1	家家乐超市(黑体）	ASIA MARKET[英]	Black background + red/white text	Covering	
2	/	/	Green background + words can no longer be distinguished	Embedded + white awning	
3	/	/	Unable to distinguish, the text is written in a mirror image	Embedded	
4	陈博贸易（手写体）	TROLLEY VALIGIE CINTURE BORSE[意] CHEN BO TRADING[英]	Red text on white background + white text on green	Embedded	

			background + text description + picture description		
5	/	/	No shop sign	No shop sign	
6	鸿达贸易（隶书）	HD[英]	Glass bottom + red letter with white edge	Adhesive	
7	鸿节贸易（黑体）	INTIMO UOMO DONNA BAMBINO[意]	Foundation + light blue words + picture description	Covering	
8	伯利恒（宋体）	ANNA ti prodotti economici[意]	Black frame + white background + red text	Embedded	
9	/	Covers[英]	White background + red/black text	External	

10	王氏食品(行楷）	WANG MARKET[英] DETERSM PESCHERIA [意]	Red background + white text + text description	Covering	
11	/	/	No shop sign	No shop sign	
12	/	/	No shop sign	No shop sign	
13	环城贸易（宋体）	H. C abbigliamento moda[意] fashion[英]	Red text on blue background	Embedded + red awning	
14	/	Universal Moda[意]	No shop sign	No shop sign	
15	王氏贸易公司（汉鼎简新艺体）	WangShi[英] Articoli Casalinghi Articoli Regalo[意]	White background + red text + text description + picture description	Embedded	

16	建春贸易公司（楷体）	JIAN CHUN[英] VENDITA INGROSSO E MINUTO[意]	Red background + yellow text; wooden background + yellow text	External + Embedded	 
17	/	OK Phone[英]	Blue background with yellow text	Embedded	
18	/	Covers Store[英]	White background + green/black /orange text	Embedded	
19	利合光电灯饰（超粗黑体）	NEWCASA • & VIDA[意]	Red background + yellow text + text description + picture description	Embedded	
20	/	EURO BLU[意]	Glass bottom + red letter	Adhesive	

21	/	ELiO COMPUTER ACCESSORI [意]	Blue and white gradient background + red text + picture description	Embedded + red awning	
22	凯立贸易公司（特色黑体）	Kai Li Trading[英]	Black frame + white background + red text	Embedded + red awning	
23	瑞升（魏碑体）	Ruisheng[英]	Blue background + white text + text description	Recessed + yellow and white striped awning	
24	/	/	No shop sign	No shop sign	

25	壹克拉贸易（黑体）	YIKELA TRADING[英] ARTICOLI REGALO[意]	Black background + white/red text + text description	Embedded	
26	森弘贸易公司（隶书）	SEN HONG TRADING[英]	White background + red text	Embedded + Green Awning	
27	赵氏贸易公司(黑体）	/	White background + red text	Embedded	
28	中意房地产咨询中心(行书)	ItaliaCina servizi consulenze[意]	Blue background + white text + text description	Embedded	
29	徐鋆杰会计律师事务所(楷书）	STUDIO LEGALE E TRIBUTARIO AVV.YUNJIE XU[意]	Blue background + white text	Embedded	

30	泓勝酒楼(行书）	Ristorante Cinese[英]	Red background + white text; glass background + red text	Embedded + sticky