

## REFLECTION

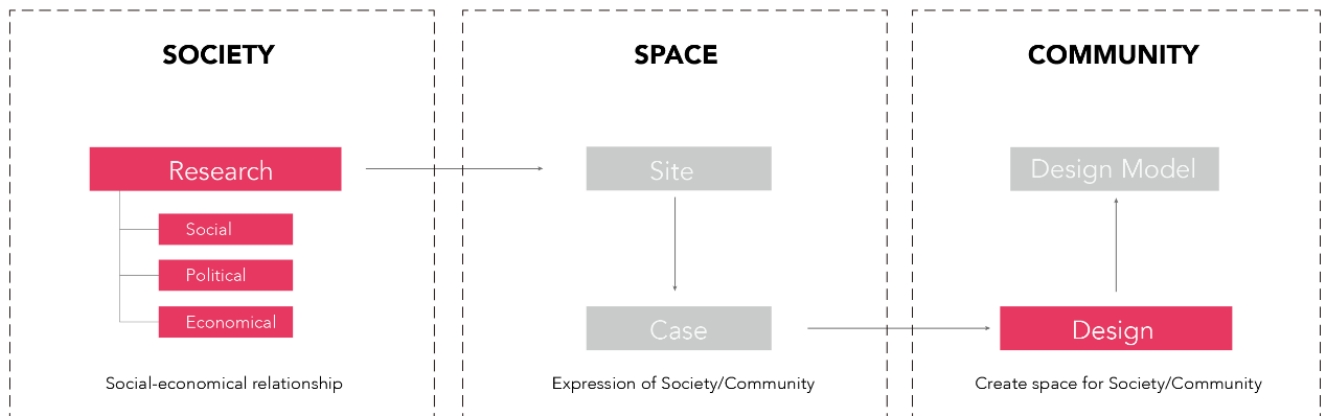


Figure 1 The relationship between research and design in this project

### 1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The inception point of the research is not site based, but it originates from a social phenomenon. It intends to reveal the spatial consequence of society, which is caused by social, political and economic sequences. As the diagram (Figure 1) illustrates, the site, Huaqiangbei area where Shanzhai Movement is initiated, provides a base for connecting theoretical research and spatial response. This analysis generally contributes to the principle of using physical environment as an element to foster social movement. Research techniques that were used are both implicit (personal conception) and explicit (references, experimental, comparative research). Combination of information and intuitions research provides enough knowledge for answering the research question, which is in terms of environmental demand from different social groups. Design proposals for case chosen will conversely influence the existing socio-economical relationship and contributing to urban design framework on involving social innovation in urban redevelopment. Thus in this project, relationship between research and design is more arguing for the relationship between society and space and how they influence each other in a way for more inclusive community building.

### 2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THEME OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE SUBJECT/CASE STUDY CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK (LOCATION/OBJECT)

The graduation lab of the author is Design and Politics, of which the topic is city of comings and goings. It deals with the theme migration this year (2016-2017). This year's studio is trying to explore how we could design buildings, cities and landscapes that make the best of our restless lives, that profit from the constant exchange of people, that can withstand the pressures of a growing and shrinking, ever changing population.

Corresponding to the theme of the studio, the urban village in Shenzhen is chosen for the research. The case study I used for detailed design is a typical typology of an urban village in Shenzhen. As an arrival city, urban village

functions as the transition place for migrants, where around 50% of the migrants of the city are accommodated. It witnessed the constant change, comings and goings of migrants in Shenzhen during the past 20 years.

Thus design interventions in the project start from the constant change in urban village. The author understands that city of comings and goings is about flows of money, ideas and materials. According to the social theory of space and the theory of the space of flows, space is the expression of society (Castells and Castells, 1998). Since our societies are undergoing structural transformation, it is a reasonable hypothesis to suggest that new spatial forms and processes are currently emerging. As research indicates, what are always staying the same in urban village are the building typologies, public space and the socio-economic system. Interventions on these three aspects will bring a different value towards an urban redevelopment in urban village. It is about providing short term or long term citizenship for migrants through sharing facilities and new infrastructure, such as education space, skill center and employment opportunities. Meanwhile, using urban village as an incubator for 'makers', these grassroots innovations challenges the paradigm shift currently taking place in Shenzhen from top-down planning towards a new wave of experimentalism and grassroots developments.

In this connection the Design as Politics Studio fulfilled perfectly the questions put forward by the problem analysis.

### 3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE METHODOICAL LINE OF APPROACH OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE METHOD CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT IN THIS FRAMEWORK

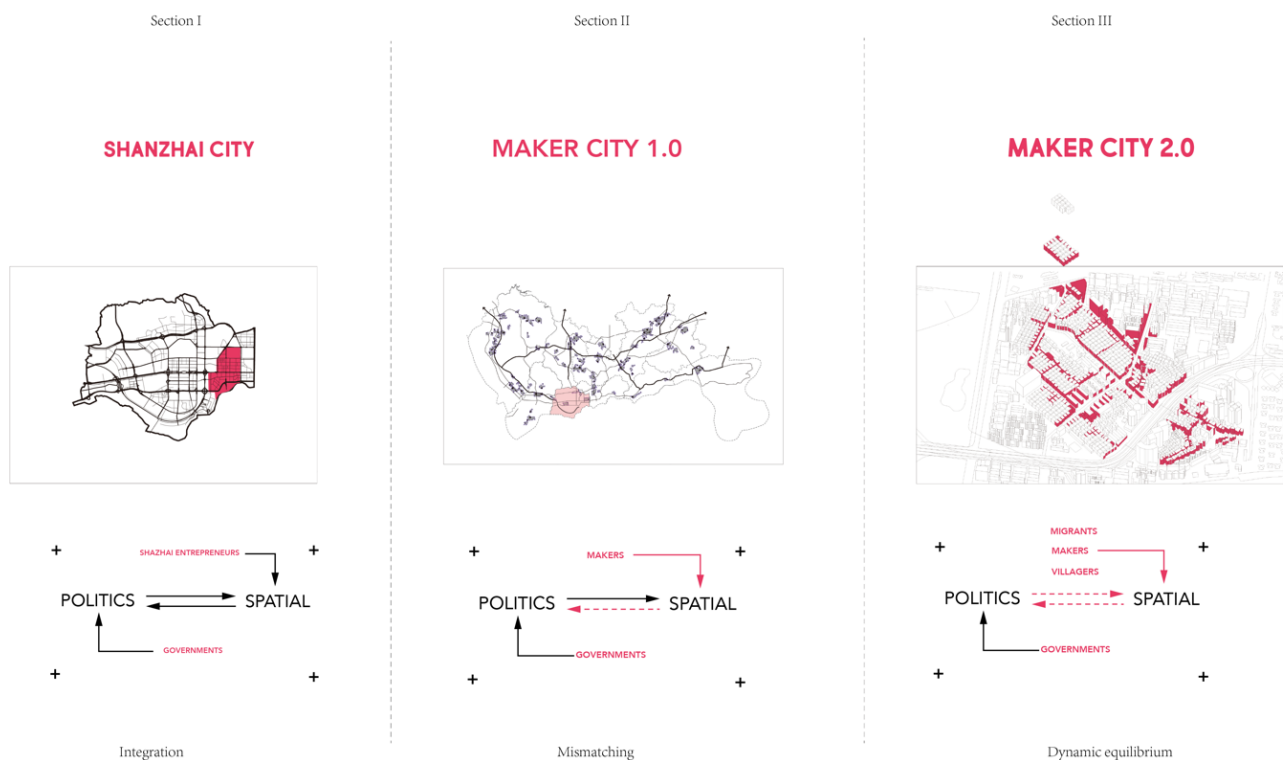


Figure 2 The relationship between politics and design in three sections

The graduation lab of the author is design as politics. This chair sees politics in the widest sense possible and defines it as the level in society where conflicts among stakeholders become visible and are being solved. Hence, politics and Design are not understood separately, but rather as politics as an essential aspect of design along with the simultaneous situation that design is an equally tool for political action. By looking at the realm of politics, the tool set of the designer will be renewed, while the spatial perspective of developments in society will be considered to enrich the existing set of political instruments. My research contributes to the research question of this studio, "What is the uniqueness of the government as a player in the society forces, and how does this expresses in the built environment?" To answer that, the studio is trying to explore, first, the historic and fundamental relationship between architecture, planning and 'government' where design does not only have a functional role in the organization of the territory, but also expresses the values that is highest on the agenda. Secondly, a strong but fragmented demand is recognized by the chair, which is about more control of citizens on their context, as individual, collective, and even on a regional and national level (Design as Politics, 2016).

In my research, I used politics as a tool to do the analysis, form strategy and contribute to the design, eventually reflect to policy. As Castells and Castells (1998) stated, "space is expression of society, not reflection of society." The design intervention proposed will in turn affect the society and assist in related policy to help community better express themselves in space. Method chosen for research consists of three sections as figure 2 shows. In the section one, History and policy review gave me an insight about the current innovation system and how space can contribute to its development along with the role of government in shaping the Chinese innovation typology in China. Meanwhile, it demonstrates the fact that grassroots innovation model in Shenzhen reflects the strong demand from locals for their own environments. How locals use their own intelligence through collective efforts to fight with governmental organizations contributed to the principles for later design intervention. Section two is about identifying the local demands which is also in line with the potential but fragmented demand for more control on their environment, as individual, collective and even on a regional scale. Politics review helped me identify the mismatching between local demand and national culture. Relocating '*makerspace*' in national innovation system revealed the fact that a gap exists between national culture and grassroots risky culture in term of innovation. It suggested that new value should be introduced to the current maker movement, which is about making mistakes, taking risks and making as a lifestyle. Final part of the research intends to use urban village as case study to explore the possibility of using makers as a hint for inclusive urban redevelopment. The relationship and accord among different stakeholders influences a pathway of future development of urban villages. Especially, how government as a player or not as a player in urban redevelopment could provide different scenarios for a possible future.

Therefore the methodical line offered by the studio perfectly matched to the methodical line chosen by the project.

#### 4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

The project seeks to explore a new way of urban redevelopment method in Shenzhen, which assists in incubating urban grassroots innovations. This thesis argues that urban planning and design should not just limit to the spatial and economic aspects, but it should also consider social aspects. When redevelopment projects are proposed and planned in cities, existing social relationship especially when the community is always being ignored and its essence is not appreciated and considered by the decision makers. However, redevelopment should not be

simplified to destroying the building, providing compensation and relocating house owners. It needs to go beyond the physical structure of urban village or other typologies, and bring an understanding of intangible network of communities in the entire city. Thus the project is about revealing the local assets and how could emerging grassroots development strategies integrate with the local community. It provides another possibility for a city of comings and goings where migrants are not underrepresented and could even earn certain levels of autonomy in their environment. The flows of comings and goings could benefit migrants and provide added values to urban redevelopment, which is about inclusive urban redevelopment and social inclusion. As Lam (2016) emphasized, it is an explanation and interpretation that grassroots innovation in Shenzhen is not an end, but a means to next phase of innovation in Shenzhen inevitably triggers our imagination about how its citizens will be treated in next phase, especially the grassroots communities that have been underrepresented for a long time. The analogy he used in the article may be appropriate for Shenzhen, an egg: "impacting from the outside would provide food for others, but impacting it from within would breed a life of its own".

## 5 REFERENCE

- CASTELLS, M. & CASTELLS, M. 1998. *The Rise of the Network Society, the Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. I*. JSTOR.
- DESIGN AS POLITICS 2016. *Studio Guide Design as Politics 2016-2017. Graduation Studio: 'A City of Comings and Goings' - Designing for Migration and Mobility*.
- LAM, T. 2016. *Shanzhai City*. In: VLASSENROOD, L. (ed.) *Shenzhen: From World of Factory to World City*. Netherlands: New Twon Institute.